THE

NATURE OF THINGS:

A DIDACTIC POEM.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN

OF

TITUS LUCRETIUS CARUS.

VOL. I.
Dumb with alarm, with supplicating knee,
And lifted eye, she sought compassion still.
Vainly, and unavailing.
PREFACE.

There is no poem, within the circle of the ancient Classics, more entitled to attention, than the "Nature of Things," by Titus Lucretius Carus. It unfolds to us the rudiments of that philosophy which, under the plastic hands of Gassendi and Newton, has, at length, obtained an eternal triumph over every other hypothesis of the Grecian schools; it is composed in language the most captivating and perspicuous that can result from an equal combination of simplicity and polish, is adorned with episodes the most elegant and impressive, and illustrated by all the treasures of natural history. It is the Pierian Spring from which Virgil drew his happiest draughts of inspiration; and constitutes, as well in point of time, as of excellence, the first didactic poem of antiquity.

In consequence, nevertheless, of the cloud that, for many centuries posterior to the Christian æra, hung over the Epicurean system, which it is the professed object of Lucretius to develop, this exquisite and unrivalled production became generally proscribed and repudiated, till at last it was rarely to be met with, but in the libraries of the learned, or the curious. Having accompanied, however, Epicurus in his fall, it was destined to be a partaker of his rise; and hence, on the revival of letters in the thirteenth century, when the atomic doctrine became once more a subject of investigation, the Nature of Things...
Things was dragged forth from its learned dust, and its beauties re-investigated and unfolded. On the resurrection of science, Italy first threw off the mouldy shroud that enveloped her; and here first we behold a restoration of the labours of Lucretius. Brescia has the honour of having, on this occasion, led the way, by a folio edition of the original, correctly and sumptuously printed by Ferrandi in 1473; Verona, Venice, and Bologna, speedily and successfully followed. Early in the ensuing century, various impressions appeared in France and Germany; and at last, under the superintendence of Creech, in our own country, in 1695.

To enter into an examination of the comparative merits of these different editions of the original, would be to overstep the bounds of my character as a translator. It is sufficient to observe, that of those which have hitherto appeared, the most approved, and by far the most correct, are Havercamp's and Wakefield's; the latter of which was only published in 1796, and by the elegance of its typography, the accuracy and re-integration of its text, and the rich and comprehensive commentary with which it is accompanied, has amply atoned for the tardiness with which the merits of Lucretius were acknowledged in Great Britain. The Wakefield edition has since been reprinted by M. Eichstadt at Leipsic, or rather is at this time reprinting; the first volume only having hitherto made its appearance, which comprises the entire text, and what was certainly much wanted, a new and very copious Index. Its size is octavo, and its date 1801. The remaining volumes are to contain the notes, together with observations by the learned Editor himself.

The popularity of Lucretius, however, has hitherto been more retarded by the want of poetic talents in his translators, than from any deficiency of original editions; and Great Britain, which was latest
in acknowledging his vernacular merit, possesses, to the present hour, no version that can communicate any adequate idea of it to those unacquainted with Latin; and is still far behind what has been repeatedly effected on the Continent.

The best version which has hitherto been offered to the public, is that, in Italian, of the justly celebrated Alessandro Marchetti, who died in 1714, after having been Professor of Mathematics in the University of Pisa during the greater part of his life. Marchetti's translation is in blank verse, and is fully entitled to the high commendation bestowed upon it by his friend Graziani, himself a celebrated poet, as well as chief secretary of state to the duke of Modena. "You have translated this poem," observes he, in a letter to the Professor, "with great felicity and ease; unfolding its sublime and scientific materials in a delicate style and elegant manner; and, what is still more to be admired, your diction seldom runs into a lengthened paraphrase, and never without the greatest judgment*. I shall often have occasion to refer to this version as I proceed, and the reader will hence be enabled to form his own opinion of its excellence. Marchetti, like Lucretius himself, died before his labours were in possession of the public; and, probably in consequence of an interdict from the papal chair, the first edition of his translation was printed in England, by George Pickard, 1717, in 8vo. being three years after the translator's decease. But a much more elegant edition was brought forwards at Paris, in 1754, on the fine woven paper of Olanda, and accompanied with engravings from imaginary, but well-executed designs by Cochin. Yet the value of this splendid edition is much diminished by an almost incalculable number of errors, which have unaccountably been suffered to creep into the text. A new and more

* L'ha poi. V. S. illustissima tradotto con gran facilità e felicità spiegando materie, altissime e scholastichè con stile delicato, e con maniere soavi; e quel ch'è più da ammirarsi è stata silice parole, e se ne è allontanata colla parafrasi, se non rarissime volta, e con grandissimo giudizio.
correct edition, with similar engravings, was proposed at Paris about ten years ago; but the political troubles in which France has ever since been involved, have prevented it from being carried into execution.

The translation of "The Nature of Things," however, forms not the whole of the poetical labours of Marchetti; for he published, in 1707, a version of the odes of Anacreon in quarto; and left behind him, in manuscript, a complete translation of the Aeneid in ottava rima, and an unfinished philosophic poem, written in imitation of Lucretius and Empedocles, upon The Nature of Things, adapted to the latest discoveries, and the most approved modern systems. It was to this work he intended to have prefixed the beautiful dedication to Lewis the Great, which the Abbé Arnaud alludes to in his Journal, and conceives to have been designed for his translation of Lucretius. It is much to be regretted, that Marchetti did not live to complete this, which appears to have been his favourite, poem, and upon which he had laboured with close application for many years. It is seldom that so large a share of poetic and mathematical talents concentrate in the same person. Signora Borghini, who had been a diligent pupil of the professor's, and had as successfully followed him in the study of poetry as of the mathematics, pays him the following compliment in one of her Canzonets, a collection of which was afterwards published at Naples, and dedicated to her preceptor himself:

Però che dentro saggi, ecclesi, e santi
Carmi, con nuovo stile, e sorsermano.
Principj ignoti, e meraviglie ascose
Chiari per te vedransi; e se davanti
A te sì dolcemente il gran Romano
Scrisse Della Natura delle Cose,
Di più degne e famose
Opre tu rieto andrai, che al vero lume
Sciogli per l'alta via sicure piume.

PREFAE.
Thy heavenly verse, sublime, and sage,
Propounds, through each unrivall'd page,
Truths that, till now, ne'er sprang to birth,
The mysteries of heaven and earth.
By thee the mighty Roman sings
In sweetest strain, The Rise of Things;
But thy own work shall yield thy name
A worthier and a wider fame:
A firmer plumage shall display,
A loftier flight, and brighter day.

For translations of Lucretius I have hitherto sought in vain amidst the literature of Spain and Portugal; and I have reason to believe, that not one of any reputation exists in either country. This, however, is not a little extraordinary, since it is a fact which I trust will sufficiently appear in the ensuing attempt, that both Lope and Garcilasso de la Vega, Ercilla and Camoens, have been indebted to The Nature of Things, for many of their best and happiest passages; and Frachetta has written in Spanish a laborious commentary upon it, in a thick quarto volume, entitled, "Breve Spositione di tutta l'Opera di Lucretio." This last work I have examined, and shall occasionally refer to. In the German language, a version from the pen of M. F. X. Mayr made its appearance in two volumes octavo, in 1784 and 1785. It was printed at Vienna by Mösle, but I have not been able to obtain a copy. I have, however, seen De Wit’s Dutch translation, published in 1709, but without being induced to imitate it. The translation is in prose, accompanied with allegorical plates, and strangely subdivides every book into a variety of sections.

Of all countries, however, that have attempted to naturalize The Nature of Things, France has been most prolific in her exertions. Her earliest effort was a prose version published in 1650 by M. de Marolles, an abbé of Villeloin, and, for some reason that I am not
acquainted with, dedicated it to Christiana, queen of Sweden. The translator makes a boast of having completed his labours in less than four months; but he appears to have possessed no talents for the undertaking, and rapidity is the only boast of which he can avail himself. "If the abbé had succeeded," says Bayle, "only as well as the English translator Creech, he would have had a better fate; but he neither understood Latin nor the Epicurean philosophy."

Yet, for want of a better, this miserable performance long continued to be a marketable book: a second edition of it was published in 1659; and a third, in 1663, in which the author attempted to prove, that he was better acquainted both with the philosophy and history of Epicurus than the world had given him credit for, and hence subfixed a version of the tenth book of Diogenes Laertius: at the same time, dissatisfied with the unsucess of his first dedication, he descended from thrones and sceptres, and addressed it to the president of the Academie Royale, which was then just instituted. It is singular to observe, that in 1677 this very translation, hastily as it was professed to have been written, and abounding with errors of every kind, was itself translated into French verse by James Langlois, who hereby unequivocally proved himself to have been totally unacquainted with the language in which the poem he undertook to versify was originally composed. It appears to have met with the contempt it deserved; and the vanity of the versifier seems to have been solely excited to this absurd effort by a truly metrical translation of detached parts of Lucretius, in which the classical muse of Moliere was, well known to have indulged herself about this very time, and the ill fate of which might have served as a subject for one of his own tragedies. The first intention of Moliere was to have versified the entire poem; but finding that he was hereby threatened with a larger portion of labour than he could find time to engage in, he confined his rhymes to its more decorative parts, and

delivered the rest over to plain prose. A translation thus strangely and uncouthly tesselated, had it ever been completed, must have been highly unworthy of the Roman bard; but it would, nevertheless, at that time, have been no inconsiderable present to the writer's countrymen. It must be confessed, moreover, that Moliere was well qualified for the office of an interpreter from the course of his juvenile studies in the college at Clermont. Gassendi, the modern restorer of the doctrine of Epicurus, was, at that period, one of its professors: the favourite disciple of Gassendi was Chapelle, who, both now, and through the whole of Moliere's life, was his most familiar and intimate friend. With Chapelle, the French dramatist frequently attended the professor's philosophical lectures; and though never a convert to his tenets, from the literary conversations, which hence ensued between himself and his fellow-student, not only during their residence at college, but in their subsequent days, he must have been sufficiently initiated into the doctrines of the Epicurean system. Moliere, as he proceeded with his version, uniformly rehearsed it both to Chapelle and Rohaut, who jointly testified their approbation of the performance. But it was predestined to perish abortively, although, at length, brought very nearly to its completion. A servant of the translator, to whom he had committed the care of his dress-wig, being in want of paper to put it into curl, most unluckily laid hold of a loose sheet of the version itself, which was immediately rent to pieces, and thrown into the fire as soon as it had performed its office. Moliere was an irritable man, and the accident was too provoking to be endured: he determined never to translate another page, and flung the whole remainder of his version into the flames that had thus consumed a part of it.

In 1685 appeared another translation, in French prose, by the baron des Coutures, who also published, in the same year, an apologetic treatise, entitled, "Sur la Morale d'Epicure." To his version of the
Nature of Things is prefixed a life of its author, drawn up from the materials already furnished him by Ciunta, Le Blanc, Hubert Giffane, Lambine, and other commentators upon the poem: and to every book is appended a small body of notes, many of which show him to have been better acquainted with his subject than de Marolles. As a translator, however, he has succeeded less than as an expositor. His version is prolix and paraphrastic, inelegant, and devoid of spirit. It, nevertheless, obtained a second edition in 1692; and a third in 1708, but without any material alterations in either. De Coutures was succeeded in his attempt by Alexander Deleyre, who is well known as one of the writers of the Encyclopedie, but still more so, as the author of a translation of Lord Verulam's philosophic treatises. Deleyre died in 1797, and left this version among several other inedited works. It has not yet been published, nor is it much entitled to such a distinction, if not superior to his metrical romances set to music by his friend Jean Jaques Rousseau. Deleyre was, in all probability, well acquainted with the Epicurean hypothesis, but he possessed little of the fire of genuine poetry. He may have been a well-meaning man, but he was, in the early part of his life, a rigid Jesuit, and in the latter, a morose philosopher.

Be the merit of the manuscript version of Deleyre, however, what it may, the necessity of its publication is now altogether superseded by the very elegant translation, in French verse, of M. Le Blanc de Guillet, which was neatly printed at Paris in two volumes octavo, in 1788*, and dedicated to M. Dions du Sejour; and perhaps, by its appearance and intrinsic merit, first of all induced Deleyre to relinquish his design. The version is accompanied with the original text

*I have also seen a work which pretends to be a translation of the Nature of Things, and which was published at Amsterdam, in French prose, about twenty years ago. It is an anonymous performance, and rather an abridgement of the poem than a full version. Its size is small octavo, and it entitles itself Traduction Libre.
in alternate pages, which, from a casual examination, I believe to be Creech's: it is decorated with plates, illustrated by notes, and introduced by a comprehensive preliminary discourse, which contains a biography of the original author, chiefly drawn up from Giffane, or as he is more generally called, Giffanius, and Creech, and possessing whatever inaccuracies have been accidentally committed by the latter, together with some general observations upon the Epicurean hypothesis. In this hypothesis, M. de Guillet does not, however, appear to have been very deeply versed; and hence, even in the translation itself, he is sometimes incorrect, and still more frequently obscure. It is, nevertheless, upon the whole, a work of great merit, and ranks second amidst the translations of Lucretius which have yet appeared in any nation. Of course, it ranges immediately next to that of Marchetti.

In our own language, the first attempt to naturalize the poem before us was by Evelyn in 1656; upon which occasion, almost every friend of his who could write in rhyme seems to have flattered him with complimentary verses. Evelyn, however, and it is a proof that he was not altogether deficient in taste, still felt himself unqualified for the task. He had, at this time, only published a small fascicle containing the first book, with an appendix of notes which discover no small degree of general reading and acquaintance with his subject. But conscious, upon actual trial, of his own inability, and trembling at the difficulties which lay before him, he took shelter under a critical remark of Casaubon, and doubted, to adopt his own version of it, "whether it were possible for any traduction to equal the elegancy and excellency of the original;" at the same time adding, that "he is persuaded, men will rather take the pains to converse the original, than stay till the rest be translated into English." With the first
book, therefore, closed the labours of Evelyn; and no one who is acquainted with his version, will regret that it did not extend farther.

About twenty years posterior to this unsatisfactory effort, Creech introduced, before the public, his translation of the entire poem; and shortly afterwards published, at the Oxford press, a new and valuable edition of the original, with Latin notes. Creech was an admirable scholar, and no contemptible poet; but he generally wrote with too much rapidity, and hence became alike inaccurate and inelegant. He was, moreover, at all times, more studious to convey a knowledge of the simple idea of his author, than of the ornamental dress in which it was conveyed. His version of Lucretius, however, is sometimes loaded with ideas, and even whole lines which have no foundation in the original, and sometimes abruptly curtailed of others that are absolutely necessary to the force and elucidation of the argument. Of such redundancies and defects I shall occasionally have to take notice in the prosecution of the work before me. But after all, it is no small share of praise to Creech, that he completed a task, which Evelyn, in a copy of complimentary verses addressed to the former on the publication of his poem, frankly declares, he was unable to accomplish, and which no one, to the present moment, has since dared to encounter.

Dryden was, at this time, a young man; but though green in years, he was mature in poetic powers; and equally disgusted with both translators, he was resolved to try the effect of his own talents, and, if possible, to give his countrymen some idea of the real excellencies of the original. For this purpose, he selected a variety of passages, but chiefly of the ornamental kind, as the beginnings and endings of the different books; and upon these he bestowed all the polish and elegance
of which he was master. The applause to which he was entitled, he
abundantly received; and had he translated the entire poem with the
same felicity and spirit which he has infused into these detached mor-
sels, the version of Creech would have been long since forgotten, and
that of the ensuing pages, perhaps, never made its appearance.
Yet Dryden has, in general, rather paraphrased than translated; his
lines are often double the number of the original; and he has, at
times, unfortunately attempted to improve his author by ideas of his
own creation.

To Dryden’s specimens succeeded a prose version of the entire poem
by Guernier and his colleagues. It was published in 1743, in two vo-
lumes octavo, and, like the French version of de Guillet, is accom-
panied by Creech’s edition of the original in opposite pages. The
translator’s motive for preferring prose to verse, he thus explains in a
brief introduction: “Our language, though copious in compliment
and love-expressions, is but very narrow and barren in terms of art, and
phrases suited to philosophy; and the technical words we have invented
move coarsely and cloudily in verse. For these reasons, the poetical
translation of Creech is often more perplexed and harsh than the ori-
ginal; it is, in many places, a wide and rambling paraphrase; in
others, the translator contracts and curtails his author, and is fre-
quently guilty of omissions for many lines together. This is no won-
der; for the poet he undertook is not to be confined and shackled by
the rules of rhyme; his verse is nearest, and runs more naturally
into prose than any other, Juvenal and Horace only excepted, among
all the classics. I have endeavoured, because disencumbered from
the fetters of poetry, faithfully to disclose his meaning in his own
terms, and to shew him whole and entire*.”

* Preface, p. 5.

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But it is impossible to shew Lucretius whole and entire in a prose translation of any kind; and to exhibit him merely as a philosopher, and not as a poet, is to rob him of by far the greater portion of his merit,—of that which is peculiarly his own. For, whatever may be the value we affix to his doctrines and scientific inductions, the splendour of his imagery, and the harmony of his numbers are still infinitely more valuable. The translator’s animadversions upon Creech are, unquestionably, well founded; yet the unfavourable opinion he has expressed of the English language, proves him to be but little acquainted with its extent or flexibility. Of itself, and without a recurrence to abstruse or technical terms, it possesses a vocabulary sufficiently varied and rich for all the common purposes of science and literature; yet the present day affords ample proofs that under the plastic hands of a judicious poet, the most recondite terms of the learned languages may be introduced into it with elegance, perspicuity, and melody; nor is it possible, perhaps, to instance any modern tongue with which they will so harmoniously amalgamate as our own.

In 1799, another effort was made to introduce The Nature of Things in an English dress, by an anonymous author, who presented the first book alone as a specimen of his abilities for this purpose. The sample thus offered was in Iambic rhyme, and the rest of the poem was to have followed, as soon as the public had testified its approbation of the attempt. Without obtrusively depreciating the talents of a contemporary writer, it is sufficient to observe, that nothing farther of this version has been heard of; that the decision of the public was unfavourable; and that the author appears, in consequence, to have submitted, with suitable modesty, to the tribunal to which he appealed.

It results then, from this general survey, that no translation of The Nature of Things has hitherto been presented to the public.
PREFACE.

by any means worthy, either of our own language, or of the intrinsic merits of the original.

To remedy this defect in English literature, is the object of the present attempt; an object, unquestionably, accompanied with difficulties, and difficulties which no effort has yet been able to surmount. I shall not, however, attempt to aggravate them, by disingenuously depreciating the powers of the language in which I write, or by affecting to discover a general obscurity in the original, which, to those who have closely studied its style and design, by no means exists.

Contrary to the example afforded by my predecessors, I have preferred blank verse to rhyme; not, however, from any dread of superior labour, but from a persuasion that, in mixed subjects of description and scientific precept, it possesses a decisive advantage over the couplet. It bends more readily to the topics introduced, it exhibits more dignity from its unshackled freedom, and displays more harmony from its greater variety of cadence. I have also attempted, what ought, indeed, to be the attempt of every translator, to give the manner, as well as the matter, of the original, to catch its characteristic style, and delineate its turns of expression.

The translation is accompanied with a perpetual commentary, in the form of subjoined notes, and a correct copy of the Latin text. With respect to the propriety or advantage of the latter, I was for some time doubtful. Mr. Wakefield was the first who proposed it to me; the plan was afterwards strenuously advised by many other literary friends of the first eminence, and I at length resolved to adopt it. In the choice of an edition, I found no difficulty: the intrinsic excellence, and pre-eminence of Mr. Wakefield's own, precluding all hesi-
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tation upon the subject. I have at present, however, a motive for reprinting this edition, of which, I could not, at first, be aware; for almost all its copies were unfortunately consumed by the fire that, about two years ago, destroyed Mr. Hamilton's Printing-offices. To this edition, nevertheless, I have not, in every instance, adhered in my translation; on some few occasions preferring the lection of prior expositors, and in two or three cases suggesting emendations of my own: yet, not chusing to break in upon the integrity of Mr. Wakefield's text, I have merely pointed out, and defended, such variations in the commentary.

This commentary is composed of notes of different descriptions, which will, in general, be found equally original in their design and materials. It consists of parallel passages, or obvious imitations of Lucretius by other poets, whether Latin, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, or English; together with original passages from Greek writers, to which our poet has himself occasionally referred, or from which he has manifestly borrowed. It consists, likewise, of casual observations on the different versions of Lucretius in our own, as well as foreign languages; and comparisons of the doctrines elucidated or animadverted upon in the course of the poem, with others of a similar tendency, which have been advanced or maintained by more modern philosophers. As I chiefly design this publication for the use of the English reader, I have, moreover, been punctilious in suffixing translations of all the passages from foreign writers, whose works I have found it necessary to quote. In cases where we have already adequate translations of such works in our own language, I have readily availed myself of such assistance: but in all other instances, as also where the version in common use is not sufficiently close to the original author to answer the purpose of the quotation, I have taken the liberty of giving a version myself. This, as will be
obvious, has largely augmented my labours, but it was a trouble that seemed imperiously demanded.

In attentively perusing the poem before us, it is impossible to avoid noticing the striking resemblance which exists between many of its most beautiful passages, and various parts of the poetic books of the Scriptures: and the Abbé de St. Pierre, as well as several other Continental writers, have hence conceived Lucretius to have been acquainted with them. The idea, it must be confessed, is but little more than a conjecture, but it is a conjecture which may easily be defended. Virgil, who though considerably younger than Lucretius, was contemporary with him, and attained his majority on the very day of our poet’s decease, was indisputably acquainted with the prophecies of Isaiah; and Longinus, who flourished during the reign of Aurelian, quotes from the Mosaic writings by name. It is not difficult to account for such an acquaintance; for different books of the Bible, and especially those of the Pentateuch, appear to have been translated into Greek by the Jews themselves, at least three centuries anterior to the Christian era, for the use of their brethren, who, at that time, were settled in Egypt, and other Grecian dependencies, and, residing among the Greeks, had adopted the Greek language. The Septuagint itself, moreover, was composed and published about the same period, by the express desire, and under the express patronage of Ptolemy Philadelphus; who, convinced of the importance and excellence of the Hebrew Scriptures, was desirous of diffusing a knowledge of them among the various classes of men of letters who, at his own invitation, had now thronged to Alexandria from every quarter. Theocritus was at this time among the number, and largely partook of the liberality of the Egyptian monarch; and Sanctius seems fairly to have established it, that the labours of the Grecian idyllist are deeply imbued with the spirit, and evince
manifest imitations of the language of the Song of Songs. Dr. Hodgson has, indeed, ascended very considerably higher, and even challenges Anacreon with having copied, in a variety of instances, from this inimitable relic of the sacred poetry of Solomon. This accusation may, perhaps, be doubtful; but it would be easy to prove, if the discussion were necessary in the present place, that, during the dynasty of the Ptolemies, not only the Muses of Aonia were indebted to the Muse of Sion, but that the eclectic philosophy, which first raised its monster head within the same period, incorporated many of the wildest traditions of the Jewish rabbis into its chaotic hypothesis. The literary connection which subsisted between Rome and Alexandria is well known; and it is not to be supposed that writings, which appear to have been so highly prized in the one city, would be received with total indifference in the other.

Be this, however, as it may; be the parallelisms I advert to, designed, or accidental, I trust I shall rather be applauded than condemned, for thus giving a loose to the habitual inclination of my heart. Grotius, Schultens, Lowth, and Sir William Jones, have set me the example; and, while treading in the steps of such illustrious scholars, I need not be afraid of public censure. Like them, I wish to prove that the sacred pages are as alluring by their language, as they are important in their doctrines; and that, whatever be the boast of Greece and Rome with respect to poetic attainments, they are often equalled, and occasionally surpassed by the former. The man who, professing the Christian religion, is acquainted with the ancient Classics, ought, at the same time, to be acquainted with biblical criticism; he has, otherwise, neglected his truest interest, and lived but for little purpose in the world. I delight in profane literature, but still more do I delight in my Bible: they are lamps, that afford a mutual assistance to each other. In point of importance, however,
I pretend not that they admit of comparison; and could it once be demonstrated, that the pursuits are inconsistent with each other, I would shut up Lucretius for ever, and rejoice in the conflagration of the Alexandrian library. Having thus occasionally extended my researches and resemblances to the Hebrew, the reader must excuse me, if, from a love of Asiatic poetry, I sometimes lead him into the sister languages of Arabia and Persia: yet, I trust, he will seldom have to repent of his journey, or return without an adequate recompense for its distance and fatigue.

To the general work, I have prefixed a biography of our poet. Those, I have hitherto met with, are little more than dry catalogues of dates and names, uninteresting in narrative, barren in facts, and questionable in chronology. I have pursued a different plan, have presented Lucretius, as far as I have been able, in the circle of his connexions, delineated him from his own writings, analysed the doctrines he professed, and defended him from the attacks of malevolence and ignorance. In a subjoined Appendix, I have given a comparative statement of the rival systems of philosophy that flourished in his own æra: have followed them, in their ebbs and flows, through succeeding generations, and identified their connexion with various theories of the present day. At the end of the work is added a copious, and, I trust, a useful Index.

I have thus put the reader into possession of his bill of fare, and may perhaps be allowed to hope, without vanity, that he will not be dissatisfied with the entertainment provided for him. "A good book," says an elegant writer of our own times, "is a creation; a good translation, a resurrection." In the present instance, the creation is indisputable, the resurrection remains yet to be proved.

* Marquis de Boufflers. See his Discourse on Literature, delivered in the Academy of Sciences and Polite Arts at Berlin, Aug. 9, 1798.
Concerning this inimitable poet, and most excellent philosopher, History presents us but with few authentic documents: and hence there are many circumstances of his life upon which writers have not been able to agree. For this dearth of materials, it is not difficult to account. Lucretius lived and died in a period in which the eye of every citizen was directed to public concerns; when the Roman empire was distracted by the ambition of aspiring demagogues, and the jealousies of contending factions: and when the party that triumphed in the morning was often completely defeated by night. Added to which, the life of Lucretius was spent in the shades of philosophy and quiet: a situation, undoubtedly, best calculated for the improvement of the heart, and the cultivation of philosophy or the muses, yet little chequered with those lights and shades, with that perpetual recurrence of incident, and contrast of success and misfortune, which are often to be met with in the lives of the more active; and which importunately call for the pen of the biographer,
while they afford him abundant materials for his narrative. From the
records that yet remain, however, and the most plausible conjectures
of his editors and annotators, I am enabled to present the reader
with the following pages.

Titus Lucretius Carus was born at Rome, in the second year of
the 171st Olympiad, the 658th of the city, and the 90th anterior
to the Christian æra, during the consulate of Licinius Crassus, and
Quintus Mutius Scævola; being one year younger than Cæsar, and nine
than Cicero. His name imports, that he was a descendant, and he
is generally admitted to have been so, from one of the most ancient
and illustrious families of the commonwealth; whose collateral branches
had successively been elected to the highest offices in the state, and
had often evinced the most distinguished abilities in their respective
characters of consuls, tribunes, and prætors. From which of these

* I have followed the Chronicle of Eusebius, in fixing the dates both of the birth and death of Lucretius; for they so well correspond with the few political facts which are incidentally connected with his life as to carry along with them a strong internal proof of precision and veracity. These dates, however, have been disputed by a variety of biographic critics; and, almost every one of them having offered a different ground for his dissent, no man, perhaps, has ever had so many periods fixed, either for his nativity or decease. Lamminus asserts, that, upon the calculation of Eusebius, he must have been born under the consulate of Domitius Aenobarbus and Caius Cassius Longinus; but this would be to fix his birth in the first, instead of in the second year of the 171st Olympiad, and of course in the 657th, instead of the 658th year of the city. Crecch, on the contrary, supposes him to have been born a year later, instead of a year sooner than Eusebius has computed. Peter Criniti, a Florentine writer, declares that he was older, and commonly allowed to be older, than Cicero, Terence, or Varro. De Poet. Lat. i. ii. Des Coutures, in the life of Lucretius, prefixed to his French version, brings him into the world not less than twenty years earlier than Cicero; and he is countenanced by Giffarius, and Pareus, the editor of the Dauphin edition. Even Gassendi, whose accuracy is seldom to be impeached, has, upon this point, made a most extraordinary mistake; and, confounding the day of his decease with that of his birth, asserts that, according to the Chronicle of Eusebius, Lucretius died in the 171st Olympiad, at the age of forty-three; and then, reasoning from the very error into which he had been betrayed, proceeds to contend that he must have been even older than Zeno, the preceptor at Athens, of Cicero, Atticus, Memmius, and our poet himself. De Vita Epic. ii. 6 It is either from a blind copy, or a similar misapprehension, that our own countryman, P. Blount, assigns him an equal degree of antiquity, and contends that he was born about the year of the city 620; consequently, not less than twenty-seven years anterior to the undisputed nativity of Cicero.
branches, however, our poet immediately derived his descent, we have no satisfactory document to inform us: but his prænomen of Titus naturally refers us to the direct line of that warm and excellent patriot, the celebrated Titus, son of Spurius Lucretius, memorable from his election to the office of inter-rex, on the abolition of the Roman monarchy, and brother of the chaste and virtuous Lucretia, who slew herself upon the violation of her person by Tarquin the sixth, and hereby produced the expulsion of the Tarquin family from the Roman throne.

It was upon this expulsion of the Tarquins, that Spurius Lucretius was unanimously chosen inter-rex, or king for the time being, till the meditated change in the constitution was completed, and the people had decided on the two citizens best qualified to support the new dignity of consuls. On this decision, little debate seems to have been necessary, and Junius Brutus, and Tarquinius Collatinus, the widowed husband of Lucretia, were unanimously inducted into the consular office. Upon the death of Brutus, who fell a short time afterwards, fighting gloriously for his country, against the combined forces which the Tarquins had mustered up with a vain hope of regaining possession of the Roman throne, Spurius Lucretius was elected consul in his stead *. Collatinus had retired from public service to the tranquillity of a rural life, and the celebrated Valerius, afterwards sur-named Poplicola, divided the consulate with him. Spurius Lucretius, however, enjoyed this additional proof of public estimation and gratitude but for a very short period. He died only a few days after his election to the chief magistracy: and Titus Lucretius, his son, from whom it appears probable our poet immediately descended, was unanimously appointed in his stead. The consulate was a dignity which Titus Lucretius enjoyed repeatedly; and he had always the

* Cic. de Fin. lib. ii.
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additional dignity of possessing Valerius Poplicola for his colleague, the most able general, as well as the most consummate politician of his age. In the assault of Porsenna upon the Roman bridge, in favour of the Tarquins, and which immortalized the gallant Horatius Cocles, Titus Lucretius commanded the left wing of the Roman army; but was under the necessity of retiring from the field of battle, in consequence of a dangerous wound, before Cocles had signalized himself by his desperate resistance. He was likewise consul, and joint commander in chief with Poplicola when, in the year of Rome 247, the Sabines were completely defeated in their first attack upon the Roman state*, after it had assumed the form of a republic.

Though it seems to be uniformly admitted that this is the family, and probably the branch of that family, from which our poet sprang, history affords us not a single glimpse of information as to the phenomena, or profession of his father: the rank he maintained in the republic, or the patrimonial property he was possessed of. Cicero incidentally enumerates three citizens of the name of Lucretius, who were contemporaries with Carus, and probably connected by the consanguinity of brothers, or cousins; Marcus Lucretius, an acquaintance both of the Roman orator and of Caius Verres†, Quintus Lucretius Vispillio, and Lucretius Aphilia, both of whom he has introduced into his book of Celebrated Orators, and whose talents he has discriminated by representing the former as deeply skilled in the law, and admirable as a chamber counsel, and the latter as possesst of abilities better adapted for popular harangues than for legal opinions‡. He likewise speaks of a Quintus Lucretius, who fled from Sulmo, the birth-place of Ovid, upon the approach of Marc Antony§, and who appears to have been

* Plut. in Poplic. † In Verr. lib. i.
‡ Erat in privatis causis Q. Lucretius Vispillio, et acutus, et jurispritus: nam Aphilia (in other copies Asilia, Ofella, Ofilius), aptior concionibus, quam judiciis. § Ad Attic. lib. viii.
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a friend of his own, and his brother Quintus. But it is most probable, that the Quintus Lucretius here mentioned, is the same person as Lucretius Vispillio, and who, moreover, according to Caesar, was of senatorial dignity, and that Cicero has only in this place incidentally omitted his surname.

Lucretius Offella, who is highly celebrated in history for his military exploits, and more especially for his able conduct at the siege of Pæneffe, must have been many years older than our philosopher, and seems to have been rather an uncle, than a relation of any other kind. He fell a sacrifice, in the eighteenth year of the age of Lucretius Carus, to the infamous and arbitrary power of Sylla, who was then perpetual dictator. Offella, presuming on the favour of the people, whom he knew to be generally attached to him, offered himself for the consulate: Sylla was determined he should not succeed, but, at the same time, fearful of the issue of a fair competition, he procured him to be suddenly murdered by a centurion in the very centre of the comitia. The citizens were highly enraged, but their fury was now become idle.

Besides these who were contemporaries of Titus Lucretius, if we ascend about fifty or sixty years anterior to his birth, we meet with three of the same family occupying simultaneously some of the most important offices of the commonwealth: Caius, who, during the war with Perses king of Macedonia, in conjunction with Matienus, was elected naval duumvir *, or lord high admiral, and attacked, with singular success, a variety of fortified posts on the shores of Thessaly, and who was afterwards elected prætor †, for the services he rendered his country; and Spurius ‡, and Marcus, the brother of Caius, who for many years successively were also either prætors § or tribunes ||. It must be con-

* Liv. lib. xl. cap. 26. † Id. xlii. 56. ‡ Id. xlii. 18. § Id. cap. 28.
‖ Id. cap. 19.
fessed, however, that but little real dignity can attach to our philosophic poet from the former of these ancestors: for he was accused before the senate, and at the forum, of having been guilty of the basest misconduct and rapacity during his different praetorships; of having made slaves of many families under the immediate protection of the Roman republic; of having exacted immense contributions for his private use; and of having even decorated his sumptuous villa at Antium with paintings plundered from the temple of Æsculapius at Abdera*. Charges of this kind, indeed, were but too frequently exhibited against the praetors of almost every province: like many adventurers to distant colonies in the present day, they too often solicited these high offices for the sole purpose of amassing immense fortunes in a short period of time; and when once they had obtained their appointments, moral rectitude, and the honour of their country, were completely discarded, and every engine was set to work that could contribute to their immediate object in view. Nothing, therefore, could be more wretched than the situation of a province dependant upon the Roman power: it had the liberty of complaining by ambassadors extraordinary, it must be confess; nor was the government generally indifferent to the accusations alleged; for the obnoxious viceroy was commonly removed, but he was, at the same time, as commonly succeeded by one as iniquitous as himself. With regard to Caius Lucretius, however, he was not only recalled, and severely reprimanded, but most heavily fined for his rapacity†.

Yet nothing of this kind of guilt appears to have sullied the character of the father of Lucretius Carus. The silence of history respecting him, completely proves that he never possessed any office of great political distinction or dignity: and it is hence highly probable that, like his son, he preferred a life of retirement and study to the pomp

* Liv. cap. 43. † Id.
and pageantry of public occupations. From the juvenile friendships of our poet, and the liberal education bestowed upon him, there can be no doubt, however, of his having lived in a state of considerable respectability and affluence.

The period in which Titus Lucretius was born was highly favourable to philosophy; the Romans having now begun to discover an enthusiasm for Grecian literature, and to cultivate a polite and classical taste with regard to their own tongue. The disputes of Marius and Sylla had not yet lighted up the torch of civil war throughout the republic: the elegant writings of Polybius, whom Scipio Æmilianus had not long before attached to the Roman interest, and induced to desert Greece for the metropolis of this aspiring people, were in the hands of every one: and, charmed with the style of the Grecian historian, as well as emulous of his literary fame, Rutilius Rufus, the consul, had lately published, in Greek, a history of his own country.

The study of the Grecian language had indeed become fashionable from another cause; for the Achaean hostages, who were sent to Rome, upon the reduction of their own country, towards the close of the preceding century, and whose number was not less than a thousand, were, for the most part, men of taste; and elegant accomplishments, while many of them were scholars of profound and eminent erudition. The whole city became enamoured of the various acquisitions of its new visitants; and in matters of polite literature, the conquerors soon yielded to the conquered. Hence, schools for the study and exercise of rhetoric and eloquence, superintended by native Greeks, became in a short time so frequent, that scarcely a Roman youth * was to be

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* Vide Sueton de Clar. Rhet. i. who thus appeals to the words of Athenæus, which unquestionably relate to the rhetoricians of Greece: ὅρμασθαι ἐπὶ τῶν άρτοι αὐτοὶ ἀξίωμαται σὺν πτήσεως τῶν Ρωμαίων δείκτις ἐπιλογουμένων τῶν θεοτόκων. Deipnosoph. i. xiii.
found, who would engage in any other avocation; and the whole body of philosophers and rhetoricians were expelled by a decree of the senate, during the consulship of Fannius Strabo, and Valerius Messala, in the year of the city 592. A general taste for Grecian literature, nevertheless, still continued to predominate; and it was considerably augmented towards the beginning of the seventh century of the Roman æra, by a comparison between the true classical taste which had been uniformly evinced by these unfortunate scholars, and the tribe of Latin sophists and declaimers, who, in consequence of their exile, sprang up, and began to usurp their place: men who were bloated with conceit, instead of being inspired by wisdom, and who substituted the mere tinsel of verbiage for the sterling gold of argument and fair induction*. With this foppery of learning, also, the Roman government soon became disgusted, and in 661, during the censorship of Crassus, the Latin declaimers shared the fate of the Greek rhetoricians, and were formally banished from Rome†. In their own language, therefore, we meet with but few successful specimens of prosaic eloquence down to this period; yet Cato the censor, Lælius, and Scipio, were orators of no inconsiderable powers, and eminently as well as deservedly esteemed in their day. In poetry, however, the republic had already a right to boast of its productions: for Andronicus, Nævius, and Ennius, had long delighted their countrymen with their dramatic as well as their epic labours; Pacuvius, and Accius, Plautus, Cæcilius, and Afranius, had improved upon the models thus

* The first of these Latin declaimers was Plotius Gallus, who erected his school when Cicero was a boy; and as all Rome flocked to hear him, Cicero was stung with disappointment, because his wiser friends prohibited him from being of the number. He thus relates the transaction in his treatise to Marcus Tullius, a treatise now lost, but the present passage from which is preserved by Suetonius, and is as follows: Equidem memoria teneo, pueris nobis, primum Latine docere ccepisse Lucium Plotium quendam: ad quem quum ficeret concursus, quod studiosissimus quisque apud eum exerceretur, dolebam mihi idem non licere. Continebar, autem, doctissimorum hominum auctoritate; qui existimabant, Graecis exercitationibus ali melius ingenia posse. De Clar. Rhet. ii.
† Aul. Gell. et Sueton. l. c.
offered them in the former department, and Terence had just carried it to its utmost point of perfection.

Public museums, libraries, and collections of valuable curiosities from Greece, Syracuse, Spain, and other parts of the world, were, at this period, also becoming frequent and fashionable. Italy was never more emptied of its elegancies and ornaments by Bonaparte, than Syracuse was by Marcellus, when stratagem and treachery at length gave him an admission into this city. In the forcible words of Livy, "he left nothing to the wretched inhabitants but their walls and houses *." Spain and Africa were in the same manner ransacked by the elder Scipio; Macedon and Lacedæmon by Flaminius; Carthage by Scipio Africanus, and Corinth by Mummius. But the most important library and museum, which at this period attracted the attention of the Romans, and excited a taste for classical study and the fine arts, were established under the patronage and superintendence of the illustrious L. Æmilius Paulus, and consisted of an immense number of volumes, statues, and paintings, which he had imported from Epirus, upon the general plunder and destruction of that unfortunate country, in consequence of its adherence to Perses of Macedon, and which had been accumulating ever since the reign of Alexander the Great. This primitive library was founded about fifty years prior to the birth of Lucretius; it was continually augmented by the accession of other books, presented by men of letters or warriors, into whose hands they occasionally fell, as a part of the public spoil; but was more indebted to Lucullus, who had studied philosophy under Antiochus the Ascalonite, than to any one else, and who, about the eighteenth year of our poet's age, added to it the whole collection of volumes he had seized from Mithridates, upon his conquest of Pontus. Yet the transplantation into the Roman capital, of the extensive and invaluable

* Nihil præter mœnia et tecta Syracusanis relictum, l. xxvi. 30. 

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libraries of Aristotle and Theophrastus, contributed perhaps, more than every other circumstance, to inflame the Roman people with a love of Grecian literature. This was effected by the fortunate conquests of Sylla, and anteceded the public present of Lucullus, who, from being a menial dependent upon, became a legate of the former, by about fifteen years, consequently during the infancy of Lucretius. These unrivalled libraries were the property of Apellicon of Teia, who had accumulated an immense collection of books of intrinsic value, at an incredible expense. Apellicon does not appear to have been by any means a scholar; but he was a man of prodigious wealth; and, as it sometimes occurs in the present day, notwithstanding his ignorance of literature, a library was his hobby-horse, and the greater part of his rental was expended in augmenting it. For this purpose, he ransacked all the public and private collections of books in Asia; he surpassed, in many instances, the offers even of the emperors Eumenes and Mithridates, for volumes that were become scarce as well as valuable; and where he had not an opportunity of purchasing, he frequently, by considerable presents, tempted the librarians to steal for him. During the first war, however, between Mithridates king of Pontus and the Roman republic, in which Sylla eventually triumphed, and acquired a high degree of personal glory, the city of Athens had unfortunately united itself with the Asiatic prince: and hence, at the conclusion of the war, was left totally at the mercy of the Roman conqueror. Sylla appears to have thrown a most wishful eye upon every thing of intrinsic value that lay within his reach:—and, having sacrilegiously invaded the groves of Academus and the Lyceum, the library of Apellicon was one of the next objects that captivated his attention. He was determined to add it to his other treasures; but force was now become unnecessary; for, at this very moment, the book-worm Apellicon died, and he met with no resistance from his relations.*

* Plut. in Sylla, Strab. l. xiii.
The Life of Lucretius.

Sylla immediately transported this invaluable acquisition to his own palace at Rome, and the eye of the public was uniformly directed to its contents. The original manuscripts of Aristotle were found to be much injured: Apellicon had purchased them of Nileus of Scepsis, during whose possession of them they had been for a long time buried under ground, to prevent their falling into the hands of Eumenes king of Pergamus, in his attack upon this city. They had, hence, become in many places mouldy and moth-eaten, and the chasms which were hereby introduced into the text, it was found difficult to fill up. But they had experienced even a greater misfortune still, by the clumsy attempts of Apellicon himself to restore these ruined passages: for the mistakes into which he had fallen had added obscurity to obscurity. Sylla pursued a better plan, and, well knowing that he was totally incompetent to the undertaking himself, employed first of all Tyrannio, a celebrated grammarian and critic from Pontus, and afterwards, the still more celebrated Andronicus Rhodius, to make a complete revision of these invaluable writings, and to supply their defects from the best collateral copies. But the literature of Greece was, nevertheless, best to be acquired in Greece itself; and the Romans, though they transplanted books, could not transplant the general taste and spirit that produced them. Athens, although considerably shorn of the glory of her original constitution, and dependant upon Rome for protection, had still to boast of her schools, her scholars, and her libraries. Every scene, every edifice, every conversation was a living lecture of taste and elegance. Here was the venerable grove, in which Plato had unfolded his sublime mysteries to enraptured multitudes: here the awful lyceum, in which Aristotle had anatomised the springs of human intellect and ac-

* Pancirol. lib. i.
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tion: here the porch of Zeno, still erect and stately as its founder: and here, the learned shades and winding walks, in which Epicurus had delineated the origin and nature of things, and inculcated tranquillity and temperance: and here too was the vast and magnificent library that Pisistratus first established, and endowed for the gratuitous use of his countrymen. Here Homer sung, and Apelles painted: here Sophocles had drawn tears of tenderness, and Demosthenes fired the soul to deeds of heroism and patriotic revenge. The monuments of every thing great or glorious, dignified or refined, virtuous or worthy, were still existing at Athens: and she had still philosophers to boast of, who were capable of elucidating the erudition that blazed forth more conspicuously in her earlier ages of independence.

To this celebrated city, therefore, this theatre of universal learning, Lucretius, with a great number of Roman youths of his own age, was sent for education. The system of philosophy determined upon for his pursuit, was that of Epicurus: and the Epicurean school, an edifice erected and endowed by this profound and indefatigable sage himself*, was, at the present period, superintended by Phaedrus and Zeno. Till this æra, however, the school of Epicurus had been gradually declining; and, unsupported by public patronage, the neat, but modest mansion which had not been sufficiently provided for by its

* The estate consisted of a convenient house and most pleasant garden, in the walks and shades of which Epicurus delivered his instructions to crowded and delighted audiences: the institution was hence denominated "The School of the Garden," as that of Plato was the Academy, that of Aristotle the Lyceum, that of Zeno the Porch, and that of Antisthenes the Cynosargum. The purchase-money paid for it was eighty minae, which, as the mina may be computed at about five pounds sterling in the present day, makes its sterling value about four hundred pounds. Epicurus entrusted it by his will, which has been preserved by Diogenes Laertius, and is a curious and valuable document, to Hermachus of Mitylene, a beloved and confidential disciple, whom he hereby nominated his successor, and expressly charged with the execution of his different bequests. He provided for its perpetuity, upon the death of Hermachus, and left it enriched with an extensive library, and endowed with a moderate revenue from another estate he possessed at Mitylene: the house upon which he gave also to Hermachus as his place of residence.
philosophic founder, against such a casualty, was falling into a state of dilapidation. But it was not suffered to remain in this humiliating situation long; for it was completely repaired, and even additionally ornamented, by the private munificence of Lucius Memmius, a Roman citizen of high rank and unswerving virtue; between whose family and that of Lucretius the most intimate friendship had subsisted for several centuries; and who were continually assisting each other, as we learn from Livy *, in obtaining elections either to the consulate, the tribuneship, or some provincial prefecture. The son of Lucius Memmius was a fellow-student with young Carus; and it is probable, that even their fathers had preceded them in the same college, and that its restoration was determined upon from the influence of local attachment and juvenile veneration.

In consequence of this well-timed and judicious patronage, the Epicurean school experienced a sudden and brilliant revival; for it is impossible to reflect on the names of the students, whom we know, from the writings of Cicero, to have been contemporary, at the period we are speaking of, without being astonished at the constellation of real learning and genius they exhibited in the aggregate: Cicero himself, and his two brothers, Lucius and Quintus, the latter of whom was a poet, and as signally distinguished in the profession of arms, as Marcus in that of eloquence; Titus Pomponius, from his critical knowledge of the Greek tongue, surnamed Atticus, but who derives this higher praise from Cornelius Nepos, that "he never deviated from the truth, nor would associate with any one who had done so;" our own poet Lucretius Carus, his family and bosom-friend Caius Memmius Gemellus, of whose talents and learning the writings of Cicero offer abundant proofs, and to whom he afterwards paid the honour of dedicating his "Nature of Things:"

* Lib. xlii, xliii.
his relation, whom Cicero, as I have already remarked, has enum-
erated among the orators of his day; Marcus Junius Brutus, Caius
Cassius, and Caius Velleius, each of whom immortalized himself by
preferring the freedom of his country to the friendship of Caesar; and
hence engaged in the patriotic conspiracy which only terminated
with their lives: these we know to have been contemporary stu-
dents; and they may fairly be adduced as a specimen of the very
flourishing state of the Epicurean school at this period.*

The friendships contracted in youth are the most durable, for they
are the most honest and disinterested; and it should be remarked to
the praise of these illustrious young men, that they never deserted
each other in future life; that the warmth of their juvenile attach-
ments increased, rather than diminished, with their years; and that in
the midst of the misfortunes to which almost every one of them was
exposed in his turn, each was sure of receiving the utmost commise-
ration and assistance from the rest. This too should be observed, in
praise of the principles they had imbibed with their studies, and of the

* Velleius Paterculus gives us the following catalogue of eminent and accomplished scholars who flou-
rished in the present age: “Vidit,” says he, “Ciceronem, Senemque Crassum, Catonem, Sulpitium,
moxque Brutum, Calidium, Calvum, Coelium, et proximum Ciceroni Casarem, eorumque velut alumnos
Corvinum, ac Pollionem Asinium, emulumque Thucydidis Sallustium, auctoresque carminum Varronem et
Lucretium, neque ullo in suscepti operis sui carmine minorem Catullum,” lib. ii. To these he might
have added Quintus Cicero, who was both a poet and a soldier; Varro Atacinus, who translated into Latin
the Argonautics of Apollonius Rhodius, and wrote an heroic poem, “de Bello Sequanico,” besides Sa-
tires, Elegies, and Epigrams, some of which appear to have been serviceable to Virgil; Rabirius, an epic
poet, a philosopher, a philologer, and a critic, esteemed the most learned man of his age, and who com-
posed not less than 490 books or treatises on different subjects, enumerated by Cicero or Aulus Gellius;
Quintus Hortensius, the celebrated orator, who was consul in 684; M. Marcellus, of equal merit and ta-
lents, who was consul in 702, and whose son, Caius Marcellus, married Octavia, sister to Augustus;
Calpurnius Piso, consul in 605; Quintus Lutatius Catulus, the poet and historian, consul, also, in 651;
and Atteius, one of the most distinguished characters of his age, who was likewise consul in 713. In the
earlier period of his life he was master to Sallust, and Asinius Pollio, to the latter of whom Virgil dedicated
his fourth eclogue, and who recommended Atteius to Maecenas. We have here, therefore, a galaxy of ta-
lents and learning, which neither the Augustan, nor any other age in the whole history of the Roman
republic, can presume to rival.
tutors who had superintended them. Of these worthy colleagues, indeed, Cicero often speaks in terms of high esteem and veneration, although shortly after his return to Rome he abjured the doctrines of Epicurus, into which he had been so sedulously initiated at Athens. Both Zeno and Phædrus he applauds, for their indefatigable attention to the duties of their office*; but, of the amiable disposition of the latter, he bears the most ample testimony, in more than one of his epistles. “We, formerly,” says he, in a letter to Caius Memmius, “when we were boys, knew him as a profound philosopher; but we still recollect him as a most kind and worthy man, ever solicitous about our improvement†.”

Cicero, I have said, upon his return to Rome, abjured the philosophic doctrines of Epicurus, which he had so warmly embraced in his youth: the sublimity of Plato’s mysteries offered a higher gratification, and seduced him from his first faith. But, in a subsequent visit to Athens, for the benefit of his health, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, he tells us, that both himself and Pomponius Atticus, who accompanied him, were frequent attendants upon their old tutors‡. Except Cicero, however, it does not appear, that any of the fellow-students of Lucretius were enticed, or at least altogether enticed, from the philosophic principles of their juvenile days. With Atticus, and his own brothers, the Roman orator often rallies in his epistles, and with the most elegant and good-humoured wit, for their inflexible adherence to their earlier opinions, notwithstanding his attempts to convert them to his new creed. Cassius, Atticus, Memmius, and

* De Fin. Bon. et Mal. lib. i. p. 1086. Gronov. † Epist. lib. xiii. ‡ Lib. i. de Fin. In a still later period of his life, Cicero seems once more to have fluctuated, though he never altogether deserted the principles of the academy: when his son, however, was old enough to be sent to Athens, he committed him to the care of Cratippus, a teacher of the Peripatetic philosophy.
Lucretius, it is well known, maintained, through the whole of their lives, the entire system they had imbibed at Athens: and, when Brutus was alarmed by the appearance of a ghost, while sitting alone in his tent at midnight, and revolving in his own mind the meditated attack upon Anthony and Octavius, Cassius quickly dispelled his apprehensions, by recalling to him the opinion of Epicurus, upon phantoms of this description; which, like the images that appear to us in our dreams, he assured him were nothing more than mere films, or effluences ejected from surrounding objects, and only presented to the mind in a state of extreme quietude and abstraction*.

It is not to be supposed, that a body of youths, thus richly endowed by nature, and instructed by education, would remain deaf to the voice of ambition, and evince no desire of sharing in those political honours and emoluments, which the situation of the commonwealth afforded them, at this period, so fair a chance of attaining. For the most part, they plunged deeply into the stream; many of them indeed far beyond their depth,—yet to all it proved a boisterous current, and they were frequently in danger of being overwhelmed. Ambition and self-interest appear, on particular occasions, to have seduced several of them from the path of political rectitude and integrity; but, upon the whole, they may be uniformly regarded as the brightest ornaments of their country, and the firmest pillars of her republican constitution. They were a band not easily to be broken; and the instances are but few, in which they separated from each other, and appeared in opposite parties. Memmius was, on more

* Plut. in Brut. See this doctrine elucidated by Lucretius, in b. iv. 33—41 of the ensuing poem. Brutus is stated, by some authors, to have imbibed the entire system of Stoicism; and there can be no doubt that he did so, with respect to its ethical doctrines. But on points of physics and metaphysics, the readiness with which he yielded to these arguments of Cassius, proves obviously, that he was not far from being still an Epicurean at his heart.
occasions than one, indebted to Cicero, Cicero to Atticus, Brutus to Cassius, and Cassius to Velleius.

Into these perversities of political life, however, Lucretius never entered. The high road to the first dignities of the state was open to himself, as well as to his friends; and from the illustrious antiquity of his family, his own mental endowments, and the support of his fellow-students, had ambition been his ruling passion, he could have gratified it to satiety. In this case, from the glowing patriotism, and inextinguishable love of liberty, which are so conspicuous in his poem, and which it was not in the power of the deepest retirement to eradicate, there can be no doubt, that he would have united with Brutus in the conspiracy against Cæsar: and it would have been highly gratifying to the virtuous heart, to have beheld, at a distance of more than four hundred years, the immediate descendants of the two families, who had stimulated the people to throw off the tyranny of the Tarquins, once more at the head of a plot concerted to rescue their country from the chains of a tyrant possessed of infinitely more artifice and address. But the life of Lucretius did not extend to this period, nor did his bosom pant for the possession of public honours and renown. He saw, in the history of his own family, abundant instances of the instability of that happiness which depends upon the caprice of the multitude; and how fatal to the preservation of virtue and serenity of mind, are those temptations, to which the candidate for political fame is perpetually exposed. These are evils which he not only saw but felt, for he repeatedly adverts to them, and dwells in the most impressive manner, upon their magnitude and fatality. Temperance and tranquillity, he had been taught in every lecture at Athens, were the only foundations of an unshaken felicity—and Epicurus had more attractions in his eye than the forum or the senate.
In the neighbourhood of Rome, therefore, he fixed his peaceful abode, and devoted himself altogether to the pure pleasures of philosophy and domestic life. His two most intimate friends appear to have been Cassius and Memmius. Cassius, like himself, was a strenuous supporter of the doctrines, as well as defender of the character of Epicurus; and Cicero has expressly noticed the continuance of his attachment to the Lucretii, even after our poet's decease. One of this family, in particular, he still denominates the bosom-friend of Cassius, and proves, that they were in the habit of maintaining a close and intimate correspondence when at a distance from each other*. To Memmius our poet dedicated the work that has immortalized him; and accompanied him to Bithynia, in conjunction with Catullus, and the celebrated grammarian Curtius Nicas, upon his appointment to the government of that province†. In an early period of life, he married a lady whose name was Lucilia, but with whose family we are not acquainted, though from such name, in conjunction with several other circumstances, it is no improbable conjecture, that she was a sister of Lucius Lucilius, who joined the confederacy against Cæsar, and, by personating Brutus in his unfortunate engagement with Marc Anthony, enabled him to escape from the hands of the victorious army. The friendship which, from having commenced in their boyish days, subsisted without interruption, or even diminution, between this extraordinary society of virtuous and accomplished youths, extended in many instances to their families and collateral connexions, and laid the foundation for a variety of intermarriages. It was hence, that Quintus Cicero married Pomponia, the sister of Pomponius Atticus; and Cassius, Julia, the sister of Marcus Brutus. Lucilius was the bosom-friend of Brutus and Cassius; and Cassius the bosom-friend of Lucretius; and it is thus highly probable, that the Lucilia, who was the wife of Lucretius, was a sister of the Lucilius in question.

* Attic. vii. 24, 25.  
† Sueton.
In the retired and unmolested shades he had chosen, happy in his domestic connexions, occupied by the studies of philosophy, successfully cultivating the muses, and occasionally enlivened by the resort of his early and more ambitious friends, our poet proved how well he was entitled to the surname of Carus, or the Amiable, and composed his unrivalled poem on the Nature of Things: a poem which was read with enthusiasm by the most learned of his own, as well as of the Augustan age that immediately succeeded, and which will perpetuate his name as long as language of any kind shall live to pronounce it.

The composition of this excellent work seems to have afforded him an uninterrupted source of pleasure; for there is scarcely a book which does not contain many passages testimonial of the delight it produced. Of future fame he was not unambitious,—but it was not the fame of the warrior, whose laurels are crimsoned with blood, or of the rapacious praetor, whose palace was too generally erected, and beautified with the spoils of the province he was appointed to defend. It was the pure and unsullied fame of the poet and the philosopher; of the sage, who glows with satisfaction at the thought of having laboured night and day for the benefit of his race; of the patriot, who weeps over the vices of his country, while he is anxious to instruct the public mind, and correct the public morals. Conscious of being actuated by these honourable motives, he more than once bursts forth into the following exclamation:

---the thirst of fame
Burns all my bosom, and through ev'ry nerve
Darts the proud love of letters and the muse.
I feel th' inspiring pow'r, and roam resolv'd
Through paths Pierian never trod before.
Sweet are the springing founts with nectar new,
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Sweet the new flow’rs that bloom; but sweeter still
Those flow’rs to pluck, and weave a roseate wreath
The muses yet to mortals ne’er have deign’d.
With joy the subject I pursue—and free
The captiv’d mind from superstition’s yoke:
With joy th’ obscure illume; in liquid verse
Graceful and clear, depicting all survey’d.*

It is by no means an easy point to ascertain the period in which this poem was written. From the evidence of its introductory address, it was at least commenced, when Memmius was in his zenith of political splendour and influence, and the republic was distracted with internal broils, and foreign wars. Taking this, therefore, as a postulate to compute from, I have no hesitation in referring it to about the year of the city 695. Caius Memmius, who had been praetor in 689, and appointed to the government of Bithynia in 691, had at this time returned from his prefecture; Clodius, by his intrigues, had acquired the control of the forum; and, by the connivance of both Pompey and Caesar, had succeeded in obtaining a formal decree of banishment against Cicero: the Asiatic war against Mithridates, and his allies, was but just closed, and that with the Helvetii was in its midmost violence. Lucretius, at this period, must have been in his thirty-eighth year. It is some proof of the popular influence which was now possessed by Caius Memmius, that Caesar, notwithstanding the glory he had already attained, and was still in the act of attaining by his martial exploits, found himself compelled to drop a public accusation, he had at one time determined to bring forwards against him. The origin of this dispute we know not; but there is little doubt of its having proceeded from the warmth, with which Memmius had espoused the cause of Cicero, and it hence becomes highly creditable to his virtue: through life there was the closest attachment between them, and

* Book I. v. 984, and Book IV. v. i.
the former, a short time anterior to his decease, adopted a young and particular friend of the latter as his heir. That this was the real ground of dispute, is rendered still more probable by the fact, that on the recall of Cicero to Rome, which was chiefly brought about by the interposition of Caesar himself, the two disputants were not only reconciled, but, from that time, united in the support of each other’s interest.

The difficulties with which Lucretius had to struggle, in the composition of his poem, were great and numerous; and we cannot wonder at his frequently feeling their embarassing effects, and occasionally alluding to them in his progress. The subject he had selected, though the noblest, was the most profound, as well as the most comprehensive, that can ever engage the attention of the human mind; nor is there any title by which it could be designated so pertinently as that selected by himself, The Nature of Things. It embraces the whole scope of natural, metaphysical, and moral philosophy; and to execute it with any great degree of success, required a knowledge almost, if not altogether, universal.

The first difficulty Lucretius had to surmount, was produced by the Latin language itself. To philosophy it was a total stranger; and though rich and nervous with respect to subjects introduced into the senate, or at the forum, it displayed a dreadful poverty and imbecility in matters of metaphysical science. The only poets, indeed, of any kind, who had ever preceded him in hexameter verse, were Livius Andronicus, Ennius, and Naevius; and of these three, the second alone was worthy of any degree of notice; who, on this account, though he wrote after Andronicus *, has been justly regarded as the father of Ro-

* Horace, in speaking of Livius Andronicus, does not wish for the destruction of his poems, but is surprised that they should ever have been esteemed:

Non equidem insector, delendave carmina Livī
Effec reor, memini que plagosum mihi parvo
man poetry; and to whom Lucretius, with that native politeness and suavity of disposition, for which he was so eminently distinguished, pays a high compliment, and proves at the same time how far he was exalted above every low and invidious feeling*. But it does not appear from the testimony, either of Virgil, Ovid, or Statius, that the compositions of Ennius had ever enriched the Latin tongue. Virgil thus expresses himself, upon his merits as a writer:

He from the mire of Ennius gather'd gold †.

Nor widely different Ovid, who alludes to him under the following description:

Ennius in sense acute, but rude in art ‡.

While Statius, in the ensuing couplet, draws, perhaps, a fair comparison between Ennius and our own poet:

Here his rude muse let barbarous Ennius yield,
Here learn'd Lucretius drop his rapturous rage ||.

The subject, moreover, which Ennius had adopted for his poem, that, I mean, of the second Punic war, was not calculated to augment the language with many phrases that would have been useful to Lucretius, even if he had been more select in his terms, and more profuse of rhetorical imagery. He appears, however, to have been a man of an enlarged understanding, and deeply versed in the philosophy of the

---

Oribilium dictare ; sed emendata videri,  
Pulchraque, et exactis minimum distantia, miror.  

I hate not Livy, nor would e'er destroy  
Those lines Orbilius taught me when a boy;  
But that such lines with numbers e'er could range,  
Exact and polish'd, this I own is strange.

* Book I. 130.  † Aurum ex Ennii stercore collegit. Cul.  
‡ Ennius ingenio maximus, arte rudis. Trist.  
|| Cedet musa rudis ferocis Enni,  
Et docti furo arduus Lucreti. Silv.
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Greeks. The doctrines he had imbibed were those of Pythagoras. He was highly beloved both by Cato and Scipio Africanus, who were his pupils; and the latter of whom, in gratitude for his poem on his own exploits, erected a statue to his memory.

Lucretius, therefore, might well assert, as he does in the passage just quoted, and with the strictest degree of veracity, that in writing this poem he was exploring his way

Through paths Pierian never trod before.

He had, in consequence, to introduce doctrines and ideas into poetry, with which poetry was as yet totally unacquainted; and to bend and modify the language, in which he wrote, to a perspicuous conveyance of them. Of this difficulty he was fully sensible; and he thus openly expresses himself upon the subject, to his friend Caius Memmius:

Yet not unknown to me how hard the task
Such deep obscurities of GREECE t' unfold
In LATIN numbers; to combine new terms,
And strive with all our poverty of tongue.
But such thy virtue, and the friendship pure
My bosom bears, that arduous task I dare,
And yield the sleepless night: in hope to cull
Some happy phrase, some well selected verse,
Meet for the subject; to dispel each shade,
And bid the mystic doctrine hail the day *.

Lucretius, however, has not only occasionally introduced new and appropriate terms, but on particular occasions revived, or given a new sense to antiquated words, which ought never to have sunk into oblivion. Vocabularies, like all other things of human invention, are subject to dilapidations; and nothing, perhaps, requires a more delicate taste than to restore the falling edifice, so as to assimilate it to

* Book I. v. 153.
the fashion of the day, without destroying its genuine order of architecture; to introduce the hoary stranger into company with his juniors, and to obtain for him that attention to which, by his years, he is entitled. No poet has ever expressed himself upon this subject with more felicity than Horace, in a passage which I shall take the liberty of translating:

Stamp’d is thy taste if, dextrous, thou discern
For hackney’d terms some new unhackney’d turn.
If themes abstruse, to modern numbers strange,
Perplex thy pow’rs, assume an ampler range:
Call back to life sounds obsolete and old,
The cause demands it, and thou may’st be bold;
Or the fresh stores the Grecian fount supplies,
Bent but a little, frequent may suffice.
These fearless take: for why should Rome concede
A claim to bards, whom now we seldom read,
Cecilius, Plautus, that the classic strain
Of Virgil asks, or Varius, but in vain?
Why should myself not glean, if glean I may,
In the same fields, unlimited as they,
Where Ennius, Cato, cull’d unfading flow’rs,
Trimm’d the new growth, and made th’ exotics ours?
Yet less approv’d it must be to purloin
From foreign mints, than use a native coin.
As falls the foliage with the falling year,
Yet with the spring new foliage pants t’ appear,
So perish phrases—so a junior race
Spring into birth and fill their parents’ place.
Man dies himself, and all that man can boast:
E’en the vast bason o’er the Roman coast,
Imperial plan! that bids our navy ride
In conscious triumph, and defy the tide;
E’en the broad plain that, late, a drear morass,
Now springs productive o’er the wat’ry mass,
Bears the stern plough-share, and to cities round
Spreads its gay scene, with russet harvests crown’d;
E’en the canal, that erst our fields o’erflow’d
With useless ooze, till taught a happier road—
These all shall perish, as from man they thrive;
Nor shall the pomp, the grace of words survive.
Yet much that dies shall live, while many a term
Now most esteem’d, most durable and firm,
Shall sink forgot, if tyrant custom teach:
Whence draw we sole the rules, the rights of speech.*.

No poet, perhaps, has more completely exemplified the true taste
and solid judgment of such precepts, than Lucretius; for no poet has
been more delicately or forcibly select, whether in the adoption of his
words, or his idioms. Some degree of obscurity may, indeed, be discov-
ered occasionally, but it is in every instance chargeable upon the subject,

* In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis,
Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum; si forte necesse est
Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum,
Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis
Continget: dabitur licentia sumpta pudenter.
Et nova factaque nuper habebunt verba fidem, si
Graeco fonte cadant, parce detorta. Quid autem
Cæcilio, Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademptum
Virgilio, Varioque? ego cur acquirere pauc
Si possum, invideo; cum lingua Catonis et Enni
Sermonem patrium ditaverit, et nova rerum
Nomina protulerit? Licuit, semperque licebit
Signatum præsente notâ procedere nomen.
Ut silvae foliis pronos mutantur in annos;
Prima cadunt; ita verborum vetus interit ætas,
Et juvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque.
Debemur morti nos, nostraque; sive receptus
Terrâ Neptunus, classes Aquilonibus arcet,
Regis opus; sterilisve diu palus, aptaque remis,
Vicinas urbes alit, et grave sentit aratum:
Seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus annis,
Doctus iter melius: mortalia facta peribunt,
Nedum sermonum stet honos, et gratia vivax.
Multa renasceuntur, quæ jam cecidere; cadentque
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,
Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi.
rather than upon the poet; for I hesitate not to assert, that throughout the whole it is impossible for order to be more luminous, for language to be more perspicacious, or for the greater part of the deductions introduced to be more consequent and legitimate. There are few prose writers upon mathematical and metaphysical subjects so felicitous in the conveyance of their ideas:—and, as to most of the translators and commentators upon the Latin text, I have often been compelled to turn to the original to discover what they were endeavouring to interpret. Added to which, the occasional digressions, in which the poet has indulged himself, flow freely, and to the point; and his episodes are altogether unrivalled. I am not surprised, therefore, at the enthusiasm which Quintus Cicero, who through life adhered to the system of Epicurus, evinced for this elaborate poem. It was his travelling companion amidst his wars; and, like Alexander, with respect to the Iliad, or, as is reported, Bonaparte, with respect to the poems of Ossian—he slept with it under his pillow, and feasted on it whenever he had leisure. Nor did he estimate its merits too highly: for Marcus Cicero himself, long after he had abjured the doctrines it is designed to elucidate, accedes, in one of his letters to his brother, to his own exalted opinion of it: “I agree with you,” says he, “that this poem displays a large and luminous mind, and many masterly touches of the poetic art.” This, however, is not the only instance in which Marcus Cicero testified his high sense of Lucretius as a poet. We shall find, in the prosecution of this narrative, that we are indebted to him for its publication. And when, several years afterwards, Cytheris recited the Silenus of Virgil before a full audience, Cicero, who was present on the occasion, enraptured with its beautiful epitome of the Epicurean philosophy, burst suddenly into an extatic exclamation, that its author was “a second hope of mighty
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Rome*," esteeming Lucretius the first: as if he had said, "Behold another great genius rising up amongst us, who will prove a second Lucretius."

The opinion of Cicero was manifestly that of Virgil, as is obvious from his numerous attempts to copy or imitate him through the whole of his various poems: but the delicate compliment before us, he appears to have treasured up with peculiar pleasure, and to have waited with an eager desire to introduce the terms in which it was conveyed with a dexterous felicity of application; and we at length find, that he has reserved it for the last book of his Æneid, where it is elegantly and successfully employed in a description of the young Ascanius. But Virgil has given a still more pointed instance than the present, of his high opinion of the poetic talents of Lucretius, in the second book of his Georgics. No classical reader can be ignorant of the admirable digression on the pleasures of rural retirement, in conjunction with the study of philosophy, with which this book concludes. Such was the life, and such the pursuits of our poet;—the thought seems suddenly to have entered the mind of Virgil as he was writing—he instantly drops his general description for an individual portrait; and, imitating the very language of the character he meant to delineate, thus abruptly bursts forth in his praise:

Felix! qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjicit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.

* Magna spes altera Rome. It has been generally understood, till of late, that this exclamation of Cicero, instead of referring to Lucretius, referred to himself. For this new interpretation, I am indebted to the critical acumen of Dr. Warton; and it is at once so ingenious and plausible, and so infinitely superior to the former, that, I apprehend, it will be admitted by every scholar for the future. It equally takes away the vanity, which cannot but attach to Cicero upon the old explanation, and the incongruity necessarily resulting from confounding an eminent poet with an eminent orator. I am indebted, also, to the same able expositor for the happy idea of applying to Lucretius the verses in a subsequent passage from the second book of the Georgics.

† How blest the sage! whose soul could pierce each cause
Of changeful Nature, and her wondrous laws;
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In addition to these illustrious testimonies of the merit of Lucretius, Ovid has boldly declared, that his poem shall only perish with the destruction of the world *. Gellius † and Cornelius Nepos ‡ affirm, that he was "most excellently endowed with wisdom and eloquence, and ought to be ranked among the most elegant poets that have ever written;" while Casaubon has, without qualification, asserted, in more modern times, that "he is the best author of the Latin tongue §." And yet, notwithstanding these decisive sentiments of such very competent judges, there have been persons, who, because they were too ignorant to understand him, or too dull to be animated by the fire of his genius, have rashly taken upon them to deny him every kind of merit. To those of a false and turgid taste he has appeared too simple; to those of a superficial mind, too deep and obscure.

Perhaps no critic of modern times has more justly appreciated the style and talents of Lucretius than Mr. Hume, in the following passage: "Pope and Lucretius seem to lie in the two greatest extremes of refinement and simplicity, in which a poet can indulge himself, without being guilty of any blameable excess. All this interval may be filled with poets, who may differ from each other, but may be equally admirable, each in his peculiar style and manner. Corneille and Congreve, who carry their wit and refinement somewhat farther than Mr. Pope, (if poets of so different a kind can be compared together,) and Sophocles and Terence, who are more simple than Lucretius, seem

Could trample Fear beneath his foot, and brave
Fate, and stern Death, and Hell's resounding wave.

The verses in Lucretius, of which these are a manifest imitation, occur in Book I. v. 69, and are there applied to Epicurus.

*Carmena sublimis tune sunt peritura Lucretii,
Exitio terras cum dabit una dies.

† Poetam ingenio et facundia praeclarentem.
‡ Inter elegantissimos poetas.
§ Lucretius Latinitatis author optimus. Not. in Johan. c. 5.
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to have gone out of that medium in which the most perfect productions are found, and to be guilty of some excess in these opposite characters. Of all the great poets, Virgil and Racine, in my opinion, lie nearest the centre, and are the farthest removed from both the extremities *.

To this honourable testimony of Mr. Hume, the reader must excuse my recurring to the equally advantageous opinion of Dr. Warton; than whom no scholar was ever better acquainted with Lucretius, and no critic more competent to decide upon his merits. "I am next," says he, "to speak of Lucretius, whose merit, as a poet, has never yet been sufficiently displayed, and who seems to have had more fire, spirit, and energy, more of the vivida vis animi, than any of the Roman poets, not excepting Virgil himself. Whoever imagines, with Tully †, that Lucretius had not a great genius, is desired to cast his eye on two pictures he has given us at the beginning of his poem: the first of Venus with her lover Mars, beautiful to the last degree ‡, and more glowing than any picture painted by Titian; the second §, of that terrible and gigantic figure, the demon of superstition, worthy the energetic pencil of Michael Angelo. Neither do I think, that the description that immediately follows, of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, was excelled by the famous picture of Timanthes on the same subject, of which Pliny speaks so highly, in the thirty-fifth book of his Natural History: especially the minute and moving circumstance of her perceiving the grief of her father Agamemnon, and of the priest’s concealing his sacrificing knife, and of the spectators bursting into tears, and her falling on her knees. Few passages, even in Virgil himself,

* Essays, Vol. i. p. 209. † This was not, in reality, as I have just pointed out, the opinion of Tully, but quite the contrary. Dr. Warton refers to the common, but erroneous reading, and a reading which is now, I believe, universally relinquished for that I have given in p. xlv.
‡ Lib. i. 33 § Lib. i. 63.
are so highly finished, contain such lively descriptions, or are so harmonious in their versification, as where our poet speaks of the fruitfulness occasioned throughout all nature, by vernal flowers*; of the ravages committed by tempestuous winds; of the difficulty of his undertaking, where, after mentioning the great obscurity of his subject, he breaks out into that enthusiastic rapture†:

Obscure the subject: but the thirst of fame
Burns all my bosom; and through ev'ry nerve
Darts the proud love of letters, and the muse.
I feel th' inspiring power; and roam resolv'd
Through paths PIERIAN never trod before.
Sweet are the springing founts with nectar new;
Sweet the new flowers that bloom: but sweeter still
Those flowers to pluck, and weave a roseat wreath,
The muses yet to mortals ne'er have deign'd.

"The second book opens with a sublime description of a true philosopher, standing on the top of the temple of wisdom, and looking down with pity and contempt on the busy hum of men. This is followed by a forcible exhortation to temperance of each kind, and by that account of the pleasures of a country life‡, which Virgil has exactly copied at the end of his second book of the Georgics. The fears and the cares that infest human life are afterwards personified in the following manner §:

But if all this be idle, if the cares,
The terrors still that haunt, and harass man,
Dread not the din of arms,—o'er kings and chiefs,
Press unabash'd, unaw'd by glittering pomp,
The purple robe unheeding—

"These images are surely far superior to those admired ones of Horace:

* Lib. i. 251. † Ver. 921. Dr. Warton quotes the original: I have exchanged it for the ensuing version, for the benefit of the English reader. ‡ Lib. ii. 24. § Lib. ii. 46, 50.
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—Nec Curas laqueata circum
Tecta volantes—
Scandit aeratas vitiosa naves
Cura.

"I know not how to resist the temptation of giving the reader the landscape of a distant mountain, with the flocks feeding on the side of it*; and I could wish to have set down the description that immediately follows, of a field of battle†, or the subsequent one of a cow’s lamenting her calf that was sacrificed‡.—

"In the beginning of the third book, which opens with the praises of Epicurus, is a passage, that of itself, without alleging other instances, is sufficient to shew the strength and sublimity of the author’s imagination.§

"This image always put me mind of that exalted one in Milton, which is so strongly conceived:

On heavenly ground they stood, and from the shore
They view’d the vast immeasurable abyss,
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turn’d by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains to assault
Heav’n’s height, and with the centre mix the pole.

"Our poet adds, in lines as finished and as smooth as Virgil’s, that he then saw the happy and undisturbed state of the gods.

"On a perusal of this passage, can one forbear crying out¶ with the author?

* Lib. ii. 317. This, and all the ensuing passages referred to, are quoted at large, in Dr. Warton’s Dissertation. The reference alone is here given, for the sake of brevity: the reader may easily turn to them at his option. † Lib. ii. 323. ‡ Lib. ii. 355. § Lib. iii. 14. ¶ Par. Lost, vii. 210. ¶ Lib. iii. 228.
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---On these vast themes---
As deep I ponder, a sublime delight,
A sacred horror sways me—Nature thus
By thy keen skill through all her depths unveil’d.

"The description of a person in a deep lethargy *; of the effects of drunkenness †; of the falling-sickness ‡; and the noble prosopopeia||, where Nature is introduced, chiding her ungrateful sons, for their folly and discontent, are equal to any thing in the Roman poesy: as is likewise the conclusion of this book, where the poet allegorizes all the punishments of hell §.

"In the fourth book, our author has painted the evils and inconveniences attending the passion of love, in the liveliest terms. No poet seems to have felt more strongly than Lucretius.—

"I know not what apology to make to the reader for such a number of quotations; but I have always thought, that general criticism, without producing particular passages, was both useless and unentertaining. Besides, I look upon the giving him these descriptions, to be like leading him through a gallery, adorned with the most exquisite paintings. I am sure there is no piece by the hand of Guido or the Carracci, that exceeds the following group of allegorical personages ¶:

Spring comes and Venus, and, with foot advanc’d,
The light-wing’d Zephyr, harbinger belov’d;
Maternal Flora strewing, ere she treads,
O’er ev’ry hoof flowers of choicest hue,
And the glad ether loading with perfumes.
Then Heat succeeds, the parch’d Etesian breeze,
And dust-discour’d Ceres; Autumn, then,
Follows, and tipsy Bacchus, arm in arm,
And Storms, and Tempests; Eurus roars amain,

* Lib. iii. 465. † Lib. iii. 475. ‡ Lib. iii. 486. || Lib. iii. 944. § Lib. iii. 991.
¶ Lib. v. 735.
And the red South brews thunders: till, at length,
Cold shuts the scene, and Winter's train prevails,
Snows, hoary sleet, and frost, with chattering teeth.

"The fifth book concludes with a description of the uncivilized state* of man, together with the origin and progress of government, arts, and sciences. The poetical beauties it contains are so many, and so various, that, intending to publish a translation of this part of Lucretius, with critical observations, I wave all farther mention of it at present†.

"The sixth book is the least obscure and abstruse of any, being wholly taken up with describing the appearances of nature, and accounting for some seeming prodigies. The plague, with which the whole poem concludes, being more known, and perhaps more read than any other part of it, I shall not point out any particular passages."

The poverty of the Latin language was not the only evil Lucretius had to struggle with. The foreign and domestic contests in which the republic was involved, rendered the times unfavourable to literary publications of every kind;—and the philosophy he was about to disseminate, struck strongly at the root of every popular prejudice, and even of the established religion itself. The former, however, was an evil of lighter consideration; for the man who writes for immortality, and feels a triumphant pre-sentiment that his works will for ever survive him, can readily forego the applause of the fleeting hour in which he personally exists: he looks forward to future ages, and expects from posterity that garland of unfading flowers which his misjudging co-evals refuse to his labours on their first appearance. The latter, however, was an evil of more considerable moment; for, notwithstanding

* Lib. v. 736. † Why this intention was not complied with, I know not. Every true lover of poetic excellence must regret the cause, be it what it may: but none more than the present translator.
the consciousness a man may have of the rectitude of his own intention, and the truth of his own tenets, nothing is so difficult as to eradicate ancient and national prejudices, and, more especially, prejudices that relate to an established religion which necessarily creates many of the first offices of the government that establishes it. This was precisely the situation of Lucretius, when he first ventured upon his poem. The popular religion was the grossest and most iniquitous that can be conceived; and every unbiassed mind must agree with him that it would have been better for the people to have had no religion whatever, than to have been in the belief and profession of one that subserved almost every species of vice, and could be accommodated to the purposes of every party, and every plot. This popular religion, moreover, as I have just observed, formed an essential part of the constitution of the republic, as well as proved a source of its most lucrative offices and employments. During the monarchy of Rome, the king himself, in this respect resembling the monarch of our own country, was the pontifex maximus, or supreme head of the church*: and when, upon the expulsion of the Tarquins, this office existed no longer, the people, at the instigation of Junius Brutus, appointed a Rex Sacrorum†, or lord of religious ceremonies, to be for ever elected from the Patrician order, and to have a supreme control over all the countless ranks of curiones, flamines, flaminiceæ, vestal virgins, augurs, celeres, salii, and whatever classifications besides were included in the sacred system of Numa. It should be noticed, however, that this economy of the church was at all times kept totally distinct from the civil department of the state; and that neither the chief pontiff himself, nor the augurs, nor any person possessed of any religious office whatever, was suffered to interfere in the concerns of the latter; but that each was compelled to devote himself solely to the care of the public worship, and his own peculiar function‡.

* Plut. in Num. † Dion. Hal. l. v. Antiq. Liv. l. vii. ‡ Ibid.
THE LIFE OF LUCRETIUS.

Yet, notwithstanding this wise and salutary restriction, it is impossible to conceive, that any man could, without personal danger, encounter the animosity of so numerous and powerful a body as those religious orders must have formed, by the propagation of doctrines, avowedly subversive of their entire constitution. The most violent demagogue never dared attempt it: and consuls, tribunes, prætors, and quaestors, found it equally for their interest, whatever may have been the infidelity of their hearts, to reverence the established system. Lucretius, however, like an honest man, and one who could not look, without contempt, upon the absurd superstitions of his country, hazarded the danger, and was determined to employ, both the force of argument, and the charms of poetic imagery, to convince the republic of its errors. He tells his countrymen, that they need never be afraid of sound and genuine philosophy: that philosophy can by no means introduce vice and immorality into the world; but that their own absurd and abominable superstitions might do, and often had done so. And, in proof of this latter assertion, he adverts to, and relates, in a masterly manner, the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, in consequence of the demand of such an oblation, by the pretended goddess Diana *. He informs them, that they need not be afraid of forsaking the altars of their gods, from any idea that these imaginary beings could punish them for apostacy; for that Epicurus himself, the most undaunted of all the philosophers, and upon whom, had they possessed any power whatever, they would doubtless have wrecked their utmost vengeance, had never sustained any detriment in consequence of his religious opinions.

No thunder him, no fell revenge pursu’d
Of heav’n incens’d, or deities in arms.
Urg’d, rather, by such bugbear threats, to press,
With firmer spirit, forward through the bounds
Of nature, close conceal’d; the flaming walls

* Book I. v. 69.
THE LIFE OF LUCRETIUS.

Of heaven to scale, and dart his dauntless eye,
Till the vast whole beneath him stood display'd *.

And he frequently observes that, however novel and alarming his tenets may appear, and, however unpropounded, in any popular way prior to his own attempt, nothing can be so absurd, as to reject them solely on this account; that it is the duty of every wise man to investigate the proofs to which any important doctrine appeals, and fairly to abide by the legitimate consequences of such investigation.

Cease, then, alarm'd by aught profound or strange,
Right reason to reject: weigh well the proofs
Each scheme advances; if, by truth upheld,
Embrace the doctrine; but if false, abjure †.

It is but just to observe, however, that neither Lucretius himself, nor any of his followers or admirers, were harassed by the Roman government for their attachment to the sentiments of Epicurus. Notwithstanding the prejudices of the people, and the power of the priesthood, the right of private judgment was, at this period, never interfered with. Philosophers tolerated philosophers; the religion of Numa tolerated them all; and, in the mystery of divine providence, the tremendous plague of persecution was reserved for future and more enlightened generations.

Thus pleasantly and profitably glided away the tranquil life of Lucretius. Yet it was not against the superstitions of his countrymen alone, that he directed his poetic pen; but against their ambition, against their rapacity, against their avarice, against the general strife and anxiety that prevailed for public honours, and popular applause: and the unworthy means that were incessantly employed to obtain them. The latter part of his third book is filled with the most just and beautiful reflexions upon these various deviations from morality, and all

* Book II. v. 1049.  † Book L
THE LIFE OF LUCRETIUS.

virtue: the indignity of the pursuit, and the fallacy of the enjoyment.

From "the cool, sequestered vale" of his own retirement he frequently took a pleasure in looking at the busy, bustling world, at a distance: not, as he expressly observes, that the dangers to which the distracted multitude is exposed, afford us any delight, but that it is highly gratifying to feel secure from such dangers and toils ourselves*: to mount, as it were, some firm and elevated cliff that commands the prospect, and survey the restless scene beneath:

To watch the giddy crowd that, deep below,
For ever wander in pursuit of bliss;
To mark the strife for honours, and renown,
For wit, and wealth insatiate, ceaseless urg’d,
Day after day, with labour unrestrain’d †.

The whole passage is so strikingly beautiful, that I am not surprised at its having been copied and imitated by poets in every age, and, nearly, in every nation.

O! wretched mortals! race perverse, and blind!
Through what dread dark, what perilous pursuits
Pass ye this round of being! know ye not
Of all ye toil for, Nature nothing asks
But, for the body, freedom from disease,
And sweet, unanxious quiet for the mind?—
And little claims the body to be sound:
But little serves to strew the paths we tread
With joys beyond e’en nature’s utmost wish.
What though the dome be wanting, whose proud walls
A thousand lamps irradiate, propt sublime
By frolic forms of youths in massy gold,
Flinging their splendours o’er the midnight feast?
Though gold and silver blaze not o’er the board,

* Book II. v. 3. † Book II. v. 9.
Nor music echo round the gaudy roof?
Yet listless laid the velvet grass along,
Near gliding streams, by shadowy trees o'er-arch'd,
Such pomps we need not; such still less when Spring
Leads forth her laughing train, and the warm year
Paints the green meads with roseat flowers profuse.
On down reclin'd, or wrapt in purple robe,
The thirsty fever burns with heat as fierce
As when its victim on a pallet pants *

Such was the life of wisdom, of simplicity and temperance, that was
taught and practised both by Epicurus and Lucretius; a life that, it
might have been expected, would have secured them from all misrepre-
sentation, or aspersion of character. And yet, strange to relate, or
rather, strange it would be, if we did not observe the same thing occur
every day in our own age, these very moralists have been accused of ex-
cess and gluttony; and the pure system they equally recommended and
practised, has been esteemed the high road to debauchery and the
gratification of every illicit passion. I am not surprised, indeed, that
such infamous and idle reports should be often believed in the present
day, or should, occasionally, have been accredited even among the
Christian fathers; because I know that the writings of many of the
Platonic, as well as Peripatetic philosophers, who successively governed
the physics and metaphysics of the Christian church in its earlier
ages, may be adduced in corroboration of such reports. But I am
truly surprised at the envy and wilful perversion of all fact that could
alone have engendered such reports at the first, and the readiness with
which Plutarch, Seneca, and even Cicero himself, after he had ab-
jured his primal faith, countenanced the libels by which the character
of Epicurus was unjustly defamed. Intimately acquainted with the
tranquil and temperate life of Lucretius, Cicero, at least, must have

* Book II. v. 14.
known, that both in his diet and his morality, as well as in his philosophic doctrines, he was a close and undeviating disciple of the Grecian sage. Yes, they were lovers of Pleasure—and luxurious at their meals; they both confess the charge. But what was the pleasure of which they were lovers, and the meals in which they indulged so luxuriously? Cassius himself, and in the very words of Epicurus, shall tell us, as he told Cicero in an expostulatory letter he wrote to him, after having heard that Cicero had favoured the circulation of such aspersions. The declaration of Cassius, moreover, is entitled to the utmost credit, from his having intimately studied the life and doctrines of Epicurus; and, as I have already related, been first a fellow-student with both Cicero and Lucretius, and afterwards an intimate and confidential friend. “Those,” says he, “whom we call lovers of Pleasure, are real lovers of Goodness and Justice: they are men, who practise and cultivate every virtue: for no true pleasure can exist, without a good and virtuous life*. When we assert then, that Pleasure is the chief good, the prime felicity of man, we do not mean the pleasures of the luxurious and the libidinous: the pleasures of the taste, the touch, or any of the grosser senses, as the ignorant, or those who willfully mistake our opinions, maliciously assert: but what constitutes pleasure with us is the possession of a body exempt from pain, and a mind devoid of perturbation. It is not the company of the lascivious, nor the luxurious tables of the wealthy, nor an indulgence in any sensual delights, that can make life happy; but it is a sound and unerring

* Οἱ πλούσιοι νομίζουσιν ἐστὶν καὶ τιμᾶσις τὸν καλότερον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀκρίβειάν καὶ τὴν καλύτερην γνώσιν, &c. Malbranche asserted the very same proposition, and was misunderstood in the same manner. “Tout plaisir,” said he, “est un bien, et rend actuellement heureux celui qui le goutte.” Nouveau Systeme de la Nature et de la Grace. This declaration was conceived to be impious and immoral; and it was soon vehemently attacked, in a publication entitled, “Réflexions Philosophiques, et Théologiques sur le nouveau Systeme,” &c. It was necessary, therefore, to explain the meaning of Malbranche; and we hence find it developed, in almost the words of Cassius, in a periodical publication of much repute in his own day. “Tout plaisir est un bien: mais qui est ce que c’est le plaisir?—c’est la vertu, c'est la grace, c’est l’amour de Dieu, ou plutot, c’est Dieu seul qui est notre beatitude.” Nouvelles de la République des Lettres. Mois de Decembre, 1685.
judgment, that investigates and develops causes, that informs us what ought reasonably to be desired, and what to be avoided, and which banishes those opinions that disturb the soul with perpetual anxiety and tumult."

With respect to Plutarch and Cicero, it must be confest, however, that they not only knew that the popular prejudice against Epicurus was without foundation, but occasionally acknowledged it to be so *

Let him, then, who accuses Epicurus of illicit pleasures, examine the delights in which he indulged; let him who defames him as a glutton, produce his dishes. Let him enter into his garden, let him sit down at the sumptuous table it exhibits, and when convinced by the banquet itself, let him rise up and pronounce his condemnation †. The epistles which Epicurus occasionally addressed to his friends, and which were afterwards collected into one volume, contained a statement of his daily regimen. These unfortunately are now no longer‡

* Thus, Plutarch, after asserting as follows, *Amicis carere, actioni privari; Drunnum nullum putare, voluptati indulgere, res omnes negligere, ista sunt que homines omnes, ipsis exceptis, huic sectae attribuant:* immediately subjoins, *αδικας φυτα τις άλλα τω δεξιω, ου τ' αληθων σκοπουμαι.* "Every one knows that this opinion was never deserved by Epicurus: but we give it as an opinion, and not as a truth." Plut. lib. ii. c. 9.

In like manner, Cicero declares of the same philosopher, "Negat quemquam jucunde posse vivere, nisi idem, honeste, sapienter, justaeque vivat. Nihil gravius, nihil philosophia dignius: nisi idem hoc ipsum honeste, sapienter, justa, ad voluptatem referret. Quid melius quam fortunam exiguam intervenire sapiens? sed hoc is ne dicit, qui, cum dolorem non modo maximum malum, sed solum malum etiam dixerit, toto corpore opprimi possit doloribus acerrimis, tum cum maxime contra fortunam glorietur? quod idem melioribus etiam verbis Metrodorus, occupavi inquit, &c." Tusc. Quest. i. v.

† I am indebted, for this passage, to Creech. It is a part of his Latin, and learned address to his friend Coddrington, to whom he dedicated his edition of Lucretius. Qui libidinem Epicuro objicit, demonstrat illius furtar et delicias: qui gulam, fercula, &c.

‡ The destruction which has thus attended the works of Epicurus, compel us, in quoting from him, to have recourse to subsequent authors, who, like Diocles and Diogenes Laertius, have preserved certain parts of his writings in their own compositions. These, indeed, are but few, yet sufficiently numerous to prove to us, that Lucretius has been a most faithful expositor of his entire system. It is said, that a complete and original treatise of Epicurus upon his own philosophy has been lately discovered in the ruins of Herculaneum, and that we may soon expect a printed edition of it. This, as a curiosity, will be truly valuable, and I am sorry that I cannot avail myself of it at present. Yet, after the very ample
in existence; but Diogenes Laertius, who, in his age, had an opportunity of perusing them, and has preserved several in the course of his biography, tells us, from what he had read, that his diet was the most temperate imaginable: that he satisfied himself with the herbs of his garden intermixed with fruits, and the plainest pottage. "I am perfectly contented," said Epicurus, in one of these epistles, "with bread and water alone; but send me a piece of your Cyprian cheese, that I may indulge myself whenever I feel disposed for a luxurious feast." Such, adds Diogenes, who has preserved the anecdote, was the life of him who declared that his pursuit was pleasure *. And it is observed by Diocles, that his disciples followed the example of their preceptor: that water was their common beverage, and that they never drank more than a small cup of wine. When Demetrius, therefore, besieged the city of Athens, and the inhabitants were reduced to the utmost extremity, the scholars of Epicurus sustained the common calamity, with less inconvenience than any other citizens: the philosopher supported them at his own expence, sharing with them daily a small ration of his beans †.

"I readily," says Seneca himself, in one of his epistles, "quote the excellent maxims of Epicurus, that I may convince those, who deceive themselves as to their object, and expect to find in such maxims a screen for their vices, that, to whatever sect they attach themselves, they must live virtuously. This is the inscription over the garden-gate: "Here, stranger, mayest thou happily take up thine abode; here pleasure*. And it is observed by Diocles, that his disciples followed the example of their preceptor: that water was their common beverage, and that they never drank more than a small cup of wine. When Demetrius, therefore, besieged the city of Athens, and the inhabitants were reduced to the utmost extremity, the scholars of Epicurus sustained the common calamity, with less inconvenience than any other citizens: the philosopher supported them at his own expence, sharing with them daily a small ration of his beans †.

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* Οικοδήμης δι’ εν ΤΗΝ ΤΡΙΤΗ ΤΗΣ οπιτράμυς Φοίνικος ευελπίζοντα τὸ καὶ λιστάτα διαστήματα Κυνήγης γαϊς (Φοίνικος) οἰδίπερ έναμον πρωίσαρ εύ δι’ εώς τοίας ποικιλολήπτων—Διός τ’ αμπελών τούτων κωανάεις, έδ’ αθάνατον ορκίζομαι, και αμη διαλέγει και πεμπείσθον ποιμήδα (Φοίνικος) Κύθρονοι ευ θέαν βούλλομαι τοις τυπελλείσθαι, δυναμεί. Τεωτός τ’ ο’ τα’ άθανατον ευμετά τίτος δεν-μοστίζεται. Στησ. Λαρρ. ο. 11.

† Plut. in Vit. Demetr.
sure is the supreme good: the kind and hospitable owner of this man-
sion, will readily receive you, and set before you barley-cakes, and
large draughts of water from the spring;” adding, at the same time,
“Is not this fare delicious?” Nor was the death-bed of Epicurus at
variance with the uniform temperance and tranquillity of his life.
The disorder to which he fell a victim, was a stone in the bladder:
it had, for a long time, been occasionally attended with excruciating
pain; but for fourteen days previous to his death, the pain was unin-
terrupted. Yet he bore it with admirable composure and patience,
propounding the most important and sublime precepts to his students,
who tenderly surrounded him, and exhorting them, with his last breath,
to lead a life of sobriety and virtue.

With respect to illicit amours, they are crimes which both Epicu-
rus* and Lucretius† were incessantly declaiming against; and even
Cicero, notwithstanding all his enmity to their doctrines, acknow-
ledges, in many places, that the Epicureans were uniformly worthy
men: and that no philosophers were so little addicted to vices of any
kind ‡.

“Wisdom,” says Epicurus himself, in his epistle to Menæceus, “is
the chief blessing of philosophy, since she gives birth to all other vir-
tues, which unite in teaching us that no man can live happily who
does not live wisely, conscientiously, and justly; nor, on the other
hand, can he live wisely, conscientiously, and justly, without living
happily: for virtue is inseparable from a life of happiness, and a life
of happiness is equally inseparable from virtue. Be these, then, and
similar precepts, the subjects of thy meditation by night and by day,
both when alone, and with the friend of thy bosom; and never, whe-

* Galen in Art. Med. † See, especially, the latter part of Book IV. of the Nature of
Things. ‡ Quest. Tusc. I. iii. Epist ad Famil. passim.
ther asleep or awake, shalt thou be oppressed with anxiety, but live as a God among mankind *.

If then, it be inquired, whence such unjust accusations could have arisen against a sect, that so little deserved them, Du Rondelle, who has investigated this matter with much critical penetration, shall inform us. “To hear such a man as Epicurus,” says he, “was a pleasure, not often to be met with. For, instructed in the opinions of all the philosophers, endowed with a quick conception, possessed of great eloquence, nor ever opening his lips without dignity, in a most delightful garden, decorated with a variety of fragrant flowers that perfumed the air with their odours, he arrested the attention of every one with more than Herulcan chains; whence Laertius compares him to the Sirens; nor was it possible for an auditor to quit this delightful spot, without feeling the bonds of friendship for a host who was equally successful in his researches, and enchanting in his diction. The mode of philosophizing which he adopted, was highly approved of. Its report spread over all Athens, and was in the mouth of every one: from every quarter visitors thronged to our philosopher, and were anxious to intermix in his audience; while the professors of other systems were deserted, and themselves left alone in their schools.

“This displeased the philosophers, but more especially the Stoics: and as Diotimus, one of the latter sect, had already discovered impudence enough to defame whomsoever he chose, he was applied to, to write against Epicurus. They now burst forth, therefore, with fifty lascivious epistles, pretended to have been written by the philosopher

* Διο κανε ψιλοσοφης το τιμητηρον υπαρχη ο Φραγμη, εξ ης οι λαται ποται πεθυκασε αριστας κεδακαυτας ης ουκ εμπι ηδης ευ, ανι του φραγμης και καλαις και δικαιος ευτι φραγμης και καλαις και δικαιος απυ του ηδης. Συμπι- 
φακας γαρ ης αριστας τε ηδης και τη δε αιμης: τωνα εστιν σαμειοτατα.—Ταυτα ου κα τα τουτοι σαμειοτα μελη 
διαπαντος, εμπρας και μικρος προς σταυτης και υπετειν ευ ιπαρ διαπαραθισας, ζην δε ω τη οιροι αναθυτης. Diog. 
Laert. x. 132. 135.
himself. The tale runs that Epicurus, both in the porticos, and public walks of Athens, at one time indulges himself with Leontius, at another time with Themista: that he wears out the day in sleep, and the night in gambling, drunkenness, or public riots: that he is now guilty of some crime, and now of some impiety: but that, at all times, he is sottish, and unworthy of attention.

"To these calumnies Epicurus made no reply. He regarded them as belonging to the class of ephemeral rumours that die away of their own accord as soon as they are found incompetent to their end. The consciousness of his own innocence was sufficient for himself; and the fortitude and tranquillity he discovered in the midst of such infamous aspersions are stronger proofs of the integrity of his life than the testimony of a thousand witnesses. To despise the evil reports that are raised against us, and to confide in the just judgment of unbiassed posterity, is to be revenged upon our enemies in the most splendid manner possible. As to Diotimus, therefore, Epicurus neither hated, nor was incensed against him: but he pitied, and was sorry for him. He left him quietly, however, to that fate, which was certainly well deserved, but unexpected on his own part; for the writings of this calumniator were so full of ribaldry, and mere attempts at wit, that Aristophanes, with all his comic powers, could never have excited half so much of the public laughter against any one, as Diotimus at last excited against himself*."

Those, who wish to see a further account of these unjust and iniquitous reports, may consult Gassendi's Life of this celebrated philoso-

* Rondelli de Vit. et Mor. Epicuri, p. 15. The infamous letters which Diotimus endeavoured to circulate as the writings of Epicurus, and on which he founded his defamation, were proved, in a public court, to be forgeries of his own, and the author was punished accordingly. Laert. x. 3. Athen. xiii. 611. Nothing, indeed, can give us a higher opinion of the innocence and integrity of Epicurus than the fact that his most prying and inveterate adversaries could only attack him by forgeries and fraudulent impositions.
pher, where the whole is detailed at a still greater length; and with much critical research; with more, indeed, than Du Rondelle thinks necessary towards establishing his innocence. Brucker has also successfully engaged in the same benevolent cause; and his vindication is, in every respect, complete and satisfactory.

The virtues and morality of Epicurus were those of Lucretius, his disciple, and ardent admirer, and, for the most part, those of the whole school.

We are acquainted with the names of a variety of young Romans who were fellow-students with Cicero and Lucretius; and to several of whom I have already had occasion to advert. Of these there is scarcely one to be found, who did not prove, in future life, an honour and ornament to his country. The examples, indeed, they so uniformly afford us of private friendship and patriotic virtue, in practising the former of which Cicero himself allows them to have been unequalled in the history of mankind *, as well as of clear and cultivated understanding, are truly astonishing, if not altogether unrivalled. From what then, but the most malevolence, or the grossest and most unpardonable ignorance, can the heavy charge of gluttony, voluptuousness, and immorality have been raised against a sect, whose doctrines and discipline were the purest of their age? and who in themselves, whether regarded collectively or individually, were perpetually exhibiting the most convincing proofs of wisdom, simplicity, and virtue?

Of all the enemies of Epicurus, the Stoics were the most inveterate; and I have already observed, that neither falsehoods nor forgeries were neglected by this sect, in order to vilify his character in the opinion of the people. Nor was this to be wondered at, for the doctrines and

* De Fin. l. i. 20.
morality of Epicurus were levelled more immediately against the Stoics, than against any other philosophers. Zeno had opened his school but a short time anterior to the arrival of Epicurus at Athens. There was, in reality, but little new in what he taught; it was rather a system of eclectism, of general pillage and plunder from existing theories, than the invention of an original philosophy. Yet his dogmas were announced in new and affected terms; they were intermixed with abstruse and unintelligible paradoxes, which is too generally conceived in every age to be an unquestionable mark of wisdom and profound research; and these, by the external aid of gravity in speech, in dress and demeanour, obtained, for the inventor, a popularity so considerable, that the Academy, and almost every other school, was deserted for the Porch. The plan proposed by Epicurus, and his own natural disposition, were directly the reverse of such mummery. Affable and cheerful in himself, he saw no reason why man should become morose, in order to become wise; the paths of wisdom, in his estimation, ought to be paths of pleasantness, and virtue and happiness to walk arm in arm. In opposition, therefore, to the Porch, he opened an elegant and delightful Garden, and, instead of the grimace of external austerity, exhibited the most captivating urbanity of manners, and facility of address. He denied the absurd doctrine of fatality, the very pivot of the Stoic machinery, and boldly contended for the free agency of man. The school of Zeno had much, therefore, to dread, from such an adversary; its adherents beheld the Porch deserted in its turn for the Garden, and, with malicious invention, endeavoured to destroy the fair fame of their adversary by the base means I have already exposed.

But it was not with the philosophy of the Porch alone that the new school of the Garden interfered. The dialectics of the Academy and of the Lyceum, and especially those of the former, were daily becoming more perplexed and mazy, and the search after truth was dwindling
into a mere display of subtle and logomachic disputation. The simplicity adopted by Epicurus in the selection of terms, and his caution in the assumption of principles, were an indirect attack, as well as a severe reproof, upon this idle and growing fashion. The Academics were sensible of it from their diminished numbers, and almost empty walls: and they readily conspired, with the Stoics, in their unworthy attempt to overthrow so formidable a battery. The animosity which was thus early excited, continued to operate almost as long as Stoicism and Platonism continued to exist; and the disingenuous plan pursued by their first votaries at Athens was, as I have already observed, too generally had recourse to at Rome even by Cicero and Seneca themselves.

But the Epicureans, it may be said, were atheists: they denied the existence of a God, and of a future state; and some parts of the poem of Lucretius are expressly written to establish such denial.—Let us examine these assertions separately.

If, in the first place, it be atheism to deny the existence of those absurd and vicious deities, who were the sole objects of adoration with the multitude, the Epicureans were certainly guilty of atheism; for such they did deny. But it is so far from being proveable that they uniformly disbelieved the existence of an eternal First Cause of all things; that it is, perhaps, impossible to produce an Epicurean philosopher of any age against whom such a charge can be legitimately substantiated. The philosophers of this school, on the contrary, have, at all times, as openly avowed the existence of such a deity, and, in many instances, as strenuously contended for the truth of such an avowal, as the disciples of any system whatsoever. Such, in the seventeenth century, were Gassendi, and Cudworth, whose physics are altogether founded upon the atomic hypothesis; such was Abelard in the twelfth, Alexander, who was a contemporary with Plutarch, in the first century, and
such was Epicurus himself. Thus, in the opening of a letter addressed to a favourite disciple: "Believe, before all things, that God is an immortal and blessed being; as, indeed, common sense should teach us concerning God. Conceive nothing of him that is repugnant to blessedness and immortality, and admit every thing that is consistent with these perfections." This belief of Epicurus is, indeed, acknowledged by ancient writers in general: Cicero expressly tells us, that he was punctilious in the discharge of his religious duties; and Seneca, that he worshiped God on account of his most excellent majesty and supreme nature alone, without any idea either of future reward or punishment.

He admitted, moreover, the existence of orders of intelligences, possessed of superior powers to the human race, whom, like the angels and archangels of the Christian system, he conceived to be immortal from their nature; to have been created anterior to the formation of the world, to be endowed with far ampler faculties of enjoyment than mankind, to be formed of far purer materials, and to exist in far happier abodes. The chief difference which I have been able to discern between the immortal spirits of the Epicurean system, and of the Christian theologian, is, that while the latter are supposed to take an active part in the divine government of the world, the former are represented as having no kind of connexion with it: since it was conceived by Epicurus that such an interference is absolutely beyond their power, and would be totally subversive of their beatitude.

In the passage immediately subsequent to that I have just quoted, he purposely and obviously discriminates them from the Supreme Being, whom he speaks of in the singular number, and consequently re-
presents as One, and undivided. "There are also deities," says he, "and our knowledge of them is certain; yet not such deities as the vulgar apprehend, who cannot possibly trace the qualities they ascribe to them: hence, he is not impious who would take away the gods of the people, but he who attributes to them the opinions of the people: for it is the opinions, and not the presentiments of the people concerning these divinities, that are false."

In deep abstraction from the world, and profound meditation on the mysteries of creation and providence, the venerable founder of the Epicurean sect maintained, that some knowledge might be acquired of the glorious figures, and the happiness of these immortal essences; and that, in proportion as we acquire this knowledge, and are consequently induced to imitate the purity and tranquillity of life in which their happiness was conceived to consist, our own felicity would be increased and exalted. To such abstractions from the world Epicurus therefore habitually resigned himself, and in such kind of quietism consisted the whole of his religion. Incapable of developing the essence of the supreme Godhead, he here contemplated the most perfect proofs of his wisdom, his power and his goodness, and fortified himself in the most unqualified resignation to his will. On the advantages of this disinterested piety, and subjects connected with it, he wrote several treatises: and Lucretius, in a variety of passages of the ensuing poem, is as urgent as Epicurus could possibly have been, in

* The entire passage occurs thus: ΠΡΩΤΟΝ μὲν τῷ ΘΕΟΝ, ζωὴν αἴσθησιν καὶ μακάριον νομίζων, ὡς ἐκ ου τοῦ Θεοῦ κοινῇ ἑπιγραφῆς, μὴς μὲν τῆς μακάριοτάτης αἰσθήσεως αὐτῷ προσπάτηστε· τῶν δὲ τῶν Φυλακτῶν τῶν δυναμών τῆς μετὰ αἴσθησιν μακάριοτάτης, πηγὴ αὐτοῦ δέξατε. ΘΕΟΙ μὲν γὰρ ἐστι, ἐνεργεῖ μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν αὐτῶν ἡ γνώσις· ὡς δ' αὐτῶν ἐστὶν καταλύσον, ὥστε ἑστὶν αὐτῶν γιατὶ φυλακτῶν τῶν θεῶν καταλύσον. Αὕτη δὲ, εἰ δ' ὁ τῶν πολλῶν θεῶν αἰσθήσεως, ἀλλ' ὁ τῶν πολλῶν δέξεως, δι' αὐτῆς προσπάτηστε· ὡς γὰρ προλάβητε ἑστιν, ἀλλ' ὑποκλίσεις ἑπείδης ὁ τῶν πολλῶν ἑστιν ζωὴν αἴσθησις· Epicur. ad Menec. Vide Diog. Laert. x. 123.

† Those enumerated by Diogenes Laertius, who is supposed to have omitted one or two, are as follows: Χαριζόμενος, ὁ Περὶ Θεῶν: Cheredemus, or, On the Gods. Ἡγεσιάζει, ὁ Περὶ Οὐσίστιο: Hegesianax, or, On Piety. Περὶ Διακρισίας: On Just Dealings. Περὶ Διακρισίας καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Αρίτμων: On Justice, and other Virtues. Περὶ Δωμην καὶ Χαρίτων: On Gifts and Graces.
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recommending the same. With respect to the popular religion, he asserts:

No—it can ne'er be piety, to turn
To stocks and stones with deep-veil'd visage; light
O'er every altar incense; o'er the dust
Fall prostrate, and with outstretch'd arms invoke
Through every temple every god that reigns;
Soothe them with blood, and lavish vows on vows.
This rather thou term piety, to mark
With calm untrembling soul each scene ordain'd *.

Without this calmness of the soul, this sacred freedom from every gross and ungovernable passion, it is in vain, he asserts, in another place, to expect any benefit from these hallowed and religious seclusions, this spiritual quietism and devotion offered up, not at the shrines of the fabulous gods of the people, but in the great temple of "the immense concave of heaven," the pure abode of superior intelligences, who are well entitled to the appellation of divinities—being, themselves, the fairest resemblance of the supreme Creator. On this sublime subject, he thus expresses himself:

For O YE POWERS DIVINE! whose tranquil lives
Flow free from care, with ceaseless sun-shine blest,—
Who the vast whole could guide, midst all your ranks?
Who grasp the reins that curb th' ENTIRE OF THINGS,
Turn the broad heavens, and pour through countless worlds
Th' ethereal fire that feeds their vital throngs—
Felt every moment, felt in every place?
Who form the louring clouds, the lightning dart,
And roll the clamorous thunder, oft in twain
Rending the concave? or, full-deep retir'd,
Who point in secret the mysterious shaft
That, whilst the guilty triumphs, prostrates stern
The fairest forms of innocence and worth †?

* Book V. v. 1222. † Book II. v. 1103.
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This magnificent and tremendous Being he no where attempts to
describe: but, to prove his existence, he adverts, in a variety of
places, to those arbitrary and mysterious events which are perpetually
recurring through all nature, baffling the expectations of the most
prudent, and elevating us to the contemplation of a Divinity, supreme,
individual, and omnipotent:

So, from his awful shades, some Power unseen
O'erturns all human greatness; treads to dust
Rods, ensigns, crowns, the proudest pomps of state,
And laughs at all the mockery of man*.

The unseen, incomprehensible, or mysterious Power, is a phrase not
unfrequently applied to the Divinity in most languages, but in none,
perhaps, with so much appropriation as the Latin, in which the term
Vis, or Power, even without an adjunct, is put in apposition with
Numen, Mens Divina, or the present God, and often used synon-
ymously for these appellations. Thus the author of the Panegyric
to Constantine Augustus: "O supreme Creator! whose names are as
numerous as thou hast willed there should be languages among the
nations; whom, for thou authorisest it to be so said, it is impossible
for us to know—dwell not in thee that certain Power, and divine
Mind, which is diffused through the whole world!" The writer has
selected the very words of Lucretius, Vis quædam, but has, at the
same time, omitted his truly elegant and appropriate epithet of ab-
dita, unseen, inscrutable, or mysterious:—Vis abditæ quædam. Ci-
cero, in his Milonian oration, has a passage still more to the point:
"Nor can any one," says he, "think otherwise, unless he disbelieve
that there exists a Power or Divine Energy. But there does,
there does exist this Power; nor is it possible that a something,

* Book V. v. 1262.  † Summe Sator! cujus tot nomina sunt, quot gentium linguas esse
voluisti; quem (enim te ipse dici velis) seire non possimus: sive in te quædam Vis, Mensque divina
est, quæ toto infusus mundo, &c.
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which perceives and actuates, should be present in these bodies, even in the midst of their infirmities, and not be present in so grand, so excellent a movement of nature: unless, indeed, such a Power be to be denied for the sole reason that it is not seen, or perceived; as though we were able to behold this mind of ours by which we determine, by which we foresee, by which, at this moment, I myself act, and speak, or could plainly ascertain of what it consists, or where it resides. This, this, then, is the Power that has so often favoured this city with an incredible prosperity and happiness *.” Let not, therefore, the theism of Lucretius be suspected, because, in conjunction with his countrymen in general, he represents the great author and arbiter of all things as an unseen or inscrutable Power. Even in the present age of the world, we only know him from his attributes,—from his word and from his works, for no man hath hitherto seen God, or can see him. The sacred scriptures are full of the same representation. Thus, Moses, in the very midst of an intercourse with which he was favoured by the Almighty, inquires what is his name, that he might in form the Israelites of it †. To the same effect, Zophar, in his interview with Job:

Canst thou by searching find out God?
Canst thou completely find out the Almighty ‡?

With which, the following sublime apostrophe of Job himself is in perfect unison:

* Nec vero quia quaeam aliter arbitrari potest, nisi qui nullam VIM esse ducit, NUMENVE DIVINUM.—Est, est profecto illa VIM; neque in his corporibus, atque in hac imbecillitate nostra, inest QUIDDAM, quod vigeat et sentiat, et non inest in hoc tanto naturae tam praecario motu; nisi forte idcirco esse non putant quia non appareat, nec cernitur; proinde quasi nostram ipsam mentem, quaque in sepe increibiles huic urbi felicitates atque opes attulit. Seect. xxx. xxxi. p. 630. Edit. Gronov.

† Job, xi. 7: Canst thou by searching find out God?
‡ Job, xi. 7: Canst thou completely find out the Almighty?
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O that I knew where I might find him:
Behold! I go forwards, but he is not there;
And backwards, but I cannot perceive him:
On the left hand I feel for him, but trace him not,
He enshroudeth the right hand, and I cannot see him.

So, the devout Asaph:

In the sea is thy way,
And thy path in the deep waters,
And thy footsteps are not known.

And hence the Athenians, in future ages, erected an altar to this same inscrutable and MYSTERIOUS POWER, and inscribed it ΑΓΝΩΣΤΟ ΘΕΟ, “To the Unknown God.” St. Paul remarked the inscription in his visit to this city, and particularly alludes to it in his address to the

Job, xxiii. 3, 8, 9.

Our common version of ver. 9, of this passage, is incorrectly rendered “on the left hand where he doth work.” The verb obviously refers to the speaker, and not to the Creator; and hence the Septuagint, more accurately, ἀριστερὰ τὸν οὐτὸν ἀνακρίνει. Yet, τὸν οὐτὸν does not give the full meaning of בֵּין, or rather, בֵּין יִתְהַף, which more precisely implies ἐκεῖνον ἀνακρίνει, κρίνει; and supposes a person to be feeling for an object in total darkness, or with a bandage before his eyes. Reiske is the only commentator I have met with, who enters into the complete spirit of the passage, and he renders it, as I have myself given it above, “Ich habe ihn, oder, ich greife, nach ihm.” The Arabians still preserve the Hebrew term in the same sense: יִתְהַף. It is to this passage, and in this explanation of it, St. Paul seems to refer, Acts, xvii. 27. “That they should seek after the Lord, if haply, while feeling after him, they might find him.” Ἐαν γὰρ ἄραν ἄραν αὐτὸν καὶ ἀφηνίει.

The latter period of the verse is more emphatically rendered, “he enshroudeth the right hand,” or, “he wrappeth it up in darkness,” than “he hideth himself,” and is a happy continuation of the figure just introduced. The Hebrew term הָעַל, in its primary signification, refers to the garments by which our limbs are covered or concealed,—and hence, secondarily, implies to cloak, muffle, or enshroud. In this instance, the Spanish exposition of Luis de Leon gives us the true sense, though it fails in interpreting the former member of the verse. “Si à la izquierda, que baré? no le asíre: si à la derecha vuelvos, o le veré a él. O como el original à la letra: Izquierda en obrar suyo, y no le oteraré; en cubrir derecha, y no le veré.”

† Ps. lxvii. 19.
Athenians: "whom, therefore," says he, "ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you *." It was about a century before St. Paul's visit to Athens, that Lucretius was studying in the same seat of philosophy and superstition; and, as there can be little doubt that this altar was at that time in existence, it is no extravagant conjecture that our poet himself had repeatedly noticed it, and had its inscription in his recollection when composing the passage before us.

It is absurd, therefore, to contend, that either Epicurus or his disciples were systematic atheists, since their precepts and practice, the writings both of themselves and their antagonists, establish a contrary position. It has again been said that whatever may have been their opinion respecting a Supreme Intelligence, they never believed him to have been concerned in the creation of the universe, which they expressly declared to have sprung from the fortuitous concurrence of insensible atoms, and hence to have been the mere result of blind and brutal chance.

Old as is the date of such an assertion, and widely as it has been circulated in every age, it appears to me to wander as remotely from the truth as the defamation I have just examined. I doubt much whether, if minutely analyzed, this ever were, or ever could be, the opinion of any philosopher, or of any philosophic school in the world. Of all the atomic teachers, Democritus appears to have approached nearest to such a position: yet, even Democritus himself did not contend that all atoms were insensible, and, consequently, that there was no intelligence whatever manifested in the creation of the world. His elementary corpuscles were divided into two classes, the intelligent and the non-intelligent, the power governing, and the power governed; and he contended, that it was by the common consultation and re-

* Acts, xvii. 23.
result of the former, and the necessary submission of the latter, and not by the contingent effect of chance or fortune, that the universe sprang into existence. The absurdity of thus dividing the intelligent and creative power into parts, is too obvious to be dwelt upon; yet Democritus is not the only philosopher who is chargeable with this extravagant incongruity; for Aristotle and Plato are both guilty of the same error; since they both conceived the world, although manifestly a compound and divisible substance, to be eternal and intelligent as a whole. Far from coinciding, however, in any of these principles, Epicurus, and consequently Lucretius, opposed them with the utmost strength of their reasoning; and while they attempted to prove that matter, taken collectively, had no pretensions to sensation or consciousness, they asserted, at the same time, that it was no more capable of sense in its elementary, than in its collective state, and that every monad or primordial atom was alike intrinsically unintelligent and insensate. But this was not all: they expressly denied the existence of Chance or Fortune, either as a deity or a cause of action; and as positively asserted, that all the phenomena of the heavens, the alternation of the seasons, the eclipses of the planets, the return of day and night, are the effects of eternal and immutable laws established at the beginning, in the very origin and creation of all things. "Whom," says Epicurus, in a letter to Menæceus that has yet survived the ruthless hand of time, "do you believe to be more excellent than he who piously reveres the gods, who feels no dread of death, and rightly estimates the design of nature? Such a man does not, with the multitude, regard Chance as a God, for he knows that God can never act at random; nor as a contingent cause of events; nor does he conceive that from any such power flows the good, or the evil, that attempers the real happiness of human life.*" And in another place, "think not that the different motions

* Τικ ηξις εικα κριτων του και περι δεισ δει τεχνήν του, και τις θεωρητο διαπερήν αλεξιτον, και τε της φυσις επεξεργάζομαι τελεος.— Την δι ΤΥΧΗΝ, ουτε δεισεν, ουδεν πολυν ημαργον, ἐνοχλημένων, οδείν γαρ ατακ. —

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and revolutions of the heavens, the rising, setting, eclipses, and other
phenomena of the planets, are produced by the immediate control,
superintendence, or ministration of him who possesses all immortality
and beatitude; it is from immutable laws which they received at the
beginning, in the creation of the universe, that they inflexibly fulfil
their various circuits."  * Fortune, chance, accident, are terms, indeed,
which occur in the writings of Epicurean philosophers; but they oc-
cur also in writings the most sacred and unimpeachable; our esta-

tablished liturgy, the scriptures themselves, are not free from such
expressions. We well know, that in these latter they are to be taken
in their popular sense alone; Epicurus expressly tells us, that they
are thus only to be understood under his own system; and in com-
mon justice, as well as common sense, we ought not therefore to un-
derstand them otherwise.

But it may be said, that Epicurus contended for the eternity of
matter. He did so; yet this is a doctrine which by no means exclu-
sively attaches itself to the Epicurean school. Perhaps, if closely in-
vestigated, there is not an individual sect of ancient philosophers,
against whom the same charge cannot be substantiated. The Tuscans,
indeed, are reported to have formed an exception to this universality
of opinion; but we know so little of their cosmological tenets, and the

* In consideratione meteorum, ut tonitrui, fulguria, pluviae,
nivis, ventorum, non debemus subsistere in investigatione causarum secundarum, et naturalium, sed mente attollere ad Deum, ut qui illa potentissime sapientissimique et creat et gubernat, ut inde majestatem ejus
itemque justitiam et bonitatem cognoscamus. In Job. cap. xxxvii.
little we do know, appears to be so loose and indefinite, that we have no satisfactory datum from which to draw a conclusion. The present day itself, and even the Christian church, is not without espousers of the same doctrine; nor were the Hebrew theologians uniformly free from attachment to it. The short narrative of the creation given by Moses seems to leave the question undecided, as he evidently speaks proleptically, and intimates the existence of matter in a chaotic state anterior to the formation of the world; consistently with which, the author of the Book of Wisdom asserts, in the most express manner possible, that "the almighty hand of the Lord created the world out of unfinished matter." I ought, nevertheless, to observe that Maimonides contended that the Hebrew term נָבָא (created) as employed by Moses, in Genesis i. 1, implies, of itself, an absolute creation out of nothing; and that Origen, who followed the same opinion, objected to the above proposition contained in the Wisdom of Solomon, as issuing from a book which is not universally admitted to form a part of canonical scripture. Philo, however, as well as the greater part of the Christian fathers, are well known to have coincided in the sentiment expressed in the latter book; and Justin Martyr directly affirms it to have been the common belief of his own æra, that the Creator of the world formed it out of unfinished matter; in which respect, says he, Moses, the Platonists, and ourselves, are all agreed, "that the whole world was created, by the word of God, out of plastic matter, (as asserted by Moses,) Plato and his adherents affirm, and ourselves have been taught to believe." The grand motive for such a dogma appears to have been a supposed absurdity in conceiving that any

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* 1Tπειτελοφεροντο του τιτηρυνα, και καταστας τω καιρω το δειφως θεον. Ch. xi. 17.
† Cosmog. vol. i. p. 7. Nov. Ed.
‡ Athanasius, Theophilus of Antioch, Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen.
§ Πλατων, τα δυσμον, ποιημα εις δυσμανησιν ετετο εις αρχην θεον, και αποκαλεσει μεταφρασθαι. Apol. i. 10.
¶ Ρετα καινον θεον τω σπαργανω, και προδεσθησθαι λον πλεον και παλαιον εις τον καιρον, και Πλατων και \\n\& καινοτης δημιουργία εις ιπποτης, Jost. Hist. c. iv. p. 27.
thing could be created out of nothing. The Epicureans, and many other schools of philosophers, who borrowed it from them, perpetually appeal to this position. It originated, perhaps, with Democritus, who expressly asserted, according to Diogenes Laertius, "that nothing could spring from nothing, or could ever return to nothing." Epicurus echoed the tenet in the following terms: "Know first of all, that nothing can spring from non-entity." It was thus given by Aristotle: "To suppose what is created to have been created from nothing, is to divest it of all power; for it is a dogma of those who thus pretend to think that every thing must still possess its own nature." From the Greeks it passed to the Romans, and appears as follows, in Lucretius:

Admit this truth that nought from nothing springs,
And all is clear.

And it was thus, long afterwards, recorded by Persius:

Nought springs from nought, and can to nought return.

It is singular, that the very same reason is advanced among the Bramins, and is thus urged, in identic terms, in an Upanishad, from the Yajur Veda, in the course of an address to Bremah, or the Supreme Being: "the ignorant assert, that the universe, in the beginning, did not exist in its author, and that it was created out of nothing. O ye whose hearts are pure, how could something arise out of nothing?"

* Μηδέν εκ τού μη ουτός γεννηθαι, μακά τε μη συν φθανερωθαι. L. ix. 44.  † Οτι γεννηθαι εκ του μη ουτου. Diog. Laert. x. 38.  ‡ Το γεγομενον εκ μη ουτω γεγομενω, αδειως τερ γαρ ταυτω, ομοιως μενοιω της δοξης παντες με πτερ. Phys. l. i. 3.  § —ubi viderimus nihil posse creari

De nihilo, tum, quod sequimur, jam rectius inde
Perspiciemus. L. i. 157.

|| —gigni

De nihilo nil, in nihilum nil posse reverti. iii. 83.

Let it not be conceived, however, that I hereby enter into the justification of this tenet. In shewing the degree of its universality, I only mean to contend, that whatever be its opprobrium with respect to religion, or its inconsequence with respect to ratiocination, the Epicureans are not more guilty than the greater part of ancient, and several modern, philosophers. There are three systems which have been alternately advanced to avoid the supposed absurdity of the proposition thus universally appealed to, "that nothing can proceed from nothing," or, in other words, that the world was produced by an eternal and intelligent power from non-entity; yet they all, if I mistake not, plunge us into an absurdity ten times more deep and inextricable. The first is that contended for by all the old atomic schools, that matter is, in itself, necessarily and essentially eternal. But by such a dogma we are put into possession of two co-eternal, co-existent, and independent principles, destitute of all relative connexion, and common medium of action. The second, which has had even more espousers than the first, asserts, that the universe is an expansion of the essence of the Supreme Creator. But under this belief, the Creator himself becomes material, or in other words, matter itself becomes the Creator, a doctrine not only very generally advanced by former philosophers, but lately revived and re-accredited on the continent, although far more irrational than the atomic creed. The third hypothesis is that of the idealists; to wit, that there is no such thing as a material or external world; that the existence of man consists of nothing more than impressions and ideas, or of pure incorporeal spirit which surveys every thing in the same insubstantial manner as the visions of a dream. Germany has still some advocates for this tenet; the Kantian philosophy, or as the professor at Königsburg prefers it should be called, the Criticism of Pure Reason, has an obvious inclina-

* See note on Book I. v. 168. of the ensuing poem.
tion to it *; but its boldest advocates, at least in modern days, were our own countrymen, Berkeley and Hume.

But, after all, why is it an absurdity to suppose that something may spring from nothing, when the proposition is applied to omnipotence? I may be answered, perhaps, because it is a self-contradiction. But this is only to argue in circulo, for why is it a self-contradiction? "It is impossible," said M. Leibnitz, "for a thing to be, and not to be, at the same time." This position I admit, because the contrary would imply a self-contradiction absolute and universal, founded upon the very nature of things, and consequently impossible to be performed by Omnipotence itself. But the position that "nothing can spring from nothing," is of a very different character:—it is true when applied to man, but it does not follow that it is true when applied to God. Instead of being absolute and universal, it is relative and limited; the nature of things does not allow us to reason from it when its reference is to the latter; and hence, we have no authority to say that it is impossible to the Deity, or to maintain that an absolute creation out of nothing is an absurdity and self-contradiction. It is absurd to suppose that matter does not exist; it is absurd to suppose that it does exist eternally and independently of the Creator; it is absurd to suppose that it constitutes the Creator himself: but as it is not absurd to suppose its absolute formation out of nothing by the exercise of almighty power, and as one of these four propositions must necessarily be true, reason should induce us to embrace the last with the same promptitude with which we reject the other three.

So far, indeed, from intimating any absurdity in the idea, that matter may be created out of nothing by the interposition of an almighty

* Critique de la Raison Pure, p. 9. See also, M. Kiesweter’s Versuch einer fasslichen Darstellung der Wahrheiten der neueren Philosophie, für Uneingeweyte. Berlin, 1798.
intelligence, reason seems, on the contrary, rather to point out to us the possibility of an equal creation out of nothing of ten thousand other substances, of which each may be the medium of life and happiness to infinite orders of beings, while every one may, at the same time, be as distinct from every one, as the whole may be from matter, or as matter is from what, without knowing any thing farther of, we commonly denominate spirit. Spirit, as generally used among modern metaphysicians, is, to say the most of it, but a mere negative term, employed to express something that is not matter; but there may be ten thousand somethings, and substrata of being, and moral excellence and felicity, which are not matter, none of which, however, we can otherwise characterise. Yet why, between all, or any one of these, and matter itself, there should be such an utter opposition and discrepancy as was contended for by Des Cartes, and has since been maintained by most metaphysicians, I cannot possibly conjecture; nor conceive why it should be so universally thought necessary, as it still appears to be thought, that the essence of the eternal Creator himself must indispensably consist of the essence of some one of the orders of beings whom he has created. Why may it not be as distinct from that of an archangel, as from that of a mortal? from the whole of those various substances, which I have just supposed, and which we cannot otherwise contemplate, or characterise, than by the negative term spirit, as it is from matter which is more immediately submitted to our eyes, and constitutes the substratum of our own being and sensations?

But I return to the subject before me: and repeat it, that my intention, instead of defending the erroneous doctrine of Epicurus respecting the eternity of matter, has been merely to prove that, in erring, he only erred with the greater part of the world at large, and upon a point which it would be absurd and dogmatic to affirm is pos-
The doctrine he inculcated was perfectly coincident with the creed of almost every modern geologist, whether Plutonic or Neptunian, and which has been gradually gaining ground from the age of Des Cartes; I mean, that matter which was originally possessed of the mere qualities of extent and solidity, was endowed, by the Supreme Creator, with such additional properties of motion and gravitation, as enabled it, in process of time, after a long lapse of intervening ages, and an infinite reiteration of collisions, repulsions, and re-combinations, to produce, by the mere effect of such superadded powers alone, from a rude and undigested chaos, a vital and harmonious world.

An examination into the internal structure of the earth demonstrates, that such must have been the fact; and the Neptunian philosopher, or he who traces the origin of things from an aqueous, instead of an igneous, or Plutonic chaos, perceives, from the very lineaments of nature herself, the truth of the Mosaic narrative; he perceives, that the present arrangement and phenomena of the chaotic mass were not reduced instantaneously, but by a series of separate and creative operations; that the different fluids of vapour and water were separated in the first instance; that the water, for a considerable portion of time, must have covered the entire surface of the globe; that it at length gradually subsided, and disclosed the summits of our primary, or granitic mountains, which contain no organic remains, and, of course, must have existed anterior to all animal, or even vegetable life. He perceives, from the book of nature, that the waters were first animated with living creatures, the shells and exuviae of marine animals being traced in immense quantities, even to the present moment, on the summits of the loftiest and most inland primary mountains, whence it is certain that they existed, and in prodigious shoals, even prior to

* Werner, La Metherie, Des Saussures, Hutton, Whitehurst, Kirwan, Playfair.
the subsidence of the waters, and the disclosure of the dry land. He, without difficulty, can conceive, still pursuing the order of the sacred historian, which is in every respect analogous with that of the Epicurean system *, and he is supported in such conception by the best principles of ornithology,—that, the summits of the primary mountains being covered with the verdure of the grassy herb, as the waters progressively retreated the atmosphere was next inhabited; and that the different genera of birds—many of which have long since become extinct, and perhaps existed but for a short period from the date of the general creation, but whose skeletons are still occasionally detected on the surface, or but a little below the surface of our loftiest hills—drew their nutriment from the summits of these primary mountains, as soon as they began to be disclosed, and to be furnished with herbaceous food, being the only animals, excepting fishes, which hitherto possessed a habitation. It follows of necessity, therefore, as stated in the sacred writings, and as is expressly affirmed in the poem before us †, that terrestrial animals must have had a posterior creation, the surface of the earth now gradually assuming a more solid and extensive appearance, and accommodating them with an augmenting theatre of existence. The Mosaic account, indeed, limits this process to a period in which, if the terms be understood in their strict and literal sense, the existing phenomena of nature seem to evince they could not possibly have occurred; for it confines the entire work of creation within the compass of six days. In other parts of the scriptures, however, we have undeniable proofs, that the term day, instead of being restrained to a single revolution of the earth around its axis, is used, in a looser and more general sense, for a definite, indeed, but a much more extensive period; and we have as ample a proof from the book of nature, the existing face of the earth, that the six days or periods of creation referred to, in the Mosaic cosmology, imply epochs of much greater duration than so many diurnal revolutions, as we have, in the

* See Nature of Things, Book V. 818.
† Ibid. 822.
page of human history, that the same terms were employed with the same laxity of meaning by the prophet Daniel. Thus interpreted, scepticism is driven from her last and inmost fortress; every subterfuge is annihilated, and the word and work of the Deity are in perfect unison with each other. That the Creator might have produced the whole by a single and instantaneous effort, is not to be denied; but, as both revelation and nature concur in asserting that such was not the fact, it is no more derogatory to him, with whom a thousand years are but as one day, and one day as a thousand years, to suppose that he allotted six thousand years to the completion of his design than that he executed it in six days. And, surely, there is something far more magnificent in conceiving the world to have progressively attained form, order, and vitality, from the mere operation of powers communicated to it in a state of chaos, or unfashioned matter, than in supposing the actual and persevering exertions of the Almighty for a definite, although a shorter period of time *.

That Epicurus and his disciples disbelieved a future state, is a fact that I pretend not to deny. Whence were they to acquire a knowledge of this important doctrine? The evidences offered in its favour by nature, and the reflection of our own minds when directed to moral considerations, are, at best, but feeble and inconclusive; and if the Jews themselves, the only people at this period who were favoured with a revelation of any kind, hesitated upon this mysterious subject, and the Sadducees, a large and considerable body of them openly rejected it; if Solomon himself, renowned through every aera as the profoundest sage of his nation, believed that the wise or righteous man died even as the fool or the wicked †; that “that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea, they have all one spirit; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast, for all is vanity: all go unto one place;

* See Note on Book i. ver. 168. of the Nature of Things.  † Eccles. ii. 16.
all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again;" it surely can be no impeach-ment of the wisdom or virtue of a sect of heathen philosophers, that, after a full and critical examination of this momentous point, they could not bring themselves to accredit what was professedly denied by men who were in possession of an express revelation from heaven.

The belief of a future existence can only result from that of a resurrection of the body after its dissolution, or of the survival of the soul as a separate and independent principle. With respect to the former, although intermixed with a multitude of the grossest conceits imaginable, it became an early tenet among the Egyptians, and was strenuously contended for by the Phari-ساic Jews; it made little or no progress in either Greece or Rome at any time; and hence, when St. Paul, with inimitable eloquence, asserted this sublime doctrine at the bar of Agrippa's court, Festus accused him of being mad from excess of learning. "That the dead shall rise, and live again," observes Mr. Locke, "is beyond the discovery of reason, and is purely a matter of faith:" the knowledge of immortality is alone brought to light by the gospel; and nothing but the irrefragable proofs we possess of our Saviour's resurrection can afford us, at the present moment, any full or decisive evidence upon the subject.

Of the separate survival of the soul, we know as little from any intimations afforded by the light of nature, as we do concerning the resurrection of the body. And hence, though the former was a tenet far more widely acceded to than the latter, it appears to have been

* Eccles. iii. 19, 20. The belief of a future state among the Hebrews does not, indeed, appear to have been general even in the days of Hezekiah, whose reign commenced, at least, three centuries after that of Solomon; for, in his prayer to the Almighty for a prolongation of life, Isai. xxxviii. 8, 19, he expressly asserts, that death cannot celebrate Jehovah—that those who go down to the grave, are without hope—and that the living alone can praise him.

† Acts, xxvi. 23, 24.  
‡ Human Understand, iv. 2.
derived from no common foundation, nor possessed of any uniformity of conception. Generally speaking, moreover, the tenet itself was destroyed by the mode in which it was explained. What was the nature of the soul, in the opinion of those who contended for its incorruptibility? An emanation from the divine and universal mind*—a particle of the divine aura†; an idea‡; an æon§. How was it disposed of, upon its separation from the body? It transmigrated into some other body; it remigrated to the soul of the world||; it was resorbed by the divine universal Mind. But in either case, the soul is possessed of no separate entity, and as much ceases to exist per se, or to be what it was before, as if it perished with the body, and returned to the common mass of the material world. We cannot wonder, therefore, that, even among the Stoics and Platonists, the doctrine of a post-existence of the soul appeared to be frequently doubtful and undecided. They believed, and they disbelieved; they hoped, and they feared; and life passed away in a state of perpetual anxiety and agitation. But this was not all: perplexed, even when they admitted the doctrine, about the will of the Deity, and the mode of securing his favour after death, with their own philosophic speculations they intermixed the religion of the people. They acknowledged the existence of the popular divinities; clothed them with the attributes of the Eternal himself; and, anxious to obtain their benediction, were punctilious in attending at their temples, and united in the sacrifices that were offered. Such was the conduct of the most worthy and the most enlightened; of Socrates¶ and of Plato**; of Cicero†† and Seneca‡‡.

* Ex divina mente universa delibutos animos habemus. Cic. in Cat. Maj.
†—affigit humo divinae particulam aure. Hor. Sat. ii. 5.
|| Thus Plutarch, in allusion to the destiny of the soul, as maintained both by Pythagoras and Plato,
eis tnu yu vnoas 4 χαράκεφων προς τυραγνυς. Placit. iv. 9.
¶ Xenoph. Mem. i. i. Diog. Laert. i. ii. ** De Legib. i. viii.
†† Tacit. i. xv. ‡‡ Suet. in Ner.
Plut. in Cic.
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An incorruptible soul, however, being thus generally conceived to constitute a portion of the human frame, it became, from a very early period, necessary to inquire into the part it was destined to perform while connected with the body. And from its being admitted on all hands, by those who denied, as well as by those who contended for its incorruptibility, to be of a more volatile and attenuate nature than the body properly so called, it required no great degree of acuteness to appropriate to it, as its peculiar prerogative, the principle of thought and consciousness; or to maintain consecutively, that thought or consciousness could not result from pure elementary matter under any combination. It is commonly imagined that this latter tenet was the foundation of the former; but whoever examines the history of mankind will perceive that the idea of an immortal or incorruptible soul was very generally accredited for ages before the science of metaphysics or psychology was heard of, or even conceived; and the parent is hence transmuted into the offspring.

Such was the general belief in the age of Epicurus, and such it continued to be in the time of Lucretius; and hence it was necessary to reduce the doctrine to the crucible of minute examination and experiment, in order to ascertain its veracity. This each of them appears to have done with a precision that scarcely leaves a wish ungratified, and the result is, admitting their reasoning to be correct, that the frame of man is simple, uncompounded matter; that matter, in its gross and cruder state, composes the body, and in its more refined or gaseous, the soul or spirit,

That rears th' incipient stimulus, and first
Darts sentient motion through the quivering frame *

Has modern science added any thing to this discovery, or rests the question as handed down to us in the pages of Lucretius? The Chris-

tian scriptures, I admit, which have brought life, as well as immortality, to light, the present nature of man, as well as his future destiny, teach us, in my apprehension, most clearly and unequivocally, not only that the body will arise from the grave, but that the soul will exist antecedently to such an event in a state of separation. In this respect, therefore, the Epicurean were more estranged from the truth than their opponents, or rather the phenomena of nature, in which they implicitly confided, afforded them no direct evidence upon the subject, and tended to a contrary conclusion: but so far as relates to the constitution of the entire man; to the materiality of the soul itself, the indications of nature, and their own deductions, appear to have been equally correct, and by no means to be contradicted by revelation. To render the soul immortal, why is it necessary that it should be immaterial? Immortal is a term that does not occur in the scriptures: it has been introduced in aid of reason alone; and it has, unquestionably, engendered more perplexity than its fondest advocates ever flattered themselves it would remove. Perception, consciousness, cognition, we continue to be told, are qualities which cannot appertain to matter; there must hence be a thinking, and an immaterial principle, and man must still be a compound being.

Yet why thus degrade matter, the plastic and prolific creature of the Deity, beyond what we are authorised to do? Why may it not perceive, why not think, why not become conscious? What eternal and necessary impediment prevents? or what self-contradiction and absurdity is hereby implied? Let us examine nature, as she presents herself to us in her most simple and unorganized forms; let us trace her through her gradual and ascending stages of power and perfection.

Matter is denominated inert and brutish: as an individual monad or atom, however, and placed at an infinite distance from all other
atoms, can it alone deserve such an appellation, if it deserve it under any circumstances. Admit the existence of two or more atoms, and whatever be the distance at which they are placed from each other, they will begin to act with reciprocity; diminish the distance, and the action will be sensible; the power of gravitation will obviously exert itself; they will approximate, they will unite. In its simplest form, therefore, matter evinces the desire of reciprocal union, or, as it is commonly called, the attraction of gravitation. Increase its mass, arrange it in other modifications, and it immediately evinces other powers or attractions—and these will be perpetually, and almost infinitely, varied, in proportion as we vary its combinations. If arranged, therefore, in one mode, it discloses the power of magnetism; in another, that of electricity, or galvanism; in a third, that of chemical affinities; in a fourth, that of mineral assimilations, of which the very beautiful *flos ferri* affords us a striking example. Pursue its modifications into classes of a more complex, or rather, perhaps, of a more gaseous, or attenuate nature, and it will evince the power of vegetable, or fibrous irritability; ascend through the classes of vegetables, and you will, at length, reach the strong stimulative perfection, the palpable vitality of the mimosa pudica, or the hedysarum gyrans, the former of which shrinks from the touch with the most bashful coyness, while the latter perpetually dances beneath the jocund rays of the sun. And when we have thus attained the summit of vegetable powers and vegetable life, it will require, I think, no great stretch of the imagination to conceive, that the fibrous irritability of animals, as well as vegetables, is the mere result of a peculiar arrangement of simple and unirritable material atoms.

But let us not trust to conjecture; let us mark the progress of nature through the animal kingdom, as well as through the vegetable, and trace the first doubtful and evanescent symptoms of incipient percep-
tion and spirit. The seeds of plants possess no irritability whatever; yet nothing but an evolution or augmentation, a mere change and increased organization, are sufficient to produce this new and higher power. It is precisely the same with animals. The fecundated egg of a hen, or other bird, when first laid, is as destitute of all irritability as the acorn of an oak-tree; the mother nourishes it with heat, and the embryo chick expands in growth, and becomes susceptible of new faculties, till, at length, it bursts its inclosure, and the senseless embryo speck is transmuted into an active and perfect animal. The mother, however, after she has deposited her egg, communicates nothing but heat; for the warmth of an oven would have answered the purpose as well as that of her own body; and, in many countries, the former is preferred to the latter. The same fact occurs with respect to viviparous animals; for, whatever be the theory of generation we may adopt, the first filaments of the fetus, although formed within the body, are as destitute of sensation as the first fibres that pullulate from the seed or egg after its discharge from the parent stock: and hence the aphis, and some other animals, are possessed of a double power of propagating their young according to the season of the year; in the spring-time producing them oviparously, and viviparously in the summer. Hence then, animal sensation, and, hence, necessarily and consequently, ideas and a material soul or spirit; rude and confined indeed in its first and simplest mode of existence, but like every other production of nature, beautifully and progressively advancing from power to power, from faculty to faculty, from excellence to excellence, till it at length terminate in the perfection of the human mind.

Such appears to be the clear indication and gradual progress of nature, and such was the doctrine of Epicurus. But such was not the whole of his doctrine. He pursued the mind into her inmost recesses; he analyzed her powers, and endeavoured to develope her very tex-
ture, as distinguished from the external and grosser body. To enter minutely into this subject would occupy far too much space, and I refer the reader, therefore, to the following poem, Book III. v. 100—265, and the explanatory notes which will be found appended. Let it at present suffice to observe, that the mind was supposed to be the result of a combination of the most volatile and ethereal auras or gasses, diffused over the whole body, though traced in a more concentrate form in some organs than in others. Nor could any conception be more correct or happy: it is the very philosophy of the present day, boldly predicted and accurately ascertained. Such, from the clearest and most convincing experiments, are the sources of all nervous communication; and why may not a certain modification of such gasses constitute the mind itself, and form the very texture of that separate state of existence which the infallible page of revelation clearly indicates will be ours? Analogy, I admit, points out to us, as it did to Epicurus and his disciples, that such a texture can be no more incorruptible, than the less subtilized body itself, which is avowedly doomed to the grave; and it may moreover be questioned, whether a frame so attenuate be capable either of organization, or permanent endurance. As the suggestions of analogy, however, are erroneous with respect to the body, we can place no dependence upon them with regard to the mind, admitting it to be material in its frame. Matter is not necessarily corruptible under any form. The body, which is now mouldering in its grave, will hereafter experience a glorious resurrection; the corruptible will put on incorruption; the mortal, immortality. As then the material body is privileged to enjoy incorruptibility in a future period, so may the material mind be privileged to enjoy it from its birth. Why it should be requisite for that which seems to constitute one harmonious whole to separate, and for the mind to exist by itself in an intermediate state of being, is a mystery which equally attaches to the material and immaterial systems. But the power that is capable of giving personality and consciousness to matter in its grosser and more palpable form,
must unquestionably possess a similar power of bestowing the same
qualities on matter in its most attenuate and evanescent.

This opinion, however, I offer as a speculation to be pursued, ra-
ther than as a doctrine to be precipitately accredited*. Yet its ten-
dency is by no means idle or unimportant: since, if capable of esta-
blishment, it will, in a considerable degree, remove the objections
which attach to the common systems of materialism, elucidate the
Mosaic account of the first creation of the soul from a divine breath or
aura infused into the body, and give stability to universal tradition,
by developing the nature of that evanescent and shadowy texture, un-
der which, among all nations, the soul has ever been supposed to exist.
Opposed as the two theories of materialism (in the manner in which it is
commonly professed) and immaterialism are to each other, it is curi-
ous to observe how directly and equally they tend to one common re-
sult with respect to a point upon which they are supposed to differ
diametrically: I mean, an assimilation of the human soul to that of
the brute. The materialist, who traces the origin of sensation and
thought from a mere modification of matter, refers the perception,
cognition, and reflection of brutes, to the very same principle which
produces such endowments in man; and believing that this modifica-
tion is equally, in both instances, destroyed by death, maintains like
Solomon, that "as the one dieth, so dieth the other; so that a man
hath no pre-eminence above a beast:" and his hope of a future exist-
ence depends exclusively upon the resurrection of the human body,
as positively predicted in the Christian scriptures. The immate-
rialist, on the contrary, who conceives that mere matter is inca-
pable, under any modification, of producing the effect of sensation and
ideas, is under the necessity of supposing the existence of another and
a very different substance in a state of combination with it: a sub-

* The subject will be found farther investigated in a new theory of physiology which the author shortly
intends to submit to the public.
stance not subject to the changes and infirmities of matter, and altogether impalpable and incorruptible. But if sensation and ideas can only result from such a substance in man, they can only result from a possession of the same substance by brutes: and hence the level between the two is equally maintained by both parties, the common materialist lowering the man to the brute, and the immaterialist exalting the brute to the man. The immaterialist, however, on the approach of dissolution, finds a difficulty to which his antagonist is not subject, for he knows not, at that period, how to dispose of the brutal soul: he cannot destroy an incorruptible and immaterial substance, and yet he cannot bring himself to a belief that it is immortal. This difficulty is extreme, and no system that has hitherto been invented has been able to surmount it. By some immaterialists, and particularly by Vitrina and Grotius, it has been conceived, that as something distinct from matter must be granted to brutes to account for their powers of perception, mankind are in possession of a principle superadded to this, and which alone constitutes their immortal spirit; but such an idea, while it absurdly supposes every man to be created with two immaterial spirits instead of one, leaves us as much as ever in the dark as to the one immaterial, and, consequently, incorruptible soul or principle possessed by brutes. The insufficiency of the solution has not only been felt but acknowledged by other immaterialists, and nothing can silence the objection, but to advance boldly, and deny that brutes have a soul or percipient principle of any kind; that they have either thought, perception, or sensation; and to maintain, in consequence, that they are mere mechanical machines, acted upon by external impulsions alone. Des Cartes was sensible that this was the only alternative; he, therefore, cut the Gordian knot, and strenuously contended for such a theory: and Polignac, who intrepidly follows him, gravely devotes almost a whole book of his Anti-Lucretius to the elucidation of this doctrine; maintaining,
that the hound has no more will of his own in chasing the fox or the hare, than the wires of a harpsichord have in the excitation of tones; and that, as the latter is mechanically thrown into action by the pressure of the fingers upon the keys, so the hound is mechanically driven forwards by the pressure of the stimulating odour that exhales from the body of the fox or hare upon his nostrils*. Such are the fancies which have been invented, to explain what appears to elude all explanation whatever, and, consequently, to prove that the original theory itself is unfounded.

Yet the objections that apply to the theory of materialism, as commonly understood and professed, are still greater. By the denial of an intermediate state of being between the two periods of death and the resurrection of the body, it opposes what appears to be, not only the general tenor, but, in some instances, the direct declarations of the Christian Scriptures†: and by conceiving the entire dissolution and dispersion of the animal machine, of which all the atoms may become afterwards constituent portions of other intelligent beings, it renders a future and resumed personality almost, if not altogether, impossible.

The idea I have thrown out seems to avoid the difficulties attached to both systems. It says to the materialist, matter is not necessarily corruptible: you admit that it is not so, upon your own principle, which strenuously asserts, that the body itself will, hereafter, arise incorruptible and immutable. It says to the immaterialist, the term immaterial is the mere creature of system, at the same time that it by no means answers the purpose of its creation: it tells him that it is a term not to be found in the scriptures, which, so far from discountenancing a belief that the soul, spirit, or immortal part of man, is a system of gaseous or ethereal matter, seem rather to authorize such a conception by expressly

* Anti-Lucr. i. vi. 640.
† Matt. x. 28. Luke, xvi. 22, 23. id. xxiii. 43. Acts, vii. 59. 2 Cor. v. i. 6, 8, 9. Phil. i. 21—24. 2 Peter, iii. 18, 20. 2 Peter, i. 13, 14.
asserting that it was originally formed from an air or aura, which was breathed into the body of Adam, in consequence of which he became a living soul, and by presenting it to us under some such modification in every instance in which the dead are stated to have re-appeared.

In reality, the difference between this hypothesis and that of immaterialists, in general, is little more than merely verbal. For, there are few of them who do not conceive that the soul, in its separate state, exists under some such shadowy and evanescent form, and that, if never suffered to make its appearance in the present day, it has thus occasionally, appeared in earlier times, and for particular purposes. Yet, what can in this manner become palpable to material senses must itself be material in its texture, otherwise it could produce no impression on the external organs, and must for ever remain impalpable and imperceptible: a similar texture of existence seems, therefore, to be presupposed by both systems; and the only discrepancy between them is, that while the one denominates it material, the other, but I think less accurately, denominates it immaterial. From what source universal tradition may have derived the same idea of disembodied spirits I pretend not to ascertain; the inquiry would, nevertheless, be curious, and might be rendered important: its universality, independently of the sanction afforded to it by revealed religion, is no small presumption of its being founded on fact. My only object, in this digression, has been to conciliate discordant opinions, and to connect popular belief with philosophy.

But to return to the subject before me. I have already observed, that the Epicureans were addicted to religious abstractions, and that the great founder of the sect composed various treatises upon the duties of piety and holiness. These, according to Cicero, were possessed
of an ardour and enthusiasm which would have become a priest *; and it has hence been inquired what could be so absurd as to recommend piety, and engage in devotional exercises, if the soul be not immortal, if there be no resurrection of the body, and the Deity interfere not with moral actions lest the human will be curtailed in its liberty? This question has been proposed often; and the adversaries of Epicurus have maliciously replied to it, that he was only influenced to such a conduct by a fear of offending the civil power. It is impossible, however, to form a more false conjecture of his motives, nor can any one give credit to such reply for an instant, who is acquainted with the magnanimity he evinced throughout every stage of his life; the fortitude with which he opposed the prevailing superstitions of the people, and the simplicity of his own religious tenets. "We are accustomed," observes Gassendi, upon this very point, "to assign two causes why mankind should worship the Deity: the one is, his own excellent and supreme nature; and the other, the benefits he is continually conferring upon us by restraining us from evil, or vouchsafing to us some positive good †." It was then, by the former, and the far purer of these motives, by which Epicurus was actuated. Seneca, indeed, expressly tells us so: "He worshiped God," says he, "induced by no hope, by no reward, but on account of his most excellent Majesty, and Supreme Nature alone ‡." "And why should we not," inquires Bayle, "allow to Epicurus the idea of a worship which our most orthodox theologians recommend as the most legitimate and the most perfect? For they preach to us, from day to day, that though there should be no paradise to hope for, and no hell to dread, we should, nevertheless, be obliged to honour God, and to do whatever

* De Nat. Deor. 1. i. 41. † Duplicem solemus assignare causam, quare Deum homines colant, unam dicimus excellentem, supremamque Dei naturam; alteram beneficia, &c. lib. iii. c. 4. ‡ Deum colebat nulla spe, nullo pretio inductus; sed propter majestatem ejus eximiam, supremamque ejus naturam. De Benefic. lib. iv. cap. 19.
we think agreeable to his nature*.” But, independently of these
considerations, the devotional services of the Epicureans carried a
positive and physical benefit along with them. By occasional ab-
stractions from the world, all undue attachment to it was diminished,
if not totally eradicated; and by confirming themselves, during these
periods of retirement, in a calm and confidential resignation to the
determined series of events, they obtained a complete victory over
their passions, and gave the truest enjoyment to life.

What, then, is there so much worse, so much more impious, in the te-
nets of Lucretius and Epicurus, than in those of their contemporaries?
That we of the present day are possessed of more knowledge and illumi-
nation, upon the important doctrine of a future life, should be a source
of continual thankfulness,—and a stimulus to superior virtue. The ad-
vantages they enjoyed, however, they improved as far as they were able:
let us in this respect, at least, follow their example,—and go and do
likewise.

But to revert to the life of our poet. In the midst of his retirement,
Lucretius did not enjoy all that undisturbed tranquillity which he had
fondly painted to his imagination. He had retreated from the storms
and tumults of a public life, but he could not become indifferent to
the welfare of his country. His eyes seem to have been frequently
wandering back to those busy scenes where so many of his ancestors
had signalized themselves for wisdom and patriotic virtue: and the
disturbances which the ambition of the triumvirs had introduced into
the Senate, and the disputes between Clodius and Milo into the fo-
rum; the venality so flagrantly discovered in elections to every public

* Pourquoi ne voudrions nous pas qu’Épicure ait en l’idée d’un culte, que nos théologiens les plus
orthodoxes recommandent, comme le plus légitime, et le plus parfait. Ils nous disent tous les jours que
quand on n’aurait ni le paradis à espérer, ni l’enfer à craindre, l’on serait pourtant obligé d’honorer
Dieu, et de faire tout ce que l’on croiroit lui être agréable. Art. Epicure.
office, whether of quaestors, praetors, tribunes, or consuls; the unprincipled and traitorous conduct of Pompey, who maintained an army devoted to his own interest, at the very gates of the city; the general insurrection in Gaul, and the unsuccessful expedition against the Parthians, are said to have preyed severely upon his heart. While, at the same time, to complete his affliction, his beloved friend, Caius Memmius, who, by the advice, and with all the influence of Julius Cæsar, had just before offered himself a candidate for the consulate, but had been obliged to yield to the superior interest and artifices of Pompey, was attacked with a charge of bribery and corruption, under a law which had lately been proposed by Cato, and sanctioned, with difficulty, in the comitia, and which provided that every one, against whom such a charge could be substantiated, should be banished from the republic for life.

That Memmius was guilty upon this occasion can scarcely admit of a doubt: the whole republic was become corrupt, and Cato, whose intention in the proposition of this law was principally directed against Pompey and Cæsar, acquired equally the hatred of the rich and the poor for his interference. Neither did the law itself, in any respect, answer the purpose of its virtuous projector; for the people and the Senate, instead of being openly and individually bought up as heretofore, were now only bargained for more privately in the lump, through the medium of the existing consuls and tribunes. On the present occasion, the disturbances were unquestionably very great:—the candidates were numerous, the different factions were powerful; and the tribunes themselves, not knowing which party to embrace, procrastinated the meeting till the time of the writ was expired, and then dissolved the assembly without any determinate issue. Hence ensued an interregnum which lasted for seven months, during the whole of which period Pompey employed the full extent of his influence and address to be elected into the supreme office of dictator;
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but finding that the party of Memmius, and the other candidates for the still vacant consulate, were too powerful for this utmost gratification of his ambition, he artfully lowered his pretensions, and had interest enough to obtain the consulate for two dependents upon him, Domitius Calvinus and Valerius Messala. This point being secured, his next object was to glut his vengeance upon those who had precluded him from becoming dictator: Caius Memmius, and various others, were hence arraigned at his instigation before the comitia, upon the charge of bribery I have just adverted to; and though little doubt remains that Pompey himself was the most corrupt man in the court, Memmius was declared guilty, and sentenced to a banishment into Greece. Cicero, upon this occasion, returned the friendship he had so lately received, and pleaded with all his ability for the accused; but the most splendid talents must prove fruitless where the cause is predetermined. It was, probably, in the power of Cæsar to have turned the balance against the consuls themselves: but Cæsar never consulted any other interest than his own, and he had indubitably as powerful a motive for coinciding with Pompey at this time, as he had for opposing him in the year preceding.

The warm and sympathetic soul of Lucretius, however, was unable to sustain so unexpected a shock, and the endearing attentions of his Lucilia were lavished upon him in vain. It threw him into a fever, affected his intellects, and, in a paroxism of delirium, he destroyed himself.

* Giffan. de Gent. Memmiad.
† This is the cause generally assigned by his biographers and commentators; and as Memmius was exiled in the year of the city 701, and towards the close of that year, the date we are furnished with precisely coincides with that offered by the Chronicle of Eusebius, which states Lucretius to have been forty-four years old at the time of his death. Cicero, as I have already observed, in his letters to Atticus, vii. 24. 25, speaks of a Lucretius, a bosom friend of Cassius, who was resident at Capua, at the time when the senate fled from it, along with Pompey’s army, at the approach of Cæsar; and who repeatedly communicated to Cassius an account of the transactions that occurred. If the Lucretius here referred to were the sub-
He was, at this time, about forty-four years of age: the date of the city being probably 702, and his poem, though completed, had not
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litherto been made public. Cicero, notwithstanding the enmity he had manifested against Epicurism from the moment of his deserting this system of philosophy, out of regard to the memory of his deceased friend, undertook to become his editor, and to revise it in the few places where revision was necessary. This task, it is probable, he executed about a twelvemonth afterwards, during the winter he spent in Cilicia; the government and protection of which was, at that time, committed to his hands.

Tasso, or our own lamented Cowper, evinced regular alternations of reason and derangement; during the intervals of which malady, like these two poets also, he composed the greater part of the work that has immortalized him. That he may have been subject, during his last illness, to some alternating insanity, is by no means improbable, but not from the ridiculous cause of an amorous philtre communicated to him in a fit of jealousy, and especially the sort of philtre employed by mistake upon this occasion, which, according to St. Jerome, was aconite or monks hood. "ille sponte sua," says he, "miscuit aconitum : Lucilla decepta favore propinavist, pro amoris peculo." That monks hood will speedily and effectually poison is, I suppose, known to every one, but that it should produce the marvellous effect of a periodic madness, will not be very readily accredited by botanists or physicians. Giustinian has well observed, that the whole story reposes upon no authority, and is entitled to no belief; and he hence attributes the poet's decease, with far more probability, to the cause assigned in the text.

* There has been a long and idle contest among the critics, whether the six ensuing books of the Nature of Things be the whole of which the poem ever consisted. The question originated from a casual assertion of Varro, that a verse, not now to be found in any part of it, formed the beginning of its twenty-first book: but Varro does not mention, whether it were the twenty-first book of THE NATURE OF THINGS, or of some other poem Lucretius may be supposed to have written, and which Frachetta conceives he actually did write. Had this, however, been the fact, it is almost impossible that we should not have been made acquainted with its title, and its object, as well as possessed some other fragments besides this one solitary verse of Varro, delivered down to us, either by Priscian, Tertullian, Lactantius, Arnobius, or Donatus, who have quoted so largely from all the six books of the Nature of Things. At the same time, it is scarcely possible, upon a minute and critical examination of the Nature of Things, to conceive that any additional book could either have preceded or been superadded to those, of which the poem consists in its preserved form. It comprises a perfect whole as it exists at present; and no didactic poem I am acquainted with, either ancient or modern, has fairer pretensions to the harmonious combination of a beginning, a middle, and an end. Its object is to develop the principles of the philosophy of Epicurus. It commences, therefore, with its first rudiments; it exhibits and establishes its general doctrines; and it then applies those doctrines to the explanation of all the phenomena of nature: the most familiar, as well as the most abstruse. The two last books, indeed, may be regarded as a kind of dramatic denouement or peripetia of the whole; in which, from the principles progressively advanced, every event is accounted for, and rendered luminous. The dark curtain of nature is, as it were, undrawn: her multifarious wheels are at work before us—and the vast and entire machine is presented in all its connexions and dependencies. I cannot, therefore, but agree with Giustinian in conceiving, that either Varro
Thus perished, untimely, Titus Lucretius Carus, the immortal author of The Nature of Things, and whom Scaliger, with a felicitous brevity of character, has denominated "a divine man, and an incomparable poet." But virtue and talents have no arbitrary control over the mutable enjoyments of the present world: and not Lucretius alone, but almost every one of those illustrious Romans, whom I have enumerated as the friends of his youth, may be adduced as forcible examples of the truth of this position. There is, indeed, a similarity of fate and misfortune attendant upon the latter part of their lives, so truly astonishing, if not altogether unparalleled, that I cannot consent to close this biography without taking a brief glance at it.

Caius Memmius, who, as I have already observed, was banished, by his countrymen, into Greece, died during his exile. He retired.

herself must have written erroneously, when he alluded to a verse in the twenty-first book of Lucretius, or that some transcriber of Varro has equally erred in writing Lucretius for Lucilius, or some other poet whose labours have not descended to the present day. But the author of the Nature of Things appears to have settled the controversy in the completest manner himself, by pointing out to us, in two express passages, the first and last books of which the poem was ever designed to consist.

Thus, that the sixth book was to conclude the work, we may collect from the following verses towards the commencement of this very book itself:

\begin{equation}
Tu mihi suprema prescripta ad candida calcis
Currenti spatiarum praeest, callida Musa,
Calliope ! requies hominum, divomque voluptas:
Te duce ut insigni capiam cum laude coronam. Lib. VI. v. 91.
\end{equation}

Muse most expert, belov'd of gods and men,
Calliope! O aid me as I tread
Now the last limits of the path prescrib'd,
That the bright crown which plaudits I may claim. v. 94.

And that the doctrine of a vacuum constituted the subject of the first book, we learn from the following:

\begin{equation}
Nunc omnes repetam quam raro corpore sint res,
Commemorare, quod in primo quoque carmine claret. Lib. VI. v. 936.
\end{equation}

This thus premis'd, recal we next to mind
How rare the frame of all things, as ere while
Conspicuous prov'd we in our earliest strain.

first of all, to Athens, where he resided for some time; whence he removed to Mytelene, and, last of all, to Patre, near Corinth. Here, from the suavity of his manners, the inhabitants unanimously conferred upon him the freedom of their city. He settled, therefore, among them, and adopted, a short time before his death, a particular friend of Cicero's, of the name of Lyso, who was himself a citizen of Patre. Brutus and Cassius, in the last convulsions of Roman liberty, unable to survive the death-blow the republic had received at Philippi, followed the example which Cato had not long before given them at Utica, and fell by their own swords. The resolution of Caius Velleius, who was likewise engaged in this fearful battle, did not yet forsake him altogether. In conjunction with Lucius and Tiberius Claudius, he maintained the contest a few months longer; but upon the final triumph of Octavian at Perusia, he fled into Sicily, with a few other virtuous characters who had survived the battle of Philippi, and, in the same manner, destroyed himself. The fortune of Lucius Cicero I am unacquainted with: like Lucretius he appears to have abstained from all personal connexion with the government, and to have possessed a large share of the affection of his brother Marcus, who, in his familiar letters, is frequently speaking of him in terms of great fraternal tenderness.

The unhappy fate of Marcus and Quintus Cicero are too well known to need any detail in this place. They both fell, in consequence of the infamous convention between Lepidus, Octavian, and Antony, by which the confederates agreed to sacrifice to the private vengeance of each other the most esteemed and most virtuous of their friends. The black catalogue was completed, and the names of the two brothers forming a part of it, they, with the rest, were proscribed, and condemned to death. Quintus was barbarously beheaded, along with his son, in his own house at Rome, to which he had privily returned for pecuniary supplies. The circumstances attending his discovery and execu-
tion are deeply interesting and pathetic, but cannot be dwelt upon at present. Marcus, as is known to every one, was overtaken and slain at a little farm he possessed at Caieta; at the time he was searched for, he was concealed amidst the shades of his garden; but his retreat was pointed out by an ungrateful young man, who had formerly been a slave to Quintus Cicero, and had been emancipated at the particular request of Marcus, whose affection for him had from this time been rather that of a father than of any other relation. His head and his right hand were immediately severed from his body by a tribune whom his eloquence had not long before saved from the disgrace of a public execution.

The fates of Pomponius Atticus, and of Lucretius Vespillio, the two last of the early friends of our poet, of whom I shall give any account, were more fortunate, and they are the only persons who can lay claim to any degree of success among the whole of this virtuous and patriotic party. The names of both of them were likewise enrolled in the black catalogue of the proscribed. Yet against Vespillio, who, as I have before observed, had made literature and eloquence his chief pursuit, and had seldom or never interfered in the dangerous politics of the day, no great degree of resentment appears to have prevailed among the triumvirs: he was concealed from his pursuers by an ingenious contrivance of his wife; and after the heat of the pursuit was over, he fled at first to Sulmo, the birth-place of Ovid, and afterwards to Cnæum *, whence, upon the termination of the civil war, he returned to Rome, and persevered in his former profession of the law.

Titus Pomponius Atticus was a character of more prominence: without forfeiting his reputation for patriotism, he had hitherto possessed sagacity enough to be respected, and sought after by all the con-

* Plut. in loc.
tending factions of his country. He had been on terms of alliance with Caesar and Anthony, while the most intimate friend of Cassius and Brutus:—yet Anthony, upon the present occasion, readily resigned him, at the solicitation of his two colleagues: and hence his name was also in the list of the proscribed. On the first surmise of this villany, that unrivalled presence of mind, for which he had ever been remarkable, proved again of essential service to him. The object of Atticus, who was at this time in Rome, was, like that of the two Ciceros, to reach either Macedonia or Sicily; but he pursued a different plan to accomplish it: and the stratagem he invented succeeded according to its merit. He attired himself, without loss of time, in the habit of a Roman praetor, and disguised the slaves whom he selected to accompany him in the dress of attendant lictors. He left the city with all possible speed, travelled in the most public manner, and invented a story, to give plausibility to his journey, that he was sent by the triumvirs themselves to negotiate a peace with young Pompey. In this manner he was received in every city through which he passed with all possible marks of distinction, accommodated with horses, provisions, and every assistance he required—travelled entirely at the public expence, and arrived at Sicily in perfect safety. In this retreat he continued quiet and unmolested, till the political tempest of his country had discharged itself of its fury. He then returned to Rome, at the particular request of Augustus, and continued in possession of the esteem both of himself, and Agrippa, till his death; which, nevertheless, was not long afterwards effected by his own hands: extreme grief, in all probability, for the loss of his earlier companions and friends, having compelled him to a step which was common among the wisest and most virtuous of the heathen world; and regarded rather as an act of duty and heroism, than of criminality and disgrace.
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HAVING thus amassed together the scattered fragments that relate to the life of Lucretius, added some few memoirs of other illustrious Epicureans who were his coëval and friends, and attentively examined the doctrines they professed, I proceed to offer a brief sketch of the alternate support and opposition experienced by this celebrated school in subsequent æras.

It is once more necessary to observe, that every school of philosophy among the Greeks, whether of Ionic or Italic origin, as well as every sect whom they proudly denominated barbarian, whether Chaldean, Egyptian, Persian, or Celtic, pre-supposed the eternal existence of matter: upon the form or mode, however, of its original existence, and the process by which it acquired its present appearance and organization, they differed very materially; some maintaining, that every thing has existed from everlasting, as it appears at present; and others, that the visible world has had a beginning.

Among the Greeks, Ocellus Lucanus and Aristotle were the chief who contended for the first opinion: the former asserting, that the universe is utterly incapable of generation or corruption, of beginning or end, and that it is of itself perfect, permanent, and eternal; and the latter, asserting still more expressly, not only that the universe, as to its elementary matter and general configuration, is eternal and underrived, but that mankind, and every other species of animals, have subsisted by an uninterrupted chain of propagations from all eternity,
without origin or first production; and that the vegetable and mineral kingdoms are of equal, underived, and everlasting duration. I enter not into the more mysterious parts of the peripatetic system, the sacred triad of Form, Privation, and Matter, the Primum Mobile, the Evtele-χια, or Perfect Energy, by which the Primum Mobile itself was first put into motion, and continued in a state of uninterrupted activity; I confine my remarks to its more palpable and tangible axioms, and which admit of no disputation: of the rest, much is involved in doubt, and not a little in contradiction. In reality, the physics of Aristotle, notwithstanding the authority of his name in other respects, do not appear to have made any great impression upon the world at any time; they are the weakest part of his philosophy, and rather betray the vanity of attempting to innovate upon existing systems, than of elucidating what was not understood.

The espousers of the doctrine that the form, though not the matter, of the visible world has had a beginning, divaricate into a variety of ramifications, of which the chief are the Pythagoric, the Platonic or Academic, and the Atomic.

In the system of Pythagoras, we trace a sort of mystical triad as clearly as in that of Aristotle; and it is probable that the former set the example, and even gave the hint both to Aristotle and Plato. The Pythagorean triad was expressed by the Greek numbers, one, two, and three, or monad, duad, and trine. In reality, numbers were all in all with Pythagoras, the very cause of essence to beings*. But to drop his esoteric or concealed institutions, the material universe, upon the Samian philosophy, was itself the supreme and formative Divinity; the eternal or universal Mind, residing in, and animating the mass of matter as a whole, in the same manner that the human mind resides in,

and animates the grosser body. The mind or soul of human beings, however, as well as of all other animals, was, upon this hypothesis, capable of quitting the external frame upon its dissolution; yet it was not capable of an independent existence; it migrated from body to body, and, after various chyliads, or thousands of years, returned to its original frame, in consequence of its resurrection from the grave. Upon this theory, the soul of the world gave motion, figure, and phænomena to itself; and the earth existed, because it willed to exist, out of its own substance. It was, in the language of Anaxagoras, an ἐν ψυχήν, or animated system.

The theory of Plato was, in many points, derived from Pythagoras; for Socrates, of whom Plato was one of the most distinguished scholars, was rather a moral and political, than a physical or metaphysical philosopher; and hence his creed was either deficient upon the subject of cosmology, or too simple and irrecondite to satisfy the curiosity of his pupils. Plato, too, had his trine or triad of essences, as well as Pythagoras and Aristotle; but, like that of Aristotle, it was evidently borrowed from Pythagoras. The triad of Plato consisted of an eternal, intelligent, immaterial Deity; a logos (ὁ λογισμὸς τοῦ θεου) or Divine Reason, the eternal fountain of ideas, or the exemplars of things; and matter. The logos, or logismus, the fountain of all forms or ideas, was in every respect a parallel principle with the duad of Aristotle, both being possessed of a similar power, and equally dependent upon the Perfect Energy, or Supreme and Eternal Agent. Matter, however, was not thus dependent; for it was a principle as eternal, incorruptible, and undervived, as the immaterial Deity.

It was strangely supposed, however, to be incapable of form or quality *, and hence the necessity of conceiving the existence of a logos,

* On this account the terms incorporeal, and immaterial, are not synonymous in Platonic writings; matter itself being incorporeal, or without form or body, till associated with the divine exemplar or logos: a distinction necessary to be attended to in the study of the Academic hypothesis.
or source of all forms and ideas, which, with Plato, are nearly convertible terms; an idea, properly so called, being an intellectual form, and a form, literally so denominated, a visible idea. From the union, then, of the logos, or Divine Reason, with matter, proceeded an animated world, and sensible or corporeal existences. The kind of union supposed to subsist between the Divine Reason or exemplar, and the Deity itself, it is difficult to explain, or even to conjecture. In some part of his writings, and especially in his Timæus, Plato seems to regard the former as a being impersonated and distinct from the efficient Cause; but, in general, he speaks of it as a mere medium or instrument employed, and he was thus commonly understood by philosophers of contemporary schools. Hence Seneca, in express allusion to this doctrine, asserts, that “the exemplar is not the efficient cause of reason, but an instrument necessary to the cause*;” and hence, too, Laertius expressly regards it as nothing more than the mind or reason itself of the immaterial Deity†. Be this, however, as it may, since unshaped matter constitutes the third substance in this triad of creative powers, the trinity of Plato can bear no possible resemblance, in its first and undisguised declaration, to the trinity of the Christian church. Whatever, then, may become of the divine logos or exemplar, it is evident, that Plato conceived the existence of two eternal and independent causes of all things; the one, that by which all things are created, which is God; and the other, from which all things are created, which is matter: and, in this respect, he completely assimilated his views with the Epicurean hypothesis. He conceived, however, independently of this tenet, that unshaped matter had a soul of its own, exclusive of the animating and intelligent energy it received from the supreme Architect; and in this tenet seems to consist the chief absurdity of the Platonic hypothesis; for he hereby appears, in a great degree, to

* Epist. 65. † In Plat. l. iii. 69—73.
render the interference of all foreign control unnecessary, if not imper- 
tinent and tyrannical. The soul of man he conceived to be of a su-
uperior nature to this soul of the world, to have emanated originally from 
the Supreme Divinity, and by him to have been planted, for some cause 
not clearly ascertained, in different stars or planets; where it is 
ordained to wait, till a material body is prepared for its reception 
on earth: on the dissolution of which, the soul, if virtuous, refunds or 
remigrates to the Divinity itself; if vicious, is sentenced to a material 
Tartarus, and chastised with material punishments.

I now proceed to the consideration of the Atomic theory, which, in 
the hands of Democritus, supposed the existence of matter alone, di-
vided into an infinite multitude of primary or elementary particles, of 
which some were eternally intelligent, and others eternally senseless 
and incogitative; and hence incapable of resisting the action of the 
former, by whose control over them, and union with them, the visible 
world was produced. Under the plastic hands of Epicurus, however, 
the atomic philosophy assumed a very different, and much more ra-
tional appearance. Matter with him consisted of an infinite multiplicity 
of elementary corpuscles; of which the whole were equally unintelligent 
and senseless, and solely operated upon in the work of creation by an 
immortal Divinity *, "possessed of all immortality and beatitude," 
and through the medium of a system of "immutable laws which they 
received at the commencement of the universe †," and which will con-
tinue to act till the universe itself shall be dissolved.

In its mere physical contemplation, therefore, the theory of Epicu-
rus allows of nothing but matter and space, which are equally infinite 
and unbounded, which have equally existed from all eternity, and

* See the preceding Life of Lucretius, p. lxxiv.
† Ibid. p. lxxiv.
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from different combinations of which every individual being is created. These existences have no property in common with each other; for, whatever matter is, that space is the reverse of, and whatever space is, matter is the contrary to. The actually solid parts of all bodies, therefore, are matter; their actual pores, space, and the parts which are not altogether solid, but an intermixture of solidity and pore, are space and matter combined. Anterior to the formation of the universe, space and matter existed uncombined, or in their pure and elementary state. Space, in its elementary state, is positive and unsolid void: matter, in its elementary state, consists of inconceivably minute seeds or atoms—so small that the corpuscles of vapour, light, and heat, are compounds of them; and so solid that they cannot possibly be broken, or made smaller, by any concussion or violence whatever. The express figure of these primary atoms is various: there are round, square, pointed, jagged, as well as many other shapes. These shapes, however, are not diversified to infinity; but the atoms themselves, of each existent shape, are infinite or innumerable. Every atom is possessed of certain intrinsic powers of motion. Under the old school of Democritus, the perpetual motions exhibited were of two kinds:—a descending motion, from its own gravity; and a rebounding motion, from mutual concussion. Besides these two motions, and to explain certain phenomena which the following poem develops, and which were not accounted for under the old system, Epicurus supposed that some atoms were occasionally possessed of a third, by which, in some very small degree, they descended in an oblique or curvilinear direction, deviating from the common and right line anomalously; and hence, in this respect, resembling the oscillations of the magnetic needle.

These infinitudes of atoms, flying immemorially in such different directions, through all the immensity of space, have interchangeably tried and exhibited every possible mode of action,—sometimes repelled
from each other by concussion; and sometimes adhering to each other
from their own jagged or pointed construction, or from the casual in-
terstices which two or more connected atoms must produce, and which
may just be adapted to those of other configurations, as globular, oval,
or square. Hence the origin of compound bodies; hence the origin of
immense masses of matter; hence, eventually, the origin of the world
itself. When these primary atoms are closely compacted together, and
but little vacuity or space intervenes, they produce those kinds of sub-
stances which we denominate solid, as stones, and metals: when they
are loose and disjoined, and a large quantity of space or vacuity oc-
curs between them, they produce the phenomena of wool, water, va-
pour. In one mode of combination, they form earth; in another, air;
and in another, fire. Arranged in one way, they produce vegetation
and irritability; in another way, animal life and perception.—Man
hence arises—families are formed—society multiplies, and governments
are instituted.

The world, thus generated, is perpetually sustained by the application
of fresh elementary atoms, flying with inconceivable rapidity through
all the infinitude of space, invisible from their minuteness, and occu-
pying the posts of all those that are as perpetually flying off. Yet,
nothing is eternal and immutable but these elementary seeds or atoms
themselves: the compound forms of matter are continually decomp-
pounding, and dissolving into their original corpuscles: to this there is
no exception:—minerals, vegetables, and animals, in this respect all
alike, when they lose their present configuration, perishing from ex-
istence for ever, and new combinations proceeding from the matter in-
to which they dissolve. But the world itself is a compound, though
not an organized being; sustained and nourished like organized beings
from the material pabulum that floats through the void of infinity.
The world itself must therefore, in the same manner, perish: it had a
beginning, and it will eventually have an end. Its present crasis will
be decompounded; it will return to its original, its elementary atoms;
and new worlds will arise from its destruction.

Space is infinite, material atoms are infinite, but the world is not
infinite.—This, then, is not the only world, or the only material system
that exists. The cause whence this visible system originated is com-
petent to produce others; it has been acting perpetually from all eter-
nity; and there are other worlds and other systems of worlds existing
around us. In the vast immensity of space, there are also other be-
ings than man, possessed of powers of intellect and enjoyment far su-
perior to our own: beings who existed before the formation of the
world, and will exist when the world shall perish for ever; whose hap-
piness flows unlimited, and unallayed; and whom the tumults and
passions of gross matter can never agitate. These, the founder of the
system denominated gods;—not that they created the universe, or are
possessed of a power of upholding it; for they are finite and created be-
ings themselves, and endowed alone with finite capacities and powers;—
but from the uninterrupted beatitude and tranquillity they enjoy, their
everlasting freedom from all anxiety and care.

Such is the system of Epicurus, reduced to a brief outline; and
such the sublime subject of the poem that follows. Those who are
conversant with modern philosophy will perceive, from this short
sketch, a striking resemblance to a great variety of the most important
and best established doctrines of the present day. These I pretend
not to investigate in this introductory essay, as the different compari-
sions may be more advantageously brought forwards in the progress of
our pursuit. To the ensuing pages I therefore refer my readers for
additional information; and am much mistaken if, on closing the vo-
lumes, they will not coincide with Lambinus in admitting that the phi-
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Iosophy of Epicurus was the most rational, and enforced the best principles of any system of philosophy recorded by prophane writers.

The doctrines of this system, however, were from time to time disputed by other schools: and the contest appears for a long while to have been conducted with no small equality between the disciples of Epicurus, Aristotle, Zeno, and Plato; each sect, in its turn, prevailing over the others.

The chair of Epicurus was filled upon his death by Hermachus, one of his most confidential friends and followers, whom by his will he appointed his sole executor, and whose intrepidity in defending his master's tenets against the sophists and dialectics eminently qualified him for this office. The Epicureans of chief estimation besides himself, anterior to the era of Lucretius, were, Metrodorus, Polyænus, Polyclitus, Dionysius, Basilides, Apollodorus, Protarchus, Phædrus, and Zeno; of whom the last two, as I have already observed, were joint residents and professors at the Epicurean establishment, when Lucretius, and his co-students, were committed to it for education. I have already mentioned the names of a great variety of characters of the first rank and celebrity, who professed Epicurism at the time in which Lucretius flourished; to these may be added, Trebasius, Piso, Albutius, Pansa, and Patro, who was recommended to the protection of Caius Memmius by Cicero himself*. Even at this period, therefore, the Epicurean school appears to have enjoyed a complete triumph at Rome over every rival institute: nor could it fail of doing so, from the conjoint exertions in its favour of such characters and scholars as Atticus, Cassius, Velleius, Memmius, and Lucretius. Even in the Augustan age, it seems still to have retained, if not to have increased, its

* Epist. Fam. xiii. 1.
popularity. We are told by Seneca, that not the learned alone, but even the unlettered, revered the name of Epicurus; and Lactantius asserts, that no other sect was, at this time, by any means so flourishing. It is to the credit of this sect, moreover, that, notwithstanding its great numbers, it never subdivided into parties; and that the opinions of its institutor were voluntarily submitted to with more implicit confidence, than Pythagoras, even by an express law, could ever exact from his ὑπηττοὶ ὅμιλεται, or most attached and genuine disciples.

It was in consequence of this perfect deference to the doctrines of Epicurus, and the uninterrupted union of his followers, that the school continued to flourish under the Roman emperors, for a long course of years, as Laertius asserts, after other schools had begun to decay. The most celebrated adherents to this system, from the death of Lucretius to the establishment of the Christian religion, were Pliny the elder, Celsus, Lucian, and Diogenes Laertius. Of these, the first, to whom we are indebted for his "Natural History of the World," does not, however, appear to have imbibed the whole of the Epicurean theory, and especially the tenet of a multiplicity of habitable worlds. Celsus is far better known as an Epicurean philosopher, in consequence of the controversy between himself and Origen. His works are totally lost, except detached passages cited by Origen in his reply. It is generally conjectured, that he flourished under Adrian and Aurelius Antoninus. Origen, however, mentions two philosophers of this name, both Epicureans; the former of whom, he tells us, existed in the reign of Nero, while the latter was born in that of Adrian, whom he survived *

* Δυο δὲ παραλείψαμεν Κέλσος γνωσεις Επικουρίους τω μεν, προτερος, κατὰ Νερονα, τουτον δε, κατ’ Ἀδριανον, κακτωτερον. L. i. contr. Cels.
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Lucian is far better known as a severe but humorous satirist than as a politician or philosopher, though he has some pretensions to notice in the two last characters. He flourished under Aurelius Antoninus, by whom he was appointed procurator of Egypt with a liberal salary. Philosophic tenets of every kind seem to have sat but loosely upon him; yet, in his Dialogues, he always treats his avowed master with respect, and he is almost the only philosopher to whom he is decently civil. He unwarrantably misrepresents Socrates, and declares Epicurus to have been the only sage who retained a sound intellect in the midst of madmen and fools. To the writings of Diogenes Laertius I have already had frequent occasion to refer. He lived in the beginning of the third century of the Christian æra, and is well known to the republic of letters as a most diligent biographer. According to Jonssius, he acquired the surname of Laertius from having been born at Laertes, a small city of Cilicia*: and he did what every man should do who is in pursuit of truth, and has sufficient leisure for the purpose. With an active and unbiassed mind, he profoundly investigated all the different systems that were proposed to him by the literature of the Greeks; and having minutely appreciated the pretensions and merits of each, he gave his hearty suffrage in favour of Epicurus, and immediately began to collect, into one regular tract, all the scattered fragments that yet remained of him relative to his person, his principles, and his practice. Laertius, from many of the idioms he has adopted, appears to have been acquainted with the writings of the Christian fathers, and has hence been believed to have been a Christian himself. But this," says Menage, "is impossible, he could not have been a Christian, for he bestows immoderate praises on Epicurus†.

* Jonss. I. iii. 12.
† Ἐλεγετονύ ἄντων, πρὸ ὑπὸ κακοῦ γαλλικῶς δίκιμος δοσὶν πλασμόνα, ἐν Ἀριστοτελείᾳ vita usurpavit; qui loquendi modus cum Christianorum scriptorum proprius videtur, Laertium Christianum fuisse vir quidam doctus suspicatur; sed frustra, Christianum non fuisse, indicio esse possunt quae Epicuro tribuit laudés immodice. Observ. l. i.
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It must be confessed, however, that Epicurism, which thus main-
tained its sway at Rome, obtained at no time any great degree of fa-
vour at Alexandria, where, under the Ptolemies, learning and learned
men received the most flattering encouragement; and which continued,
under the Roman emperors, to be the chief seat of philosophy and
science. For this contempt it is, nevertheless, easy to account. The
warm and elevated minds of the Asiatics are possessed of more imagi-
nation than judgment; they are fond of what is marvellous, and pre-
fer the splendour of mysticism to the beauties of simplicity. It was
from this quarter that Pythagoras derived his system, and much of
its ænigmatic involution was artfully transferred into their own doc-
trines, both by Plato and Aristotle. The Orientalists were, therefore,
hence, prepared for the tenets of the Samian, Academic, and Peripä-
tetic schools, while the students of the latter formed a ready alliance,
not only with the scientific arcana of the magi, gymnosophists, and
Egyptian priests, but with the vulgar superstitions and vernacular tra-
ditions of the country. Hence, in a century or two after the com-
mencement of the Christian æra, there was not a single school in this
celebrated mart for learning, whether Grecian or Asiatic, that retained
its purity. A change of some kind became necessary, and it was at-
ttempted; not, however, as it ought to have been, by a return to first
principles, but by a pretended selection, from every system, of that
which was conceived to be its essential or most valuable doctrines:
whence, a new order of philosophy sprang up, more absurd and het-
ergeneous than any which had preceded it; and this, from the choice
which was thus exercised, its advocates denominated Eclectism. Of
this confused amalgamation, or rather general plunder of opinions,
Potamo is said to have been the inventor; but, as from Platonism a
larger share had been stolen than from any other theory, and as the name
of Plato still preserved a large portion of its primæval repute and venerate-
tion, the greater body of the Eclectics continued to denominate them-
selves Platonists, notwithstanding their innovation upon his doctrine.
What considerably added to the confusion of this Babel edifice was, that from the growing reputation of the Christian church, the purity of its principles, and the incontrovertible miracles which had been wrought by many of its earliest professors, Christianity and Judaism had both been studied as philosophic sciences, and many of their doctrines been suffered to intermingle in the general mass. In consequence of which, multitudes of the earlier Christians themselves were induced to frequent Alexandria; where, in too many instances, they caught the common contagion, and combined the mysteries of modernized Platonism with the simple precepts of their own creed. Hence the writings of Athenagoras and Clemens Alexandrinus abound with pagan doctrines; and they themselves, as well as Pantaenus and Ammonius, were all successively instructors in the catachetical school in this metropolis. Ammonius, however, in process of time, apostatised from the Christian faith; and his immediate followers, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Jamblichus, became in succession its most inveterate adversaries: yet it is probable that their attachment to Christianity would have rendered it more disservice than their enmity; for though possest of considerable learning, they were all, in the highest degree, mystagogues and enthusiasts; Plotinus contending with violence for the doctrine of divine emanation, and, as connected herewith, the worship of gods, daemons, genii, and heroes; Porphyry, for the purgative exercise of corporeal abstinences and mortifications; and Jamblichus surrendering himself without restraint to all the superstitious practices of divination. The early connection of some parts of the Christian church with Oriental gnosticism, a belief which in many respects approximated that of Platonism, and paved a way for the reception of the latter, shews clearly how liable Christianity was to debasement from its earliest propagation, in consequence of the lawless sway of human passions and opinions, and how much more it would have suffered from the friendship than from the hostility of such hallucinated philosophers.
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Into this chaotic mass of opinions, Epicurism, however, was never received. It was founded on physical experiments which could not be sublimated to the airy regions of Platonism, Pythagorism, Cab-balism, Gnosticism, or Eclectism. The dialectics of Aristotle might dazzle by their subtlety and corruscation; the asseverations of the Stoics might, in some degree, impose by their dogmatism; the indecision of the Sceptics might attract by its indolence and independence, but the system of Epicurus was, in no respect, calculated for the meridian of Alexandria. M. Degerando indeed, observes, that in Rome it discovered a disposition to shake hands with the Sceptic school, when on its decay*; but I am acquainted with no fact that can support such an assertion: no philosophy was possessed of more decisive axioms, and no disciples could adhere to them with more inflexibility. He is more correct in observing, as he does shortly afterwards, that "Epicurus, Zeno, and the Cyrenaics, contributed no gift to Alexandrian Eclectism;" and, that "their maxims were exiled as so many importunate laws, which awakened the spirit, and snatched it from those delicious reveries, in which it loved to lap itself †."

On this account, also, we may easily perceive, why Epicurism, or the Atomic doctrine, should have acquired but little notice during the earlier ages of the Christian church. I have already shewn, that whatever connection the latter had formed with the Grecian philosophy, was through the medium of the Samian, Platonic, or Peripatetic schools, which appear alternately to have triumphed over each other, and al-

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* La philosophie Grecque, transplantée à Rome, éprouva bientôt, sur les empereurs, les effets de cet esprit de combinaison. Les théories de Platon chercherent à s'allier avec la morale des Stoïciens; celle d'Epicure parut tendre une main amie au Scepticisme abandonné. Histoire comparée des Systèmes de Philosophie, vol. i. ch. 8.

† Epicure, Zeno, les Cyrénaïques ne portèrent aucun tribut à l'Eclectisme Alexandrin; leur maxims furent écartées comme autant de loix importunes qui en éveillant l'esprit, l'eussent arraché aux douces rêveries dont il aimoit à se nourrir. Ibid.
ternately to have fallen. In effect, both the ethics of the Epicureans, which were only studied in the uncandid and deceitful narratives of hostile writers, and the whole range of their physical system, which denied all particular interference of Providence, the immortality of the soul, and a state of future resurrection,—till considerably explained and modified, were sufficient to excite alarm, and justify indignation. It was, for a similar reason, that Aristotle himself was, for a long period, anathematized; his doctrine of the eternity of the world being conceived an essential part of his entire system. Origen, indeed, who beheld in the eclectic chaos an attempt to unite the schools of Aristotle and Plato, seems to have conjectured that a similar coalition might advantageously have been produced between Peripatetism and Christianity; but this conjecture appears rather to have terminated in a simple wish, than in any actual effort*. Hence, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenæus, Clemens of Alexandria, Eusebius, and almost all the most learned defenders of the Christian faith, who flourished during its first six centuries, discover a strange propensity to a variety of Platonic and Pythagoric doctrines, but especially to the former, even while they openly and honestly oppose the grosser absurdities towards which they tended. St. Austin asserts expressly, that he was prepared for the reception of Christianity by a perusal of the writings of the later Platonists†; and in many of the hymns of Synesius, bishop of Ptolemais, which have yet survived their author, we trace much more of Cabbalism, Gnosticism, Platonism, and Peripatetism, than of the pure precepts of the gospel he professed‡.

Yet, though the school of Aristotle was thus generally abandoned by the learned Fathers of the Christian church, it was by no means

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* Even so late as the thirteenth century, the writings of Aristotle were prohibited by the synod of Paris, and afterwards under pope Innocent III. by the council of Lateran. Laun. de Fort. Ar. I. c.
‡ P. 312.
abandoned by the heretics; and the accuracy and legitimacy of reasoning, which they acquired by the study of the dialectics of this philosopher, gave them, in much of the common controversy, a manifest and decided advantage. The Christian Fathers were, at length, sensible of this advantage themselves; and, about the beginning of the eighth century, began to discover an inclination to enlist this part of the Peripatetic philosophy into the banners of their own faith. The attempt was first introduced by Joannes Damascenes, who flourished at the period I am adverting to, and retired about the middle of life, from a high station at the Saracen court, to a monastery at St. Abas, that he might enjoy full leisure to prosecute his studies. From this era, Aristotle began to obtain an ascendancy over his rivals; nothing was heard of but the trivium and quadrivium of the Lyceum, or that circle of instruction, into which the liberal arts were at this period divided; the trivium comprising grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics; and the quadrivium, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy: and so complete was the triumph of this school at one time, and so extravagant the general attachment to its philosophy, that Melancthon makes it a matter of complaint, that in sacred assemblies the ethics of Aristotle were read to the people, instead of the gospel*. Some few and feeble attempts were occasionally made to revive the credit of Plato; and in one or two instances, and especially under the pen of Rosceline, who flourished in the twelfth century, to introduce the opinions of Zeno, but they were all of contracted limits and temporary duration; whence, till the revival of learning in the fourteenth century, may the scholastic system be fairly regarded as maintaining a complete sway over the mystic, as well as over every other, by which it was occasionally assaulted. Plato was left in obscurity, the doctrines of Zeno abandoned, and Epicurus known only by name.

* Apol. A. C. p. 62. See also Laun. c. ix. 210, in which a similar complaint is repeated.
It is astonishing, indeed, to observe the ignorance of the schoolmen, as to the real philosophy of Epicurus, from a short time after the commencement of the Christian æra, to the beginning of the fifteenth century; for, excepting a few of the primitive Fathers of the church, Lactantius seems to have been almost the only writer tolerably instructed in its tenets. And, hence, almost every person who differed in his philosophic opinions from the dogmas of the synods and ecumenic councils, was denominated an Epicurean. Alexander, therefore, a Christian, who is supposed to have flourished in the beginning of the second century, was always looked back to as a disciple of this school, because he maintained, if we may credit Albertus Magnus, that God is matter, or does not exist independently of matter; that all things are essentially God, and that the figures of bodies are all imaginary accidents, and have no real existence*. David de Dinant, a Christian philosopher of the thirteenth century, is reported to have espoused the same tenets, and is imagined by Bayle, to have been an immediate disciple of another Christian philosopher of the same creed, of the name of Amalric, who, in like manner, taught, that “all things are God, and God is all things, both the Creator, and the thing created;” and whose body was preposterously dragged out of its grave, many years after it had been quietly inhumed, and sentenced to the flames for heresy†. These philosophers were both esteemed Epicureans in their principles, as was also the celebrated Peter Abelard, who wielded with so much reputation the weapons of polemic divinity, about half a century before the æra of Dinant. Giordano Bruno has likewise occasionally been ranked in the same catalogue: a bold and fantastic

† Omnia sunt Deus, Deus est omnia; Creator et creatura idem, &c. Bayle. Dict. Hist. et Crit. Art. Spinoze Res A. Almaric, though the fact is not recorded by Bayle, had, in his life-time, been convicted before the second Parisian council, and, on account of his declared errors, fallen under its severe censures.
philosopher who existed as late as the 16th century, and was a strong champion for the eternity of matter. The works of Bruno, from which I shall occasionally offer extracts, were dedicated to our own well-known countryman, Sir Philip Sydney. England, indeed, had afforded him an asylum from the persecutions of bigots and enthusiasts on the Continent; and, from a variety of complimentary canzonets, which he composed in praise of the beauty of the ladies of London, for Bruno, it seems, was a gallant and a poet, as well as a philosopher, he acquired no small degree of the favour of queen Elizabeth herself. But the caprice and imprudence of Bruno prevented him from being satisfied with the polite attentions he received from our fair countrywomen: he returned to Naples, the city in which he was born, towards the close of the 16th century, and, having engaged in fresh theological disturbances with some of the cardinals of the Roman church, he was condemned, and burnt for heresy.

But none of these appear to have been, strictly speaking, of the Epicurean school; the eternity of matter was, undoubtedly, a tenet maintained by the founder of this sect, but maintained, as I have already observed, in common with every other philosophic school whatsoever: while the essential intelligence of matter, or material atoms, was a doctrine totally repugnant to the first principles of their system. These philosophers might, therefore, have been of the school of Democritus, who contended for the intelligence of a certain classification of atoms; or of that of Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, or Aristotle; but they could not possibly be followers of the system of Epicurus. Indeed, I cannot perceive any great degree of difference between the doctrines of Abelard, and his inveterate antagonist Champeaux, notwithstanding the high reputation he acquired in consequence of his triumph over him. Champeaux was accused of believing the Deity material, or, in the language of Bayle, of disguised Spinosism (Spinozeme non de-
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veloped*;) and yet, whatever may have been the immediate arms with which Abelard encountered this heterodox son of the church, we are told that, on other occasions, he himself never hesitated to assert, that "God is all things, and all things are God; that he is convertible into all things, and all things are convertible into him; imitating, in this respect, the theosophy of Empedocles or Anaxagoras, and distinguishing the species of things according to their simple appearance†".

Abelard was therefore ranked,—and certainly considered as an atomist, with much more reason than many of the rest, whose names I have glanced at,—among the scholars of Epicurus: and Arnobius, of whose abilities Du Pin gives us no very favourable opinion‡, Hierocles, the subtle and celebrated Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and an almost infinite number of other combatants of equal ability, were, from age to age, engaged in subverting the doctrines of these imaginary Epicureans.

Shortly after the revival of letters, however, and especially about the 15th century, notwithstanding the superiority which Aristotle still continued to maintain in the cloisters of monks, and the establishments of professed schools, the doctrines of Epicurus began, once more, to obtain a warm, and, in some measure, a fashionable encouragement. Philelphus, Alexander ab Alexandro, Cælius Rhodigianus, Volaterranus, Jean François Pic, and many other philosophers of equal repu-

† Deum esse omnia, et omnia esse Deum; eum in omnia converti, omnia in eum transmutari asseruit: quia Empedocleæ, aut forte Anaxagoricæ præventus theosophia, distinguebat species secundum solam apparentiam, nempe quia aliquot atomi in uno subjecto erant eductæ quæ latebant in alio. Caramuel. Phil. Real. l. iii. s. 3.
‡ Arnobius pretended to have been called to the profession of the Christian faith by his dreams. The bishops obliged him to give some proof of his attachment to their own religion, and he composed a work in seven or eight Books, entitled "Adversus Gentes." This publication I have never had an opportunity of perusing; but Du Pin informs us, that it was written with much haste, and that he appears to have been but little acquainted with the mysteries of the Christian faith. "Il attaque," observes he, "avec beaucoup plus d'adresse la religion des Pauens qu'il ne defend celle des Chretiens. Bibl. des Auth. Eccl. Tom. 1. p. 204.
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... had, at this time, the hardihood to intermix the atomic philosophy with the tenets of the Christian faith. Sennert, an eminent physician at Wirtemburg, published an express elucidation and defence of the atomic system, in a work entitled, Hypomnemata Physica, "Heads of Physics*;" Vives and Ramus ventured publicly to expose the defects of the Aristotelian philosophy, and Chrysostom Magneni, who published "A Treatise on the Life and Philosophy of Democritus†, attempted to reconcile the systems of the Peripatetics and the Atomists; a vain effort, however, and which he was obliged to relinquish. Magneni was an Italian, and the poets of Italy appear to have taken, at the same time, as much pains to restore the atomic system as the philosophers themselves. Hence Michele Milani wrote a very long and learned canzone, in which he unequivocally asserts, that it was purposely meant to adapt a great part of the atomic hypothesis to the Christian verity‡. His example was followed by Baptista Guarini, who also wrote a book in favour of the same school§: and shortly afterwards by Francisco de Quevedo, a Spanish poet and philosopher¶, and by our own countryman, Sir William Temple¶.

But the 17th century presented us with two Epicureans, of far more celebrity than any of these: I mean Gassendi and Du Rondelle; both natives of France, and both of whom laboured with more assiduity and critical investigation to establish the moral character of the founder of this school, and the truth of his fundamental doctrines, than any of its adherents from the era of Diogenes Laertius.

Of these two accurate critics and elaborate scholars, Gassendi has acquired the greater share of reputation: for he not only wrote a bio-

* Ed. 1638. Wertemberg. † Lugd. Bat. 1648.
‡ In essa si spiega buona parte della filosofia di Democrito adattata alla verita Christiana. See Crescembini's Comentarj Poetici, I. ii. 10. § Gassendi Physique. Tom. II.
¶ This publication was imprinted in 1635, and entitled "Epiceto Espanol en versos consonantes, con el origen de los Estoicos, y su defensa contra Plutarcho, y defensa de EPICURO contra la opinion commun.
¶¶ This book I have not seen, but I quote from Gassendi, to whom it appears to have been familiar.
graphy of Epicurus, in common with his junior countryman Du Rondelle, but an elaborate commentary on the tenth Book of Laertius, which is itself a life and literary history of the same philosopher, and a complete system of natural and metaphysical philosophy; in which he endeavoured to improve upon the hypothesis of the Grecian sage in those parts in which it is defective, and to adapt it to his own era. The fame of Gassendi was soon proclaimed through all Europe, and Epicurus began at last to obtain his turn of ascendance in our literary schools and universities. Cudworth, although professedly a Platonist, had already felt himself compelled to adopt the atomic philosophy so far as related to its physics: "An Abridgment of Gassendi's Philosophy," together with several other works in favour of the atomic or Epicurean system, was published by Francis Bernier, a learned physician of Montpelier, while our own countryman Walter Charlton, wrote a treatise of a similar tendency in England, entitled "Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charletoniana;" and another to the same effect by G. B. De Sancto Romano, was produced from the Paris press, under the title of Physica e Scholasticis Tricis liberata: "Physics rescued from Scholastic Jargon."

The progress of modern Epicurism, however, though thus tempered and christianized, was not endured without much apprehension, and even a vigorous resistance. Nor was this apprehension, indeed, without some degree of reason: for while Gassendi was amassing and concentrating whatever could be advanced by ancient history, physical facts, and ingenious argumentation, in favour of Epicurus and his opinions,—supported at the same time, as he is reported to have been, by St. Evremond,—Bayle * was endeavouring to form a coalition be-

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* Tous les disciples d'Epicure avoient pour sa mémoire un respect profond. Tant que son école subsista, le jour de sa naissance fut célébré comme un jour de fête; et depuis le renouvellement des lettres, sa conduite, et sa morale ont trouvé parmi les modernes un grand nombre d'approbateurs. Volatterian, Philelophe, Laurent Valle, Saint-Evremont, le Chevalier Temple, une infinité d'autres que je pourrais nommer, ont signalé leur zèle en faveur de ce philosophe. A taat de suffrages BAYLE ajoute le sien, et pro-
tween the atomic philosophy and scepticism; and Leibnitz † and Wolfe between that and Platonism or Pythagorism. Hobbes, the intimate friend of Gassendi, attempting to press the atomic system still farther, was reviving the long exploded doctrine of Democritus respecting the necessary intelligence of separate elementary corpuscles; and Spinosa, with several other heterodox Jews of Spain and Portugal ‡, were renewing the old Eleatic doctrine that the universe, or matter collectively, and not in distinct atoms, was the Deity, and efficient cause of all things. It is not a little singular, that this last doctrine of Spinosa, or rather of Xenophanes, from whom both himself and the Eleatic sect immediately derived it, that God is the Universe, and the Universe God, not transitively, or with a power of emanation, but imminently and immutably, was now, for the first time, pretended to be discovered as comprising a part of the faith professed by two philosophic frater-

† The monads of Leibnitz, however, are not precisely the same as those of Epicurus. They were immediately derived from the Pythagorican system, and hence have a closer resemblance to the numbers of the Samian, or the ideas of the Academic philosophy. Monads, under Leibnitz, as under Pythagoras, have no parts, neither extension, figure, nor divisibility; each, however, is a true atom of nature, and incapable of destruction, except by the power of the Creator. Each monad differs from every other; and each is also possessed of perception and appetite, in which respect each may be said to partake of the nature of soul. This power of perception and appetite produces an internal principle of alteration; and hence the sympathies and affinities, the repulsions and separations, the combinations and forms of bodies. It is to this source, therefore, that we are obviously to look for the foundation of the late Dr. Darwin's philosophy, though I do not remember that he has any where indicated the fountain from which he derived it.

‡ A complete edition of the works of Spinosa have been lately published in 8vo. by professor Paulus of Jena. Spinosa was the son of a Portuguese Jew, and born at Amsterdam in 1632. His mode of reasoning is extremely incorrect; and hence his arguments may, in many instances, be as well adapted by his adversaries as by himself. The following extract may serve as an example of this want of appropriation.

Proposito. "Idei rei singularis, actu existentis, Deum pro causa habet; non quatenus infinitus est, sed quatenus alia rei singularis actu existentis idea affectus consideratur; cujus etiam Deus est causa, quatenus alia tertia affectus est, et sic in infinitum."

Demonstratio. "Idei rei singularis, actu existentis, modus singularis cogitandi est, et a reliquis distinctus; adeoque Deum, quatenus est tantum res cogitans, pro causa habet. At non, quatenus est res absolute cogitans; sed quatenus alio cogitandi modo affectus consideratur, et hujus etiam, quatenus alio affectus est, et sic in infinitum. At qui ordo, et conexio idearum idem est ac ordo, et conexio causarum; ergo unus singularis idea alia idea sive Deus, quatenus alia idea affectus consideratur, est causa, et hujus etiam, quatenus alia affectus est, et sic in infinitum." Q. E. D. Ethic. Prop. ix.
nities in Japan * and China, of which the latter is denominated Foe Kiao †.

The creed or system of lord Bolingbroke seems to have been an intermixture of that of Spinosa and Leibnitz; or, to ascend higher, of the Pythagoric or Platonic, and the Eleatic schools; and hence the celebrated Essay on Man, which was certainly planned by himself, and composed by Mr. Pope, without his having been aware of its tendency, at the direct instigation of his noble patron, discloses, in every page, the doctrines of sufficient reason and a material deity: on which account, on its first appearance, the poem was regarded, and especially on the Continent, as one of the most dangerous productions that had ever issued from the press. In the present day, we allow to it a very liberal extent of poetic licence, and with such allowance it may be perused without mischief; but a few verses alone are sufficient to prove its evil tendency, if strictly and literally interpreted. The following distich, for example, discloses the very quintessence of Spinosism:

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul †.

And the general result drawn from the entire passage, which is too long to be quoted, is no less so:

In spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear—whatever is, is right.

If every thing be right at present, there is no necessity for a day of retribution hereafter; and the chief argument afforded by nature, in

‡ To justify such observation, it is only necessary to compare this couplet, and the entire passage which belongs to it, with the following verses of Virgil, who has derived the idea he exemplifies from the very same source as Spinosa:

His quidam signis atque hic exempla secuti,
Esse apibus partem divinæ mentis, et haustus
favour of a future existence, is swept away in a moment. Unite the propositions contained in these two distichs, and illustrated through the whole poem, and it follows, that the Universe is God, and God the Universe; that, amidst all the moral evils of life, the sufferings of virtue, and the triumphs of vice, it is in vain to expect any degree of retribution in a future state; every thing being but an individual part of one stupendous whole, which could not possibly subsist otherwise; and that the only consolation which remains for us is, that the general good is superior to the general evil, and that whatever is, is right:

If plagues and earthquakes break not heaven's design,
Why then a Borjia or a Catiline *.

Hence, Pope was generally denominated, on the Continent, the modern Lucretius. As a merely moral poet, he was permitted to be read in Switzerland: but his French translator confesses that he thought it a duty he owed society, to correct, and render less daring, many of the expressions contained in the original work. "This school of philosophers," observes M. Bourguet, in a letter to M. de Meuron, state-councillor of the king of Prussia, "takes a pleasure in confounding all ideas: in pretending to develop God, it miserably confounds him.

Ætherios dixere Deum, namque ire per omnes
Terrasque tractasque maris, calamque profundum.

Led by such wonders, sages have opin'd
That bees have portions of a heavenly mind;
That God pervades, and, like one common soul,
Fills, feeds, and animates the world's great whole.

Innumerable passages of a similar tendency might be selected from both the Georgics and the Aeneid, but the task is unnecessary.

* There is no doubt that Pope was imposed upon by Bolingbroke, and is said to have regretted, in the latter part of his life, that he had thus lent the full extent of his talents to the propagation of infidelity. Hence, the following stanza of Mr. Mason, which professedly alludes to Pope, in his Elegy to a young nobleman:

The bard will tell thee, the misguided praise
Clouds the celestial sunshine of his breast;
E'en now, repentant of his erring lays,
He heaves a sigh amid the realms of rest.
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with nature, and reduces mankind very nearly to the rank of brutes. In effect," continues he, "Mr. Pope, in his Essay on Man, has not said a syllable on the nature of the soul,—the most excellent part of man—on its immateriality, on its indestructibility, on its immortality. He has drawn the ideas of his poem from the works of lord Shaftesbury, from which, in many places, he has copied the very expressions. And, as to his morality, it is as superficial and heathenish (superficielle et payenne) as his lordship's own." See the Journal Helvetique 1738, and Reflexions sur les Ouvrages de Literature, Tom. VI. p. 111.

Philosophic speculations therefore, of such a tendency, and actually productive of such consequences, could not be indulged without apprehension, and were not to be promulgated without resistance. It was in vain that Gassendi, St. Evremond, Leibnitz, and Wolfe, appealed to their punctual performance of Christian duties, and public attendance upon Christian worship; Hobbes, Bayle, and even Spinosa, appealing to the same, some degree of suspicion still attached to all of them, and the eloquence of Bossuet and Fenelon, the subtlety of Malbranch, the logic of Clarke, and the gigantic talents and learning of Cudworth, were all called forth and confederated in the common cause. Des Cartes had already, moreover, began to put forth his enormous powers in pursuit of some new system of natural philosophy; and though, like Cudworth, compelled to drink, in some measure, from the Epicurean stream, he enlisted under the banners of the alarmists, and his prodigious and well-directed opposition was a host of itself in their support.

But logic and natural philosophy were not the only weapons employed against these heterodox sons of the church, the muses were also applied to for their contribution, and, notwithstanding their having espoused the opposite cause in Italy, they consented to the application which was made to them in France; in consequence of which,
the cardinal Polignac, whose name is well known in the republic of
letters, produced a Latin poem of nine Books in hexameter verse, of
no small degree of merit, which he entitled "Anti-Lucretius, sive de
Deo et Natura *;" from which title it is obvious, that the aim
of the cardinal was chiefly directed against the modern disciples of
Epicurus: but, whatever might be its success, and how well soever
such success might be deserved against other philosophic reformers,
neither poetry nor prose had any avail in this instance. The dia-
lectics of the schools had yielded to the novum organon of the immortal
Bacon; syllogistic logomachies to an attentive examination of nature;
the Epicurism of Gassendi was embraced by the most eminent mo-

* This celebrated poem, we learn from the Eloge of M. de Boze, as also from the preface prefixed to
the first edition, took its rise from mere accident. During a short residence of the abbe Polignac in
Holland, in the year 1697, he formed an acquaintance with the learned Peter Bayle: whom he was asto-
nished to find attached to the system of Epicurus, and delighted with the poem of Lucretius, which he
appeared to have completely committed to memory. The abbe found this system was gaining ground very
considerably among men of letters, and immediately determined on opposing it by a poem of an oppo-
site tendency. On his return, therefore, to the quietude of his own home, he composed one in five
books, which he entitled Anti-Lucretius. This formed the rudiments of the future and more perfect
work, which extended to nine, and which added, to the attack upon Lucretius, an additional assault upon
the doctrines of Spinoza, Hobbes, Newton, and even Locke himself. Polignac was about forty years
old when he commenced this undertaking: he proceeded with it very slowly, reading it, as it advanced, to
Malbranche, and a great number of other literary friends, both before his election to his cardinalship, and
afterwards, during his residence at Rome: but, perhaps, no poem, after all, has had so many escapes
from being buried in oblivion. The cardinal himself was forty years at work upon it, and at length died
at the extreme age of eighty, leaving it still unfinished; and in such a confused state, from the variety of
additions and alterations he had made in it, that it was attended with the utmost difficulty, in many in-
stances, to trace its connection. His friend the abbe Rothelin, however, to whom on his death-bed he
entrusted his indigested papers, undertook the Herculean task. At this task he laboured occasionally for
several years, and, at length, died himself as he was on the point of completing it. This was an addi-
tional evil, from which the poem did not recover for a long time: finally, about the year 1745, nearly
half a century after its commencement, it was ushered into the world by M. de Beau, Professor of Elo-
quence in the University of Paris.

This poem is certainly possessed of very considerable merit: its Latinity is, for the most part, correct,
though by no means equal to that of Buchanan or Casimir; its order is perspicacious, and its similies, in
general, appropriate. Its principal defects appear to be inanition and extravagance of system. The greatest
injury it sustains is from its title: the author, in this respect, should have been more modest: by him-
self, he is certainly instructive, fertile, and elegant; but he has no pretensions to enter the list with Lu-
cretius.—A very good French translation of this poem was given in prose by M. de Bougainville, perpe-
tual Secretary of the Royal Academy of Belles Lettres in 1750.
APPENDIX.

dern philosophers, and at last appears to have obtained an eternal triumph, from its application, by Newton and Huygens, to the department of natural philosophy, and, by Locke and Condillac, to that of metaphysics.

It is useless to pursue this history any further: the systems which have since been started in opposition to the Atomic, however splendid and fashionable for the moment, have already flitted away, or have no prospect of obtaining any permanency. Of these, the principal is that of the Idealists, of whom the chief leaders were Berkely and Hume. The former, dissatisfied with Locke's explanation of the mode by which sensation is communicated to the mind, incapable of tracing the connexion between external objects and the mind itself, and consequently the existence of an external world, boldly denied such an existence, and maintained that sensations and ideas were mere modifications of the soul, concatenated by a system of laws immutable and universal; whence the existence and necessary connexion of cause and effect, the proof of identity, and the demonstration of an intelligent Creator. The system of Hume was founded upon that of Berkely; but, instead of restraining, it extended it to a still more extravagant length. Hume, in imitation of Berkely, contended that the external world was incapable of proof; that the mind or soul was nothing more than a consciousness of existence, and that such consciousness depended alone on a succession of ideas produced either by sensations or impressions; but he maintained exclusively that he could no more trace any necessary catenation between such ideas or sensations, between one event and another, than he could trace the existence of external objects. Facts, he admitted, conjoined with facts, but are not necessarily connected with each other; and hence to assert that such connexion was produced by a system of operative laws, was, in his opinion, to presume, but by no means to reason. Upon this theory, therefore, there is no-
thing existing in all nature but impressions and sensations, and the
ideas thence resulting;—there is no such thing as causation, no proof
of identity, none of a God. Yet it would be injustice to assert, that
Mr. Hume hence-denyed the being of a God; on the contrary, he ad-
mitted it, and pretended to found his belief of such a Being on a kind
of innate impression, though he would not allow it the name of an innate
idea *, a sort of moral sentiment, as developed by Hutchinson.

The ideal system has been opposed with no small degree of success-
by two others derived from very different premises, yet each highly in-
genious, and in many respects incontrovertible: the one invented by
Dr. Hartley, and founded on the doctrine of vibration and the asso-
ciation of ideas; the other by Dr. Beattie and Dr. Reid, and which
appeals to the decisions of common sense†.

These responsive theories, however, originating in our own country,
have not satisfied the metaphysicians of the Continent; and, in reality,
being principally directed to our own meridian, they do not embrace
all the objectionable points presented by continental hypotheses which
have obtained celebrity enough to require notice. M. Kant has
hence advanced a new system, which has the boast of being of
universal application, and in every respect undervived from antece-
dent philosophers: but as this is a system rather intellectual than
material, it by no means falls within the scope of the present lucu-
bration to analyze it. It affects, in a greater degree than any other
theory whatever, to take nothing for granted, and to trace all ideas
and cognition to their earliest source; yet, with a singular sort of con-
tradiction, it commences with pre-supposing the existence of certain
first principles and an external world. It is strangely obscured, more-
over, by the perplexity and abstruseness of its vocabulary, its author
not only having invented a host of new terms, but too generally ap-

* On Human Understanding, Essay xii.
† See these different systems more minutely ad-
verted to in the Note on Book IV. v. 766. of the ensuing Poem.
propriated to those in common use a sense foreign to that in which they are daily employed upon other, or even similar occasions; so that the proselyte has not only the task of learning a new language before he can be initiated into the Kantian philosophy, but of un-learning that which it has cost him years, perhaps, to acquire. It is on this account that M. Kieseweter, as well as several other disciples of the professor, have attempted to re-model its nomenclature, to render his conceptions less obscure and recondite, and to present the whole theory in a form more abridged and systematic *. At the present moment, nothing in Germany is so fashionable as the study of the Transcendental Philosophy, or Criticism of pure Reason, as its inventor has chosen to denominate it; but many, who have studied it, are dissatisfied with it already, and appear to be aiming at an erection of different schools out of its ruins. Its chief antagonists for this purpose are M. M. Jacobi and Reinhold, and an anonymous author, who signs himself OEnesidemus, all of whom seem equally sensible of its insufficiency, and have hence attempted to connect it with some other theory. Jacobi, like Leibnitz, whose system in many respects he avowedly prefers to the Kantian, is a professed Platonist, and on this account is for connecting the Transcendental Philosophy with Platonism †: OEnesidemus, as his fictitious name imports, is a Sceptic, and he, on the contrary, is for conciliating it with the philosophy of Pyrrho ‡: while Reinhold, who has invented a sort of theory of his own, which is denominated Elementary Philosophy, makes it his object to form a junction between the Transcendental and the Elementary §. After all, however, Kantism itself, notwithstanding its proud boast of perfect independence and originality, seems, in many respects, to be little more than a kind of modern eclectism, an hypothesis deduced from prior schools, and in many instances betraying

† Beiträge zur Leichtern übersicht, &c. band 3. Hamburg, 1802.
‡ Beiträge zur Berichtigung, Hamburg, 1803.
§ OEnesidemus; ou Observations sur la Philosophie de Reinhold.
APPENDIX.

its pillage. "It attracts," observes M. Degerando, who has well studied it, "the friends of Natural Philosophy by the nature of its results; those of Rational Philosophy by the character of its methods. It says to the former, 'all knowledge is restricted to the limits of experience;' it says to the latter, 'all knowledge proceeds, à priori, from the laws of the understanding.' With Locke, it asserts, that there are no innate ideas; with Leibnitz, that experience can only result from the chain established between different facts, through the medium of internal notions: it has imitated Plato in his ideas of pure reason; Aristotle, in his logical forms. It has flattered Idealism, by repeating after it, that we can know nothing but the mere appearances of things; Scepticism, by throwing over the principle of thought itself, the veil in which she has involved all external existences; finally, it seems to open a door to great numbers of those who, tossed for a long time on the ocean of systems, exhausted by the clash of all opinions, by the uncertainty of all metaphysics, seek for repose on a shore remote from all such disputes."

ARGUMENT.

The Poet describes the pleasures that result from the study of philosophy, and a mind satisfied with a little, and estranged from the passions and pursuits of the busy world. He then resumes his subject, and attempts to prove a perpetual motion in primordial atoms; and that this motion is of various kinds, direct, curvilinear, and repercussive. He asserts, that primordial atoms are not all of the same figure; some being globular, others polygonal, and others jagged: that these figures vary not to infinitude; but that the atoms under every separate figure are infinite in number. The formation of compound bodies from the combination of atoms of different figures, and the variation of their solidity or fluidity, their roughness or rotundity, from the different atoms of which they are compounded; and the degree of force and affinity, or connexion with which they adhere to each other. Prismatic hues, and their origin; refraction of colours, and its cause. Neither these, nor any other qualities of bodies, reside in primordial atoms themselves, but only in their peculiar arrangements and combinations. The origin of irritability, sensation, and apprehension: the immensity of creation, from the immensity of its materials—and, consequently, the existence of other systems, and systems of systems of worlds. No compound material being eternal—whence no system of material atoms can be eternal; and whence, again, the progression, senescence, and decay of every existing world, the ruins, or disorganised corpuscles of which will be employed in the generation and maturity of other worlds. Proofs, that the earth is already in a state of decline and comparative infertility; and hence, that it must, eventually, perish from senility alone.
DE RERUM NATURA.

LIBER SECUNDUS.

Suave, mari magno turbantibus aquara ventis,
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;
Non, quia vexari quemquam est jocunda voluptas,
Sed, quibus ipse malis careas; quia cernere suave est.
Per campos instructa, tua sine parte perici.

Ver. 1. How sweet to stand, when tempests tear the main.] Nothing truly valuable is to be acquired without severe application and labour. The pursuit of riches, honours, or fame, demands incessant exertion, and is accompanied with perpetual anxiety; an anxiety that frequently poisons every enjoyment, and too dearly purchases the object of our toils, even if it be purchased at last. But the pursuit of knowledge differs essentially from every other exertion: it, too, has its difficulties and its labours, its briars to clear away, and its precipices to surmount; but its path is free from anxiety and disappointment; and the man who gains possession of its summit, feels himself elevated above the world, and may well look with pity on the crowds that are struggling below him. Impressed with this sentiment, our poet opens the book before us: and the beauty and elegance of his imagery have produced a host of imitators; not one of whom, however, to the best of my knowledge, has, by any means, equalled himself. For the idea contained in the first two verses Lucretius, however, seems, in some measure, to have been indebted to Isidorus. "Nothing is more pleasant," says this writer, "than to sit at ease in the harbour, and behold the shipwreck of others;" Pelus. Lib. ii. Ep. 240. The following description of Akenside will here perhaps arise in the mind of every reader; and it is not unlikely that Lucretius was the original from which he drew: we have already traced him occasionally turning his eye to the poem before us:

... ask the crowd
Which flies impatient from the village walk,
To climb the neighbouring cliff, when far below
The cruel winds have hurled upon the coast
Some hapless bark: while sacred Pity melts
The general eye, or Terror's icy hand
Smites their distorted limbs, and horrid hair:
While every mother closer to her breast
ARGUMENT.

Lucretius opens his Poem with an invocation to Venus, and then dedicates it to Memmius; briefly treating of its subject, and endeavouring to clear it from the charge of impiety. He now commences his subject in detail, and attempts to prove that nothing could spring from, or can return to, nothing; that there are certain minute corpuscles, which, though imperceptible to the senses, may be conceived by the mind, and whence every thing originates: that there is also space or vacuum—besides which nothing is to be traced in Nature: and that whatever else appears to exist, as weight, heat, poverty, history, war, are merely the conjunctions or events, the properties or accidents, of body and void; and that these elementary corpuscles are perfectly solid, indivisible, and eternal. He confutes the opinion of Heraclitus, who held that fire was the principle of all things; and of other philosophers, who, instead of fire, maintained the same of air, water, and earth; and at length of Empedocles, who regarded the whole as equally elementary and primordial. He attacks the homoeomery of Anaxagoras, and ridicules its absurdity. He contends, that the Universe is infinite on all sides; that space cannot be limited; and that the property of infinity attaches equally to body and void. Hence he severely censures those who believe that there exists a central point in the Universe, or admit the doctrine of central gravitation. He concludes with a brief panegyric upon philosophy, by the light of which mankind are able to penetrate the profoundest mysteries of Nature.
DE RERUM NATURA.

LIBER PRIMUS.

ÆNEADUM genetrix, hominum divōmque voluptas,
Alma Venus! cœli subter labentia signa

Ver. 1. Parent of Rome—] Nothing can be more beautiful or appropriate than this introductory address. Our author is engaging in a philosophic poem, which is to trace the origin and nature of things in all their unbounded variety and extent. He is writing at Rome, and chiefly for the benefit and instruction of his own countrymen; and what imaginary power could so properly be invoked, since invocations have been resorted to in all ages, as the deity who was the acknowledged source of all animal and vegetable life? What power could be so properly invoked by a Roman poet, desirous, more especially, of bespeaking the esteem of the multitude, as the divinity from whose embraces with a mortal immemorial tradition had derived their national descent?

But the poem was entered upon in a period of turbulence and war; probably about the year of Rome 695, and the 33d of our poet's age; in the midst of the contest with Mithridates and his Asiatic allies, while Clodius was intriguing at the forum, and the banishment of Cicero was determined upon through the connivance of both Pompey and Caesar. (See the preceding Life, p. xxxviii.) All Rome was at this time divided into factions: the people were striving against the patricians, and the patricians against the people. In such a state of affairs, what chance had the poet or the philosopher to be attended to? Lucretius was aware of the difficulty, and, with great politcal delicacy and address, invokes the only deity who, according to the mythology of his country, could captivate the god of war, and induce him to unbucket his armour.

This exquisite invocation has, nevertheless, been strongly and repeatedly objected to, as totally inconsistent with our poet's avowed disbelief of the system of religion at that time established by the government. "Cette invocation," says the Baron des Coutures, "a surpris beaucoup de savans, comme contraire à la doctrine d'Epicure." In another French publication, entitled "Lettres Recueillies par Jean Michael Brutus," there is an epistle from Petrus Victorius to Giovanni della Casa, archbishop of Benevento, inquiring whether Du Rondelle, who had then just published his celebrated little treatise "De Vita et Moribus Epicuri," had taken notice of such an apprehended incongruity? To this epistle no answer is subjoined; but Du Rondelle appears to have
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But the poem was entered upon in a period of turbulence and war; probably about the year of Rome 671, and the 21st of our poet's age, when Sertorius had fled into Spain, and erected the standard of rebellion against the republic. The contest which ensued continued for more than five years: the most celebrated Roman generals were perpetually harassed, and even defeated; and the gallant Memmius, a relation of Caius Memmius, to whom the poem is dedicated, speedily fell a victim to his patriotism. All Rome, moreover, was now divided into factions: the people were striving against the patricians, and the patricians against the people. In such a state of affairs, what chance had the poet or the philosopher to be attended to? Lucretius was aware of the difficulty, and, with great political delicacy and address, he invokes the only deity who, according to the mythology of his country, could captivate the god of war, and induce him to unbuckle his armour.

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THE NATURE OF THINGS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

Parent of Rome! by gods and men belov'd,

Benignant Venus! thou! the sail-clad Main,

thought the objection too puerile to be noticed, for he certainly has not adverted to it. Tycho Brahe was likewise consulted upon the same subject, in 1596, by Is. Pontanus, who defended our poet with much dexterity and success. See Lettres publiées par M. Malthéeus, à Leide, 1698, 8vo. The Baron de Coutures has also offered an ingenious vindication. He denies this introductory part of the poem to be mythological, and contends that the whole is pure and allowable allegory: that Venus, in the sense here adopted, is a mere symbol of universal generation; and Mars, her paramour, of universal destruction: from the embraces of which two opposite powers proceed the regeneration, re-combination, and re-dissolution of all things; upon which doctrine the whole system of Epicurus is founded. Mr. Hume, however, who has likewise engaged in a short critique upon the same subject, is not disposed to be so easily satisfied. He admits that Venus may possibly, in this introduction, be allegorically addressed, and that Lucretius, as a philosopher, had a right to address her "as the generating power which "animates, renews, and beautifies the universe; but "he was soon betrayed," continues our critic, "by "the mythology of his age, into incoherencies, while "he prays to that allegorical personage to appease "the furies of her lover Mars." Essays, vol. ii. p. 474. Of which precise opinion was the cardinal Polignac:

Immemor ipse sui, Martis descriptam amorem.

Anti-Lucr. v. 35.

False to his creed, he paints the loves of Mars. Now, allowing that the solution of De Coutures is somewhat too recondite, I can by no means perceive the incoherency complained of by Mr. Hume. The character of Mars is, in the present instance, altogether as allegoric as that of Venus; and the fiction of their union as correct and consistent with the true spirit of allegory, as any fiction that was ever invented. Venus is the poetic type of all female grace and excellence; Mars, of all the qualities of the hero: the one the goddess of beauty; the other the genius of war. What is there then incoherent in the loves of such ideal personages; in their mutual embraces; and the triumph of the former over the latter? The same fact is realized every day in the natural world. It is the very type of the connexion between Alexander and Thais, Marc Antony and Cleopatra, our own Edward and Eleonora. That such an allegory was consonant with the mythology of the Grecian people,
Quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentes,
Concelebras; per te quoniam genus omne animantum

is creditable to the consistency of that mythology itself. But, surely, Lucretius was not to relinquish a beauty of this description, merely because it coincided with the popular faith of his countrymen, or might even be founded upon it. In my mind, it was an additional motive for his having recourse to it; and nothing can, in a greater degree, demonstrate the delicacy of his taste, or the correctness of his judgment.

It is true, he is commencing a poetical essay, with the express purpose of confuting the popular mythology of both Greece and Rome. He asserts repeatedly that the whole system is fictitious, and totally unworthy of credit; but he assails at the same time, that so long as it is regarded as mere fiction, no evil can ensue, and that its beauties are numerous and apposite:

Call, if thou chuse it, the resounding deep
Neptune, and Ceres term the golden grain,
Be Bacchus wine, its vulgar source forgot,
And even this globe of senseless Earth define
Parent of Gods: no harm ensues; but mark,
'Tis fiction all, by vital facts disprovd.'

The address, therefore, introduced at the commencement of this poem, is pure, appropriate allegory, deriving a high degree of beauty from its relation to the popular mythology of the times. Surely, the Abbe St. Pierre must have totally forgotten this, and fifty other passages of a similar tendency, when he thus hastily expressed himself: "Je n'en dirai pas "d'avantage sur ce poete; l'exorde de son poeme en "est la refutation."

The Portuguese poet Camões, than whom no man was ever better acquainted with classical literature, has followed Lucretius in a great part of this very allegory, as he has also in a variety of other conceptions, and in the present instance with peculiar felicity. The deity chiefly introduced into the Lusiad is the Urania-Venus, or heavenly Love of the ancients. Gama, the hero of the piece, is thwarted in his voyage of discovery towards India, by the devices of Bacchus, the chief demon of that country, who, as the voyagers advance towards the Indian highlands, flies with all speed to Neptune, and intreats him to raise a tempest and shipwreck them on the very point of completing their enterprise. The whole is exquisitely delineated. Neptune consents; and the gods of the winds are ordered into immediate action. The storm commences; and its description is perhaps unrivalled. The terrified adventurers are in the utmost danger, and expect every instant to perish. Gama addresses himself to the Almighty, the God of the Christian church, to him who was formerly the refuge of Israel in passing through the Red Sea, and of St. Paul in sailing over "the sandy syrtes of the faithless waves."

The chieftain's prayer is heard: the star of love (amorosa estrella) is discovered in the horizon, prelusive of the approach of Venus herself, who immediately appears, and, in consistency with the power assigned her by Lucretius, averts the impending destruction, puts to flight the winds and the tempests, and restores to the world, peace, serenity, and gladness.

Mas ja a amorosa estrella scintillava,
Dirante do sol claro orizonte,
Mensageira do dia, e visitava
A terra, e o largo mar com ledo fronte;
Venus que nos ceos a governava, &c.

When now the silver star of Love appear'd;
Bright in the east her radiant front the rear'd;
Fair through the horrid storm the gentle ray
Announc'd the promise of the cheerful day;
From her bright throne celestial Love beheld
The tempest burn, and blast on blast impell'd:
Her lovely nymphs the calls, the nymphs obey;
Her nymphs, the virtues who confess her sway;
Round every brow she bids the rose-buds twine,
And every flower adown their locks to shine.—
Bright as a starry band the Nereids drawn,
Instant old Eolus' sons their presence own;
The winds die faintly, and in softest sighs
Each at his fair one's feet desponding lies. Mickle.

Since writing the above, I have looked into the Spanish commentary of Manuel de Faria i Sousa, where I find the same conjecture advanced, that the
BOOK I.

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

And fruitful Earth, as round the Seasons roll,
With Life who swellest, for by thee all live,

personification of Venus by Camoëns, is an imitation of the present passage of Lucretius, whom the learned annotator has, moreover, vindicated at the same time. "Por ventura," says he, "que imité el poeta en esta elección al grande filósofo Lucrecio, que resuelto a cantar de las producciones de la naturaleza no invocó otra deidad sino a Venus, a quien la filosofía antiqua atribuía el título de autora de las cosas alma Venus," &c. : to which he adds, "I esso sin memoria alguna de que Venus pro otro lodo sea deidad lasciva; i por esso la invoca con título de pureza alma Venus, atendiendo a los oficios licitos que ha de hazer en el poema en toda especie de generacion: que es lo a que atendió nuestro poeta haciéndola autora de la produccion de la christianidad, i policia en la Asia."

I am nevertheless afraid that Camoëns cannot so easily be defended as Lucretius, upon the point of allegory; the Portuguese bard having inharmoniously combined the mythology of the Greeks with the doctrines of the Christian church. Hence Mr. Mickle, notwithstanding his defence of Camoëns in this respect, has thought proper in his version to smooth away its more obnoxious prominences, by omitting, in Gama's prayer to the Supreme Being, his reference to St. Paul and the Israelites, and by concealing the pagan term VENUS under the more general and accordant appellation of CELESTIAL LOVE. Yet the impropriety is not greater in thus blending the supernatural agency of the Christian religion with the mythology of the Greeks, than in combining the former with the Gothic machinery of magic and incantation: a practice that was common among Christian poets in every country throughout Europe, till the sublime and harmonious system first introduced by our own Milton into his immortal and unrivalled epic. No critic, however, has less right to be severe upon Camoëns than Voltaire, though no critic has animadverted so harshly; for the former has not only introduced the very same combination of machinery into his Henriad, but has been guilty of the grossest incongruity in arranging it. Instead of following Lucretius and Camoëns, in representing the power of Love as becalming every tempest and restoring tranquility to nature, he has given to Love himself (to Cupid instead of Venus), and in a poem founded upon Christian tenets, the power of exciting the most terrible storms, and of unchaining all the winds and all the lightnings of heaven: and in this manner alone does he separate Henry of Navarre from his companions, and conduct him to the residence of the fair Gabrielle:

Il agite les airs que lui-même a calmés;
Il parle, on voit soudain les elemens armés.
D'un bout du monde à l'autre, appelant les orages,
Sa voix commande aux vents d'assembler les nuages,
De verser les torrens suspendus dans les airs,
Et d'apporter la nuit, la fondre, et les éclairs.

HENRIAD. Liv. 9.

The winds he maddens that he calm'd of late,
He speaks—and all is elemental hate.
From pole to pole his voice terrific flies,
Bids clouds o'er clouds, o'er tempests tempests rise;
Suspended torrents from their fountains fall,
And thunders, lightnings, night, usurp the ball.

With how much more elegance as well as classical propriety is this office allotted by Cambens to old Eolus?

Yet it may be observed, that neither Voltaire nor Camoëns presumed to invoke Venus, or any other of the Grecian deities, for poetic assistance, as Lucretius has done at the commencement of this poem: but neither Voltaire nor Camoëns had the same motive, otherwise there can be no doubt that each would have followed the example thus set before them. Involcations, indeed, either to real or allegoric powers, have been customary among poets in all ages. The practice is of immemorial date; and the man who would venture to begin a poem of importance without it, would be sure to incur the displeasure of the Muses, and perhaps be adjudged guilty of a contempt of court. Hence Vida, in his advice to his pupils, observes, that the best poets of every period have adhered to this usage.
Concipitur, visitque exortum lumina solis:
Te, Dea, te fugiunt ventei; te nubila coeli,
Adventumque tuum: tibi suaveis dædala tellus

Hence Homer and Virgil invoke the muse, without any specific name, in the commencement of their respective poems; Vida and Klopstock, the holy Ghost; Milton, both; Tasso and Sanazaro, the holy Virgin; and Gesner, an impersonification of enthusiasm. Dante and Ariosto, indeed, have occasionally adopted more extraordinary invocations still; and the objections of the critics will certainly apply to them with but little possibility of palliation; for the former, in the third canto of his Divina Comedia, and the latter, in the same canto of his Orlando Furioso, address the pagan god Apollo with little that can be called pure allegoric allusion, and with very much of the paraphernalia of the popular Grecian mythology.

The cardinal Polignac, who strenuously opposed the philosophy of the Roman bard, and of all other deists or atheists, ancient or modern, in a poem entitled Anti-Lucretius, of which I have already given some account in the preface, and who, so far as relates to poetic ornaments, was a frequent copyist of our author, did not indeed dare to imitate him in the present instance. Like that of Vida and Klopstock, the invocation he has adopted is addressed to the holy Ghost. It is possessed of no small share of beauty, however; and the reader will doubtless be pleased with an opportunity of comparing the addresses of these antagonist poets together.

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Te causa et regula mundi
Omnipotens, ætarna dei sapientia, virtus,
Et mens, et ratio, vitæ dux optima nostræ,
Ipseque lux animi, te solam in vota vocabo,
Hunc ades, et vati longum da ferre laborem.
Per te cuncta suo stant ordine, cuncta videri
Tandem, et nativis possunt emergere ab umbris;
In te discendi nobis innata voluntas
Pascitur, et veri nunquam satiatus cupidio.
Incute vim dictis, propriamque ulciscere causam.

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Ver. i. 1. — by gods and men belov'd,

Benignant Venus! thou the sail-clad main, &c.]

The greater part of this address to Venus has been beautifully translated by Spenser, and introduced into his Fairy Queen. It occurs in B. iv. cant. 10, and the merit of the passage induces me to transcribe it.

Great Venus! queene of beauty, and of grace,
The joy of gods and men, that under skie Doost fairest shine, and most adorn thy place;
That with thy smiling looke doostpacifie
The raging seas, and mak'st the storms to fie:
Thee, goddesse! thee, the winds, the clowdes do feare;
BOOK I.

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

And, living, hail the cheerful light of day:
Thee, Goddess, at thy glad approach, the winds,
The tempests fly: dedalian Earth to thee

And when thou spread'st thy mantle forth on him,
The waters play, and pleasant lands appear,
And heavens laugh, and all the world shewes joyous cheer.

Then doth the daedale earth throw forth to thee,
Out of her fruitful lap, abundant flowers:
And then all living wights, soon as they see
The spring break forth out of his lusty bowres,
They all do learn to play the paramours:
First do the merry birds, thy pretty pages,
Privily pricked with thy lustful powres,
Chirp loud to thee out of their leavy cages,
And thee, their mother, call to coole their kindly rages.

Then do the salvage beasts begin to play
Their pleasant frisks, and loath their wonted food;
The lions roar, the tigres loudly bray;
The raging bulls rebellow thro' the wood,
And, breaking forth, dare tempt the deepest flood,
To come where thou dost draw them with desire:
So all things else that nourish vital blood,
Soone as with fury thou dost them inspire,
In generation seek to quench their inward fire.

From thee are all things; all things spring from thee
In heaven above, the many-peopled earth,
In ocean, or th' abyss.

It seems probable, however, that Lucretius himself is an imitator in the commencement of this address, and that his eye was directed to the following verses in the orphic hymn to Venus, or Aphrodite:

Panta gai ek onihe esto—gyias di te panta
O bella Venere
Madra d'amore:
O bella Venere
Che sola sei
Piacer degli uomini
E degli dei, &c.

From thee are all things;—all things spring from thee
In heaven above, the many-peopled earth,
In ocean, or th' abyss.

Ver. 6. Thee, Goddess, at thy glad approach, the winds,
The tempests fly:—] Much of Lucretius has been copied or imitated, as I have just observed, by poets in all ages and nations. An obvious imitation of these, and the two following lines, are to be met with in the very beautiful and animated Spanish poem, entitled Araucana, by Alonzo Ercilla, a bard of much celebrity, who flourished towards the close of the sixteenth century, and with whom the English reader is in some measure acquainted, by the abstract Mr. Hayley has given of this gallant and spirited production, in Vol. IV. of his "POEMS and PLAYS."

The subject of this epic is the warfare between the Spanish invading troops and the undaunted natives of Arauco, a district in the province of Chili in South America. The Indian demon, Epamanon, had appeared in most fearful array over the Spanish forces,
Submitit Flores; tibi Rident æquora ponti,
Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine ceelum.
Nam, simul ac species patefacta est verna diei,
Et reserata viget genitabilis aura Favonii;

begirt, like winter, with storms, and clouds, and
terrible darkness. Having delivered his dreadful man-
date to the affrighted troops, he dissolves again
into air, and vanishes from sight. Then, observes
Ercilla,

Al punto los confusos clementos
Fueron sus movimientos aplacando,
Y los desenfrenados quatro vientos,
Se van á sus cavernas retirando.
Las nubes se retraen á sus asientos
El cieelo y claro sol desocupando.
Quick as he vanish'd, nature's struggles cease;
The troubled elements are sooth'd to peace.
The winds no longer rage with boundless ire,
But, hush'd in silence, to their caves retire;
The clouds disperse, restoring, as they fly,
The unobstructed sun, and azure sky.

Hayley.

A more general imitation still is to be met with in
the Fasti of Ovid, as was long ago observed by
Bentley, from whose notes Mr. Wakefield has intro-
duced it into his own correct and elegant edition:

Ilia quidem tptum dignissima temperat orbem,
Ilia tenet nullo regna minora deo:
Juraque dat
Oslo,
terrae,
natalibus undis;
Perque suos initus continet
Gttmt genus.
Ilia deos omnes (longum enumerare) creavit;
Ilia satis catissas, arboribusque dedit:
Ilia rudes animos hominum contraxit in unum,
Et docuit Jungi cum pare quemque sua.
Quid genus omne creat Wwntm, nisi
Wanda vvluptas,
Nee coeant pecudes, si levis absit Amor?

Fatt. iv. 91.

Sublime, she modulates th' attemper'd world,
And times and tides to herbs and harvests gives.
Rude savage man forth from the wilds she led,
And bound with social and domestic ties.
What rears the feathery tribes but genial love?
But love, what stings the flocks with fierce desire?

To notice, however, all the copies which have origi-
nated from this beautiful address, would be endless.
I will only add the following of Dr. Darwin, both
because he admits it to be a copy, in a subjoined note,
and because he has copied with spirit. He is descri-
bining the approach of Eros or Cupid instead of Venus:
the son instead of the mother:
Earth, at his feet, extends her flowery bed,
And bends her silver blossoms round his head;
Dark clouds dissolve, the warring winds subside,
And smiling ocean calms his tossing tide.
O'er the bright noon meridian lustres play,
And heaven salutes him with a flood of day.

Temp. of Nat.

Ver. 8. Purs forth her sweetest flower's; Ocean
laughs] Between the two images described in
this verse, Creecic, in his translation, has introduced
four or five lines, which have no prototype in any
copy of the original, at least in any I have ever seen:
The earth with various art (for thy warm pow'r's
The dull mass feels) puts forth her gaudy flowers:
[For thee doth subtle luxury prepare
The choicest stores of earth, and sea, and air;
To welcome thee she comes profusely drest
With all the spices of the wanton East;
To pleasure thee e'en lazy luxury toils;
]
The roughest sea puts on smooth looks and smiles.

His annotator on these verses informs us that the
supplemental lines are an improvement of the transla-
tor upon his author. That they are an addition
must be confess'd: the improvement is not quite so
obvious.
Pours forth her sweetest flow’rets; Ocean laughs,  
And the blue Heavens in cloudless splendour deck’d.  
For, when the Spring first opes her frollick eye,  
And genial Zephyrs long lock’d up respire,
Aërisæ primum volucres te, Diva, tuumque
Significant initum, perculsæ corda tua vi.
Inde ferae pecudes persaltant pabula læta,
Et rapidos tranant amneis: ita, capta lepore,
[Inlecebrisque tuis omnis natura animantum]
Te sequitur cupide, quo quamque inducere pergis.
Denique, per maria, ac monteis, fluviosque rapaceis,
Frondiferasque domos avium, camposque virentes,
Omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem,
Ecficis, ut cupide generatim secla propagent.

Ver. 12. Thee, Goddess, then, the aerial birds—
Mr. Wakefield has justly observed that Virgil has
happily imitated this passage in his Georgics:
Avia tum resonant avibus virgulta canoris,
Et Venerem certis repetunt armenta diebus.
Parturit almus ager; zephyrique tepcentibus amis
Laxant arva sinus: superat tener omnibus hu
mor:
Inque novos soles audent se gramina tuto
Credere : nec metuit surgentes pampinus austros,
Aut actum ccelo magnis aquilonibus imbrem :
Sed trudit gemmas, et frondes explicat omnes.

Thus elegantly translated by Mr. Sotheby:
Birds on their branches hymeneals sing,
The pastured meads with bridal echoes ring;
Bath’d in soft dew, and fann’d by western winds,
Each field its bosom to the gale unbinds;
The blade dares boldly rise, new suns beneath,
The tender vine puts forth her flexile wreath,
And freed from southern blast, and northern shower,
Spreads without fear each blossom, leaf, and flower.

The greater part of this address to Venus has like-
wise been obviously imitated by Statius, a frequent
copyist of our poet, in his address to the Terra Mater.
O hominum divumque asterna creatrix
Que fluvios, sylvasque, animasque, et semina mundi
Cuncta, Prometheasque manus, Pyrrhaeque saxa,
Gignis, et impartis que prima alimenta dediti,
Mutastique viros; que pontum ambusque, vehisque,
Te penes et pecudum gens mitis, et ira ferarum,
Et volucrum requies; firmum atque immobile mundi
Robur innocidui.

O source eternal both of gods and men!
Who woods, and floods, and mortals, and the seeds
Rear’d at the world—the stones, and plastic hand
Of Pyrrha and Prometheus, and the stores,
First given, renew’st—renew’st the race of man,
And round the main thy mighty bound propell’st; the
The flock’s gay gambols, and the forest-ire,
The lull of birds, alike thou sway’st supreme,
The firm, fast pillar of the restless world.

But Statius, and most other imitators of Lucretius,
are exceeded by Petrarc, in the following admirable
verses:
Book I.  

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Thee, Goddess, then, th’ aerial birds confess,
To rapture stung through every shivering plume:
Thee, the wild herds; hence, o’er the joyous glebe
Bounding at large; or, with undaunted chest,
Stemming the torrent tides. Through all that lives
So, by thy charms, thy blandishments o’erpower’d,
Springs the warm wish thy footsteps to pursue:
Till through the seas, the mountains, and the floods,
The verdant meads, and woodlands fill’d with song,
Spurr’d by desire each palpitating tribe.
Hastes, at thy shrine, to plant the future race.

Ver. 12. — *th’ aerial birds* — [ Hence Pope, with a reference well worthy of himself: 
Or fetch th’ aerial eagle to the ground.

Ver. 13. — *To rapture stung through every shivering plume* — [ To the same effect, Thomson:
‘Tis love creates their melody, and all
This waste of music is the voice of love;

That e’en to birds, and beasts, the tender arts
Of pleasing teaches. Hence the glossy kind
Try every winning way inventive love
Can dictate; and in courtship to their mates
Pour forth their little souls;—
In fond rotation spread the spotted wing,
And shiver every feather with desire.

Of the entire passage, the following is a more general imitation, by Mr. Roucher, in his "Months:"

L’amour vole, il a pris son essor vers la terre:
Depuis l’oiseau qui plane au foyer du tonnerre,
Jusqu’aux monstres errants sous les flots orageux,
Tout reconnaît l’amour, tout brille de ces feux.
Dans un gras pâturage, il dessèche, il consume
Le coursier inondé d’une bouillante écume;
Le livre tout entier aux fureurs des désirs,
De ses larges naseaux qu’il présente aux zéphyrts,
L’animal, arrêté sur les monts de la Thrace,
De son épouse errante interroge la trace.
Ses esprits vagabonds l’ont à peine frappé,
Il part, il franchit tout, fleuve, mont escarpé,
Précipice, torrent, désert; rien ne l’arrête;
Il arrive, il triomphe, et, fier de sa conquête,
Les yeux étincelans, repose à ses côtés.

CHANT. V.
Quæ quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas,
Nec sine te quidquam dias in luminum oras
Exoritur, neque fit lætum neque amabile quidquam;
Te sociam studeò scribundis versibus esse,
Quos ego de rerum natura pangere conor
Memmiadē nostro; quem tu, Dea, tempore in omni
Omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus:
Quo magis æternum da dictis, Diva, leporem.
Ecce, ut interea fera mœnera militiaē,
Par maria ac terras omnēs, sopita, quiescant.
Nam tu sola potes tranquillâ pace juvare
Mortaleis: quoniam belli fera mœnera Mavors

Mnestheus commands the Pristis, swift of oar,
Italian Mnestheus, whence the Memmii spring.
The Memmius whose patronage Lucretius here bespeaks, arrived at different and distinguished dignities in the Roman republic. During his praetorship he obtained the government of the province of Bithynia, and was afterwards appointed one of the tribunes of the people; an office his uncle had held with the highest reputation to himself, and benefit to the republic. It was this elder Memmius who first excited the Roman citizens to investigate the infamous conduct of Jugurtha, and accused the senate of venality and corruption. He procured an order for the former to be summoned to the forum, from the very center of the kingdom of Numidia; and boldly reprimanded him, when he appeared before the people, for his iniquitous conduct. But the city that, a few years afterwards, banished the virtuous Metellus, was already unworthy of the patriotic and undaunted spirit of Caius Memmius. He fell a sacrifice to the lawless violence of Apuleius and Glaucia, during the comitia for the election of consuls, to which office these ambitious desperadoes were fearful he would have been chosen.
Book I.

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Since, then, with universal sway thou rul'st,
And thou alone; nor aught without thee springs,
Aught gay or lovely; thee I woo to guide
Aright my flowing song, that aims to paint
To Memmius' view the essences of things:
Memmius, my friend, by thee, from earliest youth,
O Goddess! led, and train'd to every grace.
Then, O, vouchsafe thy favour, power divine!
And with immortal eloquence inspire.
Quell, too, the fury of the hostile world,
And lull to peace, that all the strain may hear.
For peace is thine: on thy soft bosom he,

For a farther account of Caius Memmius Gemellus,
I refer the reader to the life of Lucretius, prefixed
to this volume.

Ver. 32. Quell, too, the fury of the hostile world, &c.] An ancient commentator upon Statius has justly commended this and the two ensuing verses of Lucretius, in an annotation upon the following passage, which is hence obviously borrowed:

O! mitis bellorum requies, et sacra voluptas,
Unaque pax animo; soli cui tanta potestas
Divorumque, hominumque meis occurrere telis
Impune, et media quamvis in caede fremens
Hos assistere equos, hunc ensim avellere dextra.

O thou, my balm in war, my dear delight,
And minds sole quiet—thou, of gods and men,
Unhurt my fatal arms alone who dar'st,—
Dar'st, in the rage of battle, from the chief
To snatch the uplifted sword, or, with prompt aid,
Succour the affrighted courser.—

Ver. 34. —on thy soft bosom he, &c.] The description of this amour is voluptuous, without being indelicate: and on this latter account more especially, Lucretius has very considerably the advantage of either Ariosto or Tasso. Milton perhaps, but Milton alone, excels him, in his picture of the loves of our first parents, in the garden of Eden. The purity of this painting is indeed only equalled by its elegance.

So spake our general mother, and with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unreprov'd,
And meek surrender, half-embracing lean'd
On our first father: half her swelling breast
Naked met his, under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid. He, in delight
Both of her beauty, and submissive charms,
Smiled with superior love, and press'd her lips
With kisses pure.

Par. Lost, iv. 493.

Camões, who, as I have observed before (see Note on ver. 1.), has imitated Lucretius in attributing to Venus the power of tranquillizing every storm, and restoring happiness to nature, probably had his eye also directed to this elegant delineation of the same deity, in his account of her approach to Jupiter, with a petition in favour of De Gama. The painting is
Armipotens regit, in gremium qui sæpe tuum se
Rejicit, æterno devictus volnere amoris:
Atque ita, suspiciens tereti cervice reposta,
Pascit amore avidos, inhians in te, Dea, visus;

so truly beautiful and delicate, that it may even be
quoted after the above passage in Milton. It occurs
in the second canto of most of the editions of the
Lusiad, but is unaccountably omitted in the small
copy of Manuel de Lyra, published at Lisbon in
1584. Gonçalves had previously inserted it in his
of 1572; and Faria i Sousa has, with much pro-
priety, restored it in his splendid and illustrative edi-
tion of 1639:

Os crespos fios douro se eparrzam
Pello colo, que a neve escurecia
Andando as lacteas tetas lhe tremiam
Com quem amor brincava, e nam se via;
Da alva patrina flamas lhe saiam,
Onde o minino as almas acendia.
Polas lisas columnas lhe trepavaéo,
Desejos, que como era se enrolavão, &c.

Adown her neck, more white than virgin snow,
Of softest hue the golden tresses flow;
Her heaving breasts, of purer, softer white
Than snow-hills glistening in the moon's pale light,
Except where covered by the sash, were bare,
And love, unseen, smiled soft, and panted there.
Nor less the zone the god's fond zeal employs,
The zone awakes the flames of secret joys.
As ivy tendrils, round her limbs divine,
Their spreading arms the young desires entwine;
Below her waist, and quivering on the gale,
Of thinnest texture flows the silken veil,
(Ah! where the lucid curtain dimly shows,
With double fires the roving fancy glows!)
The hand of modesty the foldings threw,
Nor all conceal'd, nor all was given to view.

MICHE.

Ver. 36. Struck by triumphant love's eternal wound
Thus Virgil, imitating the same passage:

Tum pater æterno fatur devinctus amore.

Then thus the sire, by love eternal struck.

In the following of Petrarc, the similitude is equal,
but results from a different idea:

Ma le ferite impresse
Volgon per forza il cor piegato altrove
Ond' io divento smorto;
E'l sangue si nasconde, i non so dove.

The wounds she then made me sustain
Fix'd my wandering heart on the fair;
I grew pale through each limb with the pain,
And my blood fled—I cannot tell where.

Ver. 38. On thee he feeds his longing lingering eyes.

In the original, "pascit amore avidos—visus," literally
"feeds his voracious eyes with love." Thus
Virgil, adopting the same metaphor,

—animum pictura pascit inani.

He, with th' unsolid picture, feeds his mind.

And Claudian, with a still closer reference to Lu-
cretius:

Illecebris capitur,
nimiumque elatus,
Avaro
Pascitur intuitu.

Rufin. i. 164.

Her charms entrance him, and, with love elate,
He feeds his eyes voracious.

This elegant comparison of the fascinating power
of love to a delicious and intoxicating feast, has by
no means been disregarded by modern poets: but, in
general, the latter have rather employed the intoxi-
cating cup, in their similes, than the more solid viands
of the banquet; a deviation of which Apuleius set
an early example. Thus, lib. iii. of his Transfor-
mation into an Ass: Admissis et sorbillantibus suaviis,
sitienter hauriebam; "Thirsty I drank the soft con-
duced kisses." And thus Boccaccio: E non accor-
gendosi, riguardandola, dell'amoroso veleno, che egli
con gli occhi bevea. ALATIEL. "Unconscious, while
BOOK I. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

The warlike field who sways, almighty Mars,
Struck by triumphant Love's eternal wound,
Reclines full frequent: with uplifted gaze
On thee he feeds his longing, lingering eyes,

"he beheld her, of the amorous poison which he
"drank in with his eyes."

Among the Asiatics this imagery is extremely common; and many of their most favourite metaphors are hence derived. Thus Ferdusi, in his Shah Nameh:

لَبِّ يِرَازَ مِي بِبُوِّي كَلَابَ

Lips sweet as wine, and fragrant as the rose.

So Hafiz, the pride of the bowers of Shiraz, with more amplification still:

برِمَخِ سَاتِي بِرَبِّي كَدَ

 הפרוה خانظ پنوج باده ناب

Drink then kisses sweet as wine
From thy favourite damsel's cheek;
Never shall her like be thine,
Though through paradise thou seek.

In my notes on the Song of Songs, I have given many other instances of the same figure. Solomon himself was indeed equally attached to it. Thus in the opening apostrophe of the royal bride, Chap. i. 1.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth;
For thy love is delicious above wine.

And again, in the following passage, in which the simile equally refers to both eating and drinking; the royal lover, having previously compared his fair bride to a garden or paradise of sweets, on which he was panting to banquet, Chap. ii. 8.

Eat, O my friend! drink,
Yea, drink abundantly, O my beloved!

Perhaps the most exquisite simile of this kind that occurs in modern poetry is to be found in the elegant and well-known song of B. Jonson, generally sung as a glee. It is a direct imitation indeed from the Greek of Philostratus, but the copy is superior to its original; and there is a degree of moral truth and sublimity in the two first lines of the following stanza, which elevates them above all praise.

Vol. I.

The thirst that in the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine.

In the following, Mr. Sotheby proves that he is by no means an unapt scholar in the imitative arts. It occurs in his spirited and harmonious version of Wieland's Oberon; but its merit is certainly, for the most part, his own; the idea conveyed in the original not exactly corresponding to the imagery exhibited in the translation. The passage is a part of the sixth canto of this fanciful and highly finished poem, and occupies the 54th stanza of the German.

Sie ist nun ganz für Hün neugeboren,
Gab alles, was sie wus, für ihn, &c.

Amanda, too, o'erpower'd with fond desires,
To long-lost joys restor'd, thus warmly press'd,
Resigns herself, caressing and carest,
To each warm kiss that wak'ning passion fires.

His mouth the never-sated draught renew'd,
And from her lip, in sweet voluptuous dew,
Drinks deep oblivion of foreboded woes.

Such are the beauties to which the imagery, and, in some instances, the immediate passage before us, has given birth. The following, however, is an example of false taste, and a case in which it ought not to have been copied. It occurs in the Syphilis of Fracastorio, a poem which is nevertheless possessed of much general merit.

Ulcera (prole divum pietatem !) informia pulchros
Pascebat oculos, et die luces amorem,
Pascebatque acri corrosas vulnera nare. L. i.

Foul ulcers fed (kind heav'n's!) the beauteous eye,
The day's sweet lustre; fed, with acrid grume,
Th' eroded nostrils.

This passage requires no comment. The absurdity of applying a metaphor, that should be sacred to delicate and agreeable subjects alone, to so foul and fetid an exhibition, must be obvious to every one.
Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.

Hunc tu, Diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto
Circumfusa super, suaveis ex ore loquelas
Funde, petens placidam Romanis, incluta, pacem.
Nam neque nos agere hoc patriæ tempore iniquo
Possumus æquo animo; nec Memmii clara propago
Talibus in rebus communi deesse saluti.

Quod super est, vacuas aureis mihi, Memmius, et te,
Semotum a curis, adhibe veram ad rationem:
Ne mea dona, tibi studio disposta fidelis,
Intellecta prius quam sint, contempta relinquas.
Nam tibi de summâ cœli ratione deûmque

In quoting the whole of this description, with high eommendation, I am surprised that this manifest incongruity should have escaped, as it has done, the eagle eye of Dr. Warton. See his Reflections on Didactic Poetry.

Ver. 39. And all his soul hangs quivering from thy lips.] It is as little possible to do justice to the original of this line as of the foregoing, v. 38.

Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.

An idea somewhat analogous is to be found in edc vii. of Anacreon.

Καρδιν ἐν μοι αἷμα Heavy
Ἀνθισμένη καὶ αἰσχυῶσιν.
Now to my lips my heart was flying,
And all my quivering soul was dying.

But perhaps the nearest approximation, in point of merit, is to be traced in the justly celebrated ode of Sappho, so admirably translated by Catullus into Latin, and by Phillips into our own language:

—τοιοῦ ταύ
Καρδίαι τι στίγμαι ὑπήκοα
Ως ἓδο στι, βραχχοὶ ὑμοί γαρ αὐδας
Οὐδείς ἐδ结合 translate

'Twas this bereav'd my soul of rest,
And rais'd such tumults in my breast;
For subtle I gaz'd, in transport toss'd,
My breath was gone, my voice was lost.

It has generally been allowed that the whole of this exquisite invocation is original. St. Pierre is the only critic I have met with who does our poet the injustice to contend, that it is a copy; and the reader will smile when he is informed that the worthy Abbé suspects him to have been pilfering from the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus. The passage to which he refers is contained in chap. 24, from ver. 5 to ver. 27. Of this sublime delineation he has given a version in French prose, as he has also of the present address of Lucretius, for a companion with each other; and having finished the former, he thus concludes:

„Cette foible traduction est celle d'une prose Latine qui a été traduite elle-même du Grec, comme le Grec l'a été lui-même de l'Hebreu. On doit donc présumer que la grace de l'original en ont disparu en partie. Mais telle qu'elle est, elle l'emporte encore, par l'agrément et la sublimité des images sur les vers de Lucrèce qui paraît avoir emprunté ses principales beautés.” Etudes de la Nature, Tom. ii. etud. 8. I freely confess that I have met
And all his soul hangs quiv’ring from thy lips.  
O! while thine arms in fond embraces clasp  
His panting members, sov’reign of the heart!  
Ope thy bland voice, and intercede for Rome.  
For, while th’ unsheathed sword is brandish’d, vain  
And all unequal is the poet’s song;  
And vain th’ attempt to claim his patron’s ear.  
Son of the Memmi! thou, benignant, too,  
Freed from all cares, with vacant ear attend;  
Nor turn, contemptuous, ere the truths I sing,  
For thee first harmoniz’d, are full perceiv’d.  
Lo! to thy view I spread the rise of things;  
with such frequent parallelisms of expression, of figure and phrasology, in Lucretius, with what occur in the Hebrew Scriptures, of which the reader will find many pointed out to him as he proceeds, that I am myself half-tempted to believe the Roman poet was no stranger, either to their existence, or their bold poetic beauties: yet I can trace no sufficient similarity between the passages in question, to render it, in my own opinion, probable that the one is a copy of the other. Let the reader, however, consult for himself. If Lucretius were in reality acquainted with the sacred books of the Jews, it was perhaps by means of some persons of this nation, who were resident at Rome, through which city great numbers of Jews were at this period scattered, as there were also throughout all Greece, and almost every part of the Roman dependencies. It was probably from the same source that Virgil, not long afterwards, derived his knowledge of the prophecies of Isaiah; and Longinus, still later, his acquaintance with the cosmogony of Moses. It should be remembered also, that the Hebrew Scriptures had been long translated into Greek, by the seventy interpreters, who flourished in the reign of Ptolemy, and executed their version at his express desire. In consequence of which Dr. Warton openly asserts, that Theocritus was well acquainted with this version, and copied largely from the Song of Songs into his own Idylls. Dr. Hodgson, indeed, maintains the same with respect to Anacreon: but it is often difficult to distinguish between original parallelisms and imitations; and hence the following, from Thomson, may or may not be a copy:

The mingl’d passions that surpris’d his heart,  
And through his nerves in shiv’ring transport ran?

Autumn, 255.

Ver. 43. For, while th’ unsheathed sword is brandish’d,—] For an account of the probable period of time when Lucretius began his poem on the Nature of Things, see note on ver. 1. of this book. His address to Venus, for the restoration of permanent peace, was not, however, attended with much success; since for more than half a century after the termination of the Jugurthic war, the republic was still violently and perpetually agitated by the ambi-
Disserere incipiam, et rerum primordia pandam;
Unde omneis natura creet res, auctet, alatque;
Quoque eadem rursum natura perempta resolvat:
Quae nos materiem et generalia corpora rebus
Reddundâ in ratione vocare, et semina rerum
Adpellare suëmus, et haec eadem usurpare
Corpora prima, quod ex illis sunt omnia primis.

[Omnis enim per se divêm natura necesse est
Inmortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur,

Ver. 57. Far, far from mortals, &c.] It is much
doubted by some of the best commentators, whether
the six lines in the original, answering to the present
and five following verses, be not an interpolation, or,
at least, erroneously introduced by transcribers into
the present place. They, at least, discover a certain
want of connection with both the antecedent and suc-
cceeding sentences. They are not, says Mr. Wake-

field, to be found in many copies both manuscript
and printed; certainly not in the manuscript at Ve-
rona, nor in three other copies which I have collected
in this country. Bentley regarded them as intro-
duced in this place unconnectedly, and without any
reference. And in the margin of the Cambridge
manuscript, some ancient annotator has written,
"These six verses are transposed into this position
from Book II. not on the authority of the poet, but
from the ignorance of his copyists." It is on this
account they are included, in the original, in brackets;
a mark which is here, and in several other places, de-
signed to express a doubt.

They contain, however, the idea of ease and tran-
quillity, which Homer had long before represented
as the common inheritance of the popular gods; al-
though, according to the latter, this tranquillity was
sometimes interrupted by contests among themselves,
as well as by the daring obstinacy and opposition of
mankind: but, excepting in such casual instances of
mental commotion, they were Θεοι ἴδια ζωοτες, Diï
tranquilli viventes, or, as Mr. Pope expresses it,
Immortals blest with endless ease.

A passage, the Greek of which Milton perhaps had
in his recollection, when he wrote in his Paradise
Lost,

—Thou wilt bring me soon
to that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease.

Silius Italicus was impressed with the same idea;
and hence, in describing the deity, says
Imperturbatâ placidus tenet otia mente.
Calm is his quiet, undisturb'd his mind.

The "immortal gods" of the Epicurean system
are, however, of a very different description from
those of the Greek and Roman populace, and are no
where in the poem before us represented as the crea-
tors of the world, or as objects of religious worship.
They appear, indeed, to be the very same order of
existences as the "gods" of Milton, created and
blessed spirits, endowed with endless duration, and
possessed of far superior faculties to man. They are,
therefore, as different from the popular deities of
Greece and Rome, as these last are from the christian
Book I. 

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Unfold th’ immortals, and their blest abodes:
How Nature all creates, sustains, matures,
And how, at length, dissolves; what forms the mass,
Term’d by the learned, Matter, Seeds of Things,
And generative Atoms, or, at times
Atoms primordial, as hence all proceeds.

Far, far from mortals, and their vain concerns,
In peace perpetual dwell th’ immortal Gods:
Each self-dependent, and from human wants

orders of angels and archangels. Respecting the essence of these angelic beings Lucretius seems in some measure undetermined. In Book V. 154, he represents them as totally uncompounded of matter, and consequently incapable of either affecting or being affected by material bodies, from the want of some common property.

For their immortal nature far remov’d
From human sense, from matter gross and dull,
Scarce by the mind’s pure spirit can be trac’d.

And, thus, th’ immortal regions must from ours
Wide vary, congruous to their purer frames.

Yet in Book vi. 77, he obviously intimates, that by profound meditation, and abstraction from the world, the solitary soul may attain some slender knowledge of the essence of these pure spirits; and imbibe some portion of their tranquillity and happiness. He asserts, in various places, consistently with the doctrine of species or effluences developed in Book iv. that effigies of these divinities are perpetually flowing from their persons. In Book v. 1192, he expressly declares that mankind, in the commence-ment of the world, before the mind was distracted by an infinity of cares and occupations, traced these effigies not unfrequently amidst their solitary musings, and were conscious of their presence in their midnight dreams. And he informs us, in many places, that Epicurus was much accustomed to such religious abstractions; and that by such abstractions he became divinely illuminated. The whole system, indeed, bears the most obvious resemblance, as I have before observed, to that of Milton in his Paradise Lost, excepting that Lucretius, far from assigning to his divinities the superintendance of the planets, represents them as totally unaffected by every transaction that occurs. For a farther account of this system, the reader may consult the prefixed life of our poet.

Epicurus, however, was not the only philosopher of ancient Greece who admitted the existence of such an order of secondary gods as is here referred to. Plato allowed the same, and apparently to a much greater extent in point of number. Like Epicurus, moreover, he conceived that, although they were the production of the supreme and ineffable principle, they were at the same time self-existent, and independent. Between the two propositions, of creation and self-existence, there seems indeed to be no small degree of discrepancy: but how far the attributes of self-existence and independence may be bestowed on any order of created beings, by the Creator himself, it is not perhaps for our limited capacities to ascertain completely. It is sufficient to observe, on the present occasion, that several of the Greek philosophers appear to have imagined that it was not only possible but actual.
DE RERUM NATURA.  

Semota ab nostris rebus, sejunctaque longe;
Nam, privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
Nec bene promeritis capitum, nec tangitur ira.

Humana ante oculos fede quom vita jaceret
In terris, obpressa gravi sub Religione;
Quae caput a coeli regionibus obtendebat,
Horribili super adspectu mortalibus instans;
Primum Graius homo mortaleis tollere contra
Est oculos ausus, primusque obsistere contra:

Ver. 62. *Vice no revenge, no rapture virtue prompts.*  
This verse has given great offence to many of the commentators, who appear to have been incapable of separating the idea of the immortals, whom our poet supposes to exist, like the angels or archangels of the Christian system, in the possession of all felicity, but nevertheless as secondary powers alone, from the idea of one eternal and intelligent First Cause. Lanctantius, therefore, bursts forth into the following animadversion upon what he erroneously conceived to be its tendency: *Dissolvitur autem religio si credamus Epicuro illa dicenti. De Ir. Dis. 8. “All religion vanishes from us the moment we credit this position of Epicurus.”* But, independently of this conception relative to their blessed or immaterial spirits, the Epicureans never believed that the Deity, or great First Cause himself, at any time, interfered with the moral world; since such an interference would, in their opinion, have been at once subversive of the free-agency of the mind, and have reduced mankind to so many passive machines. Epicurus, says a writer who was well versed in his system, taught, that whatever relates to moral actions, God never attempts to controul, but only what relates to the nature of the physical world: καὶ Ἐπικούριος δὲ κατέ

Ver. 65. *the gloomy power of Superstition swayed.*  
The word here translated *superstition* is in the original religio, and has generally, to the present time, been rendered by the translators of our poet in every language, *religion.* Even Marchetti has followed the common example.  

Giacca l’umana vita oppressa e stanca
Sotto religio grave e severa.

And much odium has been thrown upon the Roman bard, for the impiety he is here supposed to exhibit. But without minutely entering at present into the theology of the Epicureans, it is obvious, from the instance he shortly afterwards adduces—that, I mean, of the sacrifice of Iphigenia—that the religion to which he immediately adverts is the superstitious tenets and practices that were popular among his own countrymen, and the pagan world at large. And surely there could be no impiety in ridiculing such a senseless mass of religion as this; since atheism itself must have been far less impious than the doctrines it inculcated.  

It is but just, however, to observe that Evelyn
Estrang’d for ever. There, nor pain pervades,
Nor danger threatens; every passion sleeps;
Vice no revenge, no rapture virtue prompts.

Not thus Mankind. Them long the tyrant power
Of Superstition sway’d, uplifting proud
Her head to heaven, and with horrific limbs
Brooding o’er earth; till he, the man of Greece,
Auspicious rose, who first the combat dar’d,
And broke in twain the monster’s iron rod.
Quem neque fana deūm, nec fulmina, nec minitanti
Murmure compressit caelum; sed eo magis acrem
Inritat animi virtutem, ecfringere ut arta
Naturæ primus portarum claustra cupret.
Ergo vivida vis animi pervicit, et extra
Processit longe flammantia moenia mundi;
Atque omne inmensum peragravit mente animoque:
Unde refert nobis victor, quid possit oriri,
Quid nequeat; finita potestas denique quoique
Qua nam sit ratione, atque alte terminus hærens.
Qua re Religio, pedibus subjecta, vicissim
Obteritur, nos exæquat victoria caelo.
Illud in his rebus vereor, ne forte rearis
Infia te rationis inire elementa, viamque
Indugredi sceleris; quod contra sæpius illa
Religio peperit scelerosa atque inpia facta.
Aulide quo pacto Triviaï virginis aram
Iphianassaï turparunt sanguine fede
Ductores Danaûm delecti, prima virorum:

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Ver. 73. —the flaming walls
Of heaven to scale,—] It is by this appellation our poet beautifully describes the ethereal or superior portion of the atmosphere of the mundane system, which bounds, as with a sapphire wall, the whole of its vast contents. For a more full and philosophic meaning, however, of this expression, the reader may turn to note on ver. 1112 of the present book. Gray has obviously imitated this verse of Lucretius, in his Progress of Poesy:

He passed the flaming bounds of place and time.
No thunder him, no fell revenge pursu'd
Of heaven incens'd, or deities in arms.
Urg'd rather, hence, with more determin'd soul,
To burst through Nature's portals, from the crowd
With jealous caution clos'd; the flaming walls
Of heaven to scale, and dart his dauntless eye,
Till the vast whole beneath him stood display'd.
Hence taught he us, triumphant, what might spring,
And what forbear: what powers inherent lurk,
And where their bounds, and issues. And, hence, we,
Triumphant, too, o'er Superstition rise,
Contemn her terrors, and unfold the heavens.

Nor deem the truths Philosophy reveals
Corrupt the mind, or prompt to impious deeds.
No: Superstition may, and nought so soon,
But Wisdom never. Superstition 'twas
Urg'd the fell Grecian Chiefs, with virgin blood,
To stain the virgin altar. Barbarous deed!
And fatal to their laurels! Aulis saw,
For there Diana reigns, th' unholy rit
Around she look'd; the pride of Grecian maids,

And Milton, at least equally impressed with its
beauty, has dilated upon it as follows:
Far off th' empyreal heaven extended wide,
With opal towers, and battlements adorn'd,
Of living sapphire.

Par. Lost, ii. 1047.

Ver. 89. Around she look'd; the pride of Grecian
maids;] This little episode is well selected,
and inimitably related. On the subject it is designed
to exemplify, it is altogether to the point. It was a
story well known to the world, from the time of
Homer to Euripides, from whom Lucretius has bor-
rowed many of his most delicate touches. But he has given the entire tale a different, and, in my judgment, a more natural action, as well as one more consistent with the narration of the best historians. Instead of painting that sorrow and affliction of mind which our poet has here so correctly delineated, Euripides gives the unfortunate princess the character of a heroine, voluntarily offering herself as a victim for the good of her country, and of Greece at large.

The Greek tragedian has also introduced a different termination, and represented the fair victim as removed by a miracle from the sacred grove, at the moment she was on the point of being immolated, and her place supplied by a deer, provided by Diana in her stead: in which latter fiction he has been followed by Ovid, in his Metamorphoses, book xii. This story is generally supposed to be derived from that of Jephtha, so pathetically related in the book of Judges; and from the resemblance of the names, as also from Jephtha’s having lived at the era of the siege of Troy, it is probable both memoirs are derived from one common source. The sacred historian, however, coincides in the catastrophe introduced by Lucretius, and represents the unhappy victim as actually sacrificed: but he agrees with Euripides, in attributing to her the heroism of a voluntary surrender. The following is the description of the Grecian dramatist, which, though highly beautiful, is not superior to that of our own poet:

Soon as we reach’d the grove and flowery mead Of Dian, where your daughter was conducted By a detachment of the Grecian troops, The host collected instantly around; But Agamemnon, soon as he beheld The virgin at the sacred grove arrive, Where she was doom’d to bleed, groan’d deeply, turn’d His head aside, then wept and veil’d his eyes Beneath his robe. Close to her sire she stood, And said, “My father, I with joy attend “Thy summons, freely for my native land, “And for all Greece, devote myself to bleed; “Conduct me to the altar of the goddess; “Because Heaven’s awful voice hath thus requir’d. “Through me may ye be blest, through me obtain “The glorious palm of conquest, and return “To your exulting country.”

The fable is undoubtedly well calculated for dramatic representation; and the moderns have had recourse to it almost as frequently as the ancients. The corresponding drama of Buchanan, as derived more immediately from the account given in the sacred Scriptures, is entitled “Jephthes;” but in his catastrophe he has equally departed from his own copy, as well as from Lucretius; following the footsteps and peripatia of Euripides and Ovid. In his elegant description of his heroine, however, whom he denominates Iphis, he has been chiefly indebted to our own poet, having minutely copied almost every trait in the text before us. Iphis, in the drama of Buchanan, having taken a pathetic farewell of her parents, in which she alludes to her own maturity of age, and the bridal hopes that had so lately surrounded her, is thus exquisitely painted, on the very verge of fate:
The lovely Iphigenia, round she look’d,—
Her lavish tresses, spurning still the bond
Of sacred fillet, flaunting o’er her cheeks,—

As near the altar stood the victim sad,
The destin’d maid,—o’er either cheek so chaste
Spread the wide blush of modesty—unwont
Thus to be compass’d by the throngs of men.
So o’er the iv’ry flows the clear earmine,
So roses oft with snow-white lilies blend.
But, with the virgin blush, spread too the power,
O’er all her visage, of triumphant faith.
Firm stood she, fearless of her fate; with eye
Down cast and tearless; tearless she alone

At this dread hour, while all around her wept.
Some urg’d her sire’s heroic deeds of late,
Our country freed from bondage by his arms,
Himself now childless, and his race extinct.
These sigh’d, full deep, o’er fortune’s cruel course!
How short is bliss, though bought with endless grief!

How all unstable every joy of man!
While those her flower of youth deplor’d—her eyes
Radiant as stars, her hair that rival’d gold,
And the firm courage that her sex excell’d:
While happily Nature, with superior charms
Had thus endow’d her at the last sad hour,
To prove how fair an offering she could boast.
As seems the sun more precious, when at eve
His last look trembles o’er the western waves,
And sweeter smells the rose, and lovelier far
Unfolds its blossoms, when the spring retires:
So on the threshold of impending fate
Stood she, prepar’d for death.

The best dramatic piece I have ever met with, derived from the same source, next to this of Buchanan, is Racine’s. It is modelled for the modern stage, and has often been exhibited with success. Euripides is the entire source from which the French poet has drawn his characters. He has considerably, however, changed that of Achilles; but the piece derives no benefit from the alteration. With the former, the Grecian hero is neither a lover of Iphigenia, nor has ever entertained an idea of marrying her. A report to this effect is indeed determined upon, in a council of the Grecian chiefs, at which Achilles was not present, but merely to obtain the consent of Clytemnestra, the mother of Iphigenia, to her daughter’s being conveyed to Aulis; where both the ladies, agreeably to the directions sent them, arrive shortly afterwards; and, on meeting with Achilles, accost him in the character they conceived he was sustaining. A mutual and excessive surprize succeeds: for Achilles had not even heard of the stratagem by
which Iphigenia was thus decoyed. Without having any design of uniting himself with her, he nevertheless quarrels most vehemently with the whole synod of Grecian chiefs, for thus presuming to employ his name on so base an occasion; and advises, but un成功eally, to set sail without offering so precious a sacrifice.

Racine, on the contrary, has made Achilles a most violent admirer of Iphigenia, and represents their marriage as on the point of being solemnized, at the very moment when Calchas, the priest, announces the fatal demand of Diana. He represents, also, Iphigenia as resolved, at all adventures, notwithstanding the delirious affection of Achilles, and her own anterior vows of attachment, to submit heroically to the doom decreed her: nor is she to be deterred from self-consecration by the sighs of her mother, or the frantic declarations of the Grecian chieftain, who threatens, if she suffer herself to be thus destroyed, and the gods be panting for human blood, that he will immediately afterwards immolate the priest who is to sacrifice her, and even her own father, by whose consent alone she is to suffer. There is more rant, indeed, in this speech than Racine is in the habit of introducing:

Si de sang et de morts le ciel est affamé
Jamais de plus de sang ses autels n’ont flamé.
A mon aveugle amour tout sera légitime:
Le prêtre deviendra la première victime : Le bûcher, par mes mains detruit et renversé,
Dans le sang des bourreaux nagera dispersé.
Et si, dans les horreurs de ce désordre extrême,
Votre père frappé tombe, et petit lui-même,
Alors, de vos respects, voyant les tristes fruits,
Reconnoîssez les coups que vous aurez conduits.

Such is the opposite and irreconcilable difference between the bombast of inflated and unnatural passion, and the plain, unvarnished narration of Lucretius. Achilles, however, in the Iphigenia of Racine, is fortunately excused from committing this terrible carnage, by the well-known substitute of a deer: for, as the victim is on the immediate point of being sacrificed, the priest becomes filled with a divine and secret dread, the heavens are loaded with signs and wonders, and this other and more pertinent victim is instantly disclosed.

A tragedy on the same subject was written, a few years afterwards, in France, by Le Clerc, assisted by his friend Coras. This dramatic composition I have never had an opportunity of reading; but either its intrinsic merit was but small, or the envy of Racine was very great on the occasion, since he gave himself the trouble of writing the following epigram on its appearance:

Entre Le Clerc et son ami Coras,
Deux grands auteurs, riant de compagnie,
N’a pas long temps s’ourdirent grands débats
Sur le propos de leur Iphigenie.
Coras lui dit: “La pièce est de mon cru.”
Le Clerc répond: “Elle est mienn’e, et non votre,”
Mais aussitôt que la pièce eut paru,
Plus n’ont voulu l’avoir fait l’un, ni l’autre.

Le Clerc and Coras, who in partnership rhym’d,
Iphigenia who wrote with such spirit,
When the drama was done, had a strife most ill-timed,
On deciding whose chief was the merit.
“’Tis all mine,” said Coras.—“To say so is a fraud,”
Cried Le Clerc, “for I wrote it myself.”

But at length when the bantling was usher’d abroad,
Then neither would own the poor elf.

This story is as well calculated for painting as for poetry; and forms the subject of one of the best pieces which has flowed from the pen of Sir Joshua Reynolds: the colouring of which is after the Venetian school, and exhibits one of its happiest copies. Its rival, Jephtha’s Vow, has been selected not less frequently. Perhaps, the best picture from this latter episode is Mr. Opie’s; but, like almost every prior attempt, it is altogether spoiled by the painter’s.
And sought, in vain, protection. She survey'd
Near her, her sad, sad sire; th' officious priests
Repentant half, and hiding their keen steel,
throwing a veil over the eyes of the young and
beautiful oblation, by which half her charms, and
more than half the effect of the subject, is unmer-
cifully destroyed. Among the Greeks there was
a most celebrated picture from the tale of Iphigenia,
by Timantes, of which Cicero has given us a par-
ticular description. Chalcas, Ulysses, Menelaus,
and several other personages, were introduced into the
scenery, with countenances of great grief and com-
miseration. The painter, having thus exhausted his
art, was at a loss how to express the superior
agony of the father; and, with a stratagem somewhat
similar to the above, concerning which he has been
often complimented, but the idea of which was ob-
viously borrowed from Euripides, he threw a veil
carelessly over his face; " quoniam," as Cicero
has elegantly expressed it, " summum ilium luctum
pencillo non posset imitari." In Orat. " Be-
cause no art of the pencil could delineate the ex-
treme grief he endured." These tricks of the
profession are, in my apprehension, at all times be-
neath the dignity of a man of real genius; and be-
speak poverty of imagination rather than modesty
in the artist.

Ver. 93.
-She survey'd
Near her, her sad, sad sire; th' officious priests
Repentant half, and hiding their keen steel,] I
must inform the English reader, that the term
propter in the original may be translated either as a
preposition of motive, or of place; or, in other words,
that the version may be rendered— " She perceived
" the priests conceal the knife near her father," or
" on account of her father." Evelyn, and Creech
who has closely copied him, have both pretended
to descry a peculiar degree of force and emphasis
in the last lection;—in the concealment of the knife
on account of the father. I have chosen to consider
the preposition, however, as referring to place alone,
independently of motive; and that for the following
reasons: 1st, It is Iphigenia herself, and not her
father, who stands most advanced in the fore-ground
of this elegant groupe. She is in every respect the first
figure, and he but a second. The poet, true to the
feelings of nature, delineates her as fully sensible of
the blessings of life, as well as of youth, and the hor-
ror of the doom to which she is devoted,—and de-
voted too by her father's consent. He has amased
together, in the most exquisite and pathetic colours,
every circumstance that can tend to depict the agony
of her mind, and excite the compassion of the
crowd around her. The people pity her; her father
pities her; the priests pity her: and while they con-
cel the sacrificing knife— on whose account do they
conceal it? Doubtless on her own.— Near the fa-
ther, but on account of the daughter. To read the
passage otherwise is to destroy half the spirit of the
episode. The version of Evelyn and Creech may
apply to the tale as related by Euripides, but not as
related by Lucretius.

But, 2dly, all our best annotators, translators and
expositors, have adopted this very interpretation of
the preposition which I have given myself. The
verb that follows ought, I think, to be celerare; and,
following the greater number of copies, I have so
rendered it in the translation. In the edition of Gis-
fanius, however, in that of Bologna, and in that of
Mr. Wakefield, as printed on the opposite page, it
is celerare, "to brandish," instead of "to conceal."
But those who prefer celerare, must necessarily use
propter in the sense offered in the text; for, " to
brandish the knife because of the father," would
be nonsense. Coutures who, with myself, has re-
tained celerare, has also retained propter in my own sig-
nification. " Elle vit," says he, "son père devant
" l'autel, elle s'apperçut que les ministres qui etoient
" proches de lui, cachoient le couteau sacré." Pre-
cisely to the same effect is the elegant version of Mar-
chetti, who is the only poet, in any nation, by whom
Lucretius has hitherto been worthily translated.
Adspectuque suo lacrumas ecfundere civeis;
Muta metu, terram, genibus submissa, petebat:
Nec miseræ prodesse in tali tempore quibat,
Quod patrio princeps donâtate nomine regem:
Nam, sublata virûm manibus, tremebundaque, ad aras
Deducta est; non ut, solemni more sacrorum
Perfecto, posset claro comitari hymenæo;
Sed, casta inseste, nubendi tempore in ipso,
Hostia concideret mactatu mœsta parentis,
Exitus ut classi felix faustusque daretur.
Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum!

Vidit ella a se davante in mesto volto
Il padre, e a lui vicini i sacerdoti
Celar l'aspra bipenne.

In the interpretation I have given to this passage,
I am equally justified therefore by natural propriety,
and the opinion of the best critics who have pre-
ceded me.

Ver. 101. — vain that first herself
"Lisp'd the dear name of Father, eldest born."

Nothing can be more unfaithful to the original, or
more inconsistent with the sentiment our poet is en-
deavouring to inculcate, than Coutures' version of
this beautiful passage. He is protesting against the
cruel effects of superstition among his countrymen,
and not their laxity of parental affection; against
the sacrilegious demands of their priests, and not
the severity of their patriarchs. True to the genuine
feelings of nature, he represents the sufferings of
Agamemnon as extreme: he stood, as it should ap-
ppear, overcome with grief by the side of his daugh-
ter; and nothing but the stern demand of a sanguinary
oracle, which he dared not disobey, could obtain his
consent to the sacrifice. Yet Coutures has repre-
sented him as a monster, void of all parental feeling;
not irresistibly enforced, but self-determined to
offer up his daughter, and peremptorily resolved
that no entreaties should dissuade him from so
sanguinary an oblation. "It was in vain," says he,
"that she attempted to soften the king, by calling him
"her father: she was seized by pitiless hands, and
"carried trembling to the foot of the altar." Çetoit
en vain qu'elle s'efforçait d'attendrir le roi en l'appel-
chant son père; elle fut arrachée par des mains im-
pitoyables, et menée tremblante aux pieds des autels,
&c.
And crowds of gazers weeping as they view'd.
Dumb with alarm, with supplicating knee,
And lifted eye, she sought compassion still;
Fruitless and unavailing: vain her youth,
Her innocence, and beauty; vain the boast
Of regal birth; and vain that first herself
Lisp'd the dear name of Father, eldest born.
Forc'd from her suppliant posture, straight she view'd
The altar full prepar'd: not there to blend
Connubial vows, and light the bridal torch;
But, at the moment when mature in charms,
While Hymen call'd aloud, to fall, e'en then,
A father's victim, and the price to pay
Of Grecian navies, fav'red thus with gales.—
Such are the crimes that Superstition prompts!

Klopstock, however, has been far more sensible of
the beauty and pathos of this admirable picture; and,
with no small felicity, has transplanted it into the
second book of the Messias. It occurs in the solitary
meditation of the repentant Abbadona, when he
had first deserted his infernal companions. It is thus
he addresses the Almighty:

Oh! without trembling, dar'd I this dread judge
But call Creator, freely would I now
Yield the dear name of father, name belov'd,
And still pronounce'd by those who ne'er transgress'd.

Ver. 110. Such are the crimes that Superstition prompts!] The translators have generally, as
before observed, employed the term religion, instead
of superstition, to interpret the religio of Lucretius.
I have given my reasons for deviating from the common example, in the note on verse 63 of this book.
The cardinal Polignac, following the general, but
erroneous interpretation, has deemed it necessary, in
his Anti-Lucretius, to inform us that the poet whom
he opposes was mistaken: that this, and other
equally barbarous transactions, were not the effect of
religion, but of impiety; as though impiety were not
the very subject he meant to object against,—called,
indeed, but falsely, religion, by the general mass of
his contemporaries. The following is the cardinal's
allusion to the episode before us:

Effera tantum igitur potuit suadere malorum
Impietas, non Religio; quæ prava coercens
Tutemet a nobis jam quovis tempore, vatum
Terriloquis victus dictis, desciscere quæres,
Quippe et enim quam multa tibi jam fingere possunt
Somnia, quæ vitæ rationes vortere possint,
Fortunasque tuas omneis turbare timore.
Et merito: nam, si certam finem esse viderent
Ærumnarum homines, aliquæ ratione valerent
Religionibus atque minis obsistere vatum:
Nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas;
Æternas quoniam poenas in morte timendum.

Corda metu, spe recta fovet; cunctisque suum jus
Spondet, et humanas vetat obbrutescere mentes.
Quod si ductores Danaum, Calchante magistro,
Tentarunt fato lachrymabilis Iphianassa
(Grande nefas) classi celeres arcessere ventos,
Ac lœsum ultrices numen placare Diane,
Non haec vera dei Reverentia; fecit
Caca Superstitio, et vasi fallacia vatis.
Sed talis nunquam immites cecidisset ad aras
Hostia, vesani dira ambitione parentis
Jussa mori.

Impiety alone persuades to ills,
Religion never. She, coercing strong
The heart deprav'd, with fear,—with ardent hope
Sustains the good; deep in the conscious breast
Her laws she stamps, benign alike to each.
What though the Grecian chiefs, at Calchas' nod,
Strove with the blood (a deed unjust and dire!)
Of Iphigenia, maid lamented long,
T'excite the gales, and calm Diana's wrath,
That fettered all their navy—Reverence this
Urg'd not, to God most due, but priests deceiv'd,
And Superstition vain. At his mild shrine

No human victim falls; no father there,
Mad with ambition, wipes his crimes away,
Lav'd by a daughter's blood.

This dreadful and barbarous rite of offering human
victims to heaven was not, however, confined to the
Greeks. There are but few nations, and unfortunately
but few religions, that can plead a total exemption from
such an impious custom, in any age. I have already
observed, in note on verse 63, that Voltaire has at
tributed the savage ceremony, in whatever era, and
under whatever religion it occurred, to fanaticism,
whom he has most appropriately personified, and fol-
lowed in his bloody course over the greater part of
the globe. There is so much truth and beauty in his
delineation, as well as immediate reference to the epi-
sode before us, that it would be inexcusable in me
not to offer its perusal to my readers. It occurs in
his Henriade, I. iv.

Il vient, le Fanatisme est son horrible nom,
Enfant dénaturé de la religion;
Armé pour la défendre, il cherche à la détruire,
Et reçu dans son sein, l'embrasse, et la déchire.
C'est lui qui dans Raba, sur le bords de l'Arnon
Book I. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

And dost thou still resist us? trusting still
The fearful tales by priests and poets told?—
I, too, could feign such fables; and combine
As true to fact, and of as potent spell,
To freeze thy blood, and harrow every nerve.—
Nor wrong th' attempt. Were mortal man assur'd
Eternal death would close this life of woe,
And nought remain of curse beyond the grave,
E'en then religion half its force would lose;
Vice no alarm, and virtue feel no hope.
But, whilst the converse frights him, man will dread
Eternal pain, and flee from impious deeds.

Guidait les descendans du malheureux Ammon,
Quand à Moloc, leur dieu, des mères gémissantes,
Offraient de leurs enfans les entrailles fumantes.
Il dicta de Jephéte le serment inhumain ;
Dans le cœur de sa fille il conduisit sa main.
C'est lui qui, de Calchas ouvrant la bouche impie,
Demanda par sa voix, la mort d'Iphigénie.
France, dans les bois, il habita long-temps,
A l'affreux Teutates il offrit ton encens.
Tu n'as point oublié ces sacrés homicides,
Qu'à tes indignes dieux présentaient tes Druides.
Du haut du Capitole criait aux Pâiens,
" Frappez, extermez, déchirez les Chrétiens."
Mais lorsqu'au fils de Dieu Rome enfin fut soumise,
Du Capitole en cendre, il passa dans l'église :
Et dans les cœurs chrétiens inspirant ses fureurs,
De martyrs qu'ils étaient, les fit persécuteurs.
Dans Londres, il a formé la secte turbulente,
Qui sur un roi trop faible a mis sa main sanglante.
Dans Madrid, dans Lisbonne, il allume ces feux,
Ces bûchers solennels, où des Juifs malheureux
Sont tous ans en pompe envoyés par des prêtres,
Pour n'avoir point quitté la foi de leurs ancêtres.

He comes—Fanaticism, his name abhor'd,
Religion's monster-offspring; clasp'd in mail,
Her weal he simulates, but works her woe,
And, in her lap, embraces and destroys.
'Twas he in Raba, Arnon's banks beside,
Led the fierce Ammonites, when, at the shrine
Of bloody Moloch, mothers, wel'm'd with grief,
Offer'd the smoking entrails of their babes.
His was th' inhuman oath by Jephta sworn;
He, 'gainst the daughter, rais'd the father's hand.
When Calchas op'd his impious lips, 'twas he
Th' oblation urg'd of Iphigenia fair.
With thee, O France! long dwelt he; and thy groves
Claim'd for Teutates, claim'd with incense foul,
And Druid rites, remember'd still with dread.
He, from the Capitol's proud summit, cri'd,
" Strike!" to the Pagans—" let no Christian live!"
But when imperial Rome the cross ador'd,
Her tower in ashes, he the Christians join'd,
And made of martyrs persecutors fell.
He fir'd th' enthusiastic sect, that to the block,
In London, led a prince too weak for sway:
Lit in Madrid, in Lisbon lit the fires.
The solemn butcheries, that, year by year,
Wait the vex't race of Jews, by priests condemn'd,
For stern adherence to their fathers' creed.

Ver. 123. *Tet doubtful is the doctrine, and unknown, &c.* As there is no subject that can be of so much importance to man as a future existence, there is none which has more fully occupied the attention of the meditative and the learned, in every age. The existence itself, the mode of existence, its duration, or interchange, are points that have been agitated and discussed in every possible variety of shape. And what, after all, is the result?—that just as much is now known, by the mere light of reason, as was known above two thousand years ago, when Lucretius wrote his poem. In effect, although of infinite importance, the subject scarcely admits of argumentation of any kind. Of matter, we can discern but little; of immaterial spirit, nothing at all. We have no physical data to reason from; at least, none that will advance us beyond the bounds of probability; and every moral consideration is equally as inconclusive. Hence Cicero, Plato, and many other sages of antiquity, have expressly declared, that the more they meditated on this profound subject, the more their doubts of a future state were increased: while Democritus, Epicurus, Solomon (as it should seem from the general tenor of his writings, and especially his *Ecclesiastes*, chap. ii. 15, 16. iii. 18, 19, 20), as well as the entire body of the Sadducean sect, disbelieved it altogether. It is an object of revelation, therefore, rather than of reason: and a most illustrious object it is, and completely worthy of the intervention of the Divinity. And without searching further for motives, the Christian philosopher, in the belief of this important truth alone, finds a *dignus inducens nodus*, a motive amply sufficient to justify an immediate communication from the Creator to mankind. See the prefixed life of Lucretius.

Ver. 125. *The soul first lives, when lives the body first.* In the prosecution of this poem, which comprises a complete history of the philosophy of the ancients, I shall have frequent occasion to examine the different systems of opinions that are here enumerated; and to compare them with many which have been started, under the semblance of novelty, in times much more modern. At present I shall content myself with observing, that the opinion conveyed in this, and the preceding line, was that of Democritus, Thales, Epicurus, Empedocles, and a variety of other sages, who differed, nevertheless, very widely, in many other doctrines of their respective theories.
Yet doubtful is the doctrine, and unknown
Whether, co-eval with th' external frame,
The soul first lives, when lives the body first,
Or boasts a date anterior: whether doom'd
To common ruin, and one common grave,
Or through the gloomy shades, the lakes, the caves,
Of Erebus to wander: or, perchance,
As Ennius taught, immortal bard, whose brows
Unfading laurels bound, and still whose verse
All Rome recites, entranc'd—perchance condemn'd

Plato, in various parts of his Dialogues, seems to have imagined that the soul exists from all eternity, and continues waiting in some distant star till the moment of the formation of its appropriate body, with which it then immediately unites itself, and continues in a state of intimate connection, till, at length, it is once more separated by death; when, according to its degree of moral merit, it is sentenced to Erebus or Elysium. Pythagoras believed, with Plato, that souls were of eternal existence, and, of course, incorporeal; but that upon the dissolution of one body, in which they were placed, they constantly transmigrated to another, as well to the body of brutes as of men. This doctrine of the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, is of immemorial date, and was equally believed by the Hindus and the Egyptians; from the last of whom Pythagoras probably received it, during his travels into Asia. It was not, however, confined either to Egypt, Hindustan, or Greece; for we find it equally credited, at an early age, in China, and among the Celts in general; and particularly among those of Britain and Gaul. It is hence supposed, by Mr. Davies, to have constituted a common topic of belief among mankind, even in the first post-diluvian century; for to an epoch thus early does he refer the Celtic and Druidic colonizations of Spain and Britain. These, however, are learned and ingenious conceptions, rather than facts of solid and applicable proof. The reader may amuse himself with such, and various other opinions, in this elaborate writer's volume of "Celtic Researches." It appears, from verse 133, that Ennius himself had, at some period of his life, inclined to a belief in the metempsychosis; though, at another period, he seems to have changed his opinion.

Thus Mr. Cowper, in his beautiful and descriptive poem, "The Task."

Has man within him an immortal soul?
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
His ashes—where? and in what weal or woe?

Ennius, the Spencer of the Roman poets, flourished about a century before Lucretius, and was the first who attempted an heroic poem in his native language. It is much to be lamented that we have nothing of his writing transmitted to us, in modern times, but
Et si praeterea tamen esse Acherusia templ
Ennius æternis exponit versibus edens:
Quo neque permanent animæ, neque corpora nostra;
Sed quædam simulacra, modis pallentia miris:
Unde, sibi exortam, semper florentis Homeri

a few fragments, and detached sentences, occasionally quoted by authors who were his countrymen. These, however, are generally quoted with an admiration of his abilities; and give us a high opinion of him as a philosopher, if not as a poet. Mr. Wakefield has hazarded a conjecture, that the few lines in this passage of Lucretius, which relate to Ennius, comprise the very words which he himself made use of; but this is conjecture alone. This earliest of the heroic poets of Rome, and who was by birth a Neapolitan, instructed the pretor, Marcus Porcius, in the Greek language, at Sardinia, during the consulate of Titus Quintus Flaminius and S. Ælius Patkus Catus. After the Romans had subdued this island, Cato induced his tutor to reside at Rome, where he died in the 70th year of his age, and was interred in the family tomb of the Scipios, by whom, also, he had been largely patronized. At different periods of his life he wrote a variety of satires, comedies, and tragedies; but his grand poem on the Carthaginian war, comprizing an extent of twelve books, was not concluded till about three years before his death.

Ver. 136. Of Acherusian temples,—J The word templ, in the Latin, is occasionally used by most of the poets to signify any large space or cavity. Thus the fragments of Ennius contain "cæ
cula cæli templ," the cerulean concave of heaven. Thus, again, Terence, in his Eunuch, "templa cæli." And Lucretius employs the same term, in a similar sense, in an almost infinite variety of other places. "Templum," in this respect, seems perfectly synonymous with the Hebrew term "Beth," which, when applied to the Supreme Being, means a temple strictly so called; but, at other times, a house, tent, or excavation of any kind. The Hebrew character, denominated Beth, is a happy symbol, as Mr. Allwood has justly observed, of this idea. It is written י, and is an excavation, with one end open for the purpose of receiving air.

Ver. 136. —where, nor soul
Nor body dwells,—J Whenever, among nations of but small refinement and civilization, the idea is credited, that man is a compound being, possessed of a corporeal body or substratum, and a something incorporeal, superadded to the body, and capable of surviving its dissolution, it, in no instance, occurs to them, that this other substance is itself divisible, and capable of existing in different places, and in different modes of existence, at the same period of time. Pythagoras, who derived much of his instruction from the sages of Egypt, never imagined the human constitution, any more than the brute, to be possessed of more than two constituent principles. It is the common doctrine, if we may credit any of the accounts of travellers and historians, entertained, at this day, among the American Indians, and the inhabitants of New Zealand, and generally among those of the Southern Islands. But this simple division of man into two parts has not satisfied the caprice of all nations, or of all philosophers. Brutes, it has been urged by such persons, have a soul and a body; but man is intrinsically superior to brutes. He must, therefore, possess some essential addition to such a constitution. He must have a reasoning spirit, as well as an animal soul, and a body susceptible of de-
The various tribes of brutes, with ray divine,
To animate and quicken: though the bard,
In deathless melody, has elsewhere sung
Of ACHERUSIAN temples, where, nor soul
Nor body dwells, but images of men,
Mysterious shap’d; in wondrous measure wan.

A shadowy form! for, high in heaven’s abodes
Himself resides; a god among the gods.
There, in the bright assemblies of the skies,
He nectar quaffs, and Hebe crowns his joys.

Virgil has represented the very same fact as taking
place with respect to Anchises, whose manes, his son,
Æneas, conversed with below, while his soul was residing
in the upper and blest abodes. Hence the
propriety of the following lines, which have been attributed to Ovid:

Bis duo sunt homini: manes, caro, spiritus, umbra:
Quatuor ista loci bis duo suscipiunt.
Terra tegit carnum, tumulum circumvolat umbra,
Orcus habet manes, spiritus astra petit.

Four things are man’s—flesh, spirit, ghost, and
shade;
And four their final homes:—hell claims the ghost;
The spirit, heaven; in earth the flesh is laid;
And, hov’ring o’er it, seeks the shade its post.

For a farther elucidation of this subject, see note
on book iii. verse 100.

Ver. 137. —images of men.] The original is
highly picturesque and impressive: "—simulacra,
modis pallentia miris." And Virgil has not hesitated
to copy the entire verse.

—simulacra modis pallentia miris
Visa sub obscurum noctis.

Now I the strength of Hercules behold,
A tow’ring spectre of gigantic sail,
A shadowy form! for, high in heaven’s abodes
Himself resides; a god among the gods.
There, in the bright assemblies of the skies,
He nectar quaffs, and Hebe crowns his joys.

Pope.
Conmemorat speciem lacrumas ecfundere salsas
Coepisse, et rerum naturam expandere dictis.

Quapropter, bene quom superis de rebus habenda
Nobis est ratio; solis lunaeque meatus
Qua fiant ratione, et qua vi quaeque gerantur
In terris; tunc, cum primis, ratione sagaci,
Unde anima atque animi constet natura, videndum:
Et quae res, nobis vigilantibus obvia, menteis
Terrificet, morbo affectis, somnoque sepultis;

Ver. 149. Whence spring those shadowy forms, which,
En in hours
Wakeful and calm, but chief when dreams molest,
This part of the duty incumbent on the philosopher,
our poet endeavours to perform in book iv. where
the subject is resumed, and discussed in a truly
scientific and masterly manner, consistently, I mean,
with the system he has adopted. He there ingeniously
assigns the cause why the existence of spectres,
ghosts, and apparitions, has been so generally ac-
ccredited in all ages, and nearly among all nations, as
history informs us it has been; and why the night
has commonly been the season of their supposed ap-
pearance and operation, rather than the day. Thus
the ghost in Hamlet:

I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term
to walk the night,
And for the day confin'd.

In the superstitions of all the Northern nations, the
same idea is to be traced, so far as relates to the
time of apparition. Milton, therefore, with much
appropriate beauty, has compared the demon of death
to the night-hag.

Par. Lost, b. ii.

The rule, indeed, seems to be common to all
countries, as well as to all periods; to the East and
West, as well as to the North; to the sacred writ-
ings, as well as to heathen mythology. It is, hence,
the same season of doubt and terror that the sublime
author of the book of Job has made choice of, for
the appearance of that fearful spectre, which is so
inimitably described in chap. iv. of this unrivalled
drama, and which has been so often adverted to by
men of taste and discernment. Our common transla-
tion does not give all the beauties which are con-
tained in the original; and the reader will, therefore,
excuse me for offering him a new version, which, at
least, has the merit of accuracy, as, I trust, he will
find, on comparing it with the following arrangement
of the Hebrew:

בשעפים מחוזだって וליד
בזעפ זכרות על-אמית

DE RERUM NATURA.
Here Homer's spectre roam'd, of endless fame
Posset: his briny tears the bard survey'd,
And drank the dulcet precepts from his lips.

Such are the various creeds of men. And hence
The philosophic sage is call'd t' explain,
Not the mere phases of the heavens alone,
The sun's bright path, the moon's perpetual change,
And pow'rs of earth productive, but to point,
In terms appropriate, the dissev'ring lines
'Twixt mind and brutal life; and prove precise
Whence spring those shadowy forms, which, e'en in hours
Wakeful and calm, but chief when dreams molest,

'Twas midnight deep; the world was hush'd to rest,
And airy visions every brain possess'd:
O'er all my frame a horror crept severe,
An ice that shiver'd every bone with fear;
Before my face a spirit saw I swim,
Erect uprose my hair o'er every limb:
It stood—the spectre stood—to sight display'd;
Yet trac'd I not the image I survey'd.

'Twas silence dead—no breath the torpor broke,
When thus, in hollow voice, the vision spoke.

No criticism is here necessary. Every one who
reads the description must perceive, in every line,
some peculiar and appropriate beauty. But the im-
possibility of tracing or distinguishing the form of
the apparition, even whilst it stood motionless before
the narrator, and compelled his attention, together
with the erection of the hair of the whole body, con-
vey a boldness and originality of thought superlatively
impressive. From this fearful picture, Ariosto,
Spenser, and Otway, have drawn many of their best
and finest paintings. They have all of them, like-
wise, made choice of solitude and the midnight sea-
son for the introduction of their supernatural imagery.
But there are some occasions in which a masterly
poet, regardless of the trammels of example, may be
justified in introducing such scenery at any hour, and
even in the presence of the most brilliant or convivial
companies. Thus, in the tragedy of Macbeth, the
ghost of Banquo suddenly arises in the midst of the
entertainment given to the noble thanes; and which,
though by Shakspeare denominated a supper, would,
in the present day, be regarded as an early dinner,
since seven is the hour at which the lords were in-
vited to assemble. The incident is too well known,
in its effect too striking, to need any comment.
There is one description of a similar incident, how-
ever, by which even this of Shakspeare is much ex-
ceeded, and whence, perhaps, he took the idea;—
the apparition, I mean, of the fingers of a man’s hand
writing mystical characters upon the wall, in the
palace of Belshazzar, in the midst of the banquet he
was giving to all the nobles of his empire, and their
ladies. The whole is related with inimitable excel-
lence in the book of Daniel, and comprizes almost
every striking circumstance, and every solemn touch,
that can render a story impressive. The splendour
of the scene, the high rank and number of the com-
pany present, the gross impiety and sacrilege they
were guilty of, the abruptness of the apparition, the
extreme terror and perturbation of the king, and the
undaunted probity and resolution of the prophet in
decyphering the occult symbols, are all of them most
interesting parts of the picture, and harmoniously
combine in producing dramatic effect.

The popular mythologies that have most indulged
in preternatural appearances of this sort, are those
of Odin and Fingal: the former constituting an early
creed of the Northern countries on the continent; and
the latter, of the inhabitants of Ireland and the High-
lands of Scotland. Each of these systems of super-
stition are possessed of a sublimity and terrible gran-
deur, far beyond what the mythology of Greece can
lay claim to; but there is a savage ferocity attendant
upon the former, which is repressive to all the feelings
of a cultivated mind. The spirits of the departed,
that assemble in the aerial hall of the Scandinavian
deity, are represented as fighting and massacring
each other for amusement, and as drinking a spirituous
beverage out of the hollow skulls of their enemies;—
while the spirits of the Celtic warriors, on the con-
trary, are delineated as regaling themselves with the
hymns of their bards, attuned in praise of love,
friendship, or heroism. Often, too, these latter are
supposed to be flying on the wings of the winds, to
warn those whom they esteem on earth of future dan-
gers, or to protect them beneath the pressure of im-
mediate calamities. Nothing is, therefore, more
common than the belief of such benignant appa-
ritions; nothing more frequent than their introduction
in the sublime poems of Ossian: and in the utmost
regions of the Highlands, and the Hebrides, the
same idea is still interwoven with the profession of
the Christian religion, at the present moment. Fin-
gal, however, admitted no supernatural agency into
his Celtic creed. It is probable the superstition
which he systematized, he originally deduced from
the Druids; but he rejected all their barbarities, and
only retained their sacred order of bards, to whom
was paid the utmost degree of reverence. The spirit
of the Fingalian, immediately upon his decease, took
its flight involuntarily to the banks of the river Loda:
if virtuous, or heroic, it was there instantaneously
met by the ghosts of its forefathers, and conveyed
with rapidity to the great hall of the founder of the
race, and claimed its seat among the blest; but if it
BOOK I.  
THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Or dire disease, we see, or think we see,
Though the dank grave have long their bones inhum'd.
Yet not unknown to me how hard the task
Such deep obscurities of Greece t' unfold
In Latin numbers; to combine new terms,
And strive with all our poverty of tongue.—
But such thy virtue, and the friendship pure
My bosom bears, that arduous task I dare;
And yield the sleepless night, in hope to cull

had been wicked, or a coward, it was suffered to
hover for ever on the wretched banks of the Loda,
or was condemned to wander on all the winds of
heaven, often perversely misleading the way-worn and
benighted traveller, in the shape of an ignis fatuus.

Respecting the ghosts of the Celtic superstition,
there was one remarkable fact, which I cannot avoid
noticing in this place. While other religions have
often conceived such a kind of ethereal spirit as se
parately existing, immediately after the decease of
the body,—the system of Fingal assumed, that the
hero had a separate shade or spirit attending him some
short time prior to his death, counterfeiting his
figure, and appearing to different persons, with the
most mournful shrieks, and in the attitude in which
he was about to die. "The account given to this
day, among the vulgar," observes Mr. Macpherson,"of this extraordinary matter, is very poetical.
The ghost comes mounted on a meteor, and sur-
rounds twice or thrice the place destined for the
person to die in; and then goes along the road
through which the funeral is to pass, shrieking at
intervals: at last, the meteor and the ghost dis-
appear above the burial place."

Ver. 158.  
—that arduous task I dare;  
And yield the sleepless night;—[There is a
passage in the Abbé Delille's very beautiful, and,
in the French language, unrivalled didactic poem of
Vol. I.

Les Jardins, in the composition of which the poet
seems to have had his eye directed to this elegant ad-
dress of Lucretius. He exhorts his horticultural
pupils not to rest satisfied, in their attempts to form
a fountain, if, at first, and even for a long time af-

laterwards, they should be disappointed in the flow of
water: he advises them to dig deeper and deeper,
since probably the earnestly-desired fluid is just at
hand. And he then proceeds:

Ainsi d'un long effort moi-même rebûté,
Quand j'ai d'un froid détail maudit l'aridité,
Soudain un trait heureux jaillit d'un fond sterile,
Et mon vers ranimé coule enfin plus facile.

So when, myself, o'erwearied with the past,
Curse some dry subject still before me cast;
I too, at times, some happy turn explore,
And my rous'd verse flows brisker than before.

But the style and imagery of Mason, in his English
Garden, exhibits a copy of Lucretius far closer still;
and especially in the following passage:

—Ingrateful sure,
When such the theme, becomes the poet's task:
Yet must he try, by modulation meet
Of varied cadence, and selected phrase,
Exact yet free, without inflation bold,
To dignify that theme; must try to form
Such magic sympathy of sense with sound,
As pictures all it sings: while Grace awakes
DE RERUM NATURA.

Quærentem, dictis quibus, et quo carmine, demum
Clara tuæ possim præpandere lumina menti,
Res quibus obscultas penitus consivere possis.
Hunc igitur terorem animi tenebrasque necesse est
Non radiei solis neque lucida tela diei
Discutiant, sed Naturæ species, Ratioque :
Quoii principium hinc nobis exordia sumet;
NULLAM REM E NIHILO GIGNI DIVINITUS UMQUAM.

At each blest touch, and, on the lowliest things,
Scatters her rain-bow hues.

Having thus had occasion to introduce into the same
note the names of my two friends, Mason and Delille,
I cannot avoid adverting to the extraordinary coinci-
dence of taste, time, and subject, which subsists be-
tween their respective and exquisite didactic poems.
The period in which they wrote was during the Ame-
rican war: to this they both allude, and incline to the
same side of politics. The subject of their poetry is
Picturesque Gardening: the title chosen by each is
precisely similar. Their taste appears to have been
formed from the same models, and directed to the
same ends; and they both speak in the most rap-
turous terms of Poussin, Milton, and Kent. Mas-
on's poem, I believe, preceded that of the Abbé
only about a twelvemonth; but there is no reason to
conceive that the latter, though acquainted with the
English language, was by any means apprised of
such a publication, when he announced his own

Jardins.

Ver. 165. —the day's bright javelins.—] “Lucida
tela diei.” This elegant metaphor is frequently em-
ployed by Lucretius, in the prosecution of his poem.
Aurélius has borrowed it from him. Mosel. 269.

Exultant ude super arida saxa rapina,
Luciferique pavent letalia tela diei.

O'er the sere rock the juicy rape exults,
And dreads the deadly arrows of the day.
Polignac has made a fuller copy still. Anti-Lucr.
b. vi. 1414.

Illa nec solis radios, nec tela diei
Lucida ferre queunt.
Not these the sun's pure beams, nor javelins bright,
Can bear of noon-tide.

Mason, who, as I have just remarked, is a close
and classical imitator of our poet, has not failed to
employ this bold and beautiful figure, also, in his
English Garden.

—Soon thy sturdy axe,
Amid its intertwisted foliage driven,
Shall open all his glades, and ingress give
To the bright darts of day.

In Dr. Darwin's Loves of the Plants, we meet
with the same idea, which is introduced with much
beauty and sublimity. He is speaking of the hu-
mene Howard.

The spirits of the good, who bend from high,
Wide o'er these earthly scenes, their partial eye,
Saw round his brows a sun-like glory blaze,
In arrowy circles of unwearyed rays.

The whole description forms a bold and elevated
imagery; for which, however, if I be not much mis-
taken, he is indebted to Ariosto. The passage I
Some happy phrase, some well selected verse, 
Meet for the subject; to dispel each shade, 
And bid the mystic doctrine hail the day. 
For shades there are, and terrors of the soul, 
The day can ne'er disperse, though blazing strong 
With all the sun's bright javelins. These alone 
To Nature yield, and Reason; and, combin'd, 
This is the precept they for ever teach, 
That nought from nought by pow'r divine has ris'n.

refer to is that in which the Italian bard describes 
the descent of Michael the archangel from heaven, 
to the Christian camp, at the command of the Al-
mighty.

Dovunque drizza Michel angel l'ale 
Fugon le nnbi, e torno il ciel sereno, 
Gli gira intorno un aureo cerchio; quale 
Veggiam di notte lampeggiar baleno.

O.R. FUR. C. xiv.

Where'er his course the radiant envoy steers, 
The clouds disperse, the troubled ether clears; 
And round him plays a circling blaze of light, 
Such as when meteors stream through dusky night.

HOOLE.

Tertullian, as Mr. Wakefield observes, has intro-
duced this same metaphor of Lucretius into his sec-
tion on Chastity. “Quibus exquirendis,” observes 
he, “non lucerna spicule, lumine sed totius solis lanced, 
opus est.” Cap. 7. “In the investigation of which 
“it behoves us to employ, not the mere shafts of a 
“candle, but the arrowy light of the whole sun.”

There is also an introduction of the same elegant 
figure in a beautiful and tender passage of Jortin; 
the whole of which the reader will find trans-
cribed, on another occasion, in the note on Book iii. 
v. 1136.

Sidera, purpurei telis extincta dies 
Rursus nocte vigent.

Kill'd by the arrows of the purple day, 
The stars at night revisit us.

The use of this metaphor, in the description of a 
severe frost, is scarcely so bold, and is much more 
common. Dyer, however, has introduced it, with 
much picturesque effect, in his delineation of a Lap-
land winter.

——the horrid rage

Of winter irresistible o'erwhelms 
The Hyperborean tracts; his arrowy frosts, 
That pierce through flinty rocks, the Lappian flies. 

F Leece, B. i.

In a similar manner, Milton, in his Paradise Re-
gained:

How quick they wheel'd; and, flying, behind 
them shot 
Sharp sleet of arrowy shower.

Whence Gray, in his Descent of Odin:

Iron sleet of arrowy shower 
Hurtles in the darken'd air.

Ver. 168. That nought from nought by pow'r 
divine has ris'n.] This maxim, originated 
by Democritus, is frequently referred to by Aristotle, 
and many other philosophers among the ancients, who 
were not immediately of the Epicurean school. It is 
thus repeated by Diogenes Laertius, ix. 44. Medes
Quippe ita formido mortaleis continet omneis,
Quod multa in terris fieri coeloque tuentur,
Quorum operum causas nullâ ratione videre

That nothing has been produced from non-existence, and to non-existence can never degenerate.

It forms the key-stone of the philosophy in the poem before us; and is, therefore, constantly reverted to by Lucretius. By power divine we must understand, if we understand anything at all, either the divinity of the world itself,—in which case he directs his dogma against the Platonists and Pythagoreans, or else the divinity of the popular gods,—and then he is opposing the multitude: since the idea of an eternal intelligent being, at whose mere will and command all Nature sprang into, and is still supported in, her present system of beauty, harmony, and order, constituted, as I have observed in the prefixed life of Lucretius, an avowed article of the Epicurean creed; while various passages of the poem before us, and particularly in the fifth book, prove obviously that Lucretius no more rejected this dogma of Epicurism than he did any other. The real doctrine of Epicurus, upon this subject, appears to be as follows: In common with the philosophers of every school, he believed in the eternity of matter; for they all equally conceived it an absurdity to suppose that the Deity himself could create anything out of nothing; but that though matter existed from all eternity, there was a time when it was first endowed by the intelligent eternal Cause with powers of motion, and a consequent capability of organization and order. From this moment, motion commenced; atoms began to unite with atoms; concrete substances to be produced; affinities to multiply; and the universe to assume form: but an incalculable number of apparently different motions were essayed, and of years exhausted, before that form was finally completed. This theory of cosmogony is detailed most beautifully, and at full length, by Lucretius, in his fifth book; and this, and this alone, explains the declarations of Epicurus, that the world entirely proceeded from the will and command of him who possesses all immortality, and all beatitude. It completely removes the impiety with which this doctrine of apparent chance has been perpetually loaded. It formed, for the most part, the actual opinion of Dinant, Abelard, and other Christian Epicureans, but more especially of Gassendi; and very closely corresponds with the system of Des Cartes, which is founded entirely upon such a supposition. "There is nothing," says he, "contradictory to the rational faculties of man, in conceiving that the Deity did no more than create the original chaos of all things; enduing it with certain laws, and leaving it to the gradual operation of those laws—to produce order from confusion, to separate element from element, and form the vast varieties of animals and vegetables that exist over the whole earth, and are nourished from its bosom." See Baker's Reflections on Learning, chap. vii.; Des Cartes Meth. Philos.; Gassendi de Exortu. Mund. And this, indeed, with the exception of the eternity of matter alone, is the avowed doctrine of La Metherie, De Luc, Hutton, Whitehurst, Kirwan, and almost all our modern cosmologists. Nor could it be otherwise, than upon such an interpretation, that several learned poets of Italy have attempted to reconcile the principles of Epicurus, or Democritus, with those of the Christian religion; and, among others, Gio. Michele Milani, who, in 1698, printed, as we are told by Crescembini, a very long and learned canzone on light, extending to not less than eighty-three stanzas; much of which was devoted to this very subject. "In essa," says he, "si spiega buona parte della filosofia di Democrito adattata alla verità Cristiana." Comentarj Poetici, l. ii. c. io. If indeed we were to examine the opinions of many of the most celebrated fathers of the Christian church,
But the blind fear, the superstition vain
Of mortals uninform’d, when spring, perchance,
In heav’n above, or earth’s sublunar scene,
Events to them impervious, instant deem.

as well as of the ancient Jews, we should make an
approach much nearer still to the cosmology of Epicurus: for several of them not only believed in the
gradual evolution of the world, but in the eternity of
matter itself; conceiving that matter was necessarily
co-eternal with God, as the solar rays are coeval with
the sun. Philo appears to have been altogether a
Platonist upon this subject. See his Cosmog. vol. i.
p. 5. nov. ed.; and Justin Martyr, Apol. 59, af-

firms, that the doctrine of Plato, with respect to the
creation of the world, is the very doctrine of Moses;
and from Moses was borrowed, ινα δε και πορα τω
ήμερων δι’ανακαινις καθως το Πλατανα μακάνε το τιτω,
όλω ανατροφες στηργοται, καθως ποιεται, ανατροφη των
αυτολεητων ιμμανων δια Μωυσευ, x. τ. λ. The άλω
ανατροφή, or un fashioned matter here referred to, out
of which the world was created by the Deity, and
which was supposed to have been co-eternal with him-
self, is indeed expressly made mention of by the writer
of the book of Wisdom, chap. xi. 17; and he has also
been supposed, in consequence, to have been attached
to the whole of this opinion. In reality, it is not easy
to extricate him from the charge; and Origen, who
enters expressly into an examination of the passage,
feels himself compelled to remark, that this book is
not received by all as canonical Scripture. Few,
however, besides Maimonides, have chosen to con-
tend, that the Hebrew ב?’א created, in Gen. i. 1.
necessarily implies an absolute creation out of nothing.

It has been of late very generally believed on the
continent, and probably with a view of reconciling
the apparent incongruity of the origin of matter out
of nothing, upon Christian principles, that the world
is an emanation of the substance of the Supreme
Being. Mr. Kant is supposed to favour this belief.
It has been professedly brought forwards and sup-
ported by M. Isnard, in his work "Sur l’Immortalite de l’Ame," printed at Paris in 1802; and is

approved of by M. Anquetil du Perron, the learned
translator of the Oupnek’hat, or abridgement of the
Veids. The difficulty, however, does not appear to
be in any great degree diminished by such a con-
jecture; for, if matter be an emanation from the sub-
stance of the Deity, then is the Deity himself ma-
terial, and matter becomes not only eternal, but the
Eternal God, the very essence of the Divine Being:
a doctrine far exceeding the impiety of the atomic
hypothesis, and infinitely more absurd. It is, more-
ever, a mere revivification of the wildest dogmas of
Plato and Pythagoras, obviously derived from India,
and still existing in the Braminic Veids. It is thus
stated in M. Perron’s version of the Oupnek’hat, to
which I have just referred: “The whole universe is
the Creator, proceeds from the Creator, subsists
in him, and returns to him. The ignorant assert
that the universe, in the beginning, did not exist
in its author, and that it was created out of no-
thing.—O ye, whose hearts are pure, how could
something arise out of nothing? This first Being,
alone, and without likeness, was the all in the
beginning: he could multiply himself under dif-
ferent forms: he created fire from his essence,
which is light, &c.”

The whole of this doctrine of the Epicurean school
is thus fully detailed, by the cardinal Polignac:

Ex nihil nihil fit: lex inviolabilis esto:
Nil ruit in nihilum, clamat tota schola Epicuri.
Ergo si quae sunt, aeterna fuere: nec unquam
Cessatura manet. Inter se sunt ubicque
Corpora, materies autem quae corpora fundat
Semper erit, fuit: est: finemque ignorat et ortum.

ANTI-LUCR. ix. 471.

Nought springs from nought: be this th’ eternal law:
To nought nought tends, shouts all th’ atomic
school.
Possunt; ac fieri divino numine rentur.
Quas ob res, ubi viderimus nihil posse creari
De nihilo, tum, quod sequimur, jam rectius inde
Perspiciemus; et unde queat res quaeque creari,
Et quo quæque modo fiant operâ sine divôm.

Nam, si de nihilo fierent, ex omnibus rebus
Omne genus nasci posset: nihil semine egeret.
E mare primum homines, e terrâ posset oriri
Squamigerum genus, et volucres: erumpere coelo
Armenta; atque aliae pecudes, genus omne ferarum,
Incerto partu, culta ac deserta tenerent:
Nec fructus iidem arboribus constare solerent,
Sed mutarentur; ferre omnes omnia possent.
Quippe, ubi non essent genitalia corpora quoique,
Quî posset mater rebus consistere certa?
At nunc, seminibus quia certis quaeque creantur,
Some power supernal present, and employ'd.—
Admit this truth, that nought from nothing springs,
And all is clear. Develop then, we trace,
Through Nature's boundless realm, the rise of things,
Their modes, and pow'rs innate; nor need from heav'n
Some god's descent to rule each rising fact.

Could things from nought proceed, then whence the use
Of generative atoms, binding strong
Kinds to their kinds perpetual? Man himself
Might spring from ocean; from promiscuous earth
The finny race, or feath'ry tribes of heaven:
Prone down the skies the bellowing herds might bound,
Or frisk from cloud to cloud: while flocks, and beasts
Fierce and most savage, undefin'd in birth,
The field or forest might alike display.
Each tree, inconstant to our hopes, would bend
With foreign fruit: and all things all things yield.
Whence but from elemental seeds that act
With truth, and power precise, can causes spring

Sir Richard Blackmore, in his Creation, book i.; a production, which, although admitted by Johnson into his own arrangement of English Poems, probably on account of its religious and moral tendency, is but very sparing indeed in true poetic spirit and embellishment. There are many passages in it, however, which are obviously deduced from Lucretius; whose philosophy it was the grand object of the worthy knight to subvert, as far as he was able.
Inde enascitur, atque oras in luminis exit,
Materies ubi inest quojusque, et corpora prima:
Atque hac re nequeunt ex omnibus omnia gigni,
Quod certis in rebus inest secreta facultas.

Præterea, quur vere rosam, frumenta calore,
Viteis auctumino fundi suadente videmus;
Si non, certa suo quia tempore semina rerum
Quom confluxerunt, patet quodcumque creatur,
Dum tempestates adsunt, et vivida tellus
Tuto res teneras cecert in luminis oras?
Quod, si de nihilo fierent, subito exorereerentur
Incerto spatio, atque alienis partibus anni:
Quippe ubi nulla forent primordia, quae genitali
Concilio possent arceri tempore iniquo.

Nec porro augendis rebus spatio foret usus
Seminis ad coitum, e nihilo si crescere possent.
Nam fierent juvenes subito ex infantibus parvis,
E terrâque, exorta repente, arbusta salirent:
Quorum nihil fieri manifestum est, omnia quando
Paullatim crescunt, ut par est, semine certo;
Crescentesque genus servant; ut noscere possis
Quidque sua de materialia grandescere, aliqua.
Powerful and true themselves? But grant such seeds,
And all, as now, through Nature’s wide domain,
In time predicted, and predicted place,
Must meet the day concordant; must assume
The form innately stampt, and prove alone
Why all from all things never can proceed.

Whence does the balmy rose possess the spring?
The yellow grain the summer? or, the vine
With purple clusters, cheer th’ autumnal hours?
Whence, true to time, if such primordial seeds
Act not harmonious, can aught here survey’d,
Aught in its season, rear its tender form,
And the glad earth protrude it to the day?
But, if from nought things rise, then each alike,
In every spot, at every varying month,
Must spring discordant; void of primal seeds
To check all union till th’ allotted hour.

Nor space for growth would then be needful: all
Springing from nought, and still from nought supply’d.
The puny babe would start abrupt to man;
And trees umbrageous, crown’d with fruit mature,
Burst, instant, from the greensward. But such facts
Each day opposes; and, opposing, proves
That all things gradual swell from seeds defin’d,
Of race and rank observant, and intent
T’ evince th’ appropriate matter whence they thrive.
Huc adcedit, uti sine certis imbribus anni
Lætificos nequeat fetus submittere tellus;
Nec porro, secreta cibo, natura animantum
Propagare genus possit, vitamque tueri:
Ut potius multis conmunita corpora rebus
Multa putes esse, ut verbis elementa videmus,
Quam sine principiisullam rem existere posse.

Denique, quur homines tantos natura parare
Non potuit, pedibus quei pontum per vada possent
Transire, et magnos manibus divellere monteis,

Ver. 220. The timely show'r from heave'n must add
benign
Its influence too,—] The author of the book
of Job, the sublimest drama that was ever composed
by any writer, whether sacred or profane, denomina-
tes, with inimitable elegance, chap. xxxviii. 31.
these refreshing and seasonable showers "the sweet
influences of Chimah;" or, as it is rendered
in the Septuagint, and hence borrowed into our
English version, "of the Pleiades." The constella-
tion Chimah (צימה) answers to the more modern
sign Taurus, as Chesil (צいただける) does to Capricorn;
and the alternate seasons of spring and winter, the
revival and destruction of the world, are hence beau-
tifully alluded to: Mazaroth (תsoever) is, in all pro-
bability, the zodiac at large; and Aish (איש) Arc-
turus, one of the most remarkable stars in the northern
hemisphere,—and hence, by an elegant synecdoche,
employed for the northern hemisphere itself. See
this subject more minutely examined in the note on
book ii. verse 1105 of the present poem. The Greek
translators, however, not being positive as to the term
Mazaroth have, in this instance, and in this alone, re-
tained the Hebrew lection; in which conduct they
have also been followed by the translators of the Eng-
lish version. I cannot avoid noticing, in this place,
the absurd argument of that biblical blunderer Thomas
Paine, deduced from these two verses, to prove the
invalidity and spuriousness of the whole book of Job.
Finding these Greek terms in the English version,
and apprehending, from his gross ignorance of the
original, that the same Greek terms occurred in the
Hebrew, he has ventured to assert that this book
could never have been written originally in Hebrew;
that it must have been first of all compiled, in a much
later period than is generally contended for, by some
romance-writer of Greece, and afterwards translated
from the Greek into the Hebrew tongue, from
But matter thus appropriate, or e’en space
For growth mature, form not the whole requir’d.
The timely shower from heav’n must add benign
Its influence too, ere yet the teeming earth
Emit her joyous produce; or, the ranks
Of man and reptile, thence alone sustain’d,
May spring to life, and propagate their kinds.
Say rather, then, in much that meets the view,
That various powers combine, concordant all,
Common and elemental, as in words
Such elemental letters,—than contend,
That void of genial atoms, aught exists.

Why form’d not Nature man with ample pow’rs
To fathom, with his feet, th’ unbottom’d main?
To root up mountains with his mighty hands?

which, as an original publication in this latter language, we have received it into English. This, however, is but one blunder among a thousand that might easily be selected from this unrivalled specimen of sober and classical criticism.

In allusion to this elegant description in the book of Job, Milton, who indefatigably examined the Scriptures, as well for their poetic ornaments as important doctrines, thus paints the first production and appearance of this constellation before its Creator:

—The Pleiades before him dance’d,
Shedding sweet influence.

Par. Lost, vii. 370.

Ver. 231. To fathom, with his feet, th’ unbottom’d main?
To root up mountains with his mighty hands?

As a philosopher, Lucretius was superior to all vulgar prejudices and stories; and his uniform aim is to release the mind from their undue influence. He treats, therefore, in these lines, as unauthentic fables the wonderful relations of Polyphemus, and the giants. Of the former of whom, we learn from Virgil, what was the popular belief as to his stature:

—graditurque per aequor
Jam medium necdum fluctus latera ardua tinxit.
Æn. iii. 364.

—through deepest seas he strides,
While scarce the topmost billows touch his sides.

Dryden.

Of the latter, this is his description in a different poem:

Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam
Scilicet et Ossæ frondosum involvere Olympum.

Georg. i. 288
Multaque vivendo vitalia vincere secla; 
Si non, materies quia rebus reddita certa est 
Gignundis, e quâ constat quid possit oriri?
Nihil igitur fieri de nihilo posse fatendum est; 
Semine quando opus est rebus, quo quæque creatæ 
Aëris in teneras possent proferri auras.

Postremo, quoniam incultis præstare videmus 
Culta loca, et manibus meliores reddere fetus, 
Esse videlicet in terris primordia rerum; 
Quæ nos, fecundas vortentes vomere glebas; 
Terraïque solum subigentes, cimus ad ortus.
Quod, si nulla forent, nostro sine quæque labore, 
Sponte suâ, multo fieri meliora videres.

Huc adcedit, uti quidque in sua corpora rursum 
Dissolvat natura, neque ad nihilum interimat res.
Or live o’er lapsing ages victor still?
Why, but because primordial matter, fixt
And limited in act, to all is dealt
Of things created, whence their forms expand.
And hence again we learn, and prove express,
Nought springs from nought, and that, from seeds precise,
Whate’er is form’d must meet th’ ethereal day.

Mark how the cultur’d soil the soil excels
Uncultur’d, richer in autumnal fruits.
Here, too, the latent principles of things,
Freed by the plough, the fertile glebe that turns
And subjugates the sod, exert their power,
And swell the harvest: else, spontaneous, all
Would still ascend by labour unimprov’d.

And as from nought the genial seeds of things
Can never rise, so Nature that dissolves
Their varying forms, to nought can ne’er reduce.

now ventures to advance a second, and maintains
that "nothing can ever be annihilated, or reduced
to nothing." This axiom he supports by four argu-
ments, which extend to verse 306. According to
the constitution of Nature, not a single substance
can be dissolved, or even change its texture, without
the interposition of some foreign and superior force.
But if all things were perishable throughout, and
subject to utter annihilation, no such foreign force
would be necessary; and we should, in a variety of
instances, be eye-witnesses of the sudden evanescence
of substances we had falsely deemed solid. Thus,
too, if, upon the gradual or ultimate decay of things,
every atom were completely destroyed, there could be
no regular return of anterior productions;—produc-
tions which have been exhibited at definite intervals,
and without any variation, through an incalculable
series of years, and which must, therefore, for aught
that appears to the contrary, on the first view of such
productions, continue to be exhibited for ever.
Were not this a fact,—were all things perishable, and
equally perishable, a similar degree of sudden and
external force would divide their contexture, and all
would equally vanish in a moment: nor could we trace, in that case, the uniform interchange
of substance into substance; follow up its dis-
junction or dissolution; and predict in what form,
and at what definite period, it would next appear
before us.
Nam, si quid mortale e cunctis partibus esset,
Ex oculis res quæque repente erepta periret;
Nullâ vi foret usus enim, quæ partibus ejus
Discidium parere, et nexus exsolvere, posset.
Quod nunc, æterno quia constant semine quæque,
Donec vis obiit, quæ res diverberet ictu,
Aut intus penetret per inania, dissoluvatque,
Nullius exitium patitur Natura videri.

Præterea, quæquomque vetustate amovet ætas,
Si penitus perimit consumens materiem omnem,
Unde animale genus generatim in lumina vitæ
Reductit Venus; et reductum dædala tellus
Unde alit, atque auget, generatim pabula præbens?
Unde mare, ingenui funtes, æternaque longe
Flumina, subpeditant ? une æther sidera pascit?

Ver. 265. —or, other feed the stars?] The Stoics,
Epicureans, and almost all the schools of ancient philosophy, conceived that the stars, and even the sun itself, were fires that required continual pabulum, or fuel, in consequence of continual exhaustion. This pabulum, as they imagined, consisted of exhalations of the finest texture, perpetually, but insensibly, ascending from the earth and seas, and, when converted into ether, directing their course through the skies for this purpose. Hence Callimachus, Hym. Del. 175.

A more full and philosophic account of this ancient opinion may be collected from our author’s system of the origin of the world, as inimitably delineated in the fifth book of this poem. In total consonance herewith, Pliny tells us in plain prose, Nat. Hist. I. ii. c. 9. “Sidera vero haud dubio humore terreno pasci.” “That the stars are doubtless fed by exhalations from the earth.” And hence Virgil, in a passage I will quote, with an emendation strenuously contended for by Mr. Wakefield: In fleta dum fluvii current, dum montibus umbra,
Lustring concussa, polus dum sidera pascet,
Semper honos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt.

Innumerosus quotaque
That feed on air, and wander round the pole.
Were things destructible throughout, then all
Abrupt would perish, passing from the sight;
Nor foreign force be wanting to disjoin
Their vital parts, or break th' essential bond.
But since, from seeds eternal all things rise,
Till force like this prevail, with sudden stroke
Crushing the living substance, or within
Deep entering each interstice, to dissolve
All active, Nature no destruction views.

Were time the total to destroy of all
By age decay'd,—say whence could Venus' self
The ranks renew of animated life?
Or, if renew'd, whence earth's dedalian power
Draw the meet foods to nurture, and mature?
Whence springs and rivers, with perpetual course,
The deep supply? or, ether feed the stars?

Sir Isaac Newton supposes an ether surrounding
the atmosphere of planets, and subtile enough to
penetrate the pores of all bodies whatever; most of
the phenomena of which he imagines to depend upon
its powers. In consequence of which, he denominates it a subtile or etherial medium. Des Cartes,
in like manner, admits a species of ether, which he
calls "materia subtilis;" and which, consistently
with his doctrine of an universal plenum, he conceives
not only adequate to pervade, but actually filling all
the vacuities of bodies. But the ether of the ancient
poets and philosophers much more nearly resembles
the congregation of hydrogen or inflammable air of
modern chemists; and which, almost to a certainty,
according to some late chemical experiments, floats on
the aerial atmosphere of the globe, and seems to realize
the imaginary fifth element of the Chinese and Hindus. Hydrogen is determined by Mr. Cavendish,
to be ten times lighter than common air; according
to the laws of gravitation, it must, therefore, be con-
tinually ascending through it, and resting above it;
for there is no more reason for supposing it should
be restrained, or combined with it in its passage,
than for supposing that air must be restrained or
combined in its passage through water. Thus dis-
engaged, and freed from all pressure, this volatile
gas necessarily then expands to inconceivable tenuity;
and accumulating, as from its own levity, and the
motion of the earth, it must do, principally over the
poles, it is probably the cause of fire-balls, northern
lights, and many other phenomena which are ex-
hibited in the superior regions.
Omnia enim debet, mortali corpore quæ sunt,
Infinita ætas consumpse ante acta, diesque.
Quod, si in eo spatio atque ante ætate fuere,
E quibus hæc rerum consistit summa refecta;
Inmortali sunt naturâ præedita certe:
Haud igitur possunt ad nihilum quæque reverti.

Denique, res omneis eadem vis caussaque volgo
Confirmat, nisi materies æterna teneret
Inter se nexus, minus aut magis indupedita;
Tactus enim leti satis esset caussa profecto;
Quippe, ubi nulla forent æterno corpore; quorum
Contextum vis deberet dissolvere quæque.
At nunc, inter se quia nexus principiorum
Dissimiles constant, æternaque materies est,
Incolomi remanent res corpore, dum satis acris
Vis obeat pro textura quoiusque reperta.
Haud igitur redit ad nihilum res ulla, sed omnes
Discidio redeunt in corpore materiali.

Ver. 266. —ever-during time.] “Infinita ætas.”
Ever-during, infinite, eternal time, are phrases often
adopted by our poet, to express a period that sur-
passes comprehension. Thus, without going beyond
the present book, we meet, in verse 559 of the ori-
ginal, with dies infinita, and shortly afterwards, in
verse 634, with ex eterno tempore; and so, in verse
1126 of the translation:

—scenes throughout
'Twere vain t' expect from all-eternal time.
Thus too Marchetti: “Dopo un eterno tempo.”
It is a phraseology that has been imitated, or at
least adopted, by many of our own poets. Glover
is particularly attached to it. Thus in book v. of
his Leonidas:
Whate’er could perish, ever-during time,
And rolling ages, must have long destroy’d.
But if, through rolling ages, and the lapse
Of ever-during time, still firm at base,
Material things have stood, then must that base
Exist immortal, and the fates defy.

Thus, too, the same efficient force apply’d
Alike must all things rupture, if, within,
No substance dwelled eternal to maintain
In close, and closer, links their varying bonds.
E’en the least touch,—for every cause alike
Must break their textures, equal in effect,
If no imperishable power oppos’d,—
E’en touch were then irrevocable death.
But since, with varying strength, the seeds within
Adhere, of form precise, and prove express
Their origin eternal,—free from ill,
And undivided must those forms endure,
Till some superior force the compact cleave.
Thus things to nought dissolve not; but, subdu’d,
Alone return to elemental seeds.

Time with his own eternal lip shall sing:
In like manner, in the sacred writings we meet with
Ver. 38. the phrase, “eternal or everlasting hills.” Thus,
Habak. iii. 6.

And again, in book viii. of the same poem:
—virtue shall enrol your names
In Time’s eternal records.
Ver. 361.

He beheld and scatter’d the nations;
The everlasting mountains were dispers’d;
The perpetual hills bowed down.
DE RERUM NATURA.

Postremo, pereunt imbres, ubi eos pater Aether
In gremium matris Terrae precipitavit:
At nitidae surgunt fruges, rameique virescunt
Arboribus; crescunt ipsae, fetuque gravantur.
Hinc aliter porro nostrum genus, atque ferarum:
Hinc laetas urbeis puerum flore videamus,
Frundiferasque novis avibus canere undique sylvas:
Hinc, fessae pecudes, pingues per pabula laeta,
Corpora deponunt; et candens lacteus humor
Uberibus manat distantis: hinc nova proles

VER. 287. When, on the bosom of maternal Earth,
His showers redundant genial Ether pours,]

The beauty of this passage needs not be pointed out to any one. In the personification of the poets, ether has always been allotted a masculine, as the earth has a feminine gender; and the productions of nature have been regarded as the fruits of their connubial embraces. Virgil has imitated our poet, Georg. ii. 325; and “he strives hard,” observes Dr. Warton, “to excel him; but I am afraid it cannot be said that he has done it.”

Tum pater omnipotens fœcundis imbribus Aether
Conjugis in gremium laeæ descendit, et omnes
Magnus alit, magno commixtus corpore, fetus.
Ether, great lord of life, his wings extends,
And on the bosom of his bride descends,
With showers prolific feeds the vast embrace,
That fills all nature, and renews her race.

The idea is common among the Greek poets; and it is more than probable that if Virgil borrowed the above from Lucretius, Lucretius himself had a reference to the following verses, in a fragment of Euripides:

_Ερημίτας φθοράς λάμβανοι φιλημένοις
Αλκαμίτας σκέφτεσθαι ἀλλὰ δυσμενώς
_Ερημίτας φθοράς λάμβανοι φιλημένοις
Αλκαμίτας σκέφτεσθαι ἀλλὰ δυσμενώς
_Οὐκ ἔστιν τι ἀπεικόνισθαι ἐν τούτῳ ὅπως
Τικταινὶ ὑπὸ τον κακτρέψθαι αἵμα,
_Οὗτος ἐστὶν ἐκ τι να ἡ ἑστιν γίγνος.

Earth loves the shower, when, parch’d with summer-heat,
Her barren womb no genial moisture knows;
And genial Ether loves, with showers distent,
On her soft lap to fall in dalliance sweet.
From the fond union that creates, at once,
And nurtures all things, man himself proceeds,
Augments and ripens.

Tasso has unquestionably an allusion to this passage of our poet, in his Jerusalem Delivered; and his description is highly beautiful.

La terra, che dianzi afflitta ed egra
Di tessere le membra avea ripiene,
When, on the bosom of maternal Earth,
His showers redundant genial Ether pours,
The dulcet drops seem lost: but harvests rise,
Jocund and lovely; and, with foliage fresh,
Smiles every tree, and bends beneath its fruit.
Hence man and beast are nourish’d: hence o’erflow
Our joyous streets with crowds of frolic youth;
And with fresh songs th’ umbrageous groves resound.
Hence the herds fatten, and repose at ease,
O’er the gay meadows, their unwieldy forms;
While from each full-distended udder drops
The candid milk spontaneous; and hence, too,
With tottering footsteps, o’er the tender grass,

La pioggia in se raccoglie, e si rintegra,
E la comparte alle piu interne vene :
E largamente i nutritivi umari
Alle piante ministra, all’ erbe, ai fiori, &c.

CANT. xiii.

Earth that late her gaping rifts disclos’d,
And fainting lay to parching heat expos’d,
Receives and ministers the vital show’rs
To fading herbs, to plants, to trees, and flow’rs:
Her fever thus allay’d, new health returns,
No more the flame within her bosom burns;
Again new beauties grace her gladden’d soul,
Again renew’d, her hills and valleys smile.

HOOLE.

Long as this note is, and numerous as are its references, I cannot conclude it without instancing a parallel passage of Hebrew poetry, which, in point of sublimity and elegance, surpasses even Lucretius himself. The reader will find it in Psalm lxv. 9, 13.

Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it;
Thou abundantly enrichest it

With the ‘dewy’ stream of God, replete with water.
Thou preparest, and fittest it for corn:
Thou drenchest its furrows; its clods thou dis-solvest;
Thou mellowest it with showers; thou blessest its increase;
And with thy bounty thou crownest the year.
Thy footsteps drop fatness; they drop on the pastures of the desert,
And the hillocks are begirt with exultation.
The pastures are clothed with flocks, the vales are covered with corn;
They all shout and sing aloud for joy.

Ver. 299. With tottering footsteps,—] The description here given us of the lamb just dropped into the world is not more beautiful than accurate. Dyer who, to the advantage of much original genius, added a strict attention to the various phenomena of nature, has a picture of the same subject in his Fleece,
Artubus infirmis teneras lasciva per herbas
Ludit, lacte mero menteis perculsa novellas.

Haud igitur penitus pereunt quaecumque videntur;
Quando alid ex alio reficit Natura, nec ullam
Rem gigni patitur, nisi morte ajuta alienâ.

Nunc age sis, quoniam docui nihil posse creari
de nihilo, neque item genita ad nihilum revocari;
Ne quâ forte tamen coeptes diffidere dictis,
Quod nequeunt oculis rerum primordia cerni;
Adcipe præterea, quæ corpora tute necesse est

which will by most readers be regarded as a copy.
It is thus he addresses the shepherd:

But spread around thy tenderest diligence

In flowery spring-time when the new-dropt lamb,

Tottering with weakness, by his mother’s side

Feels the fresh world about him.

It is not a little extraordinary that this most characteristical trait in our poet’s inimitable picture, the tottering footstep, (artubus infirmis) of the new-born lamb, should have been entirely omitted, not only by Creech, but even in the prose version of Guernier.
The French translation of Couture is likewise as little to the purpose: but Marchetti, who is always beautiful, and nearly always just, and by far the most elegant translator that has ever attempted to give Lucretius into any modern language, has not suffered this part of the description to pass unnoticed:

Quindi per i lieti paschi i grassi anneoti
Posan le membra affaticate stanche,
E dalle piene mamme in bianche stille
Gronda sovente il nutrivo umore
Onde i novi lor parti ebrì e lascivi
Con non ben fermo piè scherzan per l’erbe.

Evelyn, likewise, though in feeble poetry, has preserved something of the idea in the following lines:

Hence pure milk from distended teats distils,
And late-fall’n young warm’d with sweet suck it fills;
Who, frisking o’er the meadows, as they pass,
Frolic their feeble limbs on tender grass.

The delineation both of the bleating lamb, and the unwielding ox, is imitated in Les Jardins of Delille: but he has entirely omitted this delicate and picturesque touch; nor does his introduction of the warrior horse into the group, which is not found in Lucretius, altogether atone for its absence:

La, du sommet lontain des roches buissonneuses,
Je vois le chevre pendre. Ici de mille agneaux
L’echo porte les cris de coteaux en coteaux.
Dans ces prés abreuves des eaux de la colline,
Couché sur ses genoux, le bœuf pesant rumine;
Tandis qu’ impetueux, fier, inquiet, ardent,
Cet animal guerrier qu’ enfanta le trident,
Deploie, en se jouant, dans un gras paturage
Sa vigueur indomtee et sa grace sauvage.

There hangs the wild goat o’er the bushy steep,
Here o’er the hills a thousand echoes leap
Gambol their wanton young, each little heart
Quivering beneath the genuine nectar quaff’d.

So nought can perish, that the sight surveys,
With utter death; but Nature still renews
Each from the other, nor can form afresh
One substance, till another be destroy’d.

But come, my friend, and, since the muse has sung
Things cannot spring from, or return to nought,
Lest thou should’st urge, still sceptic, that no eye
Their generative atoms e’er has trac’d;
Mark in what scenes thyself must own, perforce,

-Ver. 302. —Nature all renews
Each from the other, &c. —] The discoveries of modern chemistry have established the truth of this doctrine beyond the possibility of controversy. Every thing is produced from, and nourished by, every thing; by the recombinations of the particles of one body, when decompounded, a second body is generated, from this second a third, from this third a fourth, and in the same manner to infinity. "The corruption of one substance," observed Aristotle, many ages ago, "is the generation of another: and "the generation of one substance is the corruption "of another." It would form an admirable motto to the Lavoisierian system. 

Ver. 306. But come, my friend, &c. —] The poet is not content with having logically established the truth of his position; he is anxious to remove every doubt which can possibly be urged in opposition to it. And the only argument which he conceives capable of producing doubt at all is, that no such eternal and unchangeable principles or seeds are discoverable in bodies by ocular perception. The force of such argument or observation, however, he completely frustrates by proving, in a variety of elegant and apposite instances, that we unanimously admit the existence of bodies even where, as in the case in question, the eye is possess of no power of decision; and a different tribunal is appealed to. The illustration of this assertion is continued to verse 373.
Confiteare esse in rebus, nec posse videri.

Principio, venti vis verberat incita pontum,
Ingenteisque ruit naveis, et nubila differt;
Interdum, rapido percurrens turbine, campos
Arboribus magnis sternit, monteisque supremos
Sylvifragis vexat flabris: ita perfurit acri
Cum fremitu, sævitque minaci murmure, pontus.
Sunt igitur venti nimirum corpora cæca,
Quæ mare, quæ terras, quæ denique nubila cœli,
Verrunt, ac subito vexantia turbine raptant.

Ver. 312. — *th' excited wind torments the deep.*

Virgil has several beautiful descriptions of a storm of wind in his different poems: and in most of them he has been indebted to Lucretius, though I do not know that he has excelled him in any. The following is bold and picturesque:

Qualis hyperboreis Aquilo cum densus ab oris
Incubuit, Scythique hyemes atque arida differt
Nubila, tum segetes altae campique mutantes
Lenibus horrescunt flabris, summæque sonorem
Ille volat, simul arva fugit, simul aqua verrena.

Georg. iii. 196.

So Boeas in his race, when rushing forth,
Sweeps the dark skies, and clears the cloudy North:
The waving harvests bend beneath his blast,
The forest shakes, the groves their honours cast.
He flies aloft, and, with impetuous roar,
Pursues the foaming surges to the shore.

Dryden.

Lucretius, in his turn, has been indebted to Homer. The storm of wind he has here so admirably described, and the storm of water to which he immediately after-wards compares it, both probably owe their origin to the following simile, introduced to illustrate the rage and activity of Tydides:

*Θον γαρ αμπειλει, πτωκας πληκουτε ειςκες,
Χειμαρρης, ος ε' ιωκα πιαν εκδοκει γυπαρς, &c.*

I. E. 87.

Thus from high hills the torrents swift and strong
Deluge whole fields, and sweep the trees along;
Thro' ruined moles the rushing wave resounds,
*Overwhelms the bridge,* and bursts the lofty bounds:
The yellow harvests of the ripen'd year,
And flatted vineyards one sad waste appear;
While Jove descends in sluicy sheets of rain,
And all the labours of mankind are vain.

Pope.

It is from Homer or Lucretius Ariosto has copied his description of the same phenomenon. The destruction of the incumbent bridge, with several other circumstances, occur alike in each of them. Orl. Fur. C. ix.

—alhora gonfio, e bianco gia di spume
Per nieve sciolta, e per montane piove,
E l'impeto de l'acqua havca disciolto,
*E tratto seco il ponte,* e il passo toltol.
Still atoms dwell, tho’ viewless still to sense.
And, first, th’ excited wind torments the deep;
Wrecks the tough bark, and tears the shivering clouds:
Now, with wide whirlwind, prostrating alike
O’er the waste-champion, trees, and bending blade;
And now, perchance, with forest-rending force,
Rocking the mighty mountains on their base.
So vast its fury!—But that fury flows
Alone from viewless atoms, that, combin’d,
Thus form the fierce tornado, raging wild
O’er heav’n, and earth, and ocean’s dread domain.

—The waters swelled with heavy rains,
And melted snows, had deluged all the plains;
And, loudly foaming, with resistless force,
Had borne the bridge before them in their course.

Thomson, in his description of an autumnal flood,
has forgotten to introduce this piece of imagery, but
in other respects he is minutely picturesque, and pos-
sest of considerable merit.

Red from the hills innumerable streams
Tumultuous roar; and high above its banks
The river lift: before whose rushing tide
Herds, flocks, and harvests, cottages and swains,
Roll mingled down—all that the winds had spar’d
In one wild moment ruin’d.

But the bold and energetic muse of the Spanish
poet Ercilla, has far surpassed both the Italian and
the English. To this admirable bard, as well as
gallant soldier, I have already adverted, and shall
have frequent occasion to refer. A variety of his
delineations prove him to have been well acquainted
with Lucretius, and well worthy of imitating him.
The passage I now allude to occurs in the ninth
canto of his Araucana near the commencement, and
comprises the opening of the tempest that announced
the visible approach of the Indian demon Epona-
mon:

Subito comenco el ayre a turbarse,
Y de prodigios tristes se espessava:
Nuves con nuves vienen a cerrarse,
Turbulento rumor se levantava,
Que con ayesidos impulsus violentos
Monstravan su furore los quatro vientos.
Agua rezia, granizo, piedra espessa
Las intrica das nuves despendian
Rayos, huenos, relampagos, apriessa
Rompen los cielos y la tierra abrian.

The air grew troubled with portentous sound,
And mournful omens multiplied around:
With furious shock the elements engage,
And all the winds contend in all their rage.
From clashing clouds their mingled torrents gush,
And rain, and hail, with rival fury rush:
Bolts of loud thunder, floods of lightning rend
The opening skies, and into earth descend.

Hayley.
Nec ratione fluunt alià, stragemque propagant,
Ac quom mollis aquæ fertur natura repente
Flumine abundanti; quem largis imbris auget
Montibus ex alitis magnus decursus aquæi,
Fragmina conjiciens sylvarum, arbustaque tota:
Nec valdei possunt pontes venientis aquæi
Vim subitam tolerare; ita, magno turbidus imbri,
Molibus incurrit, validis cum viribus, amnis;
Dat sonitu magno stragem; volvitque sub undis
Grandia saxa; ruit quà quidquam fluctibus obstat.
Sic igitur debent venti quoque flamina ferri:
Quæ, veluti validum quom flumen procubuere
Quam libet in partem, trudunt res ante, ruuntque
Inpetibus crebris; interdum vortice torto
Conripiunt, rapideique rotanti turbine portant.
Quà re etiam atque etiam sunt venti corpora caeca;
Quandoquidem factis, et moribus, æmula magnis
Amnibus inveniuntur, aperto corpore quei sunt.
Tum porro varios rerum sentimus odores;
Nec tamen ad nareis venienteis oernimus unquam;
Nec validos æstus tuimur, nec frigora quimus
Usurpare oculis; nec voces cernere suemus:

Ver. 342. Or sound thro' ether fleeting—] One of
15, perpetually agitated amongst the most celebrated
of the ancient philosophers, was this: "Is sound a
"substance, or incorporeal?" But substance, con-
tinues he, is that which either acts or suffers; or, as
As when a river, down its verdant banks
Soft-gliding, sudden from the mountains round
Swell with the rushing rain—the placid stream
All limit loses; and, with furious force,
In its resistless tide, bears down, at once,
Shrubs, shatter’d trees, and bridges, weak alike
Before the tumbling torrent: such its power!—
Loud roars the raging flood, and triumphs still,
O’er rocks, and mounds, and all that else contends.
So roars th’ enraged wind: so, like a flood,
Where’er it aims, before its mighty tide,
Sweeps all created things: or round, and round,
In its vast vortex curls their tortur’d forms.—
Tho’ viewless, then, the matter thus that acts,
Still there is matter: and, to reason’s ken,
Conspicuous as the visual texture trac’d
In the wild wave that emulates its strength.

Next, what keen eye e’er follow’d, in their course,
The light-wing’d odours? or develop’d clear
The mystic forms of cold, or heat intense?
Or sound thro’ ether fleeting?—yet, tho’ far

the Greeks define it, either the agent or patient:
which definition, he observes, Lucretius has endeavoured to express in these terms:
Nought can touch
But matter; or, in turn, be touched itself.
This was an especial doctrine of the sect of Epicureans.
Quae tamen omnia corpore constare necesse est
Naturâ; quoniam sensus inpellere possunt:
Tangere enim, aut tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res.

Denique, fluctifrago subpensae in litore, vestes
Uvescunt; eadem, dispessae in sole, serescunt:
At neque, quo pacto persederit humor aquai,
Visum est, nec rursum quo pacto fugerit aestu.
In parvas igitur parteis dissipargitur humor,
Quas oculi nullâ possunt ratione videre.

Quin etiam, multis solis redeuntibus annis,
Annulus in digito subter tenuatur habendo:
Sillicidii casus lapidem cavat: uncus aratri
Ferreus obculte decrescit vomer in arvis:

curus. Aristotle observes, that "they believed whatever
can be touched to be a body, σώμα υποπτα εἰναι τὰς
αύτον." And Laertius states it from Epicurus, as an
opposite principle, that void, the precise converse of
body, is possessed of a nature free from touch, lib. 10. The
philosophy of the senses, however, is given with
so much beauty and precision in the fourth book of
this poem, that no commentary is necessary to him
who attentively peruses it.

Ver. 356. —The dropping snow'r
Scoops the rough rock.—] The instances
adduced by Lucretius are beautifully selected; and
nearly all of them, for any thing we know to the
contrary, original. The present elucidation, how-
ever, is as old as the book of Job, in which the atten-
tive author observes, cap. xiv. 19. "The rivulets
"wear away the stones." But it is from Bion, in all
probability, that Lucretius has immediately derived
it; of whom the hand of time has yet spared us the
following fragment:

εκδιαίμενα μεθαμεροντα σωμα λογον, αυτον μικραν,
και λαθεο ει προμοι καλλιται.

By ceaseless drops, like eloquence, that flow,
The rigid stone is hollowed.

In general, however, Lucretius has been rather
imitated than an imitator. Thus Sulpicius:

Decidens scabrum cavat unda tophum;
Ferreus vomer tenuatur agris
Splendet adtrito, digitos honorans,
Annulus auro.

Anthol. Lat. Burm. iii. 97.
From human sight remov’d, by all confess’d
Alike material; since alike the sense
They touch impulsive; and since nought can touch
But matter; or, in turn, be touch’d itself.

Thus, too, the garment that along the shore,
Lash’d by the main, imbibes the briny dew,
Dries in the sun-beam: but, alike unseen,
Falls the moist ether, or again flies off
Entire, abhorrent of the red-ey’d noon.
So fine th’ attenuated spray that floats
In the pure breeze; so fugitive to sight.

A thousand proofs spring up. The ring that decks
The fair one’s finger, by revolving years,
Wastes imperceptibly. The dropping show’r
Scoops the rough rock. The plough’s attemper’d share

The tumbling torrent scoops the rugged rock;
The stern steel plough-share wastes beneath its toil;
And the gold ring the finger that adorns lessens by friction.

The same series of images is adopted by Ovid,
With a trifling inversion of the order:
Gutta cavat lapidem, consumitur annulus usu
Et teritur pressa vomer aduncus humo.

Drops scoop the stone, much use the ring consumes,
And the curved share attenuates in the glebe.

Of these examples, that of Bion’s is by far the most beautiful, as containing a moral reference. On which account, also, the following, which is the production of a poet of the present day, cannot be perused without a strong feeling of intrinsic merit. It occurs in a poem, entitled Crombe Ellen, by the Rev. M. Bowles, who has often favoured the world with proofs of truly poetic inspiration.

Scenes of retir’d sublimity that fill
With fearful extacy, and holy trance.
The pausing mind!—we leave your awful gloom.
And lo! the footway plank that leads across
The narrow torrent, foaming thro’ the chasm
Below: the rugged stones are wash’d and worn.
Into a thousand shapes, and hollows, scoop’d
By long attrition of the ceaseless surge.

Smooth, deep, and polish’d as the marble urn,
In their hard forms. Here let us sit and watch
The struggling current burst its headlong way,
Hearing the noise it makes, and musing much
On the strange changes of this nether world, &c.
Strataque jam volgi pedibus detrita viarum
Saxea conspicimus: tum, portas propter, ahena
Signa manus dextras obtendunt adtenuari
Sæpe salutantum tactu, praeterque meantum.
Hæc igitur minui, quom sint detrita, videmus;
Sed, quæ corpora decedant in tempore quoque,
Invida præclusit speciem natura videndi.

Postremo, quæque mortale dies naturaque rebus
Paullatim tribuit, moderatim crescere cogens,
Nulla potest oculorum acies contenta tueri;
Nec porro quæque ævo macieque senescunt:
Nec, mare quæ inpendent, vesco sale saxa peresa
Quid quoque amittant in tempore, cernere possis.
Corporibus cæcis igitur natura gerit res.
Nec tamen undique corporeâ stipata tenentur

Ver. 360. E'en the gigantic forms of brass,
Thus Juvenal, Sat. xiv. 219:
Ceres tangens aramque, pedemque.
The altar touching, and the foot of Ceres.
Nothing, therefore, can be more obvious than the
meaning of our poet, or form a more picturesque il-

Thus Juvenal, Sat. xiv. 219:
Ceres tangens aramque, pedemque.
The altar touching, and the foot of Ceres.
Nothing, therefore, can be more obvious than the
meaning of our poet, or form a more picturesque il-
Decays: and the thick pressure of the crowd,
Incessant passing, wears the stone-pav’d street.
E’en the gigantic forms of solid brass,
Plac’d at our portals, from the frequent touch
Of devotees and strangers, now display
The right hand lessen’d of its proper bulk.—
All lose, we view, by friction, their extent;
But, in what time, what particles they lose,
This envious nature from our view conceals.

Thus, too, both time and nature give to things
A gradual growth: but never yet the sight
That gradual growth explor’d; nor mark’d their fall,
Still gradual too, by age, or sure decay:
Nor trac’d what portions of incumbent rock,
Loaded with brine, the caustic wave dissolves.—
So fine the particles that form the world.

Yet not corporeal is the whole produc’d

And yet the Baron de Coutures is not satisfied with this common interpretation; and, in the true spirit of French gallantry, translates it thus: “and even the brass knucklers affixed to the gates of our grandees are worn by the hands of those who pass by, or who enter to pay them their respects.” Et les marteaux d’airain qui sont aux portes des grands, se trouvent enfin usés par les mains de ceux qui passent ou qui viennent faire leur cour.

Superstition, as to its more prominent features, is the same in all ages: and what Lucretius records as the practice of Rome in his era, is the practice in the same city at the present moment: the object of religious veneration alone having been changed. For the bronze statue of St. Peter, in the celebrated church that bears his name, has at this hour, its advanced foot under which the pope daily places his head, obviously marked and worn bright from the frequency of the kisses impressed upon it by the multitudes of devotees who throng towards it, from all quarters, for a benediction. The same superstitious affection was evinced towards the statue of Serapis; and still continues to be exhibited by the Siamese, in the worship of their chief idol.
Omnia natura; namque est in rebus inane:
Quod tibi cognosse in multis erit utile rebus;
Nec sinet errantem dubitare, et quærere semper
De summâ rerum, et nostris diffidere dictis.
[Quapropter locus est intactus inane, vacansque.]
Quod, si non esset, nulla ratione moveri
Res possent; namque, obficium quod corporis exstat,
Obficere atque obstare, id in omni tempore adesset

Ver. 376. Search where thou wilt, an incorporeal void.] The poet, in these verses, advances another axiom or principle of the Epicurean school. He has already established the existence and imperishability of solid bodies; and he now endeavours to demonstrate the existence of a void or space in which such bodies interact. These terms, space and void, and sometimes region, are, therefore, used in the prosecution of his observations, synonymously, and to gratify the ear with a rich interchange of expressions. This existence in the physical world, observes Empiricus, is denominated a void or vacuum, because it is destitute of body; a space, because it contains bodies; and a region, because bodies are moved in it.

The principle here advanced, the poet endeavours to establish by four beautiful and cogent illustrations; and which, with his casual reply to objections that had frequently been urged by other writers, extend to verse 479. If there be no vacuum, or incorporeal space, the universe would be all and equally solid and nothing could possibly move, because nothing could possibly give way to admit of motion. But even the common appearances of things convince us, in a vast variety of instances, that substances deemed the most solid and compact, are, nevertheless, possessed of some degree of vacuum. Were this not a fact, were all bodies equally solid and compact, every thing would be possessed of an equal weight. And with whatever speed the space, existing between the parts of bodies separated abruptly and by force, may be filled with air, prior to the arrival of such air there must have been a complete vacuum.

The arguments of Lucretius, as well as those of more modern philosophers, as Spinosa, Gassendi, and Newton, pass in review before him, and he counters them with no small dexterity; whilst he advances opposite arguments to support the Cartesian system of a plenum. Space, he observes, from the properties attributed to it by Lucretius, is, in reality, a God. For, if space be immutable and infinite, there is no reason why it should not be intelligent and almighty. If, moreover, it be divisible, and by such division, admit bodies to pass through it, it cannot be infinite. In this case, too, it must be composed of parts, and consequently corporeal. But that which is pure vacuum cannot be corporeal. Vacant space, therefore, is a mere chimera of the imagination; a thing that can have no real existence. But I must refer the reader, for further information, to the poem itself; as I must also to the works of Bayle, Euler, and other Anti-Cartesians, for the ratioincation by which this specious mode of arguing has been completely subverted.
By nature. In created things exists,
Search where thou wilt, an incorporeal void.
This mark, and half philosophy is thine.
Doubtful no longer shalt thou wander: taught
Th' entire of things, and by our verse convinc'd.
And know this void is space untouch'd and pure.

Were space like this vouchsaf'd not, nought could move:
Corporeal forms would still resist, and strive

Space, or void, is, in the present day, I believe,
 Universally asssented to; and seems to be demonstrated
 by the best chemical experiments. M. de la Place
 has long asserted, that the molecules of bodies are
 infinitely larger than the diameter of these mole-
cules; and, among other demonstrations, has appealed
 to the extreme facility with which the rays of light
 penetrate transparent substances in every direction.
 And M. Haiiy, who espouses the same doctrine,
 has advanced proofs still more decisive, from the
 symmetrical arrangement of the molecules of various
 natural bodies in a state of crystalization. See his
 Traité Elémentaire de Physique, lately published at
 Paris; a work well worth consulting by every one
 who is attached to the science of natural philosophy.

Ver. 380. And know this void is space untouch'd
 and pure.] The original of this verse,
 which is certainly unnecessary, and in the original
 strangely unconnected, has been condemned in strong
 terms by Bentley and Wakefield. The latter has,
 therefore, as will be found in the opposite page, in-
 cluded it in brackets; and advanced a conjecture, that
 it was at first nothing more than a mere marginal re-
 ference of an ancient transcriber, which, at length,
 forced its uncouth way into the text itself.

Ver. 381. Were space like this vouchsaf'd not, nought
 could move :] It was not the Epicureans alone,
Omnibus: haud igitur quidquam procedere possent, 
Principium quoniam cedendi nulla daret res. 
At nunc per maria, ac terras, sublimaque cœli, 
Multa modis multis variâ ratione moveri 
Cernimus ante oculos: quæ, si non esset inane, 
Non tam soliciito motu privata carerent, 
Quam genita omnino nullâ ratione fuissent: 
Undique materies quoqiam stipata quiesset. 
Præterea, quamvis solidae res esse putentur, 
Hinc tamen esse licet raro cum corpore cernas. 
In saxis, ac speluncis, permanat aquarum 
Liquidus humor, et uberibus flent omnia guttis: 
Dissupat in corpus sese cibus omne animantum: 
Crescunt arbusta, et fetus in tempore fundunt: 
Quod cibus in totas, usque ab radicibus imis, 
Per truncos ac per ramos diffunditur omnes: 
Inter sæpta meant voces, et clusa domorum 
Transvolitant: rigidum permanat frigus ad ossa. 
Quod, nisi inania sint, quà possent corpora quæque 
Transire, haud ulla fieri ratione videres.

Denique, quur alias aliis præstare videmus 
Pondere res rebus, nihilo majore figurâ? 
Nam, si tantumdem est in lanæ glomere, quantum 
Corporis in plumbo est, tantumdem pendere par est;
With forms corporeal, nor consent to yield;
While the great progress of creation ceas'd.
But what more clear in earth or heav'n sublime,
Or the vast ocean, than, in various modes,
That various matter moves? which, but for space,
'Twere vain t' expect: and vainer yet to look
For procreative power, educing still
Kinds from their kinds through all revolving time.

True, things are solid deem'd: but know that those
Deem'd so the most are rare and unconjoin'd.
From rocks, and caves, translucent lymph distils,
And, from the tough bark, drops the healing balm.
The genial meal, with mystic power, pervades
Each avenue of life; and the grove swells,
And yields its various fruit, sustain'd alone
From the pure food propell'd thro' root and branch.
Sound pierces marble; through reclusest walls
The bosom-tale transmits: and the keen frost
E'en to the marrow winds its sinuous way.—
Destroy all vacuum, then, close ev'ry pore,
And, if thou canst, for such events account.

Say, why of equal bulk, in equal scale,
Are things oft found unequal in their poise?
O'er the light wool the grosser lead prevails
With giant force. But were th' amount alike
Corporis obfficium est quoniam premere omnia deorsum:
Contra autem natura manet sine pondere inanis.
Ergo, quod magnum est æque, leviusque videtur,
Nimirum plus esse sibi declarat inanis;
Ut contra gravius plus in se corporis esse
Dedicat, et multo vacuum minus intus habere.

Est igitur nimirum id, quod ratione sagaci
Quærimus, admixtum rebus; quod inane vocamus.
Illud, in hiis rebus ne te deducere ven
Possit, quod queidam fingunt, præcurrere cogor.

Ver. 418. But some there are such doctrines who deny:] In the progress of this poem, we shall have abundant illustrations of the general truth of that apophthegm of Solomon, that "there is nothing new under the sun." The arguments adduced in favour of a vacuum, and which have the appearance of being unanswerable, by Democritus and Epicurus, were, nevertheless, controverted by Zeno and Aristotle; who contended that all nature was full of matter, and there was no vacuity in any point of creation. Lucretius, and other pupils of the Epicurean school, adhered to, and continued to advance the same doctrine at Rome; they were, opposed by Cicero and Seneca. The same arguments were adduced, and the same objections re-torted. The world grew tired of the contest, and it subsided. At length Des Cartes and Newton arose, and the contest was revived: a material plenum was contended for by the former, and a vacuum as strenuously asserted by the latter. Like the revival of an old fashion, the dispute was once more new to the world; and all were anxious to become ontologists and mathematicians. Sir Isaac had, undoubtedly, the advantage of his adversary. His arguments, or rather those which had been formerly advanced, and were now advanced again, were by far the most cogent; and his proselytes the most numerous. But the world was not fully convinced on the death of both of them. The defence of a plenum was entailed on Leibnitz, and that of a vacuum on Euler. The same demonstrations were mutually advanced, and the same objections mutually urged. Am I doing injustice to the ingenuity of the moderns? Let, then, two or three examples suffice. More might easily be selected, but I will not so far trespass on the reader's time.

"All bodies about the earth," observes Sir Isaac Newton, in answer to the doctrine of Des Cartes, "gravitate towards the earth; and the weights of all bodies, equally distant from the earth's centre, are as the quantities of matter in those bodies," &c. Princip. lib. ii.
Of matter each contain’d, alike the weight
Would prove perpetual: for, from matter sole,
Flows weight, and moment, ever prone to earth:
While vacant space nor weight nor moment knows.
Where things surpoise, then, though of equal bulk,
There matter most resides: but where ascends
The beam sublime, the rising substance holds
A smaller share, and larger leaves the void:

Hence draws the sage his creed: in all produc’d
Finds vacuum still, and calls that vacuum space.

But some there are such doctrines who deny:
And urge in proof, deceptive, that the wave

Compare this axiom with that proposed by Lucretius, commencing with an interrogation at verse 403, and continued to verse 420.
Say why of equal bulk, in equal scale,
Are things oft found unequal in their poise?
O’er the light wool the grosser lead prevails
With giant force, &c.

For other instances, see the note that immediately follows; that on v. 510, v. 536, and v. 1028.

Ver. 419. And urge in proof, deceptive, that the wave, &c.] There may be a plenum, observes Des Cartes, but motion may, nevertheless, commence and continue: “every part of matter that is moved (to copy from the abstract of his doctrine on this subject, as given by the late ingenious Adam Smith) thrusting some other out of its place, and that some other still, and so on. But, to avoid an infinite progress, and harmonize with his own vortices, he supposed that the matter which any body pushed before it, rolled immediately backwards to supply the place of that matter which flowed in behind it: as we may observe in the swimming of a fish, that the water, which it pushes before it, immediately rolls backwards to supply the place of what flows in behind it; and thus forms a small circle, or vortex, round the body of the fish.” Essays on Philosophical Subjects.

Whether or not Des Cartes knew at the time he adopted this illustration of his doctrine, he was only repeating what had been long advanced before, and what, in the verses in question, is admirably refuted by Lucretius, I cannot tell. But the Cardinal Polignac, notwithstanding this refutation of our poet, still chose to continue the same plausible, but unfounded, illustration, in his Anti-Lucretius, though he was well acquainted with the reply that was already prepared for him. Anti-Lucr. lib. ii. 673.

Rem res dum pellit, quæris quo pulsa recedit, &c.

Sir Richard Blackmore has borrowed the same image from our poet; but in opposition to the philosophy of Aristotle. Creation, b. i.

Nor could the fish divide the stiffen’d floods:
Cedere squamigeris latices nitentibus aiunt,  
Et liquidas aperire vias, quia post loca pisces  
Linquant, quo possint cedentes confluere undae:  
Sic alias quoque res inter se posse moveri,  
Et mutare locum, quamvis sint omnia plena.  
Scilicet id falsâ totum ratione receptum est.  
Nam, quo squamigeri poterunt procedere tandem,  
Ni spatium dederint latices? Concedere porro  
Quo poterunt undae, quom pisces ire nequibunt?  
Aut igitur motu privandum est corpora quæque,  
Aut esse admixtum dicundum est rebus inane;  
Unde initum primum capiat res quæque movendi.

Postremo, duo de concurso corpora lata  
Si cita dissiliant, nempe aër omne necesse est,  
Inter corpora quod fiat, possidat inane.  
Is porro quamvis, circum celerantibus auris,  
Confluat, haud poterit tamen uno tempore totum  
Conpleri spatium: nam primum quemque necesse est  
Obcupet ille locum, deinde omnia possideantur.  
Quod, si forte aliquis, quom corpora dissiluere,  
Tum putat id fieri, quia se condenseat aër,
Not through imagin'd pores admits the race
With glitt'ring scales—but yields at once, and opes
The liquid path; and occupies, in turn,
The space behind the aureat fish deserts.
Thus, too, that all things act: the spot possess'd
Exchanging sole, whilst each continues full.
Believe them not. If nought of space the wave
Give to its gilded tenants, how, resolve,
Feel they the power t' advance? and if t' advance
They know not, how can, next, the wave thus yield?—
Or matter ne'er can move, then, or within
Some void must mix through all its varying forms,
Whence springs alone the pow'r of motion first.

When force mechanic severs, and, abrupt,
Drives two broad bodies distant, quick between
Flows the light air, and fills the vacuum form'd.
But ne'er so rapid can the light air flow.
As to forbid all void; since, step by step,
It still must rush till the whole space be clos'd.
Nor credit those who urge such bodies sole
Can part because the liquid air, compress'd
To closer texture, gives the needed space.

into the idea the poet meant to convey, when he reached this passage: and his version of it is, hence, so incorrect, so confused, and foreign from the purpose, that his annotator, to whom he is much indebted, has thought it necessary to explain the translation itself, by a commentary of three pages.

7
Errat: nam vacuum tum fit, quod non fuit ante,
Et repletur item, vacuum quod constitit ante;
Nec tali ratione potest denser aer:
Nec, si jam posset, sine inani posset, opinor,
Ipse in se trahere, et parteis conducere in unum.
Quapropter, quamvis caussando multa moreris,
Esse in rebus inane tamen fateare necesse est.

Multaque praeterea tibi possunt conmemorando
Argumenta fidem dictis conradere nostris:
Verum animo satis hae vestigia parva sagaci
Sunt, per quae possis cognoscere caetera tute.
Namque canes, ut montivagae persaepe ferae
Naribus inveniunt, injectis frunde, quietes,
Quom semel institerunt vestigia certa viae;
Sic alid ex alio per te tute ipse videre
Talibus in rebus poteris, caecasque latebras
Insinuare omnes, et verum prostrahere inde.

Quod, si pigraris, paullumve recesseris abs re,
Hoc tibi de plano possum promittere, Memmi;

Ver. 453. *For as the hound, &c.—* The same simile is adopted by Sophocles, in the opening of his Ajax Flagellifer. It is thus Minerva addresses Ulysses:

"Inde o' exipis,
Koivos Laxiainhos eis eis eisicos Exoci, &c.
—like Sparta's hound, of scent
Sagacious, do'st thou trace him, nor in vain."  

It is impossible to read either of these passages, without being reminded of Homer's lively description of the faithful Argus that died partly of years, and partly of joy, on the sudden return of Ulysses to Ithaca: and it is probable Lucretius had it in his recollection at the time of composing the simile.

"As de ipso exipis, ti eis eisicos exici
Argos Odontos tolaant, &c.

FRANKLIN.

ODYSSE. lib. xvii.
Such feeble reas'ners, in opposing void,
A double void confess: for, first, perforce,
A void they own, where void was none before,
Betwixt the substance sever'd; and bring next
A proof surmountless that the air itself
Throng'd with a prior void: else how, to bounds
Of closer texture, could it e'er contract?

A thousand facts crowd round me: to the same
Converging all. But ample these, I ween,
Though but the footsteps of the mighty whole,
To fix thy faith, and guide thee to the rest.
For as the hound, when once the tainted dew
His nostrils taste, pursues the vagrant fox
O'er hills, and dales, and drags him from his lair;
So may'st thou trace from fact associate fact,
Through ev'ry maze, through ev'ry doubtful shade,
Till Truth's bright form, at length, thy labours crown.

Nor tardy be the toil, for much remains.
So oft, O Memmius! from the sacred fount

With him the youth pursu'd the goat or fawn,
Or trac'd the mazy levi'tret o'er the lawn.—
Him no fell savage on the plain withstood,
None 'scap'd him bosom'd in the gloomy wood;
His eye how piercing, and his scent how true,
To wind the vapour in the tainted dew.

Pope's Odyssey, b. xvii.

We recognise our own poet, however, in the following of his antagonist.
Ut canis occultam sylvis deprendere damam
Nare sagax, et odor sequi vestigis praede
Venari docuit. Anti-Lucr. vi. 50.

Thus learn we from the hound to hunt, of nose
Keen to pursue through tangled woods the deer,
Skulking from sight, and track his tainted steps.
Usque adeo largos haustūs de fontibus amnis
Lingua meo suavis diti de pectore fundet,
Ut verear, ne tarda prius per membra senectus
Serpat, et in nobis vitāī clastra resolvat,
Quam tibi de quâ vis unā re versibus omnis
Argumentorum sit copia missa par aureis.
Sed nunc, ut repetam cœptum pertexere dictis.

Omnis, ut est, igitur, per se, natura duabus
Constitit in rebus: nam corpora sunt, et inane;
Hæc in quo sita sunt, et quâ divorsa moventur.
Corpus enim per se communes dedicat esse
Sensus: quoi nisi prima fides fundata valebit,
Haud erit, obscultis de rebus quo referentes
Confirmare animos quidquam ratione queamus.
Turn porro locus, ac spatium, quod inane vocamus,
By wisdom fed, so largely have I drank,
And such the dulcet doctrines yet untold,
That age may first unman us, and break down
The purple gates of life, ere the bold muse
Exhaust the boundless subject. Haste we, then,
Each pulse is precious, haste we to proceed.

Know, then, th' entire of nature sole consists
Of space and body: this the substance mov'd,
And that the area of its motive pow'r.
That there is body, ev'ry sense we boast
Demonstrates strong: and, if we trust not sense,
Source of all science, then the mind itself,
Perplex'd and hopeless, must still wander on,
In reasoning lost, to ev'ry doubt a prey.

This appeal of mankind at large to the testimony
of the external senses, is noticed by Ariosto, in his
Orlando Furioso; who is fearful that, on account of
the prevalence of such principle, his mysterious tales, so
totally repugnant to all the experience they offer, will
obtain but little credit with the world.

Il schiocco volgo non gli vuol dar fede
Se non le vede, e tocca chiare, e piane.
Per questo io so, che l'inesperienza
Farà al mio canto dar pora credenza.

The herd unletter'd nothing will believe
But what their senses plainly can perceive.
Hence I shall ne'er with common minds prevail,
And gain but trivial credit for my tale.
Si nullum foret, haud quâquam sita corpora possent
Esse, neque omnino quâquam dîvorsâ meare:
Id, quod jam supra tibi paullo obtendimus ante.

Præterea, nihil est, quod possis dicere ab omni
Corpore sejunctum, secretumque esse ab inani;
Quoi quasi tertia sit numero natura reperta.
Nam, quodquomque erit, esse aliquid debebit id ipsum
Augmine vel grandi, vel parvo denique, dum sit;
Quoi si tactus erit quam vis levis, exiguusque,
Corporis augebit numerum, summamque sequetur:
Sin intactile erit, nullâ de parte quod ullam
Rem prohibere queat per se transire meantem;
Scilicet hocque id erit vacuum, quod inane vocamus.

Præterea, per se quodquomque erit, aut faciet quid,
Aut aliis fungi debebit agentibus ipsum;
Aut erit, ut possunt in eo res esse, gerique:
At facere, et fungi, sine corpore nulla potest res;
Nec præbere locum porro, nisi inane vacansque,
Ergo præter inane, et corpora, tertia per se
Nulla potest rerum in numero natura relinqui;
Nec, quae sub sensus cadat ullo tempore nostros,
Nec ratione animi quam quisquam possit apisci.
Nam, quâquomque cluent, aût hiis conjuncta duabus
And were not space, were vacuum not allow’d,  
In nought could bodies, then, their powers display  
Of various action: each compressing each  
To motion fatal, as already sung.

Nor is there aught such vacant space besides,  
And matter close-embodied, can be trac’d  
A substance forming discrepant from each.  
Search where thou wilt, whate’er occurs to view,  
Of bulk minute, or large, tho’ e’en its form  
Change with the hour, if tangible it prove,  
This stamps it matter, and forbids all doubt.  
But if intangible, throughout if still  
To matter pervious, act where’er it may,  
’Tis, then, void space, and can be nought besides.  

All things, moreo’er, a substance must evince  
Acting, or suffering act; or, form the sphere  
In which to act or suffer. But to act  
Or suffer action, must be matter’s sole;  
While space alone that needed sphere admits.  

Nought then, ’twixt space and matter can subsist  
Of intermediate substance: nought be trac’d  
By keenest efforts of th’ external sense,  
Or by the meditating mind deduc’d.  
All else we meet with, or conceive but these  
Are mere conjunctions, or events attach’d.
Rebus ea invenies, aut horum eventa videbis.
Conjunctum est id, quod numquam sine perniciali
Discidio potis est sejungi, seque gregari:
Pondus utei saxi est, calor ignis, liquor aquae,
Tactus corporibus cunctis, intactus inani.
Servitium contra, paupertas, divitiæque,
Libertas, bellum, concordia, cætera, quorum
Adventu manet incolomis natura, abituque;
Hæc solitiei sumus, ut par est, eventa vocare.

Tempus item per se non est, sed rebus ab ipsis
Consequitur sensus, transactum quid sit in ævo;
Tum, quæ res instet, quid porro deinde sequatur:
Nec per se quemquam tempus sentire fatendum est
Semotum ab rerum motu, placidâque quiete.

Denique Tyndaridem raptam, belloque subactas
Troiugenas genteis quom dicunt esse, videndum est,
And know the learned by conjunctions name
Those powers in each perpetual that inhere,
And ne'er can part till void or matter cease.
Thus heat to fire, fluidity to streams,
Weight to the rock, to all of matter touch,
And want of touch to space. While Discord, Peace,
Oppression, Freedom, Poverty, and Wealth,
And aught that else, of matter, and of space
Lives independent, though engender'd hence,
Are termed, and justly, by the wise events.

E'en time, that measures all things, of itself
Exists not; from the mind alone produc'd,
As, link by link, contemplating minute,
Things present, past, or future: for, of time,
From these disjoint'd, in motion, or at rest
Tranquil and still, what mortal can conceive?

Thus spring events to birth. The rape renown'd
Of beauteous Helen, or the fall of Troy,

got the idea of duration, the next thing natural for
the mind to do, is to get some measure of this com-
mon duration, whereby it might judge of its different
lengths, and consider the distinct order wherein sev-
eral things exist; without which a great part of our
knowledge would be confused, and a great part of
history rendered very useless. This consideration of
duration, as set out by certain periods, and marked by
certain measures, or epochs, is that, I think, which most
properly we call time." Hum. Underst. b. ii. c.

Ver. 516. Thus spring events to birth.—] Actions
can only be said to exist, speaking with logical pre-
cision, in consequence of the existence of the substra-
tum or body whence they issue. They could not
have existed of themselves; and without such sub-
stratum would never have existed at all. An illicit
amour can have no existence independently of the
persons consenting to it. The fall of a city supposes
the prior existence of such city, and cannot, as an
existence, be detached from the city itself.

Ver. 517. [beauteous Helen, or the fall of Troy,]
The story is so well known, as to require little or no
explanation. Helen, the grace and loveliness of
Ne forte hæc per se cogant nos esse fateri;
Quando ea secla hominum, quorum hæc eventa fuerunt,
Inrevocabīlis abstulerit jam præterita Ætas.
Namque aliud terris, aliud legionibus ipsis,
Eventum dici potent, quodquomque erit actum.

Ver. 517. —or the fall of Troy.] Had Lucretius been a writer of the present day, he must have sought for other examples than those he has now adduced, or the fastidious pen of some modern critics would have been levelled against him. Le Bossu, in his Essay on the Epic, and Mr. Bryant, in an express Dissertation on the subject, and with a gigantic mass of erudition, have attempted to prove that there never was such a place as Troy, or at least on the plain of Ilion; and of course that the history our poet refers to never had an existence of any kind, either dependent or independent: and that the whole story of the Trojan war is a fable invented by Homer, and unfounded in fact. Their arguments are principally derived from the difficulty of determining the spot where, according to the geographic description of Homer, the city of Troy must have been erected, if it had ever been erected at all: from the very different situations in which different critics have placed it; from the entire want of all traces and remains of this celebrated city even in the time of Lucan; and from the uncertainty of intelligence possessed by the Greeks themselves prior to their Olympiads, which did not commence till some centuries after the supposed conquest of Troy.

When a man of erudition once entertains an opi-
Thou deem'd existences, yet of themselves
Existed never: on material things,
On place and persons acting, or coerc'd,
Alone dependent. These revolving years
Have long th' irrevocable doom assign'd:
And rape and conquest, as events that claim'd
From these existence, now exist no more.

Had ne'er been form'd the matter, or the space,
Whose pow'r conjunctive gave those scenes to be;
No fire had e'er, from lovely Helen's eyes,
Glanc'd thro' the bosom of the Trojan youth,

The effect of love is variously described, as well
as accounted for, by the poets. Generally, however,
the instrument supposed to be employed, is either
a dart from the eye, producing a wound, as in v. 36,
of the present book; or else a species of subtle and
irresistible flame, eroding and consuming the bosom,
as in the present passage. In the opening of book iv.
of the Aeneid, Virgil introduces both these metaphors,

Ver. 527. No fire had e'er, from lovely Helen's eyes,
Glanc'd thro' the bosom of the Trojan youth.

Vulnus alit venis, et caeco carpitur igni.
She feeds her wound, and pines with secret fire.
DE RERUM NATURA.  LI B. I.

Clara ascendisset sævi certamina belli;
Nec clam durateus Troianis Pergama partu
Inflammasset equus nocturno Graiugenarum:
Perspicere ut possis, res gestas funditus omneis
Non ita, utei corpus, per se constare, neque esse:
Nec ratione cluere eadem, quâ constat inane:
Sed magis ut merito possis eventa vocare
Corporis, atque loci, res in quo quasque gerantur.
Corpora sunt porro partim primordia rerum,
Partim concilio quæ constant principiorum.

Petrarke follows our poet's latter image alone in the ensuing description:

I che l'esca amorosa al petto avea
Qual maraviglia se di subito arsi?
What wonder, that I burn and smart,
Since love's keen torch inflames my heart.

Solomon has beautifully and boldly introduced another system of imagery, the elegance, and indeed the meaning of which has seldom been sufficiently explained. Under his creative powers, the fascinating fair becomes the surrounding wall of a fortified city; which was often erected with consummate skill, beautified with all the ornaments of architecture, and over different parts of which were projected towers or turrets for the purpose of repelling the assailing foe; in whose construction and finish the taste of the artist was principally exerted, and which were hence frequently denominated towers of ivory or of silver. The triumphant fair being thus generally resembled to the beautiful and ornamental wall of a defensive city—her white and swelling bosom is next compared to the white and swelling turrets projected from its surface,—to those elegant, but dangerous prominences, which were equally formed for the purpose of attack or repulsion, and which no man, in either case, can approach without extreme peril. With this introductory explanation the passage I refer to is equally exquisite and obvious.

Call her a wall—and two towers of silver
Will we build upon her—
I myself am a wall,
And my bosom resembles two towers.

Chap. viii. 9, 10.

For a still farther illustration, the reader may consult my version and notes upon this elegant simile, Sacred Idyls, p. 59 and 206.

Ver. 531. Pour'd forth at night,—]
Hence Virgil,

Invadunt urbem somno vinoque sepultam:
Ceduntur vigiles: portisque patentibus omnes
Accipiunt socios, atque agmina conscia jungunt.
Æn. ii. 265.

A nameless crowd succeed; their forces join
T' invade the town, oppress'd with sleep and wine.
Those few they find awake, first meet their fate,
Then to their fellows they unbar the gate.

Dryden.

Ver. 535. Know too,that bodies,in their frame,consist,]
The poet proceeds to develop another principle of the
And kindled the fierce flames of storied war:
No giant horse the fell Achæan throngs
Pour’d forth at night, subverting Priam’s realm.
Mark, then, how different facts exist and blend
From void or matter; and how justly term’d
Of place and body the deriv’d events.

Know, too, that bodies, in their frame consist,
Part, of primordial atoms uncombin’d,

Epicurean philosophy; and conceiving that he has established the existence of matter and space, and demonstrated that no other principle whatever can be detected throughout the Universe, he next advances that matter is composed of two kinds, elementary atoms, impenetrably solid and compact, and substances compounded of such atoms with certain proportions of vacuum, consequently unsolid and porous. The elementary atoms of matter, he contends, must be solid, as being the precise converse of vacuum, and having no common property with it; that vacuum itself could not be proved to exist, or measured as to its extent, if it were not bounded by solid substances; and that, thus, they mutually demonstrate the existence of each other.

These primal or solid atoms are the ultima, as the poet afterwards endeavours to demonstrate, or smallest bodies of actual existence. The mind, undoubtedly, may conceive of bodies more minute, for it may conceive of these minutest substances of actual existence as divided, and as infinitely divisible. But our philosophic bard attempts to prove (ver. 675.) that if we admit the doctrine of an infinite physical divisibility, or, in other words, do not contend for an extreme into which bodies may be divisible, and beyond which they cannot be divided, the grossest absurdities must follow. Every thing would, in this case, be infinite alike, as possessed of infinite parts; and it would, as in a variety of instances it has done in modern times, lead us to the total disbelief of matter of any kind; and to become pupils of Spinoza, Hobbs, Berkeley, or Hume, according as the collateral tenets of these philosophers principally influenced our judgment.

The supposition, that these primal atoms were the least or ultimate bodies of existing nature, was an improvement upon the system of Democritus, and a doctrine peculiar to the Epicurean school. Thus Dionysius observes, as quoted by Eusebius, Prep. xiv. 7. τοσοῦτο πεπρωτα σωστά, και μη διά χάρισμα πεινας και δια τουτο αυτήν ὁ δια νοσμοτος, και μνηστας ευμνει, ἀτομα μελέτων; “they disagreed in as much as the atoms of Epicurus were all least and ultimate, and therefore insensible; whilst Democritus conceived many of them to be of considerable magnitude.” And Heraclitus, therefore, who adhered to the old atomic school, has, occasionally, denominated these latter ὅμογον, timid, or masy.

But atoms that are perfectly solid are indissoluble, and can never be separated. Such atoms, must, therefore, exist for ever, and without change: they must be eternal, and immutable. These properties of matter, properties I mean attributed to it by the Epicureans, our philosophic poet discusses at ver. 581 and 604.
I have often been amused at the disputes in which men of extensive learning and profound speculation have engaged on the subject of matter; but more especially at beholding them, in the prosecution of their inquiries, arrive at a conclusion the very converse of that for which they at first contended. Dr. Priestley was denominated a materialist, and he thus acknowledged himself; and, in effect, fought more battles under the standard of materialism than any other champion in Christendom. Every thing with him was matter in the Universe that was not space: there was no tertium quid, or third and different substance: consequently, the soul of man is material. But what is matter, or rather what is its definition? If I recollect aright, these, are the Doctor's words: "Matter is a solid and extended substance, endowed with powers of attraction and repulsion."—With this definition, he enters into a controversy with his friend Dr. Price; and, nugatory as was its termination, the world is much indebted to these celebrated men for the controversy thus commenced. Can matter think? is the grand question proposed by the latter; a substance naturally inert, and which is only moved by collision or other violence. Matter, observes Dr. Priestley, in his reply to this question, may think, for matter is not inert; it is not impenetrable: it is not, logically speaking, solid. No bodies, at any time, come into immediate contact with each other, or influence each other by means of simple solidity. The earth is affected by the sun; the moon by the earth; the waters of the earth by the moon. Light is reflected from substances to which it directs its course, at a distance, and without impinging upon them. The particles of all bodies deemed the most solid and impermeable are, at any time, made to approach nearer, or recede farther from each other, by the application of different degrees of heat or cold. We can form no conception, therefore, of the beginning of perfect solidity; and it is not an improbable conjecture, that all the elementary matter employed in the formation of the solar system, might be comprized in the capacity of a nut-shell. It is, indeed, most probable, that there is no such thing as solidity in nature; and that matter, consistently with the theory of Boscovich, is nothing more than a compages of centers of various attractions and repulsions extending indefinitely in all possible directions.—Hence then it was replied, the only powers or properties of matter are attraction and repulsion. But powers must be the powers of something: yet if matter have nothing but these powers, and be nothing but these powers,—then is it a non-entity, or rather becomes altogether immaterial.—Towards the termination, therefore, of this literary contest, it seems to have been agreed, that materialism and immaterialism were the same thing: and on the part of Dr. Priestley, that, provided there were but one substance admitted in the formation of man, and the creation of the Universe, he was totally unconcerned about the term; and was equally ready to denominate it a material, or an immaterial substance.

Our modern Idealists, whether of the school of...
Berkley or Hume, seem to have been influenced by a similar train of reasoning, and probably the scepticism of the Pyrrhonic school was founded upon the discrepant and incongruous maxims of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, respecting the corpuscles of matter; the first contending that they are infinitely divisible, and of course terminate at last in absolute nullity; and the other two, that, intrinsically, they are destitute of quantity, quality, extent, or figure, and consequently that they are equally null and non-existent. The Sceptics, therefore, like the Idealists, thought it necessary to prove the existence of an external world, but, like the latter, they failed, and of course doubted of every thing. The lesson we should hence deduce is, that it is impossible to philosophise without a basis of first principles; that the utmost circumspection is necessary in the choice we make of them; and that, when once adopted, they should, on no account, be departed from.

Ver. 536. —bodies, in their frame consist,
Part, of primordial atoms uncomb’d,
And part combin’d and blending, &c.] Compare this with the doctrine of Sir Isaac Newton; and it must be confess that even this philosopher has been more indebted to the school of Epicurus, than is generally conceived. I will quote his own words: "All things considered, it seems probable, that God, in the beginning, formed matter in solid, massy, hard, impenetrable, moveable particles; of such sizes, figures, and with such other properties, and in such proportion to space, as most conduced to the end for which he formed them. And that these primitive particles, being solid, are incomparably harder than any porous body compounded of them: even so very hard as never to wear and break in pieces; no ordinary power being able to divide what God himself made one in the first creation."

Sir Isaac Newton found these opinions indeed, but he built upon them, and a most noble superstructure has he raised. To him are we indebted for the doctrines of attraction and repulsion, and the laws which govern and regulate the Universe. Matter with him, though primitively consisting of solid impenetrable particles, is not eternal, though apparently indissoluble; it is a created substance, and speaks and proves the existence of an immaterial and intelligent author.

Des Cartes, however, as he differed from our unrivalled countryman in his doctrine of a vacuum, differed likewise from him in almost every other idea respecting matter itself, excepting indeed as to its creation by the Deity. According to Des Cartes, therefore, matter was possessed of no such primitive particles as those imagined by Newton and the Epicureans; under every modification it was totally unsolid and infinitely divisible: a doctrine which occupies the whole of the fourth book of the Cartesian Anti-Lucretius.
Conlabefactatus rigor aurī solvitur aetū

Turn glacies aëris, flamma devicta, liqueœsit:

Permanat calor argentum, penetrāleque frīgus;

Quando utrumque mātu, retinentes pœcula rite,

Sensimus, infuso lymphārum torē superne:

Usque adeo in rebus soliō nihil esse vidētur.

Sed quia vera tamēn ratiō, nāturaque rerūm,

Cogit, ades, paucis dum venibus expediamus,

Esse ea, quae solido atque æterno corpore constent;

Semina quae rerūm, primordiāque, esse docemus:

Unde omnis reram nunc constēt summā creāta.
Book I. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Melt in the fierce volcano: gold and brass
Forego their icy hardness, and alike
Yield in the fiery conflict, and dissolve:
That e’en the silver chalice, fill’d with lymph
Fervid or cold, unlocks its secret pores,
And warms, at once, or chills th’ embracing hand.
Hence deem they matter pervious all, and void
Of solid substance. But attend, benign,
And, since right reason, and the frame of things
Demand the verse, the muse shall briefly prove
The seeds; the principles of matter all
Both solid, and eternal, whence alone
Springs the stupendous fabric of the world.

Of space, of matter, as already sung,
Th’ entire of things consists, by nature form’d
Distinct and adverse; and existing pure
Each uncontrolled of each. Where matter dwells
Void space can ne’er be found, nor matter found,
Search where thou wilt, where space resides and reigns.
As space is vacant then, material seeds
Must solid prove, perforce, and free from void.

Thus, too, as vacuum dwells in all produc’d,
Some solid substance must that vacuum bound:
Nor aught of vacuum can created things.
Be prov’d t’ enclose, if solids not exist,
DE RERUM NATURA.

Si non, quod cohibet, solidum constare relinquis.

Id porro nihil esse potest, nisi materiae
Concilium, quod inane queat tectum cohibere.

Materies igitur, solido quae corpore constat,
Esse aeterna potest, quam aeterea dissoluantur.

Tum porro, si nihil esset, quod inane vacaret,
Omne foret solidum: nisi, contra, corpora certa
Essent, quae loca conplerent, quaequomque tenerent;
Omne, quod est, spatium, vacuum constaret inane.

Alternis igitur nimirum corpus inani
Distinctum ; quoniam nec plenum gnawter exstat,
Nec porro vacuum : sunt ergo corpora certa
Quae spatium pleno possint distinguere inane.

Haec neque dissolvi plagis, extrinsecus icta,
Possunt: nec porro, penitus penetrata, retexi;
Nec ratione queunt alia tentata labare:
Id, quod jam supra tibi paullo obtendimus ante.

Nam neque conlædi sine inani posse videtur
Quidquam, nec frangi, nec fundi in bina secando:
Nec capere humorem, neque item manabile frigus,
Nec penetralem ignem ; quibus omnia confaciuntur.

Et, quo quæque magis cohibet res intus inane,
Tam magis hiis rebus penitus tentata labascit.

Ergo, si solida, ac sine inani, corpora prima
Sunt, ita utei docui, sint haec aeterna necesse est.
Whose power alone can such enclosures form.
But solids must be matter; the prime seeds
Of all survey'd, harmonious in their act,
And undecay'd when all decays around.

Were there no space, th' entire of things would prove
One boundless solid: and were nought conceiv'd
Of viewless seeds, close filling, void of space,
Each spot possest, all then were vacuum blank.
Thus each from each, from matter space exists
Distinct and clear: since never all is void,
Nor ever full; but this from that preserv'd
By countless atoms acting though unseen.
These, as already sung, no powers can pierce:
O'er blows external, o'er each vain attempt
Of penetrative solvents, or aught else
Philosophy reveals, triumphant still.
For nought can break, of vacuum all devoid,
Or melt, or moulder, or within admit
Vapour, or cold, or power of pungent heat,
By which dissolves this fabric of the world.
'Tis vacuum lays the base: as this exists,
Augments, or lessens, things alone decay.
What then is solid, and from vacuum free,
Must undecay'd, and still eternal live.
Praeterea, nisi materies externa suisset,
Antehac ad nihilum penitus res quaeque redissent;
De nihiloque renata forent, quaequevidemus.
At, quoniam supra docui, nihil posse creari
De nihilo, neque, quod genitum est, ad nihil revocari;
Esse immortalis primordia corpore debent,
Dissolvi quo quaeque suprəmo tempore possint,
Materies ut subpeditet rebus reparandis.
Sunt igitur solidā primordia simplicitate,
Nec ratione queunt nihil, servata per ævum,
Ex infinito jam tempore res reparare.

Denique, si nullam finem natura parasset
Frangundis rebus, jam corpora materiai
Usque redacta forent, ævo frangente priore,
Ut nihil ex illis a certo tempore posset,
Conceptum, summum ætatis pervadere finem;
Nam quid vis citius dissolvı posse videmus,
Quam rursus reficulaquapropterlonga diei
Infinita ætas ante actum temporis omnis,

Ver. 599. Seeds there must be of ever-during date
To which, perpetual, all dissolves, or whence
Flows the fresh pabulum that all repairs.
Akenside, in his Pleasures of Imagination, has been
frequently and largely indebted to our poet for
many of his most beautiful and sublime passages, although
I do not recollect that any critic has hitherto
pointed out such obligations. In the note on ver.
1014, the reader will find an express translation; and
in that on ver. 1093, a most striking parallelism.
The following verses have a strong reference to the
system of Epicurus, and probably an allusion to the
verses which have introduced this note.
—trace the forms
Of atoms moving with incessant change
Their elemental round; behold the seeds
Of being, and the energy of life
Kindling the mass with ever-active flame. Book I.
Were matter not eternal, ages since
All had return’d to nothing whence it sprang,
And from that nothing all again reviv’d.
But since from nothing nought can ever rise,
As prov’d above, nor aught to nothing shrink,
Seeds there must be of ever-during date,
To which, perpetual, things dissolve, or whence
Flows the fresh pabulum that all repairs.
But seeds thus simple must be solid too;
Else unpreserv’d through countless ages past,
And useless to recruit th’ exhausted world.
Else friction, too, had injur’d: each by each
Through myriad years abraded, and reduc’d,
’Till nought conceptible had liv’d to rear,
Each in its time, the progenies of earth:
For all is wasted easier than renew’d.
And hence, had all been thus disturb’d, dissolv’d,
And fritter’d through the long anterior lapse
Of countless ages, future time in vain

Ver. 605. Else friction too had injur’d:—J It is the precise doctrine of our own accurate and comprehensive philosopher. These are Newton’s words on the subject: “While the primitive and solid particles of matter continue entire, they may compose bodies of one and the same nature and texture in all ages: but should they wear away, or break in pieces, the nature of things, depending on them, would be changed. Water and earth composed of old worn particles, and fragments of particles, would not be of the same nature and texture now, with water and earth composed of entire particles at the beginning. And therefore that nature may be lasting, the changes of corporeal things are to be placed only in the various separations, and new associations, and motions of these permanent particles: compound bodies being apt to break, not in the midst of solid particles, but where those particles are laid together, and touch in a few points.”
Quod fregisset adhuc, *disturbans* dissoluensque,
Numquam id reliquio *reparari* tempore posset:
At nunc nimirum frangundi reddita finis
Certa manet, quoniam refici *rem* quamque videmus,
Et finita simul generatim tempora rebus
Stare, quibus possint *ævi* contingere florem.

Huc adcedit, utei solidissima materia
Corpora quom constant, possint tamen omnia reddi
Mollia, quæ fiunt: aër, aqua, terra, vaporens,
Quo pacto fiunt, et quâ vi quomque gerantur:
Admïxtum quoniam semel est in rebus inane.
At contra, si mollia sint primordia rerum,
Unde queant validei silices ferrumque creari,
Non poterit ratio reddi: nam funditus omnis
Principio fundamenti natura carebit.
Sunt igitur solidâ pollentia simplicitate;
Quorum condenso magis omnia conciliatu
Artari possunt, validasque obtendere vireis.

Denique, jam, quoniam generatim reddita finis
Crescendis rebus constat, vitamque tenendi;
Et quid quæque queant, per fœdera naturaë,
Quid porro nequeant, sancitum quandoquidem exstat;
Nec commutatur quidquam; quin omnia constant
Usque adeo, variae volucres ut, in ordine cunctæ,
Obtendant maculas generalis corpore inesse;
BOOK I.  THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Would strive the ruin’d fragments to repair.
But what more obvious than that bounds exist
To matter decompounding, primal seeds
To forms defin’d coercing; since again
All springs to birth, harmonious, kinds from kinds,
True to their times, and perfect in their powers?

Yet, though the principles of matter thus
Prove firm and solid, its component forms,
As air, earth, vapour, or translucent stream,
May still be soft and pliant, as combin’d,
E’en from their birth, with less, or larger void.
But had those principles themselves been rear’d
Pliant and soft, then whence the sturdy steel,
The close-compacted flint, or aught besides,
Of equal texture, trac’d through Nature’s realm?
Thus simple solids must be still confest;
And all be soft, or rigid, as of these
In more or less concentrate mode compos’d.

To all has nature giv’n a bound precise
Of being and perfection; and promulg’d,
To ev’ry varying rank, her varying laws;
Urging to this, from that restraining firm.
Nought suffers change: the feathery tribes of heaven,
Bear, on their glossy plumes, through ev’ry class,
The same fixt hues that first those classes stamp’d.
Inmutabile materiæ quoque corpus habere 585
Debent nimirum: nam, si primordia rerum
Conmutari aliquà possent ratione revicta,
Incetum quoque jam constet, quid possit oriri,
Quid nequeat; finita potestas denique quoique
Quâ nam sit ratione, atque alte terminus hærens;
Nec totiens possent generatim secla referre
Naturam, motus, victum, moresque, parentum.

Tum porro, quoniam est extremum quoique cacumen,
Corporis illius, quod nostri cernere sensus
Jam nequeunt; id nimirum sine partibus exstat,
Et minumâ constat naturâ: nec fuit umquam
Per se secretum, neque posthac esse valebit;
Alterius quoniam est ipsum pars primaque, et ima:
Inde aliae, atque aliae, similes ex ordine partes
Agmine condens Naturam corporis explent.
Quæ, quoniam per se nequeunt constare, necesse est
Hætere; unde queant nullà ratione revelli.

Ver. 638. Hence matter too, through all its primal seeds,
Is prov’d immutable;—] The doctrine of the
eternity and immutability of primitive atoms, according
to the system before us, flows from their simple soli-
dity. Immutable indeed, and indissoluble Sir Isaac
Newton conceived them to be, as appears in the note
immediately foregoing. The only difference between
his opinion on this subject, and that of our poet is, that
the former imagined them to have been created by the
Divinity, and consequently denied their eternity.

Ver. 646. To each pursuit, each action of their
sires—] Hence, perhaps, Horace,
Hence matter too, through all its primal seeds,
Is prov’d immutable: for, if o’ercome
By aught of foreign force, those seeds could change,
All would be doubtful; nor the mind conceive
What might exist, or what might never live:
Nor why, decide, such variance in their powers,
And final terms of life, or instinct strong,
Through every age, still urging every race
To each pursuit, each action of their sires.

Know, too, each seed, each substance is compos’d
Of points extreme no sense can e’er detect:
Points that, perforce, minutest of themselves,
To parts can ne’er divide: not self-educ’d,
Nor, but as form’d, existing, else destroy’d.
Parts such can hold not: each the first, pure part,
Itself, of other substance: which, when join’d
Alone by kindred parts, in order due,
Forms, from such junction, the prime seeds of things.

But e’en such parts, though by the mind as parts
Conceiv’d, disjoin’d can ne’er exist; and thence
Adhere by firm, indissoluble bond.

Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis:
Est in juvencis, est in equis patrum
Virtus: nec imbelem feroxcs

From brave and good the good man springs;
The horse, the heifer show their breed:

Nor can the dove, with timid wings,
Rise from the ravenous eagle’s seed.

Ver. 647. Know, too, each seed, each substance is compos’d] See on this subject the note on ver. 535 of the present book.
Sunt igitur solidâ primordia simplicitate,
Quæ minumis stipata cohaerent partibus arte;
Non ex illorum conventu conciliata,
Sed magis æternâ pollentia simplicitate:
Unde neque avelli quidquam, nec diminui jam,
Concedit natura, reservans semina rebus.

Præterea, nisi erit minumum, parvissima quæque
Corpora constabunt ex partibus infinitis:
Quippe, ubi dimidiæ partis pars semper habebit
Dimidiam partem; nec res præfiniet ulla.
Ergo rerum inter summam, minumamque, quid escit?
Nihil erit, ut distet: nam, quam vis funditus omnis
Summa sit infima, tamen, parvissima quæ sunt,
Ex infinitis constabunt partibus æque.
Quod, quoniam ratio reclamat vera, negatque
Credere posse animum, victus fateare necesse est,
Esse ea, quæ nullis jam prædita partibus extent,
Et minumâ constant naturâ: quæ quoniam sunt,
Illæ quoque esse tibi solida, atque æterna fatendum.

Denique, ni minumas in partibus cuncta resolvi
Cogere consuesset rerum naturæ creatrix,
Jam nihil ex illis eadem reparare valeret:
Propterea, quia, quæ nullis sunt partibus aucta,
Non possunt ea quæ debet genitalis habere.
Thus seeds are simple solids, form'd compact
Of points extreme, that never can recede:
Not lab'ring jointly to produce some end,
But potent from simplicity alone,
And hence eternal: equally unprone
To waste or sever; and by nature kept
To feed the suffering fabric of the world.

Did no such points exist, extreme and least,
Each smallest atom would be, then, combin'd
Of parts all infinite; for every part
Parts still would boast, dividing without end.
And, say, what difference could there, then, subsist
'Twixt large, and small? for tho' th' entire of things
Should infinite be deem'd, each smallest speck
Still parts as infinite would hold embrac'd.
But since at this the reasoning mind revolts,
Then must it own, o'erpower'd, that points exist
Least by their nature, and of parts devoid:
And solid, hence, and of eternal date.

Hence seeds arise, the last, least parts conceiv'd
Of actual being: the extremest points
To which creative nature all resolves.
Which, if not least, if still of parts possest,
Could ne'er, with close exactitude, renew
The universal frame: all, all would rise
Materies, variis connexus, pondera, plagas, 
Concursus, motus, per quos res quaeque geruntur.

Porro, si nulla est frangundis reddita finis 
Corporibus, tamen ex æterno tempore quaeque 
Nunc etiam superare necesse est corpora rebus, 
Quæ non dum clueant ūllo tentata periculo.

At quoniam fragili natura praedita constant, 
Discrepat, æternum tempus potuisse manere 
Innumerabilibus plagis vexata per ævom.

Quapropter, quei materiem rerum esse putarunt

Ver. 686. Yet should we grant— [The verse in the original corresponding to this, together with the six subsequent, are removed by Mr. Wakefield to a prior station, occupying in the Latin from ver. 578 to 585, and corresponding with the present version from ver. 631 to 638. For this alteration he has the authority of several very respectable copies: but as the superior weight of authority seems, nevertheless, to be in favour of the common editions, and no advantage appears to result from the change, I have taken the liberty of restoring the passage to its accustomed position.

Ver. 693. Hence those who deem, &c. [The existence of elements, and their number, if they exist at all, have been disputed in all ages; and even the present state of chemistry is unable to determine the question. Among the Moderns, therefore, as among the Ancients, sometimes fire, sometimes air, sometimes earth, and sometimes water, has been considered as the sole element, or primary source of all things. Sometimes two, moreover, of the substances commonly denominated elements, sometimes three, but generally, at least, till of late years, the whole four have been regarded as equally entitled to the appellation, and as equally simple and uncompounded: to which a fifth and even a sixth have been incidentally added, namely cold and oil, both of them having at times been conceived of as simple and substantial elements. To these various opinions I shall have occasion to revert in the progress of this commentary: but at present our only concern is with fire. Fire, in all probability, from its being the grand agent in nature, and from the wonderful superiority of its effects over the known properties of every other element, was regarded amongst most nations, in an early period of the world, either as the creator and origin of all things, or, at least, the substance whence the Creator produced all things. Hence the Persians, Ethiopians, Scythians and Carthaginians in the Old World, and the Mexicans and Peruvians in the New, paid divine honours to fire itself, or to the sun, which was esteemed the sublimest representation of this element; on the origin of which worship see note on b. ii. 1167. Zoroaster ordained the erection of Pyrea, or temples dedicated to fire, through all Persia. And even the Hebrews imagined fire to be the grandest proof of the presence of the Deity. Under this symbol he appeared to Moses on mount Horeb; and to the Hebrews at large on mount Sinai, on the promulgation of the sacred law: and under this symbol he evinced his protecting presence every night, by assuming the form of a fiery pillar. And, impressed with this idea, they were ever anxious
Of weight diverse, and ever-varying form,
Casual in tie, in motion undefin'd.

Yet should we grant that matter, without end,
For ever wastes; e'en then, from earliest time,
Some matter must have triumph'd undecay'd,
Cohering still: but what can thus cohere,
What brave th' unnumber'd repercussions felt
Through ages now evolv'd, can ne'er decay:
Alike the future conqu'ring as the past.

Hence those who deem the fabric of the world to preserve it in a pure and active flame upon the national altar. When, therefore, the Jews were borne away in captivity to Persia, the priests took the sacred fire of the altar and concealed it in a dry cave, with which alone but themselves were acquainted; and where, on their restoration to liberty, the posterity of those priests found it on their return to Judea. (Maccab. 2. 1. 18.) Fire was regarded with an equal degree of veneration throughout Greece and Rome. Temples in every city were erected to the goddess Vesta—a name importing fire, whether derived from the Græcan θύρα, or the Hebrew ברית, and in every temple a lambent flame was perpetually burning over the altar. And even so late as in the third century of the Christian era, when Heliogabalus anticipated his own apotheosis, and instituted the worship of himself over all the Roman empire, having erected a magnificent temple to his own divinity, he supplied its altar with sacred fire from the temple of Vesta, which he plundered for this purpose.

We cannot be much surprized, therefore, that a belief so common among the people, should become a frequent doctrine among the philosophers—and that all things should be supposed to originate from fire as an element, instead of from fire as a god. Such was the opinion of Heraclitus, who rendered himself more celebrated than any other sage of the Pyrean school, by the eloquent, but obscure and dogmatic manner with which he wrote upon this subject. In modern times, the same tenet has been frequently started afresh; and if not pressed to the full extent to which it was carried by Heraclitus, exhibiting such intimate marks of analogy and association as perpetually to remind us of the Heraclitaean system. Buffon supposed the whole earth to have been at first a complete body of liquid fire; and to have consisted of a comet, and a portion of the sun's exterior limb carried off by such comet, in consequence of its having given the sun an oblique stroke in the course of its orbit. At its first origin, therefore, the earth, upon this system, was nothing more than a large vitreous mass in a state of fusion. This state of fusion constituted the chaos of which every nation has some tradition: and from the chaotic mass, as it became gradually cool, the earth in its present state was progressively developed. He conceived this operation to have been the work of a multitude of ages, and endeavoured to reconcile the chronology of Moses with that of the Pundits of Hindostan, by conjecturing that while the former only begins his date from the period when the earth first became habitable, the latter calculate from the earliest origin of the globe in its state of liquid heat. To detail the arguments which have been adduced in opposition to this and similar systems, would...
Ignem, atque ex igni *sumnum* consistere solo,

Magno opere a vera *labi ratione* videntur.

Heraclitus init quorum dux praelia primus,

Clarus ob obscuram *linguam magis inter inaneis,

Quamde graveis inter, Graios, quei vera requirunt.

Omnia enim *stolidi magnis admirantur*, amantque,

Inversis quae sub verbis latitantia cernunt;

engross too much time, as well as paper. I refer the reader, therefore, to the works of Woodward, Whitehurst, Howard, and Kirwan.

Dr. Hutton published a theory of the earth about fourteen years ago, in the Edinburgh Philosophical Transactions, in which, after contending for the existence of an immense subterraneous fire in its center, he endeavours to prove that every substance in contact, or nearly in contact with this fiery mass, is fused by its operation; and when fused, raised by the violence of its heat above the level of the sea; that all the continents we have discovered, and the most solid strata of which they consist, have been thus formed; that new continents are perpetually rearing in the same manner, from the wasting particles of those at present existing; and that these new ones will ascend, and appear hereafter, when those now existing shall have been entirely frittered away. This theory, which is in no small degree confused and inconsistent, has been attacked with ability and spirit by M. De Luc and Mr. Kirwan, who attribute all the phenomena of nature to aqueous solution, a theory more minutely adverted to in various notes in book v., where our poet gives his own system of cosmology.

M. de Mairan has attempted to prove that the earth is infinitely more indebted, for the heat it receives, to its own central fires than to the rays of the sun. He allows that this latter, by adding some portion of heat to the surface of the earth, is the immediate cause of the vicissitude of the seasons; but asserts, that were it not for the continual ascent of an immense quantity of subterranean heat, though the sun were perpetually to illuminate two thirds of the globe at once with a heat equal to that at the equator, the entire orb would soon condense into one general mass of solid ice. His reasonings on this subject are too long and intricate for insertion. There is, however, much ingenuity in them, and they are to be found in the *Hist. de l'Acad. des Sciences*, l'ann. 1765. See also note on b. v. ver. 425. It is probably from this theory that Klopstock has drawn his beautiful machinery of an interior world in the earth's center, in which reside the guardian spirits of the globe, and the souls of departed saints; it is a paradise where celestial breezes blow, eternal splendour smiles, and the Almighty communicates, in an especial manner, the wonders of his providence and grace to the beatified inhabitants. Here a sun, that never sets or rises, shines with pure and uninterrupted radiance, from the beams of which the surface of the earth itself is perpetually nourished and rendered fertile.

——— Von ihr fliesst leben und wärme
In die adern der erd' empor. Die oberste sonne
Bildet mit dieser vertrauten gehilfinn den blumigen
frühling,

Und den feurigen sommer, von sinkenden halme
belastet,

Und den herbst anf traubengebirgen. In ihren
bezirken

Ist sie niemals anf, und niemals untergegangen.
Educ'd from fire, itself the source of all,
Far wander from the truth. Thus deem'd the sage,
Chief of his sect, and fearless in the fight,
Fam'd Heraclitus; by the learn'd esteem'd
Of doubtful phrase, mysterious; but rever'd
By crowds of Grecians, flimsy, and untaught.
For such th' obscure applaud; delighted most
With systems dark, and most believing true

From him through all the veins of upper earth
Life flows, and heat. The sun above by him,
His fixt associate, aided, decked with flowers
Rears the young spring, the fiery summer rears,
Loaded with fruits, and autumn's viné-clad realm.
The bright horizon he for ever gilds,
Nor sets, nor rises.

Ver. 697. Fam'd Heraclitus; by the learn'd esteem'd
Of doubtful phrase, mysterious;— That Heraclitus, in common with some other philosophers, conceived all things to have originated from fire, we learn from the following assertion of Plutarch. Plac. Phil. i. 3. 'Heraclitus and Hippasus of Metapontus, maintained that the principle of all things was fire: that from fire every thing proceeded, and to it would finally return.' And that his writings were obscure and difficult to be understood, as likewise that he purposely aimed at such abstruseness of style, we are informed by Cicero, de Fin. lib. 2. De industria, says he, et consulto, occulte dixit. On this account he was generally denominated σκοτεινός, obscure. And Menage informs us, that he affected this obscurity of diction in imitation of nature herself; ad Laert. vit. Heracl. τοις γαρ κατ' Ἡρακλήσιον κρίτισθαι φαίην.

Ver. 700. For such th' obscure applaud; delighted most
With systems dark, &c.] To the same effect, Beattie, in his inimitable Minstrel:

And much they grope for truth, but never hit,
Still deeming darkness light, and their vain blunders wit.

So, Thomson:
The fond, sequacious herd, to mystic faith,
And blind amazement prone. Summer.

Hence the propriety of the advice given by Vida,
Verborum inprimis tenebros fuge, nubilaque atra;
Nam neque (si tantum fas credere) defuit olim,
Qui lumen jucundum ultro, lucemque perosus,
Obscuro nebulæ se circumfundit amictu:
Tantus amor noctis, latebrae tarn dira cupidio.

Poetic. iii. 15.

In chief, avoid obscurity, nor shroud
Your thoughts and dark conceptions in a cloud;
For some we know affect to lose the light
Lost in forced figures, and involv'd in night;
Studious and bent to shun the common way,
They skulk in darkness, and abhor the day. Pitt.

Ver. 701. —and most believing true
The silver sounds that charm th' enchanted ear.] D'Avenant has imitated this verse of Lucretius, or has otherwise exhibited a singular parallelism both of idea and verbiage, in his description of the schoolmen:

With terms they charm the weak, and pose the wise.
Veraque constituunt, quae belle tangere possunt
Aureis, et lepido quae sunt fucata sonore.
Nam, quur tam variae res possent esse, requiro,
Ex uno si sunt igni, puroque, create.
Nihil prodesset enim calidum denserier ignem,
Nec rarefieri, si partes ignis eamdem
Naturam, quam totus habet super ignis, haberent.
Acrior ardor enim conductis partibus esset:
Languidior porro disjectis, disque supatis.
Amplius hoc fieri nihil est quod posse rearis
Talibus in caussis; ne dum variantia rerum
Tanta queat densis, rarisque ex ignibus esse.
Id quoque, si faciant admixtum rebus inane,
Denser poterunt ignes, rarique relinqui:
Sed, quia multa sibi cernunt contraria inesse,

The birth-place of Heraclitus was Ephesas. He
flourished in the reign of the last Darius, about the
69th Olympiad, and in the 5th century before the
commencement of the Christian era. He is reported
to have been much addicted to the study of philoso-
phy, and frequently to have wept over the miseries
and follies of mankind. He composed several philo-
sophic treatises, of which that on Nature was the most
esteemed, though, like his other works, it was la-
boured with much intentional obscurity of style. Of
this essay Euripides sent a copy to Socrates, who
declared, with great liberality of mind, that what he
could comprehend of it was excellent, and he doubted
not that the rest, which he could not comprehend,
was equally so. Darius, after having perused this
work, invited him to the Persian court: but the
philosopher preferred the quiet of retirement to the
splendour of a palace, or the bustle of the busy world.
He lived in total seclusion from mankind; and died
in the 60th year of his age of a dropsy, said to have
been produced by his subsisting upon a vegetable
diet alone.

Ver. 703. But whence, I ask, &c.] Our poet pro-
cceeds to demonstrate, that fire could not be either
the origin of things, or the only substance employed
in their production. In support of this denial, he
advances five arguments.—Fire is a substance uniform
and homogeneous, but the phenomenon of nature are
various and opposite. Fire may indeed produce oc-
casional changes in the appearance of things by rare-
fying some bodies more than others; but if the parts
of a dense body recede, and become rare, a vacuum
must, of course, exist between the parts so receding:
The silver sounds that charm th' enchanted ear.
But whence, I ask, if all from fire proceed
Unmix'd and simple, spring created things
So various in their natures? Urge not here
That fire condenses now, and now expands;
For if the same, divided or entire,
Its parts condens'd a heat can only prove
More fierce; and less when raresied, and thin.
Still all is fire. Nor canst thou e'er conceive
From fire that aught can spring but fire itself.
Much less, in fire made dense alone, or rare,
Trace the vast variance of created things.
Dense too, and rare a vacuum must imply,
As urg'd already: yet full well convinc'd
What straits surround them if a void exist,

yet Heraclitus, and his followers, deny a vacuum,
and therefore ought to deny the possibility of rare-
faction, for which they contend. If, however, it
could be imagined that the particles of fire change
their very nature by uniting together, when once a
change of any kind has taken place, and the original
nature of the substance is hereby destroyed, it must
continue to change, it must persevere in wasting, till
at length it perish altogether. Undoubtedly, there
are substances in nature which are perfectly immuta-
ble, the essential seeds of whatever exists, and a
change in the quantity or arrangement of which pro-
duces that variety which surrounds us; but it is certain
that these primal seeds or substances cannot be fire,
for then every thing would be fire, and there could
be no variety whatever: while, to maintain such a
theory, moreover, would be to oppose our system to
our senses; our mental conjectures to those organs;
whence all knowledge of facts and events must of ne-
necessity flow: nor is there any superior reason for a
denial of the existance of other supposed elements in
favour of fire, rather than for a denial of fire in fa-
vour of the existence of other supposed elements.

Ver. 705. — Urge not here
That fire condenses now, and now expands;
Et fugitant in rebus inane relinquere purum;
Ardua dum metuunt, amittunt vera, viae:
Nec rursum cernunt exemptum rebus inane,
Omnia denseri, fierique ex omnibus unum
Corpus, nihil ab se quod possit mittere raptim,
Æstifer ignis uti lumen jacet, atque vaporem;
Ut vides non e stipatis partibus esse.
Quod, si forte ullâ credunt ratione potesse
Igneis in coëus stingui, mutareque corpus;
Scilicet ex nullâ facerâd si parte reparet,
Obcidet ad nihilum nimirum funditus ardo.
Omnis, et ex nihilo sìent quotquamque creantur.
Nam, quodquomque suis mutatum finibus exit,

Continuo hoc moris est illius, quod fuit ante:
Proinde aliquid superare necesse est incolomè ollis,
Ne tibi res redeant ad nihilum funditus omnes,
De nihiloque renata virescat copia rerum.

Nunc igitur, quoniam certissima corpora quædam
Sunt, quæ conservant naturam semper eamdem,
Quorum abitu, aut aditu, mutatoque ordine, mutant
Naturam res, et convorunt corpora sese;
Scire licet, non esse hæc ignea corpora rerum.
Nihil referret enim, quædam decedere, abire,
Atque alio adtribui, mutarique ordine, quædam,
Si tamen ardoris naturam cuncta tenerent:
Such sages doubt, but, doubting, still deny:
Fearful of danger, yet averse from truth.
Such, too, reflect not that from things create,
Should void withdraw, the whole at once were dense,
One solid substance all, and unempower'd
Aught from itself t' eject, as light, and smoke
Flies from the purple flame; evincing clear
Its parts unsolid, and commixt with void.
But should it still, perchance, be urg'd, that fires
Perish by junction, and their substance change,
Then must that changing substance waste to nought;
And thus from nought th' ENTIRE of nature spring.
For what once changes, by the change alone
Subverts immediate its anterior life.
But still, victorious, something must exist,
Or all to nought would perish; and, in turn,
From nought regerminate to growth mature.

Yet though most certain things there are exist
That never change, the seeds of all survey'd,
Whose presence, absence, or arrangement new
That all new models, certain 'tis, alike,
Those seeds can ne'er be FIRE. For what avails
Such absence, presence, or arrangement new
Of igneous matter, if the whole throughout
Alike be igneous? Change howe'er it may,
Ignis enim foret omnimodis, quodquomque crearet.
Verum, ut opinor, ita est: sunt quaedam corpora, quorum 685
Concursus motus, ordo, positura, figurae,
Ecclsiunt igneis, mutatoque ordine mutant
Naturam: neque sunt igni similata, neque ullae
Præterea rei, quæ corpora mittere possit
Sensibus, et nostros adjectu tangere tactus. 690

Dicere porro ignem res omnis esse, neque ullam
Rem veram in numero rerum constare, nisi ignem,
Quod facit hic idem, perdelirum esse videtur.
Nam contra sensus ab sensibus ipse repugnat,
Et labefactat eos, unde omnia credita pendent;
Unde hic cognitus est ipsi, quem nominat ignem.
Credit enim sensus ignem cognoscere vere;
Cætera non credit, quæ nihilo clara minus sunt:
Quod mihi quom vanum, tum delirum, esse videtur.
Quo referemus enim? quid nobis certius ipsis 700
Sensibus esse potest? quæ vera, ac falsa, notemus?

Ver. 743. Askst thou whence fire proceeds then? Sc.]
The sentiment of Lucretius respecting fire is precisely that of Boerhaave, Homberg, Crawford, and most of the modern chemists. He contends strenuously, that it is a substance sui generis, reared from a definite combination of primordial atoms, like any other simple substance. This tenet of the Epicurean philosophy is supposed to have been derived from Democritus. It was controverted by Aristotle and the Peripatetics, who maintained, that there was no such thing as elementary fire, but that heat was in every instance produced by commotion of the minute particles of the heated body. This latter tenet, together with the general philosophy of Aristotle, descended to a very late period of European learning; and formed a part of the creed of Bacon, Boyle, Des Cartes and Newton. A more accurate chemical knowledge, however, has now almost entirely banished the peripatetic doctrine from the schools of Europe, and restored to general belief the doctrine of semina ignis, or elementary fire, so forcibly contended for by our poet in this place, but described
Book I. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Through every variance all must still be flame.—
Ask'st thou whence fire proceeds then? As I deem
From certain seeds to certain motions urg'd,
Or forms, or combinations; which, when chang'd,
Change too their nature; and, though yielding fire,
Not fire resembling, or aught else perceiv'd
By human sense, or tangible to touch.

To hold, moreo'er, as Heraclitus held,
That all is fire, and nought besides exists
Through nature's boundless fabric, is to rave.
T' oppose the mental sense, erroneous oft,
To sense external whence all knowledge flows;
And whence himself first trac'd that flame exists.
To sense he trusts, when sense discloses fire,
And yet distrusts in things disclos'd as clear.
Can there, in man, be conduct more absurd!—
Where shall we turn us? Where, if thus we fly
Those senses chief that sever true from false?—
Præterea, quâ re quisquam magis omnia tollat,
Et velit ardor is naturam linquere solam,
Quam neget esse igneis, summam tamen esse relinquat?
Æqua videtur enim dementia dicere utrumque.
Quapropter, quei materiem rerum esse putarunt
Ignem, atque ex igni summam consistere posse;
Et quei principium gignundis æéra rebus
Constituere; aut humorem queiquomque putarunt

Ver. 765, —those for air who strive] The same arguments urged against fire, as the principle of all things, will apply with equal force against every other simple and individual substance whatever. For one unigenous substance can produce but one unigenous substance, and not a diversity. Anaximenes, however, a philosopher contemporary with Alexander the Great, and who on his decease wrote his history, a work that has been long lost to the world, conceived differently. And since Heraclitus had entered the lists as champion for fire, Anaximenes threw down the gauntlet in favour of air; asserting, after the reasoning of the former philosopher, that all things were generated by a successive condensation and rarification of this element: and that the world was animated and held together by its operation, in the same manner as the body is animated and held together by the soul; which last substance he likewise conceived to be of aerial origin. Air, too, or ether, upon the same principle as fire, has had its mythologic as well as its philosophic supporters, with respect to its being the common origin of all things. Hence, Jupiter himself is generally represented by the poets under the symbol of this element: and the following language, figuratively employed by Lucretius on another occasion, is by them adopted in its literal sense:

All springs from heaven ethereal, all that lives.
The sire of all is ether.

B. ii. 1000. NAT. OF THINGS.
Hence Cælum or Οὐρανός, in the chronology of Hesiod, is in like manner represented as the common father of all things, impregnating the earth by his embraces. Our author revertst to this opinion, and again opposes it in b. ii. 1167; to the note on which I refer the reader.

Air, according to the belief of Boerhaave, is not the origin of all things; but that in which all things are contained. It is the universal chaos or colluvies of created matters. Whatever fire can volatilize, the magnetic and electric fluid, and that which is ejected from the heavenly bodies, all, in his conception, combine in the composition of air.

In the Memoirs of the French Royal Academy, 1703, is a paper of M. Amontons, in which, after observing that air may be compressed so as to be rendered heavier than gold, platina, or any other substance we are acquainted with: after conjecturing, moreover, that the body of the earth is composed of strata of substances of different gravities, progressively taking their stations according to their gradation of weight, he asserts, that the centre of the earth, containing a sphere of 6451,538 fathoms diameter, is composed of air, thus compressed to a density greater than that of any known substance besides: and from such elastic air, expanded by the heat of subterraneous fires, he deduces all the earthquakes that have ever agitated the globe.

Although it does not appear, then, that all things, in the opinion of M. Amontons, originated from air, yet by far the greater part is air, and nothing else.
BOOK I.

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Why, rather, too, should all that else exists
Be thus denied, and fire alone maintain’d,
Than fire denied, and all maintain’d besides?
Tenets alike preposterous and wild.
Hence those, in fire, who trace the rise of things,
And nought but fire; or those for air who strive
As source of all; or those the dimpling stream
Who fondly fancy; or the pond’rous earth,
the face of the waters;” (the only substance intimated to exist) when engaged in the work of creation. And for the same reason it has formed a part of the creed of Basil Valentine, and many of the fathers of the Christian church in later periods. Thales, however, in all probability, drew his hypothesis from observing how very large a portion of even the hardest and most solid substances is composed of water; and from the cohesion which is produced in the driest and most subtile earths and powders of every description upon its introduction.

Ver. 766. — those the dimpling stream

Who fondly fancy;] Such was the opinion of many philosophers, but particularly of Thales of Miletus, the contemporary and intimate friend of Solon, and who consequently flourished about five centuries before the commencement of the Christian era. He was the founder of the Ionic school, and the first who attempted to calculate eclipses. His hypothesis of the origin of all things from water, has been adopted by some men of letters in every age, but particularly among the earlier of the German chemists, as Paracelsus, and Van Helmont. It was the general belief among the Hebrew sages, in consequence of the Mosaic assertion, “that the Spirit of God moved upon
Fingere res ipsum per se; terramve creare
Omnia, et in rerum naturas vortier omneis;
Magno opere a vero longe disersasse videntur.
Adde etiam, quei conduplicant primordia rerum,
Aëra jungentes igni, terramque liquori;
Et quei quatuor ex rebus posse omnia rentur,
Ex igni, terrâ, atque animâ, procreator, et imbri;

Ver. 767. — *the ponderous earth,* Pherecydes, the tutor of Pythagoras, is said to have taught the existence of three eternal beings, Jupiter, Time, and Earth; and to have believed that all material existences were derived from the last. Hesiod, however, conceived Earth to be the only eternal substance and element, and that Jupiter himself, as well as all the other gods, and the whole family of mortals, were produced by Earth, and out of its own primitive substance. Barnardin, Telesius, and some other philosophers of later periods, have indulged conjectures not very dissimilar. Employing the term generally as a whole, and not singly as an element, our poet himself regards the earth as the source of all being, animate and inanimate: thus a few lines further, he asserts,

Maternal, hence, is Earth most justly named:
and the same observation is repeatedly made in b. v. where the doctrine of cosmology is discussed at full length. But in none of these instances does he regard the earth as a separate element; consequently, he deviates essentially from those writers, whether philosophers or mythologists, who contend for such an element, and trace the origin of all things from this individual element alone. It was from earth, as an element of this kind, that the Titans or giants of ancient tradition were conceived to have arisen. Thus Herodotus, *μαθητησαται ἰ ἢ Γενεσις Γηνος γεγονακα* ἄ τιν ύπερεικλη τον κατα το σωμα μεγαλου. "They asserted in their fables, that the giants were produced from the earth, on account of the excessive dimensions of their bodies." And it is obvious that the terms, *Γενος* and *Γηνος*, Giant and Earth-born, are nearly equivalent; the former having probably originated from the latter. In consequence of this prodigious size, they were compared to mountains or elevations, on which the sun first threw his earliest beams; and the term Titans, by which they were denominated, has no other meaning. Hence Mr. Allwood contends, but I think unwarrantably, that the Titans were mere temples or mountains dedicated to the sun, and never had any real existence.

Ver. 770. *Nor wanders less the sage who air with fire*] As the individual elements have occasionally found supporters among the Greek philosophers, so have they at times in every variety of combination. Enopides pretended to trace the rise of all things from an union of air and fire; Xenophanes, from an union of earth and water; Parmenides, from that of earth and fire; and Hippo of Rhegium, from that of fire and water; whilst Onomacritus, and, since his era, Descartes, and his disciples, admit three out of the four vulgar elements, the former rejecting air, and the latter fire.

Whilst I am upon this subject, I ought not to pass over the theory of that learned and acute geologist, the late Mr. Whitehurst, which has again been brought forwards and improved upon by Mr. Kirwan. Mr. Whitehurst supposes the whole planetary system to have been formed at the same instant; and that the earth, as well as the rest of the planets, was originally a large undivided pulp or chaos, uniformly suspended in this fluid state. He supposes, more-
For each has arm’d its champions in its turn,
Alike wide wander from unerring truth.

Nor wanders less the sage who air with fire
Would fain commix, or limpid stream with earth;
Or those the whole who join, fire, ether, earth,
And pregnant showers, and thence the world deduce.

over, that the first efforts of this chaos, towards the
production of order and harmony, consisted in the
gradual separation of element from element, accord-
ing to its comparative gravity: that air would
therefore be superior in the scale of ascent, next
water, and then earth. He again supposes, that
this separation of element from element, was the
work of a vast series of time, and that, consequently,
no short period must have elapsed before the forma-
tion of animals or vegetables destined to inhabit the dry
and continental parts of the earth. But as this was not
necessary with respect to marine animals, he conceives
these latter to have been the first race of beings pro-
duced in the order of creation: and he hence accounts
for the frequency with which we meet with exuvies of
such animals as also with fossil shells, and other
marine relics on the highest mountains, and in a va-
riety of places where we should not expect them.
The operation of the sun and moon upon the agitated
chaotic mass, by drawing the waters away from one
part towards another, would allow, between every
tide, a sufficient period for the upper points of land,
not hurried away by the stream, to harden and resist
the tide’s return, or rise superior to its influx. These
points or summits, which would be constantly in-
creasing, would at length become proper habitations
for man and beast, and vegetables; and to these ele-
vations of land he gives the appellation of Primitive
Islands. This theory does not explain the origin of
craggy rocks, profound valleys, and volcanic lavas.
But, to account for such later phenomena, the inge-
nious author refers us to the universal deluge; which
he conceives to have been produced by the expansive
operation of a large body of subterranean fire, which,
bursting the solid contents of the globe to its surface,
admitted, through a vast variety of chasms, immense
quantities of water from the general bed of the ocean,
which, rared, in its turn, by the subterranean heat
to which it was exposed, concurred, by its elastic
force, in the production of all the diversities of
height and depth, of rough and smooth, that are
exhibited in the variegated face of nature. M. de
Saussure appears to have entertained very similar
ideas. He was, therefore, in the language of the
French philosophers, a Neptunian: and it was his
intention at one time to have delivered his opinions
upon the primitive state of the earth, in a full and
explicit manner. But, notwithstanding all his geolo-
gic knowledge, and profound investigations, the more
he meditated upon this subject, the more difficult, he
declared, it appeared to him, to form a decided opi-
nion; and he died without having accomplished the
object he had in view.

Ver. 772. Or those the whole who join, fire, ether,
earth,
And pregnant showers,—] The popular dog-
ma, that all things are constituted of four elements,
is derived from Ocellus Lucanus, a philosopher who
flourished in the 100th Olympiad, about nine centu-
ries anterior to the Christian era; from whom it ap-
ppears to have descended in a direct line to Pythago-
ras, Hippocrates, and Aristotle. This doctrine, how-
ever, as I have already had occasion to observe, has
been often opposed in every age; yet, upon the whole, it has ever been the most popular of any among men of letters, till about the middle of the last century, or rather later; since which time, chemistry has been gradually assuming a scientific form, and with a daring, but steady eye, and an unsuspected success, has probed into the origin, not only of natural phenomena, but of nature herself. And what after all, is the result? Is the world produced from different elements or principles, or from one and the same infinite mass of indivisible, indestructible, and homogeneous atoms? From the system of Epicurus, corroborated by the weighty assent of Sir Isaac Newton, or from some one of the various opinions of other philosophers, who have radiated from this point in almost every possible direction?

To begin with the element of fire, caloric, or latent heat. Were this a substance distinct from the particles of a heated body; a something superadded to it, and not a mere re-arrangement and new modification of those particles; the greater the degree of heat, the greater we should necessarily expect to find the gravity of such body; and both Margraff and Lewis have brought forwards a few experiments ostensibly favourable to such a fact. These, however, are easily accounted for, upon the principle of calcination, and the absorption of carbonic acid gas; while others, of greater accuracy and precision, have concurred in determining either that there is no difference between the weight of a body heated to redness, and what it possessed when cold, or that the body in a cold temperature exhibits rather a greater degree of gravity than when red-hot.—For further information on this subject, I refer the reader to the experiments of Mr. Whitehurst and Dr. Roebuck, as stated in the Philosophical Transactions, Vol. LXVI, part ii. What then must necessarily be the result of such experiments and observations, but that, according to the opinion of our sagacious and philosophic poet, fire is not a primary material substance, but a mere motion, or new and peculiar arrangement of primary particles themselves?

Yet other elements have been canvassed as scrupulously as fire, and the same doctrine applies to each of them. Earth, it appears, is the production of water, and water of air: while air is, unquestionably, a compound, and perhaps a compound of compounds; for we know not, nor have any reason to believe that the gases which form it, are any of them simple and unigenous: a few facts will be sufficient to illustrate this opinion.—It has long been suspected by philosophers, that there is not at present so much water in the world as there was formerly; while the quantity of earth, and consequently of continents and islands, has been increasing in an inverse ratio: it has hence been conceived, that water is continually converting into earth; and some experiments have very considerably favoured such an hypothesis. There is no water so pure and uncompounded, that it will not, if kept for three or four years, make an earthy deposit: rain water, distilled water, and snow, have all been tried for this purpose; but the same deposit, or transmutation into earth, has uniformly taken place. This phenomenon was long ago observed by Boerhaave, who declared, in consequence hereof, that there was no such thing as pure water to be obtained anywhere, or by any means.—The seeds of plants likewise, as the white-mustard seed, and some aquatic animals, as leeches, are known to increase in solid substance by the sustenance of water alone; or, at least, without the intermixture of earth, properly so called. Earth, then, is the production of water, and not an original element; and hence we reduce the four elements, commonly so called, to two alone; to water, and air.

There are few persons of a liberal education, but are acquainted with some of the experiments upon water, of Mr. Cavendish, and the late M. Lavoisier. From these experiments, it should seem that water is no more a radical substance than earth; or, at least, that it is producible from a due intermixture of inflammable and dephlogisticated airs; or, according to the new, and more accurate nomenclature, of
Thus sung Empedocles, in honest fame
First of his sect; whom Agrigentum bore

Thus sung Empedocles, in honest fame
First of his sect; whom Agrigentum bore

oxygen and hydrogen. And, indeed, at the late aerostatic institute at Meudon, the balloons were all filled from hydrogen alone, obtained from the simple decomposition of water by means of an easy, and inexpensive process, discovered by M. Conti, for whom the truly scientific Guyton Morveau obtained the directorship of this establishment. These experiments then strike out air from the list of simple indestructible substances, as those I have just adverted to strike out earth and fire.

It is much doubted, however, by some philosophers, since water and air are convertible substances, whether water be not the radix of air, instead of air being that of water. Water, in its natural state, discovers but a small degree of elasticity; but when rarified into vapour in an eolipile, it will exhibit all the characters of genuine air, and stream out like a blast of rapid wind. Yet air, if not a composition of water, is, as already observed, a compound of various gasses, of which, it is probable, that every gas is a compound in itself.

Boerhaave regarded cold as an element, believing it to possess an existence sui generis; Linneus oil; the Chinese philosophers, and Indian bramins, the ether, or materia subtilis, which the Cartesians suppose to exist throughout the immensity of space, or, at least a substance of a similar description, and which, among Oriental philosophers, constitutes their fifth element. See note on b. i. 846. But if a rigid adherence to an apparent homogeneity of structure, a stern inflexible defiance of all the powers of chemical ingenuity to produce a decomposition, be the test and criterion of elementary bodies, the acid and natron, or soda, which constitute the basis of common salt, have a better title to such an appellation than any substance whatever; for as yet we know of no process, whether of art or nature, by which either of them can be formed, or decomposed. And yet no one doubts that these are compound bodies, although they have hitherto eluded every analytic attempt. The magnetic aura has long been considered as nothing more than a modification of the electric; but the electric itself is a compound; and Dr. Gren, professor at Halle, has written an able treatise upon this subject, which has deservedly passed through, at least, three editions; in which he clearly proves that the electric aura is a combination of light and caloric, or elementary heat; that it may be compounded and decompounded in bodies, and actually is so in the various processes of smelting, combustion, and evaporation. See his Grundriss der Natur. 8vo. printed at Halle 1797. The opinion of M. Haily is not very different; he conceives the phenomena, both of magnetism and electricity, to be produced by the simultaneous action of two distinct fluids. See his very valuable Traité Élémentaire de Physique. There are various animals endowed with organs, that seem to possess a power of secreting these auras, and perhaps there are no living animals altogether destitute of such organs; although in the torpedo, Gymnotus electricus, and such domestic animals as cats and rats, this extraordinary power appears to exist in a greater degree than in others. It seems probable, moreover, that the electric fluid is secreted from a certain set of glands dispersed over the bodies of such animals, or from the brain itself. The secretion of a gas of any kind has not indeed been hitherto fairly detected; but air has been frequently found so largely combined with secreted substances, as to render it probable that the air itself has formed a part of the secretion. And if this be a fact with respect to air, it will equally apply with respect to the gasses of which air is a compound. The torpedo is endowed with organs which have a close resemblance to the voltaic pile; and if this structure be injured by the division of its nerves, the torpefying effect is lost. The galvanic and electric auras appear to be the same; at least, the difference is so minute as to elude all detection: it is almost reduced to a certainty, moreover, that this common aura constitutes the nervous fluid; and in man at least it should seem therefore to be secreted from the brain, and hence diffused over the body by the course of the nerves. In passing through different organs, how-
ever, it submits to a variety of changes, which proves obviously that such organs possess, of themselves, a considerable power over it. While some parts of the body abound with electricity, others are deficient in proportion to their capacity. The experiments of Buniya prove that the electricity of the blood is positive,—of the excrementitious fluids, negative; and these have been since fully confirmed by M. Vassali-Eandi. It is, perhaps, by a similar economy, that the luminous matter exhibited in a concrete state by the glow-worm and fire-fly, (lampyris Italica) is separated from their food, or the atmosphere that surrounds them. In the latter of these, it has been sufficiently ascertained by M. Carradori (See Brugnatelli’s Annali di Chimica), that the phosphorescent fomes, when separated and collected, resides in the cells of the abdomen between the rings; and that the appearance and disappearance of the light, considered as voluntary, depend on the insect’s power of opening and closing those cells.

If this solution be admitted, with respect to the secretion or separation of light in living animals, we may easily extend the conjecture, and account, upon a similar principle, for its separation and efflux from putrescent animal and vegetable substances, sea-water, and rotten timbers.

Upon the whole, it should seem then, consistently with the doctrine developed in the poem before us, that all things proceed from the same primary elemental seeds, or atoms, and are convertible into all things; and that the modification or arrangement of such atoms alone, produces the difference between substances and substances; or, to adopt the language of Lucretius, that

—in alternate course

Each flows from each, th' alternate form is seiz’d
Th' alternate nature through perennial time. i. 828.

And from whom did Sir Isaac Newton derive his hypothesis, but from the same school, when he asserted that it is probable God, in the beginning, formed matter in solid, massive, hard, impenetrable, and moveable particles, of such sizes and figures, and with such other properties as were best proportioned to the end they were to produce? and that the changes of corporeal things are to be placed only to the various separations, and new associations, and motions of those original and permanent particles?—See on this subject our poet’s observations in ver. 980, and following.

Ver. 774. *Thus sung Empedocles,* &c.] Empedocles was the scholar both of Pythagoras and Anaxagoras. He was, likewise, contemporary with Euripides the poet, and of course flourished in the 84th Olympiad, about four hundred years before the Christian era. That he had imbibed the sentiments here attributed to him, in common indeed with Pythagoras, and Ocellus Lucanus, Ovid informs us in his Metamorphoses,

*Quatuor aeternus genitalia corpora mundus Continet.—*

For this eternal world is said of old
But four prolific principles to hold. xv. 239.

Plutarch, however, has more fully recognised him still. *Εμπεδοκλῆς Μιτος Αγγελακτίνωσ, τεσσερά μὲν λίγοι στοιχεῖαι, τετρα, πέτα, υδά, γην δε αρχας διοικήσι, φύλλα τε και νυκτος, η ε μεν ετοι εγείρεσε, το δε διακρίνει. de Plac. Phil. i. 3. “Empedocles of Agrigentum maintained, that all things are produced from the principles of fire, air, water and earth; into which they are all again eventually resolved.”

To these he added two other powers, Love and Discord; the former harmonizing and uniting, the latter disjoining, and repelling. Empedocles is reported


In cloud-capt Sicily. Its sinuous shores
Th' Ionian main, with hoarse, unwearied wave,
Surrounds, and sprinkles, with its briny dew:
And, from the fair Æolian fields, divides
With narrow frith that spurns th' impetuous surge.

Ver. 776. In cloud-capt Sicily.] This description of Sicily is as geographically accurate, as it is poetical and sublime. The Ionian, or Mediterranean, sea, by which it is principally surrounded, derives its appellation, according to Pliny, from Æolus, the son of Dyrrhabicus, who was slain by Hercules, and thrown into the Mediterranean, to perpetuate his memory. The frith, which the poet justly denominates narrow, is at present known by the name of the Straits of Messina. Its breadth between Italy and Sicily is not more than about half a league. The two countries, indeed, originally united, but were separated, according to Faber, about the era of the Hebrew chief Joshua, by a most violent hurricane and earthquake.

Ver. 781. Here vast Charystis roars: J Charystis, according to the latitude in which the term is used by Thucydides, means the entire Straits of Messina; but in a more limited and common acceptation, it is a gulf, or vortex, on the immediate coast of Sicily, now denominated Calefaro, from the continual effervescence of its waters, and directly opposite the Scigla, Seylla, or pointed rock that rises off the promontory of Canis on the Italian side of the strait. The impetuosity of the current between Sicily and the rock Scigla, together with the force of the whirlpool of Calefaro, has been supposed to render this passage at all times dangerous to mariners. In stormy weather, indeed, there is still no small degree of hazard; but, at other periods, the natives of either country pass and repass with little apprehension, and very few accidents. It afforded the poets of Greece and Rome, however, an inexhaustible fund of picturesque and sublime imagery; and their descriptions of this impetuous passage are often grand and terrible. Thus Homer:

Ver. 780

All' o't' aciebre 6ràs, 6lmevs òder,
Πας ἐντοχν' 6ομικε νυκχαμεν' αμφί δι' πετρόν
Λύπον ὑδατώ, νυρτηρεί δι' ἡμέρα 6ναυσίκα
Υψίστω 6παρετέ νύς δι' χρόνον δι' ἔρημον
Ημεν μεν προς τ' αύθαμα, διαλάτας ελαίμον, &c.

Odyssey, M.

Now, all at once, tremendous scenes unfold;
Thunder'd the deeps, the smoking billows roll'd!
Tumultuous waves embroil'd the bellowing flood:
All trembling, deafen'd, and aghast we stood!
No more the vessel plough'd the dreadful wave;
Fear seiz'd the mighty, and unnerv'd the brave.

Pope.

It is worth while to compare this passage with the beginning of that quoted from Camoëns, in the note to ver. 149 of this book. Many of the lines in that extract are a close copy. The parallel passage in Virgil is more: it is a translation.

Turn procul e fluctu Trinacria cernitur Ætna:
Et gemitum ingentem pelagi, pulsataque saxa
Audimus longe, fractasque ad litora voces;
Exultantque vada, atque aestu roiscentur arenas, &c.

Æn. lib. 3.

Mount Ætna thence we spy,
Known by the smoky flames which cloud the sky.
Far off we hear the waves, with surly sound
Invade the rocks; the rocks their groans resound:
The billows break upon the sounding strand,
And roll the rising tide, impure with sand.

Dryden.
Murmura, flammarum rursum se conligere iras,
Faucibus eruptos iterum ut vis evōmat ignēs,
Ad cœlumque ferat flammati fulgūra rursum.
Quae, quem magna modis multis miranda videtur
Gentibus humanis regio, visundaque fertur,
Rebus opima bonis, multā munita virūm vi;
Nihil tamen hoc habuisse viro præclarius in se,
Nec sanctum magis, et mirum, carumque, videtur.
Carmina quin etiam divini pectoris ejus
Vociferantur, et exponunt præclara reperta;
Ut vix humanā videatur stirpe creatus)
Hic tamen, et, supra quos diximus, inferiores
Partibus egregie multis, multoque minores;
Quamquam, multa bene ac divinitus invenientes,
Ex adyto tamquam cordis, responsa dedere
Sanctius, et multo certā ratione magis, quam
Pythia, quae tripode ex Phoebi lauroque profatur;
Principiiis tamen in rerum fecere ruinas,

Ver. 781. —here Etna rears
His infant thunders,] Of this celebrated mountain, known alike to ancients and moderns, from the dreadeful effects of its volcanic eruptions, our poet treats more fully and philosophically, in his sixth book; to the notes on which passage I refer the reader for further information: observing only that Creech, in his translation of this description, has thought proper, without finding it in the original, or reflecting that Lucretius was superior to the vulgar superstitions of his time, and laboured to destroy them, to introduce the fable of the giants buried under the immense weight of the mountain, and vomiting forth their revenge in flames against the gods.

Ver. 790. —whose song divine, &c.] Aristotle ascribes to Empedocles the invention of rhetoric: and the general beauty and elegance of his poem on the Nature of Things, now unfortunately, except in a few scattered fragments, lost to the world, were so considerable, that the critics of ancient times were incapable of determining whether he ought to be ranked among the number of
Here vast Charybdis raves: here Ætna rears
His infant thunders, his dread jaws unlocks,
And heav’n, and earth with fiery ruin threats.
Here many a wonder, many a scene sublime,
As on he journeys, checks the traveller’s steps;
And shows, at once, a land in harvests rich,
And rich in sages of illustrious fame.
But nought so wond’rous, so illustrious nought,
So fair, so pure, so lovely, can it boast,
Empedocles, as thou! whose song divine,
By all rehears’d, so clears each mystic lore,
That scarce mankind believ’d thee born of man.
Yet e’en Empedocles, and those above
Already sung, of far inferior fame,
Though doctrines frequent from their bosoms flow’d
Like inspiration, sager and more true
Than e’er the Pythian maid, with laurels crown’d,
Spoke from the tripod at Apollo’s shrine;

their poets or of their philosophers. It is thus he
is described by the peripatetic chief: ὲμέρεις Ἐρα
πίδελος, καὶ δίνους περὶ Φρασὶν γίγνεις, μεταφορικὸς τι ποι,
καὶ τοὺς αἵλος τοὺς περὶ παντικήν ἐπιτάγμασι χρήσης. Some few
verses of this renowned sage, that have
escaped the ravages of time, will be found occa-
sionally scattered in the prosecution of this work.

Ver. 797. Than e’er the Pythian maid, with laurels
crown’d,
Spoke from the tripod at Apollo’s shrine. The
priestess of Apollo at Delphos was commonly de-
nominated Pythia, from πυθίαια, to consult or
advise upon a subject. She pronounced the oracle
from a low stool or table supported by three feet,
which was, in consequence, termed a tripod; and
as the laurel was a tree consecrated to Apollo,
her hair was usually braided with a bandeau of its
leaves. The Delphic tripod was supported by an
elegant and serpentine column, which, according
to Mr. Dallaway, is even now in existence, and
dorns, among other Grecian remains, the area of
the Hippodrome at Constantinople.

Vide his Constant. Ancient and Modern.
Et graviter magnei *magni cecidere ibi casu*:
Primum, quod motus, *exempta rebus inani*,
Constituunt, et res molleis rarasque relinquunt,
Aëra, solem, ignem, terras, animalia, fruges;
Nec tamen admiscent in eorum corpus inane:
Deinde, quod omnino *finem non esse secandis*.
Corporibus faciunt, neque pausam stare fragori:
Nec prorsum in rebus *minumum consistere quidquam*:
Quom videamus id *extremum quoiusque cacumen*
Esse, quod ad sensus *nostros minimum esse videtur*;
Conjicere ut possis ex hoc, quod cernere non quis
Extremum quod habent, *minumum consistere rebus*.

Huc adcedit item, *quia primordia rerum*
Mollia constituunt, *qua nos nativa videmus*
Esse, et mortali cum corpore *funditus* : atqui

Ver. 800. *And greatly wander'd in attempt to great.*] The iteration of the word *great* occurs in the original in the same manner as in the translation:

   *Et graviter magno cecidere ibi casu.*

This playful recurrence of words forms a favourite figure with our poet, who has often enriched his verses with an indulgence in it. See note on ver. 877.

Ver. 801. *And, first, they deem'd, &c.* — He opposes the hypothesis of the Ionic school, or the four elements, by six different arguments, each of them possessed of much elegant force and logical precision. They denied the existence of a vacuum, while they contended, that bodies might have motion, and dilate or contract in a perfect plenum: an absurdity already sufficiently commented upon in ver. 420, and following. They contended for an infinite divisibility of matter, and denied the possibility of its ever separating into ultimate and extreme atoms. They maintained, that the origin of things, instead of being impenetrably solid, are soft and pliable: the fallacy of all which has been sufficiently detected and exposed already. It cannot but be remarked, moreover, that the principles or
E'en these mistook the principles of things,
And greatly wander'd in attempt so great.
And, first, they deem'd that motion might exist
From void exempt: that things might still be rare,
Still soften, as earth, ether, fire, or fruits,
Or e'en the ranks of animated life,
Though void commix'd not with their varying frames.
Then, too, they held no final term ordain'd
To comminuting atoms: which, through time,
Still crumbled on, and never could be least.
Though from such points as sense itself surveys,
Extreme and least, conjecture we may form
Of points extreme, impalpable to sight,
Least in themselves, that never can divide.

With them, moreo'er, the seeds of things were form'd
Soft, and unsolid: but whate'er is soft,
Whate'er unsolid, as at first they spring

Elements of things for which Empedocles contended,
Are substances, in their very nature, hostile and opposite to each other; and of course, whenever they meet, must reciprocally annihilate each other, or else be irregularly scattered abroad by a mutual repulsive force. If, however, things could be created from the junction of such jarring and discordant elements, why should fire, water, earth, and air, be termed principles of other substances, rather than other substances principles of these? Every thing is constantly changing into every thing, and arising from every thing: and there is no more propriety in denoting one thing an element than another. But if the elemental atoms of Nature could be separated and combined afresh: if their solidity could be once destroyed, from the change in the motion or arrangement of which, every substance takes its different form and appearance: if these could be to-day pure elemental fire, to-morrow water equally unmixed and simple, then must they long since have completely perished, and disappeared: for every substance must inevitably waste, and eventually perish, that is liable to change. And it is to the solidity of primal seeds, or atoms alone, that Nature is indebted for the unvaried regularity of her powers and phenomena.
Debeat ad nihilum jam rerum summa revorti,
De nihiloque renata vigescere copia rerum; —
Quorum utrumque quid a vero jam distet, habebas.
Deinde, inimica modis multis sunt, atque venena
Ipsa, sibi inter se; quâ re, aut congressa peribunt,
Aut ita diffugient, ut tempestate coactâ,
Fulmina diffugere, atque imbreis, ventosque, videmus.

Denique, quatuor ex rebus si cuncta creantur,
Atque in eas rursum res omnia dissoluentur:
Qui magis illa queunt rerum primordia dici,
Quam contra res illorum, retroque putari?
Alternis gignuntur enim, mutantque colorem,
Et totam inter se naturam, tempore ab omni.
Sin ita forte putas ignis terræque coire
Corpus, et aërias auras, roremque liquorum,
Nihil in concilio naturam ut mutet eorum;
Nulla tibi ex illis poterit res esse creatâ,
Non animans, non examino cum corpore, ut arbos:
Quippe suam quidque in coetu variantis acervi
Naturam obtendet, mixtusque videbitur ær

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Ver. 828. — in alternate form,
Each flows from each, &c. —]  
Thus Dr. Darwin, with equal elegance and accuracy:
From other substance, must perforce decay.
So all to nought would perish, and again
From nought regerminate to growth mature:

Doctrines the muse already has disprov’d.
Such seeds, too, must be foes; created each
To each adverse; and hence can never meet
But sure perdition waits: or, chance, they part,
Disperst abrupt, as, in contending storms,
Wind, rain, and thunder scatter, and are lost.

But, from such four-fold foes, could all things spring, And, sprung, to such dissolve—why rather term
Those jarring powers the primal seeds of things
Than things of them? since, in alternate course,
Each flows from each: th’ alternate form is seiz’d,
Th’ alternate nature, through perennial time.

Yet could’st thou deem such powers adverse might blend,
And earth with fire, with ether lymph commix,
And still retain their natures unimpair’d;
Whilst thus retained, no living form could rise
Trac’d through creation, animate, or void,
As springs the verdant shrub, of reasoning soul.
For each its nature, through the varying mass,
Would still evince, and earth with air commix,

Organic forms with chemic changes strive,
Live but to die, and die but to revive;

Immortal matter braves the transient storm,
Mounts in the wreck, unchanging but in form.

TEMP. OF NAT. ii. 42.
**DE RERUM NATURA.**

Cum terrà simul, et quodam cum rore, manere:
At primordia gignundis in rebus oporter
Naturam clandestinam, caecamque, adhibere;
Emineat ne quid, quod contra pugnet, et obstet,
Quo minus esse queat proprie, quodquomque creatur.

Quin etiam repetunt a coelo, atque, ignibus ejus;
Et primum faciunt ignem se vortere in auras
Aëris: hinc imbrem gigni, terramque creari
Ex imbri; retroque a terra cuncta revorti,
Humorem primum, post aëra, deinde calorem:
Nec cessare hoc inter se mutare, meare
To coelo ad terram, de terra ad sidera mundi:
Quod facere haud ullo debent primordia facto.
Inmutabile enim quiddam superare necesse est;

---

**Ver. 846.** —that fire drawn hence

*Converts to ether, &c.—*] The order of creation, which was introduced by Heracleitus, was adhered to, with little alteration, by every other teacher of philosophy. From fire, when moist, is produced air; from condensed air, water; from water contracting and concreting, earth; from earth rarefying and diffused, water; from rarefied water, air; from air highly expanded, fire. Thus Laertius:

> Πυρόμενον τὸ πῦρ ἀεριζώσαν, καὶ αέρα γενόμενον, ἀέρα γενόμενον τὸν ἀέρα, τὸν δὲ ως τὴν ἀτμονα, καὶ τοιοῦ ἄξων ὧν τε κρίνεται, τὰ χαλκίαν ἐν τῷ νεφέλώ δὲ τὰ πέτρα ἐν αἰρετῇ. Τὸν δὲ ως τὸν διὰ τοῦ αἰρετοῦ. Τὸν δὲ ως τὸν διὰ τοῦ εἰσαγόμενος.

This common system and opinion of the elementary philosophers was intimately known to many of the poets as well. Hence the following verses of Ovid:

---

**In liquidas rorescit aquas; tenuatus in auras**

*Aeræque humor abit: demito quoque pondere rursus
In superos aër tenuissimus emicat ignes:
Inde retro redunt; idemque retexitur ordo;
Ignis enim densum spissatus in aëra transiti;
Hic in aquas; tellus glomerata cogitur aqua.**

*Metamorph. xv. 246.*

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**Earth rarifies to dew: expanded more**

The subtle dew in air begins to soar;
Spreads as she flies, and weary of her same
Extenuates still, and changes into flame.
Thus having, by degrees, perfection won,
Restless, they soon untwist the web they spin:
And fire begins to lose her radiant hue,
Mixt with gross air, and air descends to dew;
In ceaseless strife,—and fire with crystal lymph.
But primal seeds, whene’er the form of things
Mutual they gender, must, perforce, assume
An unobtrusive nature, close conceal’d,
Lest aught superior rise, of power adverse,
And thus th’ harmonious union be destroy’d.

Such sages, too, from heav’n, and heaven’s bright fires
Maintain that all proceeds: that fire drawn hence
Converts to ether, ether into showers,
And showers benign to earth: and hence again,
That all from earth returns: first liquid dew,
Then air, and heat conclusive; changing thus,
In ceaseless revolution, changing thus
From heav’n to earth, from earth to heav’n sublime:
A change primordial seeds could ne’er sustain.

And dew condensing does her form forego,
And sinks a heavy lump of earth below.

Dryden.

The whole of which opinion appears to have been
derived from the Hindus, probably through the
medium of Egypt; but with this difference, and
ostensible advantage on the part of the Greeks,
that the Hindus instead of deriving air from fire,
and water from air, derive water from fire, and fire
from air. The cosmogony of the Hindus is as fol-

lowing: They first suppose a Supreme Deity or Be-
ing of beings; then, that this Divinity created Eter-
nity; that Eternity brought forth Tchiwen; Tshi-
wen, Tchaddy; and in this manner, that a regular
succession of divinities was created, till at length,
we arrive at Bruma, or Dremah, being the twelfth
in the order of successive generation. Bremah was
the productive principle of the soul, and created
(13) the heaven, or that vast expansion between
heaven and earth which makes up the fifth element,
or is rather the receptacle of the other four; and
seems, as already observed, to be a species of
the ether of the ancients, or the materia sub-
tilis of Des Cartes: (14) the heaven or ether begat
the air: (15) the air begat the fire: (16) the fire
begat the water: (17) the water begat the earth.

Lettres Curieuses et Edifiantes, Tom. iv. See
also Asiatic Researches, Vol. iv. Art. ii., in which
the above fifth element is denominated, by Sir Wil-
liam Jones, a subtle spirit, and is said to be so
styled both in the Vedas, and the works of the
Sufis.
130 DE RERUM NATURA. Lib. I.

Ne res ad nihilum redigantur funditus omnes.
Nam, quodquomque suis mutatum finibus exit,
Continuo hoc mors est illius, quod fuit ante.
Quapropter, quoniam quae paullo diximus ante,
In conmutatum veniunt, constare necesse est
Ex aliis ea, quae nequeant convortier usquam:
Ne tibi res redeant ad nihilum funditus omnes.
Quim potius, tali naturâ prædata, quædam
Corpora constitutas; ignem si forte crearint,
Posse eadem, (demptis paucis, paucisque tributis,
Ordine mutato, et motu) facere aëris auram:
Sic alias alis rebus mutarier omnes.

At manifesta palam res indicat, inquis, in auram
Aërit e terrâ res omnis crescere, alique:
Et, nisi tempestas indulget tempore fausto
Imbribus, et tabe nimborum arbusta vacillant;
Solque suâ pro parte fovet, tribuitque calorem;
Crescere non possint fruges, arbusta, animantes;
Scilicet; et, nisi nos cibus aridus, et tener humor,
Adjuvat, amissâ jam corpore, vita quoque omnis
Omnibus e nervis atque ossibus exsoluatur.
Adjutamur enim dubio procul, atque alimur, nos
Certis ab rebus, certis aliae atque aliae res:
Nimirum, quia multimodis communia multis
So something still must, void of change, exist;
Or all would perish, all to nought return;
For what once changes, by the change alone
Subverts immediate its anterior life.
Since, then, as sung above, these all commute
Each into each, some seeds must still be own’d
That ne’er can change, or all to nought would waste.
Hold rather, then, such seeds exist, endow’d
With powers so curious that, as now combin’d,
If fire they form, combine them but anew,
Add, or deduct, give motion, or subtract,
And all is air; and changing thus, and chang’d
That things from things perpetual take their rise.

Nor urge, still sceptic, that each hour displays
All life protruded from the genial Earth:
Fed by the balmy Air; by heaven’s own Fire
Matur’d; and sav’d from pestilence, and death
Alone by Showers benignant: and that hence
Man, beast, and herbs alike exist, and thrive.
The fact we own: we own from solid food,
And crystal streams, man draws his daily breath,
Of nerve, of bone, of being else depriv’d:
But, owning, add, the compounds meet for man,
For brute, for herbage, differ in their kinds,
By different tastes discern’d: and differ thus,
DE RERUM NATURA.

Multarum rerum in rebus primordia multa
Sunt; ideo variis variae res rebus aluntur.

Ver. 877. — differ in their kinds,
By different tastes discern'd: and differ thus, &c.

The anaphora, or playful iteration adopted in this translation is still fuller in the original:

multimodis communia multi
Multarum rerum in rebus primordia multa
Sunt; ideo variis variae res rebus aluntur.

Of this sportive figure Lucretius appears to have been extremely fond, and it is hence frequently to be traced in the course of his poem. Our English interpreters, however, have none of them attempted to preserve it in their versions; but it would be an injustice to the labours of Marchetti not to mention that, as usual, he has been more attentive to this characteristic mark of Lucretian versification:

Ch' essendo molti primi semi e molti
Communi in molti modi a molti corpi
Mescolati fra lor: forza è ch' il vitto
Da varie cose varie cose prendano.

In the same manner, a few lines only above, we meet with a passage which I have endeavoured as faithfully to translate.

—in alternate course
Each flows from each, th' alternate form is seiz'd,
Th' alternate nature.

Dr. Johnson, if I rightly remember, in his life of Gray, strenuously objects to the use of alliterations of every kind, as stiff, cumbersome, and mechanical. But it should be recollected, that all metre is mechanism; and that even the style of all prose writers, who have acquired any degree of celebrity, and especially that of Johnson himself, is mechanism reduced to habit. The

Double, double toil and trouble,
therefore, of which, parodying upon a line of Shakespeare, he accuses all poets who indulge in this species of ornament, will apply to all reputable prose writers as well; but to none more, or even perhaps so largely as to the accuser. Much true taste, however, and nice discrimination, I am ready to allow, is peculiarly requisite in the use of the anaphora:

and it certainly has, occasionally, been most grossly abused in the hands of poetasters and punning epigrammatists. At the same time, all ages and all nations afford us instances of its adoption by poets the most classical and refined. In our own language it is well known to be a decoration so common in the writings of Gray, that to quote him would be altogether an act of superfluity: Mason, who was his intimate friend and copyist, and who approaches, perhaps, more nearly to the elegant and impressive simplicity of Lucretius than any other didactic poet of whom we can boast, has also introduced this ornament, as he has many other decorations of the Roman bard, and even the contour of those decorations into his English Garden with no unsparing hand. Thus in a passage where the author is proving the frequent necessity of calling in mechanic skill to our assistance in improving the plan we have decided upon;

And where we bid her move, with engine huge,
Each ponderous trunk, the ponderous trunk there move.

A work of difficulty, and danger tried,
Nor oft successful found: But if it fail
Thy axe must do its office. Cruel task,
Yet needful. Trust me, tho' I bid thee strike,
Reluctantly I bid thee; for my soul
Holds dear an ancient oak, nothing more dear,
It is an ancient friend. B. i. v. 228.

Thus in a similar manner, Spenser:
Glad of such luck, the lucky luckless maid
A long time with that savage people staid.

In the following passage of Milton, as well as in a vast variety of other places, we meet with an instance of both literal and verbal alliteration: and Lucretius was equally attached to each.

—So man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for man, be judged and die,
And dying rise, and, rising, with him raise
His brethren ransom'd.

Par. Lost. iii. 294.
And only thus, as form'd from various seeds,
To all things common, but in various modes

The glittering poetry of Dr. Darwin affords numerous instances of the same decoration; pursued, in some cases, to excess. The following couplet, and I have no room for more, offers us an elegant and unexceptionable example:

Organic forms with chemic changes strive,
Live but to die, and die but to revive.

Perhaps no poet, however, of real talents, in our own language, has carried this figure to so blameable an excess, as Dr. Young in his Night Thoughts, where it certainly makes its appearance too frequently, and is pursued, in most instances, too far.

Let us now examine a few foreign poets of acknowledged ability, both ancient and modern, in confirmation of the taste of the poet before us.

And first, the eclogues of Virgil are full of the anaphora, full, I mean, without producing disgust. Let us take an example from his Pollio:

Pan etiam, Arcadia mecum si judice certet,
Pan etiam, Arcadia dicat se judice victum.

To this passage the judicious Vida has referred, as a proof of the beauty of the iterative figure, and its employment by poets of unrivalled reputation. These are his words, and this his own imitation of this very couplet:

Quid sequar ulterius quanta dulcedine captus
Detineant aures, vocem cum rursus eandem
Ingeminant, modo non verborum cogat egestas?
Pan etiam Arcadia neget hoc si judice prsesens,
Pan, etiam Arcadia dicam te judice vanum.

Pope has been equally fortunate in his version of the above passage in Homer, and it will serve as a translation of either extract:

An iron scene gleams dreadful o'er the fields, Armour in armour lock'd, and shields in shields; Spears lean on spears, on targets targets throng, Helm sticks to helm, and man drives man along.

In an Ode on Painting, by Frederic Staudlin, a German poet of no small merit of the present day, the same description and figure is so precisely introduced as to require no additional translation.

Hier, wie im grausen schlachtgefild
An panzer panzer hallt,
Und helm an helm, und schild an schild,
Und dampf von leichen wallt.

An alliteration of the same kind is to be met with in the twelfth Canto of the Jerusalem Delivered:

L' onta irrita lo sdegno alla vendetta;
E la vendetta poi l' onta rinnova:
Onde sempre al ferir, sempre alla fretta
Stimol novo s' aggiunge, e cagion nova.

Alternate furies either breast inflame,
Alternate vengeance, and alternate shame;
No pause, no rest th' impatient warriors know,
But rage to rage, and blow succeeds to blow.

Sir John Fanshaw has introduced a beautiful alliteration into his version of the second canto of the
Atque eadem magni refert primordia sæpe
Cum quibus, et quali positurâ, contineantur;
Et quos inter se dent motus, adcipientque.

Namque eadem cœlum, mare, terras, flumina, solem,
Constituunt; eadem fruges, arbusta, animanteis:
Verum, aliis alioque modo conmixta, moventur.

Quin etiam passim nostris in versibus ipsis
Multa elementa vides, multis conmunia verbis;
Quom tamen inter se versus, ac verba, necessè est
Confiteare, et re, et sonitu distare sonanti:
Tantum elementa queunt, permutato ordine solo!

Lusiad of Camoëns ; which, indeed, does not exist in the Portugueze, and is, therefore, entitled to the additional merit of originality. Speaking of the altar, he says:

On it the picture of that shape he plac’d,
In which the holy Spirit did alight;
The picture of the dove, so white, so chastis;
On the best virgin’s head, so chastis, so white.

Camoëns, however, was by no means inattentive to this figure, although it does not form the basis of the above translation. In the sixth canto, we meet with the following instance of it:

--- eu desego
Ha muito ja de andar terras estranhas,
Por ver mais agoas que as do Douro, e Tejo,
Varias gentes, e leis, e varias manhas.
Long have I hop’d thro’ foreign climes to stray,
Where others treams than Douro wind their way;
To note what various shares of bliss and woe From various laws, and various customs flow.

Mickle.
See also extract from the same poet in note on book ii. ver. 606.

But even prose writers, and public orators, have not always neglected the cultivation of this rhetorical flower. It would be easy to select instances from Demosthenes and Cicero, were it necessary. Passing these, I shall merely observe, that St. Paul himself has adopted it, 2 Cor. ix. 8. *Quia e tanti tantis: praebere estmodo: postulare est non præstare.*

Ver. 887. *That, though the finest —* This comparison is exquisitely apposite and illustrative; and our poet recurs to it, and makes a still ampler use of it in ver. 971 of the present book, which see, as likewise the note on ver. 974. In the second, and some of the succeeding books, he also introduces the same illustration.

The argument itself is founded on strict and philosophic fact: and our modern metaphysicians have often availed themselves of it. Thus Dr. Clarke, almost in the words of our poet: “Every thing by composition, division, or motion, is nothing else but the very same it was before, taken either in whole or
Combin’d, and fitted to each rising want.
Nor small of import are the modes diverse
In which those seeds approach, recede, or blend:
Since heaven, and earth, and suns, and seas immense,
Herbs, instinct, reason, all are hence deriv’d:
The mode but chang’d, the matter still the same.
Thus, though the lines, these doctrines that recite,
Flow from the same fixt elemental types,
Yet line from line, in sense, in sound compar’d,
Egregious differs. Re-arranged alone,
Such the vast power by graphic types possesst!

by parts, or in different place or order. When two triangles, being put together, make a square, that square is still nothing but two triangles: or when a square cut in half makes two triangles, those two triangles are still only the two halves of a square; or when a mixture of blue and yellow powder makes a green, that green is still nothing but blue and yellow intermixed, as is plainly visible by the help of microscopes.” Demonstration of the Being, &c. of God, 8vo. edit. p. 58.
Nothing can afford a stronger proof of the very extraordinary manner in which the same substance, under one arrangement or modification of its primary particles, may differ from the same substance when under another, than some late experiments of Mr. Chevencix, upon a supposed new metal, entitled Palladium; in the course of which he discovered that platina, whose specific gravity is more than 22, combined with mercury, whose specific gravity is nearly 14, produced a mass whose gravity was not more than about 17. These experiments are stated in a paper inserted in the Philosophical Transactions for 1803; and they lead to an additional remark, which is too much in point to be omitted: “A no less extraordinary degree of irregular density is daily before our eyes; yet it has not so much as attracted our attention. It is true that it is taken from among the gases. But, if we suppose that we have attained accuracy in experiments upon these subjects, I see no reason to refuse their evidence in this instance. The density of oxygen gas to that of water is as 1 to 740; and the density of hydrogen gas, as 1 to 9792. The mean density of that proportion of oxygen and hydrogen gases which constitutes water, is to that of water as 1 to 2098; or, in other words, water is 2098 times heavier than the mean density of its elements in the gaseous state. But water is only 1200 times heavier than steam, or water in the state of vapour. Therefore there is a variation in ¼, of 898, or nearly half, between the density of water and its elements, when both are in the aeriform state. This fact, however, regards bodies only as they remain in the same state, whether of solidity, liquidity, or fluidity. The anomaly is much greater, if we contemplate them as they pass from one of these states to the other. Yet we must not omit the consideration of such a change, in the instance of mercury alloyed with platina; for the former metal, before liquid, becomes solid as it enters into the new combination.”
DE RERUM NATURA.

At, rerum quæ sunt primordia, plura adhibere
Possunt, unde queant variae res quæque creari.

Nunc et Anaxagoræ scrutemur ὁμοιομερεῖαν,
Quam Graii memorant, nec nostrâ dicere linguâ
Concedit nobis patrii sermonis egestas:
Sed tamen ipsam rem facile est exponere verbis,
Principium rerum, quam dicit ὁμοιομερεῖαν:
Ossa videlicet e pauxillis atque minutis
Ossibus, sic et de pauxillis atque minutis
Visceribus viscus, gigni; sanguenque creari
Sanguinis inter se multis coëuntibus guttis:
Ex auræque putat micis consistere posse
Auram, et de terris terram concrescere parvis;
Ignibus ex igneis, humorem humoribus, esse,
Cætera consimili fingit, ratione, putatque;
Nec tamen esse ullâ parte idem in rebus inane
Concedit, neque corporibus finem esse secandis.

Ver. 897. From sapient Anaxagoras,] This philosopher, concerning whose origin there is some dispute among the critics, was a native of Clazomenæ in Ionia. Metaphysics, and natural philosophy, were the continual subjects of his studies; and he travelled far with a view of benefiting himself by the observations of others. He died at the age of 62, about three centuries and a half before the Christian æra, at Lampsacus; to which place he was banished by the Athenians, in consequence of the aberration of his philosophic opinions from the popular creed of the day. His chief preceptors were Anaximenes and Pherecydes; of whom some account will be found in the notes on v. 765, 766, and 767, of this book. Plato introduces Socrates as speaking in high commendation of a work written by Anaxagoras on Physiology; and it is probable, that the tenets here attributed to him were first communicated to the world in that publication, and that it was hence our poet imbibed a knowledge of his hypothesis. Plutarch, however, l. i. 13, has informed us, that he was also the author of a book on The Nature of Things, which opens with an assertion, that the divine mind had produced and arranged every phenomenon in nature at one and the same time. Ὅμως πιστὰ χρηστὰ

These are the contents of the text, converted into a plain text representation.
Start not when told, then, that the seeds of things
Boast powers superior, and can all create.

From such mistakes, detected and expos'd,
Now turn we: and in order next survey

Those doctrines first the Grecian schools imbib'd
From sapient Anaxagoras, by them
Term'd Homœomery; a phrase ourselves,
In tongue deficient, never can translate.

But these its institutes: that bone from bones,
Minute, and embryo, nerve from nerves arise,
And blood from blood, by countless drops increas'd.
Gold, too, from golden atoms, earths concrete
From earths extreme; from fiery matters fire,
And lymph from limpid dew. And thus throughout
From primal kinds that kinds perpetual spring.
Yet Void he granted not in aught create,
Nor points extreme that never can divide.

sent to us in their concrete state. That gold was thus produced from elemental particles of gold; and that every thing else was in the same manner formed from atoms, endowed with the very powers or virtues exhibited by things themselves. "On voit," observes M. Levesque (Mem. de l'Inst. National Mor. et Polit. I.) "ce qui conduisit Anaxagore à ce résultat. Comme les autres philosophes, il n'oit que rien pût se faire de rien; mais n'ayant pas observé la nature, et manquant de toutes connaissances en chymie, il ne concevait pas que des substances

Ver. 907. Yet Void be granted not in aught create,
Nor points extreme——] The opinion of Anaxagoras is opposed by our poet in five separate arguments. It is false, as it neither allows a vacuum, nor physical and ultimate atoms; the absolute necessity of both which he has fully demonstrated in ver. 467, and following, and ver. 535, and following.
The atomic rudiments of Anaxagoras are, moreover, too feeble and insignificant for his purpose. If large masses of any substance, as of flesh, for example, be from their nature subject to corruption and dissolution, the nature of the minute and original particles, whence these are derived, being the same, such particles must also be equally subject to dissolution, and can never re-produce, by conjunction, the same masses again. Animals, again, who are a composition of antagonist qualities and powers, of bony hardness, and adipose softness, of dry tendons, and liquid blood, are often nourished by a single species of food. But if the system of Anaxagoras be true, every individual species capable of nourishing an animal, must, in itself, be composed of adverse, and opposite qualities; it must be, at the same time, hard and soft, moist and dry. And to prove the absurdity of such an opinion in a manner still more obvious, he proceeds to observe, that as smoke, flame, and ashes, are all and equally educible from timber, each of these primary and opposite substances must have existed in the timber at the same time, prior to their separation; and that each of them, moreover, must have been perpetually imbibed from the earth, as the tree increased in its dimensions.

This hypothesis of Anaxagoras has seldom been embraced in its utmost latitude by modern philosophers and physiologists, but there are many opinions which evince a strong assimilation to it. Such is the doctrine of convertible and sympathetic medicines, which, less than a century ago, was universally assented to by the first physicians in every country; who, like Anaxagoras, appear to have imagined, that every part of the human frame received its nutriment, and recovered its health, from a digestion of the same parts of other animals, or from herbs of parallel or assimilating qualities. Thus the testes of the wild boar, reduced to powder, were esteemed an antidote in cases of barrenness; the lungs of a lamb, employed in the same manner, in pulmonic diseases; the medulla of all animals, in disorders of the nerves; and sperma ceti, or the fat of the whale, an infallible remedy in cases of marasmus, or general loss of fat from any internal disease, a remedy which has not even yet lost its good name with many practitioners, who still continue to believe, that

— the sovereign'st thing on earth,

Is parmaceti for an inward bruise.

Thus, too, in the botanic productions of the earth, nothing, about a century ago, was esteemed of such infallible utility for diseases for the eyes as the herb in our own language denominated Eyebright; for a pain in the side as Stichwort; for ruptures as Solomon’s seal; for lascivious ideas as the Agnus Dei, or Chaste-tree; for disorders of the bladder as Kidney-beans; and even in the present day, Scurvy-grass, among the vulgar, is held of paramount advantage in scurvy complaints. Those who are acquainted with the writings of Etmüller, and Cole, published towards the latter end of the seventeenth century, will easily recall to mind a thousand such instances of sympathy and conversion, which uniformly seem to imply a general belief in some such doctrine as the homoeomeria of Anaxagoras. M. Bonhomme’s theory of the operation of calcareous phosphat, and its great advantage in the disease of the rickets, though far better founded, and of the date of the present day, is not very dissimilar in its origin.

But there are other systems which bear a still stronger resemblance to this doctrine. A few years ago, the female ovarium was supposed to be filled with cysts, and every cyst was conceived to be a perfect egg, with a complete human embryon in its interior; such was the doctrine of Harvey, Haller, and Bonnet. It was afterwards contended, that every animalcule in the male semen was a rudimentum homunculi; and that thousands of them existed in every drop. Such was the opinion of Ruysch, De Graaf, and Leuwenhoek; who, moreover, asserted that the human, or any other animal fetus was produced by a deposit of some one of these animalcules of the
male in the ovarium or uterus of the female; which was a mere nidus for its evolution and perfect growth. In either case, however, the rudimentum homunculi, or the minute embryon, was supposed to be possessed of every limb and feature, or the rudiments of every limb and feature, that the human frame exhibits when in a state of perfection. It was in allusion to this last doctrine, to which indeed he appears to have been a complete proselyte, that Sir R. Blackmore wrote the following lines in his "Creation:"

When the crude embryo careful Nature breeds,
See how she works, and how her work proceeds;
While thro' the mass her energy she darts
To free and swell the complicated parts,
Which only does unravel and untwist
Th'involved limbs that previous there exist. B. 6.

Perrault advanced far beyond this doctrine of evolution; and maintained that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as new generation in any order of beings: that the Almighty created all things in the beginning; and that what we term generations are only augmentations or expansions of the minute parts of the bodies of seeds. So that every order, class, and species of every thing that has existed, does exist, or will exist hereafter, were all really formed at first, and inclosed in such seeds, to be brought forth and unfolded to view at definite times, and according to definite arrangements. Perrault appears, completely, therefore, to have imbibed the old philosophy of Anaxagoras, without knowing it; or, if he knew it, at least, without acknowledging it.

Whilst upon this subject, I cannot avoid noticing the resemblance of this opinion of Perrault with that of the primordial egg of the Bramins, of which the Ordinances of Menu give us the following account, as translated from the original Sanscrit by Sir Wm. Jones. "He whom the mind alone can perceive, having willed to produce various beings from his own divine substance, first, with a thought, created the waters, and placed in them a productive seed. That seed became an egg bright as gold, blazing like the luminary, with a thousand beams; and in that egg he was born himself, in the form of Brahma, the great forefather of all spirits. In that egg the great power sat inactive a whole year of the creator, at the close of which, by his thought alone, he caused the egg to divide itself; and from its two divisions he framed the heaven above, and the earth beneath; and in the midst he placed the subtle ether, the eight regions, and the permanent receptacle of waters." Vol. iii. p. 66.

Much of this doctrine was afterwards introduced into Greece, probably by Orpheus, through the medium of Egypt, and was, for many centuries, regarded as sacred and indisputable.

Among modern theories of generation, that of Dr. Darwin has lately excited the greatest degree of attention. It supposes the human frame to emanate from a fibril of the male, uniting with seminal molecules of the female. But his view of the origin of plants appears to be different, and bears a closer approximation to the theory of Ruysch and De Graaf. If my memory fail me not, he has asserted, both in his Botanic Garden, and his Phytologia, that the seeds of all plants contain in their substance, not only the germ or rudiment of the future plant, but the whole of its leaves and branches; as does, likewise, the bud of the pedicularis and hepatica; and the hybernacle of the hyacinth, and most other plants propagated from bulbous roots.

The very accurate Spalanzani has indeed discovered in these bulbous roots different races of the same plant to the fourth generation; and has traced the same appearance in a variety of animals as well as vegetables. In the female volvox, an insect found chiefly in infusions of hemp-seed and tremella, and the putrid water of dunghills, some naturalists of his acquaintance, he tells us, observed the future fetus in the womb extending to the fifth generation. He has himself traced it to the third, even through
Adde, quod inbecilla nimis primordia fingit;
Si primordia sunt, simili quae prædita constant
Naturâ atque ipsæ res sunt; æqueque laborant,
Et pereunt; neque ab exitio res ulla refrænât.
Nam quid in obpressu valido durabit eorum,
Ut mortem ecfugiat, leti sub dentibus ipsis?
Nihil, ut opinor; ubi ex æquo res funditus omnis
Tam mortalis erit, quam quæ manifesta videmus
Ex oculis nostris, aliquâ vi functa, perire.
At neque recidere ad nihilum res posse, neque autem
Crescere de nihilò, testor res ante probatas.

Praeterea, quoniam cibus auget corpus, alitque;
Scire licet, nobis venas, et sanguen, et ossa,
( Et nervos, alienigenis ex partibus esse:)
Sive cibos omneis conmixto corpore dicent
Esse, et habere in se nervorum corpora parva,
Quaeque, et omnino venas, parteisque cruoris;
Fiet, utei cibus omnis et aridus et liquor ipse
Ex alienigenis rebus constare putentur,
Ossibus, et nervis, venisque, et sanguine, mixta.

---

the diaphonous membrane of the mother; and when isolated, he has described a regular series to the thirteenth generation; and perhaps, as he observes, even this, was not the last. In many other instances, says he, we have found one egg within another, and some osseous part of a fetus within another fetus. In like manner, the butterfly is included in the shell of the chrysalis, and the chrysalis in the skin of the caterpillar.

The theories founded upon these appearances are all of them so many approximations towards the Homœomery of Anaxagoras. The generative
Too feeble, too, the rudiments he chose, 
If rudiments they be, that hold, at once, 
The powers of things, and form the things themselves. 
All toil alike, and perish void of aid: 
For, when the hour of dissolution draws, 
Say, which can baffle the dread fangs of death? 
Can ether, lymph, or fire? can nerve, or bones? 
In each the strife were vain: since all produc'd, 
Survey'd, or viewless, impotent alike, 
Must yield to fate, and perish unredeem'd. 
But things produc'd to nought can never fall, 
Or fall'n, regerminate, as prov'd above. 
Food rears the body, and its growth sustains: 
But well we know its tendons, nerves, and blood, 
Hence all matur'd, are foreign and unlike. 
If, then, each food be compound, if commixt 
With miniatures of all, of blood and nerve, 
Of bone, and veins; each food compact, or moist, 
Of parts unlike must then itself consist; 
Of bone, of blood, of tendon, vein, and nerve.

system of Buffon has an equal assimilation. It sup-
poses an intermixture of the seminal fluid of both 
sexes in the uterus necessary to produce the future 
fetus; and asserts, that this fluid consists of organic 
molecules, secreted from every limb and organ of the 
parent bodies, which arrange themselves in the 
formation of the fetus into the same limbs and 
organs as those from which they were secered. 
See a further account of this theory in note on 
b. iv. 1264.
Praeterea, quæquomque e terrâ corpora crescunt,
Si sunt in terris, terram constare necesse est
Ex alienigenis, quæ terris exoriuntur.

Transfer item, totidem verbis utare licebit:
In lignis si flamma latet, fumusque, cinisque,
Ex alienigenis consistant ligna, necesse est;
Ex alienigenis, quæ lignis exoriuntur.

Linquitur heic quâdam latitandi copia tenuis,
Id, quod Anaxagoræ sibi sumit; ut omnibus omneis
Res putet inmixtas rebus latitare, sed illud
Adparere unum, quios sint plurima mixta,
Et magis in promptu, primâque in fronte, locata:
Quod tamen a vera longe ratione repulsum est.
Conveniebat enim fruges quoque sæpe, minaci
Robore quom in saxi franguntur, mittere signum
Sanguinis, aut aliquid, nostro quæ corpore aluntur:
Quom lapidem in lapidem terimus, manare cruorem:
Consimili ratione herbis quoque, sæpe decebat
Et laticis dulceis guttas, similique sapore
Mittere, lanigeræ quales sunt ubere lactis:
Scilicet; et glebis terrarum sæpe friatis.

Ver. 937. But here, the ready answer, fram'd of yore,]
This reply of Anaxagoras and his disciples has been
noticed by Aristotle, in the following observation, as
translated by Gassendi: Res et apparere et denominari
invicem differentes aiunt, ab eo quod in infinitorum
mistura maxime abundat. Non enim esse totum
pure aut album, aut nigrum, aut dulce, aut carnem,
aut os; cujus autem amplius unumquodque habet,
eam talis rei naturam videri: “they contend, that
things actually appear, and derive their different de-
Thus all things spring from earth: but if in earth
All lurk invelop’d, earth of forms consists
Strange, and discordant, panting for the day.
Change still the picture, and the same still flows:
In timbers, thus, if smoke, flame, ashes blend,
Then, too, those timbers hostile parts comprise.

But, here, the ready answer, fram’d of yore,
By him, the founder of the system, springs:
That, though in all things all things lurk commixt,
What most prevails, what boasts the largest share,
Lies superficial, and is notic’d chief.
Fruitless remark, unsolid, and untrue.
For still, at times, when crush’d to dust minute
Beneath the pond’rous mill-stone’s mighty orb
The crumbling corn with human blood must weep,
Or aught besides of fluid found in man,
And stain with hues obscene: and still, at times,
Each herb unfold the balmy milk so sweet,
That swells the fleecy flock, or odorous kine.
The furrow’d glebe, the lab’ring plough beneath,
Ver. 958. But shouldst thou urge, &c.] This phenomenon, of the tops of forests suddenly taking fire from the violent collision of branch against branch, has been adverted to by Thucydides, and many later historians. They are still frequent in the immense forests of Finland, and are noticed, but differently accounted for, by M. Acerbi, in his journey from Yervendale to Wasa. "Partial fires," says he, "conflagrations and tempests had committed frightful ravages in the bosom of this forest, which presented us, here and there, with exhibitions highly surprising and impressive. Every body has heard of the conflagrations so frequent in Sweden, and in the countries of the North in general. Entire mountains and tracts of several miles, covered with woods, are liable to be devoured by flames. Much has been said, and written, in order to explain the origin of those fires. Some have attributed them to the rays of the sun, which continue so long above the horizon;—but this is fabulouis, and unworthy of notice." He then, generally, ascribes them to two common causes: the peasants smoking their pipes as they travel through the woods, together with their cooking their food as they proceed; and a right granted to them by their political constitution, of cutting down and carrying away from the crown lands all trees and fragments of trees that have been injured by fires: to obtain which privilege they often purposely excite them. "I saw," continues he, "in this forest, the disastrous wreck of one of those conflagrations which had devoured the wood through an extent of six or seven miles, and which exhibited a most dismal spectacle. You not only saw trunks and large remains of trees lying in confusion on the
Must, too, develope, in its secret womb,
Plants, fruits, and foliage, oft dispers’d, and hid:
And, to the woodman, the cleft stock disclose
With ashes smoke, and smoke commixt with fire.
These, facts deny: in things things ne’er exist;
But seeds of things, in various modes arrang’d,
Various themselves: whence rises all survey’d.

But should’st thou urge that oft beneath the storm,
When rubb’d by many a repercussion rude,
Branch against branch, the forest’s topmost height
Has blaz’d from tree to tree; the fact we grant:
Not, with each trunk, that native fires combine;
But that perpetual friction quick collects
Their seeds dispers’d; hence gathering ten-fold force,
ground, and reduced to the state of charcoal, but
also trees standing upright, which, though they had
escaped destruction, had yet been miserably scorched:
others black, and bending down to one side, whilst,
in the midst of the ruins of trunk and branches, ap-
ppeared a group of young trees rising to replace the
former generation; and, full of vigour and vegetable
life, seemed to be deriving their nourishment from
the ashes of their parents.” Acerbi’s Travels, I. p.
229. 231.

Ver. 960. — the forest’s topmost height
Has blaz’d—[ The description of the forest
in flames, in the Æneid, is not widely different from
the present, in several of its bearings.

Ac velut optato, ventis seestate coortis,
Dispersa immittit sylvis incendia pastor:

Corruptis subito mediis, extenditur una
Horrida per latos acies Vulcania campos:
Ille sedens victor flammas despectat ovantes.

L. x. 405.

As when, in summer, welcome winds arise,
The watchful shepherd to the forest flies,
And fires the midmost shrubs; contagion spreads,
And rushing flames infest the neighb’ring heads:
Around the forest flies the burning blast,
And all the leafy nation sinks at last,
And Vulcan rides in triumph o’er the waste.
The pastor, pleas’d with his dire victory,
Beholds the satiate flames in sheets ascend the sky.

Dryden.

Ver. 964. Their seeds dispers’d;—[ The “seeds of
fire,” or “flame,” is a common expression among the
poets. Thus Homer,


U
DE RERUM NATURA.

Quae quom confluxere, creant incendia sylvis.
Quod, si facta foret sylvis abscondita flamma,
Non possent ulla tempus cellarier ignes:
Confacerent volgo sylvas, arbusta cremarent.

Jamne vides igitur, paullo quod diximus ante,
Permagni referre, eadem primordia sæpe
Cum quibus, et quali posituræ, contingantur;
Et quos inter se dent motus, adcipliantque?
Atque eadem, paullo inter se mutata, creare
Igneis e lignis? quo pacto verba quoque ipsa
Inter se paullo mutatis sunt elementis,
Quom ligna atque igneis distinctâ voce notemus.

Denique, jam quaæquomque in rebus cernis apertis,
Si fieri non posse putas, quin materiai
Corpora consimili naturâ prædita fingas,

Sunt autem cunctis permixti partibus ignes;
Ac silice in dura, viridique in cortice, sedem
Inveniunt, cum sylva, sibi colicita crematur:
Ignibus usque adeo natura est omnis abundans.

Fire lurks, commixt, in all things:—the tough flint
Untended by the seeds of fire,
Still to the temple pressed they.—

Hence Virgil,

--semina flamme-
Abstrusa in venis silicis—ÆNEID. vi. 6.
--the seeds of flame
Hid in the harsh flint's veins—

But the following, from Manilius, is a copy from
our own poet,

Ver. 974. As flue and fuel, terms of different sounds.] The mode of reasoning adopted by
our poet in verse 887 is here recurrent to; and it is
sufficiently strong and apposite, to warrant a repeti-
tion. The terms employed in the original are
And flame engend'ring. For could fire itself
A part constituent of the forest form,
No hour could hide the mischief; ev'ry tree
Would blaze, and burn till boundless ruin reign'd.

See, then, as earlier sung, how much imports
Th' arrangement, motion, magnitude; and form
Of primal seeds combin'd: and how the same,
Transpos'd but little, fuel quick convert
To flame, bright blazing up the swarthy flue:
As flue and fuel, terms of different sound,
Of different sense, their letters but transpos'd,
Each into each converts with magic speed.

But should'st thou urge that all things still may flow
From primal seeds, and yet those seeds possess
The form, the nature of the things themselves;

*ligna* and *igneis*, or wood and fire; but as these, in
our own language, by no means convey the poet's
orthographic illustration, I have found it necessary
to introduce a slight change, which, in every re-
spect, answers and elucidates his intention. The
version of Evelyn and Creech, as well as that of
Guernier, who has followed the two former, retain
the Latin terms *lignum* and *ignis*, but with extreme
awkwardness in lines that pretend to give a trans-
lation. Marchetti has endeavoured to avoid this
evil; but, in his escape, has introduced one quite
as considerable, by the adoption of terms, which,
though orthographically expressive of our poet's in-
tention, have no kind of connexion with his metaphors.

E puono gli stessi variati alquanto
Far le legne e le fiamme appunto come

Coutures has been more unhappy than any of the
translators; for without daring, like Marchetti, to
introduce new terms, he has given those of the or-
iginal literally translated into his own language,
where they make a more awkward, and inap-
propriate appearance than even the Latin terms preserved in
the three English versions. Rendered by Coutures,
the Latin *lignum* and *ignis* become *bois* and *feu*; but
by what means these words, which have not a
single letter in common, can be orthographically
transposed into each other, or how they can pos-
sibly explain the poet's meaning, it is not easy to
determine.
Hac ratione tibi Pereunt primordia rerum:
Fiet, utei risu tremulo concussa cachinnent,
Et lacrumis salsis humectent ora, genasque.

Nunc age, quod super est, cognosce, et clarius audi:
Nec me animi fallit, quam sint obscura; sed acri
Percussit thyrso laudis spes magna meum cor,
Et simul incussit suavem mi in pectus amorem.
Musarum: quo nunc instinctus, mente vigenti
Avia Pieridum pergadro loca, nullius ante
Trita solo: juvat integros adcedere funteis,

Ver. 980. The scheme falls self-destroy'd.—I
Nothing can be more ridiculous than to suppose
the possession of opposite qualities in compound sub-
stances, derived from the possession of such opposite
qualities in the elemental atoms of nature. And yet,
if the system of Anaxagoras be true, this absurdity
must be true likewise; and as in the case of sudden
joy, or violent agony, persons of irritable habits,
when thrown into an hysteric paroxysm, are ac-
customed, not unfrequently, to laugh and weep at
the same moment; the same extravagant effects
ought to be exhibited, with equal frequency, in many
of the atoms of which the human frame is composed.

Ver. 983. Come, now, and mark perspicuous what
remains.] The whole of this apostrophe to
Memmius is beautiful beyond expression; and has
been imitated, in almost every line, by a variety
of the most elegant and accomplished of ancient and
modern poets.

Thus Virgil, in his address to his patron:
Nec sum animi dubius, verbis ea vincere magnum
Quam sit, et angustis hunc addere rebus honorem.
Sed me Parnasii deserta per ardua dulcis
Raptat amor: juvat ire jugis, qua nulla priorum
Castaliam molli devertitur orbita clivo.

Gxo. iii. 289.

I, conscious of the toil, will strive to raise
The lowly theme, and grace with labour'd lays:
Tranc'd by sweet love o'er unfrequented heights,
Where no smooth trace to Castaly invites,
I pierce the wild by mortal foot untrod,
And lonely commune with th' Aonian god.

Thus also Akenside:
——but the love

Of nature and the muses bids explore
Through secret paths, erewhile untrod by man,
The fair poetic region, to detect
Untasted springs, to drink inspiring draughts,
And shade my temples with unfading flowers,
Cull'd from the laureat vale's profound recess,
Where never poet gain'd a wreath before.

Pleas. of Imag. i.

Thus too, the abbé De Lille, alluding to our
poet by name, in the following address to his muse:
Toi donc, qui, mariant la grâce et la vigueur
Sais du chant didactique animer la langueur,
O Muse ! si jadis, dans les vers de Lucrèce
Des austères leçons tu polis la rudeurs,—
Viens orner un sujet plus riche, plus fertile,
Dont le charme autrefois avoit tenté Virgile.
The scheme falls self-destroy'd.—For then, must seeds
Hold pow'rs adverse; and laugh, and shake their sides,
While tears of anguish down their cheeks distil.

Come, now, and mark perspicuous what remains.
Obscure the subject: but the thirst of fame
Burns all my bosom; and through ev'ry nerve
Darts the proud love of letters, and the muse.
I feel th' inspiring power; and roam resolv'd
Through paths Pierian never trod before.
Sweet are the springing founts with nectar new;

N'embruntom point ici d'ornement estranger;
V'ens, de mes propres fleurs mon front via s'embrager.

Thou, who, to vigour marrying sprightly grace,
In nervous verse didactic truth canst trace,
O Muse! of yore who, when Lucretius sung
Didst smooth his subject, and sublime his tongue,
Now o'er a richer theme exert thy pride,
A theme by Maro's magic numbers tried:
Come, let no borrow'd ornaments be mine,
With my own flowers my shadowy brows entwine.

Horace has a passage in his Epistles so extremely
in point with this of Lucretius, that it is either a
designed imitation, or affords a striking parallel:
Libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps:
Non aliena meo pressi pede.

I my free footsteps in a path untried,
First fix, and tread in regions all my own.

Manilius has a few verses to the same effect:
Aggregdior, primusque novis Helicona movere
Cantibus, et viridi mutantes vertice sylvas;
Hospita sacra ferens, nulli memorata priorum.
The Heliconian streams, and nodding groves
I first approach, with numbers unessay'd,
Oblations bearing, borne till now by none.

Lambinus has recorded the following verses from

Oppian, as bearing a striking resemblance to a part
of our poet's address:

Come, let us tread the rugged paths,
By poet never trod before.

Nor can we be otherwise than reminded of Milton's
elegant address to the heavenly muse, in the opening
of his first book of Paradise Lost, which most of his
annotators refer to this common source:

Guide my bold steps——
In these untrodden paths to sacred fame.

Thus also Armstrong, Art of preserving Health,
book ii.

Come now, ye Naiads, to the fountains lead!
Now let me wander thro' your gelid reign:
I turn to view th' enthusiastic wilds,
By mortal else untrod.
Atque haurire; juvatque novos decerpere flores,
Insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,
Unde prius nulli velarint tempora Musae.

Primum, quod magnis doceo de rebus, et artis
Religionum animum nodis exsolvere pergo:
Deinde, quod obscura re tam lucida pango
Carmina, Musaeo contingens cuncta lepore:
Id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione videtur;

Ver. 991. Those flow'rs to pluck, and weave a roseat wreath,] The translation of Creech has metamorphosed this flowery wreath of our poet into a chaplet of laurel:
—none of all the mighty tuneful Nine Shall grace a head with laurels like to mine.

His commentator on this passage, however, candidly observes, that in the original no mention is made of laurel; and that garlands and wreaths of ivy seem to have been the first ornament of poets, and other learned men, and laurel the decoration of conquerors. Thus Horace:

"Me doctarum Hedera praemia frontium
Dis miscent superis."

Yet it is very uncertain whether the me in this address of Horace ought not to be te, and refer to Mæcenas, the poet's patron, agreeably to the ingenious conjecture of Rutgers, who has since been followed by a variety of able critics of all countries. Be this, however, as it may, it is obvious, that Lucretius has no allusion either to the ivy or the laurel in the passage before us, for he expressly employs the term flores, or flowers, which will not conveniently apply to either of them:
—juvatque novos decerpere flores,
Insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam.

Sweet the new flowers that bloom, but sweeter still
Those flowers to pluck, and weave a roseat wreath.

The custom of adorning with crowns, or chaplets of flowers interwoven with foliage, those who had peculiarly distinguished themselves in the arts of war, of music, or of poetry, is almost as ancient as those arts themselves. It was occasionally forbidden, under severe penalties, by the more zealous of the Roman emperors, after their conversion to Christianity, as being supposed to partake of the superstitions of paganism. Petrarco, however, to a certainty, even so late as the middle of the fourteenth century, was fortunate enough to enjoy this honour of poetic coronation, conferred with every possible degree of publicity and splendour, and attended upon by the senators, and many of the council, at the Roman capitol: a detailed account of which transaction is inserted in Tiraboschi's Storia della Letteratura Italiana. There is great reason also to believe, notwithstanding the doubts which have been entertained on the subject by some persons, that Ariosto, a full century afterwards, was admitted to a similar distinction, and was even crowned by the hands of the emperor Charles V. Such, at least, is the declaration of the monument now in existence in the church of the Benedictines at Florence, erected to his memory in the year 1612, by Ludovico Ariosto, a collateral branch of his family.

Of all the Grecian poets, Anacreon is the most frequent in his reference to this custom of decorating the temples with flowery chaplets; and his flower is,
Sweet the new flowers that bloom: but sweeter still
Those flow’rs to pluck, and weave a roseate wreath,
The muses yet to mortals ne’er have deign’d.
With joy the subject I pursue; and free
The captiv’d mind from superstition’s yoke.
With joy th’ obscure illume; in liquid verse,
Graceful, and clear, depicting all survey’d:
By reason guided. For as oft, benign,
The sapient nurse, when anxious to enforce

Therefore I turn my pen to nature’s theme,
To celebrate Thee, as my heart would seem,
And to the world present what nature is
And what it is that we are, and what we may be:
To praise the kind weariness of heaven,
To protest us against the fall of man,
And to the soul itself, in her distress,
Infirmity, and sin, and folly, to process.

The custom was probably of Asiatic origin, yet
the Persian poets seem to have been fonder of strewing
roses around them, than of entwining them in
their hair; at least, the latter fashion is by no means
so frequently referred to as the former. Thus,
Hafiz, in one of his most beautiful gazels:

"Come, jovial, to the garden lead,
Let noise, and mirth, and madness vie;
Like nightingales, from anguish freed,
In nests of roses let us lie."

The sentiment of the rose, on almost every occasion, the rose.
Thus, Od. xv. edit. Barnes:

On me meli Tynaxe
ToE Sarzheut evaxropes
Elia mele rodbias
Katastifin kurma

I care not for the idle state
Of Persia’s king, the rich, the great!
But oh! be mine the rosy braid,
The fervour of my brows to shade.

Moore.

In like manner, the sentimental Sadi, in his Gu-}
listan:

"Khe Hery Xari Bnsbheux Zbantst
Tis not the nightingale alone
That, seated mid the rose’s sweets,
Talks of her charms in tenderest tone;
For every thorn the theme repeats.

Ver. 998. — For as oft, benign,
The sapient nurse, when anxious to enforce] This
simile, as well as many others which will appear as
we proceed, has been closely copied by Tasso in his
Jerusalem Delivered. I cannot, however, agree with
his commentator Nardius, that the copy is superior
to the original: “dum semulatur,” says he of Tor-
quato, “palmam auctori eripuit.” Let the reader
compare them:

"Sai che la corre il mondo ove piu versi
Di sue dolcezze il luanghier Parnasso;
E che il vero condito in molli versi,
I piu schivi allettando ha persuaso.
Così all’ egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
Di soave licor gli orli del vaso:
Succhi amari ingannato intanto ei beve,
E dall’ inganno sua vita riceve."

Cant. i.
Sed, velutei pueris absinthia tetra medentes
Quom dare conantur, prius oras, pocula circum,
Contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,
Ut puerorum ætas inprovida ludificetur
Labororum tenus; interea perpetet amarum
Absinthii laticem, deceptaque non capiatur,
Sed potius, tali facto recreata, valescat:
Sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque videtur
Tristior esse, quibus non est tractata, retroque
Volgus abhorret ab haec)volui tibi suaviloquenti
Carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostram,
Et quasi Musæo dulci contingere melle;
Si tibi forte, animum tali ratione tenere
Versibus in nostris possem, dum perspicis omnem
Naturam rerum, quà constet compta figura.

Sed, quoniam docui, solidissima materiae
Corpora perpetuo volitare, invicta per ævum;

Thou know'st the world with eager transport
throng
Where sweet Parnassus breathes the tuneful
song;
That truth can oft, in pleasing strains convey'd,
Allure the fancy, and the mind persuade.
Thus, the sick infant's taste disguised to meet,
We tinge the vessel's brim with juices sweet;
Meantime the bitter draught his lip rejects,
He drinks deceiv'd, and so deceiv'd, he lives.

A copy of this same passage is, likewise, to be
met with in the orations of Themistius. Without
swelling this note unnecessarily, by citing it, the
reader may find it, if he please, by turning to that
addressed ad Nicomedienses.

Ver. 1005. —in honey'd phrase,
Tun'd by the muses,— Our poet, in this
verse, appears to have had his eye turned to the fol-
lowing passage of Pindar, which I copy. I will give
it with an emendation approved by Mr. Wake-
field:

Thou know'st the world with eager transport
throng
Where sweet Parnassus breathes the tuneful
song;
That truth can oft, in pleasing strains convey'd,
Allure the fancy, and the mind persuade.
Thus, the sick infant's taste disguised to meet,
We tinge the vessel's brim with juices sweet;
Meantime the bitter draught his lip receives;
He drinks deceiv'd, and so deceiv'd, he lives.

HooLk.

A copy of this same passage is, likewise, to be
met with in the orations of Themistius. Without
swelling this note unnecessarily, by citing it, the
reader may find it, if he please, by turning to that
addressed ad Nicomedienses.

Ver. 1005. —in honey'd phrase,
Tun'd by the muses,— Our poet, in this
verse, appears to have had his eye turned to the fol-
lowing passage of Pindar, which I copy. I will give
it with an emendation approved by Mr. Wake-
field:
On the pale boy, the wormwood’s bitter draught,
With luscious honey tints the goblet’s edge,
Deceiving thus, while yet un-us’d to guile,
His unsuspecting lip; till deep he drinks,
And gathers vigour from the venial cheat:
So I, since dull the subject, and the world
Abash’d recoils, would fain, in honey’d phrase,
Tun’d by the muses, to thine ear recite
Its vast concerns; if haply I may hope
To fix thine audience, while the flowing verse
Unfolds the nature, and the forms of things.

Taught, then, already that material seeds
Are solid, and o’er time triumphant live,

The dulcet reed thy glory sings,
The soft-tun’d lyre responsive rings;
And all th’ Aonian maids renown’d
Spread through the world, th’ exulting sound.
I, too, amidst the festive strains
That glad the fam’d, the Locrian plains,
Plains with liquid honey flowing,
Luscious draughts to Locrians dear,—
Nunc, age, summae quaedam sit finis eorum,
Nec ne sit, evolvamus item, quod mane repertum est,
Seu locus, ac spatium, res in quo quaeque gerantur,
Pervideamus, utrum finitum funditus omne
Constet, inmensum pateat, vasteque profundum.
Omne quod est, igitur, nulla regione viarum
Finitum est; namque extremum debet habere:
Extreimum porro nullius posse videtur
Esse, nisi ultra sit quod finiat; ut videatur,
Quo non longius haec sensus natura sequatur.
Nunc, extram summam quoniam nihil esse fatendum,
Non habet extremum; caret ergo fine, modoque:
Nec refert, quibus adsistas regionibus ejus:
Usque adeo, quem quisque locum possedit, in omnis
Tantum de partibus infinitum omne relinquit.

Ver. 1017. Th' entire of things, then, bounds can
never know;.] This first argument of Lucretius is a verbal copy from Epicurus, as contained in
his Epistle to Herodatus; &c. Cicero has likewise adopted and illus-
trated it in his Second Book on Divination; nor has
it escaped the notice of modern metaphysicians and philosophers. Bruno, who wrote a treatise, Infinito Universo, towards the close of the seven-
teenth century, enriched it with the entire catalogue of the arguments here offered by Lucretius, to which
he added not less than eight-and-twenty new ones, offering in the whole, a most redoubtable phalanx of opposition to every antagonist who chose to take up the gauntlet he thus threw down. It is in this man-
er he concludes, with no small portion of self-confi-
dence: che non si puo negare il spazio infinito se non con la voce, come fanno gli pertinaci, &c. “that
it is impossible for the infinitude of space to be de-
ied by any but those who are wantonly perverse,
and will not attend to the innumerable proofs that
are adduced in its favour.”
Attend, benignant, while we next decide
Their number, or if infinite; and tell,
Since void throughout exists, assigning space
For place and motion, if th' entire of things
Be bounded, or unfathom'd, and immense.

Th' entire of things, then, bounds can never know:
Else parts posset of farthest and extreme.
But parts can only be extreme, beyond
Where other substance springs, those parts extreme
Binding, though sense the limit ne'er can trace.
If, then, some other substance rise, the first
Forms not th' entire of things. Whate'er it be
That other substance still must part compose.
Vain too is distance: the vast whole alike
To all extends, embracing, and embrac'd.

Yet grant th' entire of things of bound posset.
Say, to what point shall yon keen archer, plac'd
E'en on its utmost verge, his dart direct?

Ver. 1028. Say, to what point shall yon keen archer, plac'd
E'en on its utmost verge, his dart direct?] This perplexing appeal of our poet has been immediately noticed by the Cardinal Poligac in his antagonist poem. The following is his copy of it, and his reply:

At si materiam claudunt circumundique fines
Illam ultra, quaeris, quo sit ventura sagitta
Quam bonus arcitenens valido contorserit arcu.
Ex errore tuo dubium tibi nascitur illud.

Ultra materiem nihil est: mittesne sagittam
In nihilum? nihilum non est locus: ergo resistet,
Nec poterit telum vetitos erumpere fines,
Et vires frustra effusas mirabitur arcus.

ANTI-LUCR. lib. 3.

Here should'st thou ask, if matter still have bounds,
Where shall yon arrow, on those bounds extreme,
Loos'd from the tortur'd bow, direct its flight?
The question springs from error: for beyond
Lies nothing: into nothing wouldst thou urge.
Th' adventurous dart? those bounds would still
resist,
And the keen arrow urge its force in vain.

But if nothing lie beyond this bounded material sys-
tem, then it is bounded by nothing; and if it be
bounded by nothing then, again, has it no bounds
whatever; and of course there would be nothing to
resist the farther flight of the arrow. So that the
force of our poet's appeal still remains uninvali-
dated. The learned Bruno, indeed, in his first Dia-
logue, Dell' Infinito Universo, to which I have just
referred, introduces this argument as altogether irefraggable.
In reality, there seems to be no more impiety in attach-
ing the idea of immensity to space, than of end-
less duration to eternity; and, according to Mr.
Locke, we acquire both ideas in the same manner, and
at the same time. Whilst I am appealing to this cel-
èbrated philosopher, I cannot avoid quoting an illus-
tration of his own in confirmation of this very doc-
trine; and which has such a strange coincidence with
his example of an archer placed on the imaginary con-
fines of creation, that it is difficult to avoid conceiving
Mr. Locke had Lucretius in his recollection at the
time of writing it. "If body, observes he, be not
supposed infinite, which I think no one will affirm,
I would ask, whether, if God placed a man at the
extremity of corporal beings, he could not stretch
his hand beyond his body? If he could, then he
would put his arm where there was before space with-
out body: and if there he spread his fingers, there
would be still space between them without body.
If he could not stretch out his hand, it must be because
of some external hindrance: and then I ask, whether
that which hinders his hand from moving outwards be
substance, or accident, something, or nothing?"
Hum. Und. b. ii. ch. 13.

M. Cabanis, however, is a bolder man than any of
the philosophers I have yet adverted to. He derives
his idea of every species of existence from self-motion;
and he is not afraid of Mr. Locke's question, if in-
deed, which I much doubt, he ever met with it.
"That which opposes me," says he, "when I move, I
BOOK I.  

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Shall aught obstruct it, or the path be clear?
Take which thou wilt: some substance chuse, possesst
Of pow’r t’ impede, and check its rapid race:
Or let it fly unconquer’d, nor restraint
E’en once encounter: thou must still confess
Th’ ENTIRE of nature nought of limit knows.
Throughout the dart I’ll chase; and when, at length,
Th’ acceded bound is gain’d, I’ll still demand
What yet obstructs it; still new proofs adduce
That the vast whole is boundless; and that flight
Still beyond flight for ever might be urg’d.

denominate an obstacle, a body. If this body, or
obstacle, did not exist, I should be able to persevere
in my motion. Hence, from that which does not
prevent me from moving, and from that which does,
from nothing, and from body, I derive the idea of
space. I call it void if I find nothing, and full if I
meet with bodies. It is therefore impossible to know
whether space be a substance or a quality; for it is
not, strictly speaking, either the one or the other:
it is an abstract idea, compounded of those of body
and non-entity, considered with relation to my sense
of motion. If any one inquire of me, whether space
exist beyond the bounds of the Universe, I reply,
that beyond the bounds of the whole, there exists no-
thing; and that, if I were there, I should certainly
not be incommoded in moving.” Mem. de l’Instit.
Nat. Phys. et Mor. I. M. Cabanis is, however, in
as great a dilemma as the cardinal: to move into no-
thing, is precisely the same thing as not to move at all.
How is he to know that he moves, or what is to mea-
sure his progress? How would he, as a human being
at least, derive a support for his feet, or air for his
lungs? I may safely say, that he would not move far.

It is highly probable, Virgil had his eye directed
to this passage of our poet in composing the verses
that follow, although I do not find that the resem-
blance has been hitherto noticed by any of the com-
mentators on either poet. Admitting the imitation,
the passage, I think, will assume a new beauty, and
acquire an illustration that it wants.

Quid referam——
———quos oceano propior gerit India lucos,
Extremi sinus orbis? ubi aerà vincere summum
Arboris haud ulle jactu potuère sagittae?

GEORG. ii. 118.

Say, shall I mark what woods gigantic wave
O’er Indian seas, that earth’s last bound’ry lave,
Where the spent shaft, from skilful Indians
sped,
Turns e’er it strikes the tree’s aerial head?

SOTHEBY.
DE RERUM NATURA. LIB. I.

Praeterea, spatium summa totius omne

Undique, si inclusum certis consisteret oris,

Finitumque foret; jam copia materiai

Undique ponderibus solidis confluxet ad imum;

Nec res ulla geri sub coeli tegmine posset;

Nec foret omnino coelum, neque lumina solis:

Quippe, ubi materies omnis cumulata jaceret

Ex infinito jam tempore, subsicendo.

At nunc numirim reque data principiorum

Corporibus nulla est; quia nihil est funditus imum,

Quo quasi conflui, et sedes ubi ponere, possint:

Semper in adsiduo motu res quaque geruntur

Partibus in cunctis, infernaque subspeditantur,

Ex infinito cita, corpora materiai.

Postremo, ante oculos res rem finire videtur:

Aer dissipat colleis, atque aera montes;

Terra mare, et contra mare terras terminat omnes:

Omnem certem vero nihil est quod finiat extra:

Est igitur natura loci, spatiumque profundi,

Quod neque clara suo percurrere flumina cursu

Ver. 1061. From age to age resplendent lightnings

Mr. Wakefield has chosen the first: this I

have rejected, however, for the second, which is that

adopted by Havercamp, from an old Gottenburg

fragment of much celebrity among the critics; and

is supported by a Cambridge copy, and one of the

codices preserved in the British Museum. It affords,
Book I. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Were, too, th' ENTIRE of nature thus confin'd,
Thus circumscrib'd precise, from its own weight
Long since, all matter to th' extremest depth
Had sunk supine: nor aught, the skies beneath,
Nor skies themselves, with countless stars adorn'd
And sun's unsuffering splendour, had remain'd.
Down, down th' accumulated mass had fall'n
From earliest time, devoid of power to rise.
But nought of rest supine material seeds
Evince through nature; since no depth exists
Extreme, and fathomable where those seeds
Might fix collected in inert repose.
All, all is action: the vast whole alike
Moves in each part; and, from material seeds,
Draws, undiminish'd, its eternal food.

Things, to the sense, are circumscrib'd by things.
Air bounds the hills, and hills the liquid air:
Earth ocean, ocean earth: but the vast whole
What fancied scene can bound? O'er its broad realm,
Immeasur'd, and immeasurably spread,
From age to age resplendent lightnings urge,
Perpetuo possint ævi labentia tractu;
Nec prorsum facere, ut restet minus ire, meando:
Usque adeo passim patet ingens copia rebus,
Finibus exemptis, in cunctas undique parteis.
Ipse modum porro sibi rerum summa parare
Ne possit, natura tenet: quia corpus inani,
Et, quod inane autem est, finiri corpore cogit;
Ut sic alternis infinita omnia reddat.
Aut etiam, alterutrum nisi terminet alterum eorum
Simplice naturâ, ut pateat tamen immoderatum;
Nec mare, nec tellus, neque coeli lucida templâ,
Nec mortale genus, nec divôm corpora sancta,
Exiguum possent horaî sistere tempus.
Nam, dispulsa suo de cœtu, materiaî

In vain, its flight perpetual; distant still
And ever distant from the verge of things.
Cowley has a strong and sublime idea, in some
measure approaching this of Lucretius and Akenside,
in his Davideis; and which Johnson has inserted in
his Life, as an instance of vigorous conception.
He is descanting on the kingdom of the Messiah:
Round the whole world his dreaded name shall sound,
And reach to worlds that must not yet be found.
Such are the casual resemblances, the parallel scintillations of men of bold and energetic genius.

Ver. 1068. Void must performe bound matter,
matter void;) This additional argument ad-
duced against the Stoics, who denied the infinity of mat-
ter, although they allowed the infinity of space in which
In vain their flight perpetual; distant, still,
And ever distant from the verge of things.
So vast the space on opening space that swells,
Through every part so infinite alike.

Ask thy own reason. It will prove at once
Th’ entire of nature never can have bounds.
Void must perforce bound matter, matter void;
Thus, mutual, one illimitable whole
Forming for ever. For were each of each
Free and unshackl’d, uncombin’d, and pure
In their own essence, not one short-liv’d houi
Could earth, or ocean, the refulgent fane
Of heav’n sublime, or mortal forms, or those
The gods themselves inhabit, then subsist.
Freed from all order, disarrang’d, and rude,

matter moves, is entirely copied from the writings of Epicurus; and occurs in his Epistle to Herodotus:

Ver. 1073. —— the refulgent fane
Of heav’n sublime——] Thus Polignac:
—— coeli fulgentia templa.

Ver. 1074. —— or mortal forms, or those
The gods themselves inhabit,] The commentator on Creech’s translation intimates, that in these verses,
which relate to the deities, Lucretius subverts his own system, by supposing them subject to the same dissolution with other component and material bodies.

This is an obvious mistake. Our poet uniformly contends for their immortality. Like Milton, he endows them with a vehicle and figure of existence; but maintains, that they are freed from the law of dissolution, which prevails throughout every terrene substance. He attributes to them also the properties of solidity as well as figure. But were it possible, says he, for substances essentially possessed of these properties to be for one moment destitute of them, then even the gods themselves could subsist no longer, but must submit to the common fate of inferior and material beings.
Copia ferretur magnum per inane, soluta; 
Sive adeo potius numquam concreta creasset 
Ullum rem, quoniam cogi disjecta nequisset. 
Nam certe neque consilio primordia rerum

Ver. 1080. For never, doubtless, from result of thought, It is surprising to perceive how excessively mistaken all the critics and commentators upon this passage have hitherto been, while nothing, if they had really understood our poet, can be more obvious. All the Grecian schools of philosophy alike maintained the eternity of matter: but they differed as to the mode in which motion, and the present appearances of things first began. Anaximander maintained, that the infinite and primary matter, whence even the gods themselves were formed, was the first intelligent source of all things. The Stoics, not in any respect more philosophic, represented the world as in itself a rational being; and pretended that by the operation of an interior soul or spirit, it had produced and continued to sustain the beauty and order universally exhibited. Such also, with little variation, was the opinion of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Trismegistus: and Virgil has given us their creed, as the quintessence of wisdom and truth. It is thus Anarchus addresses his son:

Principio coelum, ac terras, camposque liquentes, 
Lucentemque globum Lunac, Titanique astra 
Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus 
Mens agitat nulcm et magno se corpore miscet.

Aeneid vi. 724.

Know, first, that heaven and earth's compacted frame, 
And flowing waters, and the starry frame, 
And both the radiant lights, one common soul 
Inspires; and feeds, and animates the whole. 
This active mind, infused through all the space, 
Unites, and mingleth with the mighty mass. Dryden.

Plato, indeed, endeavoured, in some measure, 
to avoid the absurdity which, in a large degree attaches to the rest, but more especially to the Cyreneaus, by supposing, that there was another divinity besides the world itself, by whom the divinity of

the world was first put into motion: by conceiving this extrinsic divinity to be both eternal and supreme, and by asserting that the souls of all intelligent and rational beings are created by him, from slips or particles of the divinity of the world, and continue scattered, like cuttings, or seeds of vegetables, through the sun, moon, and planets, ready to unite themselves with the young embryo on its first evincing a principle of vitality. Democritus, however, advanced farther than any of these sects: he not only supposed the world, in its congregate state, to be an animated being; but that many of the elementary atoms themselves were intelligent and perceptive in their own simple and uncompounded state; and that the sublime work of creation was produced from the joint counsel and determination of this order, when assembled in a kind of synod; a doctrine which, in modern times, appears, in some measure, to have been supported by Leibnitz and Hobbes, with this simple difference, that whereas Democritus divided his elemental atoms into a perceptive and an imperceptive class, Hobbes maintained, that no argument could disprove that all the atoms of matter were not only endowed with figure, and a capacity of motion, but also with an actual sense or perception; and that they merely require the organs and memory of animals to express their sensations. Scio fuisse philosophos quosdam, eosdemque viros doctos, qui corpora omnia sensu pradicta esse sustinuerunt; nec video, si natura sensiones in reactione sola collocarentur, quomodo refutari posint. &c. Physic. c. xxv. l. 5.

Against all these absurd doctrines and hypotheses, our poet is here entering his rational protest. He tells us, that they are equally made up of incongruities, if not of contradictions:

For, never, doubtless, from result of thought,
Through boundless vacuum the drear mass of things
Would quick be borne: or, rather, nought had ris’n
From the crude chaos, joyless, and inert.
For never, doubtless, from result of thought,
Or mutual compact, could primordial seeds

Or mutual compact, could primordial seeds
First harmonize, or move with powers precise.

Who is there, indeed, in the present day, that
can suppose they could thus harmonize? And yet,
strange to relate! this very passage, including se-
veral of the verses that follow, has been adduced
against Lucretius, as a proof of unpardonable impiety:
and Lactantius has chosen to assert, that “he has
hereby reached the utmost point of insanity, and
could not possibly go beyond.” Implevit, says he,
umerum perfectae insaniae, ut nihil ulterius ad-
jici possit. De Ira. Such are the unmerited scan-
dals to which our much injured and highly deserving
bard has for ages been condemned! Having exposed
these opinions of his mistaken antagonists, he adven-
tures to give us his own:—and what is it?

But ever changing, ever chang’d, and vext,
From earliest time, through ever-during space,
With ceaseless repercussion, every mode
Of motion, magnitude, and shape essay’d;
At length th’ unwieldy mass the form assum’d
Of things created.

The Mosaic cosmogony itself cannot be more con-
sistent with the existence of a Supreme First Cause.
It supposes a chaos; and it supposes the gradual de-
ervation of all things from this chaos, put into mo-
tion, and necessarily labouring, without any intelli-
gence of its own, for the gradual evolution of all
things. On the actual existence of this chaos upon
the system of our elaborate poet, see B. vi. of this
work, where the whole series of the production of
the world is most minutely, and elegantly discussed.
But there is no mention here made of any intelligent and
extrinsic Being, whom we can conceive as the Eternal
First Cause of this motion: true, there is no such
mention made, nor do I know that there is any such
necessity; it is the physical effect alone we are con-
templating, and upon the proofs and principles I
have advanced in the prefixed Life of Lucretius,
such an intelligent Being is doubtless implied, though
he be not immediately adverted to in the passage
before us. And with such an implication nothing
can be more consistent, more rational, or more piou.
Even Des Cartes himself, upon this principle, has
rescued, as far as he was able, the character of Epicu-
rus, from every charge of impiety and irration-
ality. See note on v. 168 of this Book. Of all our
modern geologists, Mr. Kirwan has taken most pains
to reconcile the theory of Moses with modern dis-
coversies and experiments; or rather, to demon-
strate that it is the only true system of geology that a phi-
losopher can, or ought to admit. But Mr. Kirwan
himself is under the necessity of conceiving, that
many ages elapsed, after the first existence of the
earth in a state of chaos, before it was fit for the
habitation of animals and vegetables, and that the
great work of creation was gradually advancing du-
course of which, he supposes also, that the days of the
Hebrew historian are not to be understood literally,
but more comprehensively, and that they comprise
so many distinct eras of the events that occurred.
The system of geology at present most fashionable
in France is that of La Metherie; but La Metherie
also supposes the same fact as to the period of cre-
ation, and its division into distinct epochs; as he
does also, that the world was originally submerged in
a primitive ocean, forming hereby an universal and
liquid chaos. Many of the positions of La Me-
therie are opposed by the fanciful Bertrand, in his
Nouveaux Principes de Geologie; but even Bertrand
himself adheres to this doctrine of the progressive cre-
ation or evolution of the earth, as it exists at present.
Ordine se suo quæque sagaci mente locarunt,
Et, quos quæque darent motus, pepigere profecto:
Sed, quia multa, modis multis, mutata, per omne,
Ex infinito, nexantur percita plagis;
Omne genus motus, et coetus, experiendo,
Tandem deveniunt in taleis disposituras,
Qualibus hæc rerum consistit summa creata:
Et, multos etiam magnos servata per annos,
Ut semel in motus conjecta est convenienteis,
Ecificit, ut largis avidum mare fluminis undis
Integrent amnes, et solis terra vapore
Fota novet fetus; summâ quoque gens animantum
Floreat, et vivant labentes ætheris ignes:
Quod nullo facerent pacto, nisi materiaë
Ex infinito suboriri copia posset,
Unde amissa solent reparare in tempore quoque.
Nam, velutei, privata cibo, natura animantum
Diffliuit, amittens corpus; sic omnia debent
Dissolvi, simul ac defecti subpeditare
Materies, aliquâ ratione aversa viaï.
Nec plagæ possunt extrinsecus undique summam
Conservare omnem, quæquomque est conciliata:
Cudere enim crebro possunt, partemque morari,
Dum veniant aliaë, ac subpleri summa queatur;
Interdum resilire tamen coguntur, et unâ
First harmonize, or move with powers precise.
But ever changing, ever chang’d, and vext,
From earliest time, through ever-during space,
With ceaseless repercussion, every mode
Of motion, magnitude, and shape essay’d;
At length th’ unwieldy mass the form assum’d
Of things created. Persevering, thus,
Through many an age, unnumber’d springs the deep
Feed with perpetual tides: by the warm sun
Sustain’d, and cherish’d, earth renews her fruits,
And man, and beast survive; and ether glows
With living lights innum’rous: scenes throughout
’Twere vain t’ expect, from all eternal time,
Had no primordial seeds, in stores immense,
Been ever nigh to renovate the world.
For as, of food depriv’d, the languid frame
Of man must perish, so th’ ENTIRE OF THINGS
Must instant cease, should once primordial seeds
Their aid withhold, or deviate in their course.
Nor deem from mutual impulse, things with things
Can sole their forms preserve; th’ eternal seeds
May, hence, be oft restrain’d, and e’en purchance,
Their flight delay’d, till, from th’ exhaustless store,
Fresh seeds arrive the fainting frame to feed:
But from concussion, frequent, they rebound,
Principiis rerum spatium tempusque fugarī
Largiri, ut possint a coetu libera ferri.
Quā re atque atque suboriri multa necesse est:
Et tamen, ut plagae quoque possint subpetere ipsae,
Infinita opus est vis undique materiae.

Ilud in his rebus longe fuge credere, Memmi,

Ver. 1112. But fly, O MEMMIUS, fly the sect deceiv'd.] The Stoics, who uniformly contended for the spherical figure of the earth and planets, contended, at the same time, for the spherical figure of the universe itself; and, indeed, appear to have advanced the spherical figure of the universe as a reason why the stars and planets should partake of a similar configuration; believing that the same kind of gravitation existed through the universe at large, which they contended did exist throughout individual planets; by which the universe was kept in perpetual action, and the earth, and every other orb, was continually tending towards one common centre. When asked how it occurred, allowing this to be a fact, that the particles of earth, water, and air, attracted by such common centre, did not fly off from their own proper orbits, and, passing through the vacuum of space, approach that centre, and rest there, to the total subversion of order, and the regeneration of chaos? they replied, that such would assuredly be the effect, were it not for a certain elastic or contractile power possessed by the atmosphere of every orb, which compresses its particles together, and thus prevents such a dissolution. This atmosphere, or elastic ether, is denominated by Ennius, Virgil, and Manilius, as well as by our own poet, *magna mundi*, or "the walls of the world;" the Stoics believing that the world at large, as well as every orb contained within its circumference, was surrounded by the same elastic substance.

This doctrine of the Stoics was strenuously opposed by the Epicureans, on many accounts. For the latter believed that matter, as well as space, was infinite; and that they had no other limit than what they reciprocally afforded each other. Hence again they denied a central point in the universe; for that which is infinite can have no centre; and of course, they denied the existence of central attraction. But they carried their opposition still farther; and denied, at the same time, that either the earth or the heavenly bodies were perfectly spherical; conceiving the former to approximate gradually, in its lower regions, to the nature of air, on which it rests, and of course, that it is totally destitute of antipodal inhabitants. This doctrine of the Epicureans was assented to for many ages after the epoch of our poet, by sages of the highest reputation, both Christian and anti-Christian; among the former of whom, indeed, to entertain a different opinion, was to be guilty of heresy. And, in effect, till the general laws and principles of gravitation were developed and understood, I question whether there were not more reason discovered in denying the perfectly spheroidal figure of the earth, and the possibility of an antipodal habitation, than in contending for such theories. At least, the objections urged against them by our poet, and others of the same school, are extremely forcible, and must, till the discovery of the above general principles, have been unanswerable. Lucretius has endeavoured to prove, that the universe is infinite; but, if this be true, there cannot possibly be a central spot; for that which is infinite can have no centre. Yet, allowing a centre, whether in the universe, or in the earth; what reason can be assigned for the supposition, that bodie press towards such centre, rather than to any other part; and that here, and here alone, they lose the
Dissolve all tie, and leave to transient rest
The common matter whence each substance springs.
Hence must incalculable seeds exist
Ceaseless in act; and the vast whole derive
Alone from boundless matter impulse due.

But fly, O Memmius, fly the sect deceiv'd,

This doctrine of the Stoics is of considerable antiquity. Homer alludes to it, and represents the common centre of the universe as the place of punishment for the disobedient deities. Here he fixes his Tartarus, or Hell; and, in the name of Jupiter, denounces to every refractory god, that

property of weight and gravitation? Whence comes it to pass, moreover, if it be a general law, that all material bodies must press to such central point, that air and fire oppose this general law, and fly off in stubborn disobedience? more especially, whence proceeds it, that fire should be able to pierce through every stratum of the incumbent and elastic atmosphere itself, and defy its constructive bond? for such was the opinion of the Stoics, who imagined that the sun, moon, and stars, were fed by this perpetual and lambent pabulum.

These are the questions with which our poet perplexed his adversaries, and the objections he urges to their system. And though a deeper investigation of the laws of nature have, at present, rendered some of his queries nugatory, and afforded us ample means of replying to others; yet the opponents of Lucretius were without these advantages, and do not appear to have been possessed of any power of rebutting the difficulties with which he presses them, or of extricating themselves from the dilemmas into which they must have been perpetually thrown.

The opinion of the Stoics, however, respecting both the universe and the solar system, as to their moving around, and tending towards some common centre, is corroborated by modern observations. The common centre of universal nature, in the opinion of Dr. Herschell, consists of a mass of opaque and chaotic matter. Philos. Trans. Vol. LXXXIV.

We cannot be surprized, therefore, at Milton's beating both the Greek and Roman poets; and informing us that the regions appointed for Satan were

As far remot'd from God and light of heaven,
As from the centre th' utmost Pole.
DE RERUM NATURA.

In medium summæ, quod dicunt, omnia niti;
Atque ideo mundi naturam stare sine ullis
Ictibus externis, neque quoquam posse resolvi
Summa atque ima, quod in medium sint omnia nixa:
Ipsum si quidquam posse in se sistere credis;
Et, quæ pondera sunt sub terris, omnia sursum
Nitier, in terrâque retro requiescere posta;
Ut per aquas quæ nunc rerum simulacra videmus:
Et simili ratione animalia supra vagari
Contendunt, neque posse e terris in loca cæli
Recidere inferiora magis, quam corpora nostra
Sponte suâ possint in cæli templâ volare:
Illei quom videant solem, nos sidera noctis
Cernere; et alternis nobiscum tempora cæli
Dividere; et nocteis parileis agitare diebus.
Sed vanus stolidis hæc omnia finxerit error,

How much more simple the awful declaration of our Saviour, in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Luke, xvi. 26. μεταξὺ φως καὶ σκιάς καθισμα μεγα εστημεναι, ἐπει οἱ θανατοι διασωζοιται ἀντιεις ὡς ὕμας, μη δουναι, μηδὲ ὡς κινους ὡς ὡς διασωζοιται. "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from them."

Ver. 1128. —by them the sun,
When night to us unfolds his stars, survey'd;

This opinion of the Stoic philosophers, together with some doubts respecting its truth, is referred to by Virgil, in his first Georgic. He is speaking of the antipodal regions.

Illuc, ut peribent, aut intempera silet nox
Semper, et obtentâ densantur nocte tenebræ;
BOOK I. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Who teach that things, with gravitation firm,
To the vast centre of th' entire, alike,
Unerring press: the world who fain would prove
Void of external impulse, may subsist,
And nought its post desert, profound, or high,
Since of such gravitating power possest.
For can'st thou deem that aught may thus sustain,
And poise itself? that aught of solid weight,
Plac'd at earth's utmost depth, could upwards strive
Revers'd; and to the surface—(in the stream
As spreads the downward shadow)—still adhere?
For thus such sages hold: thus man, and beast
Subsist, they teach, inverted, earth beneath:
From their firm station, down their deeper skies
As unexpos'd to fall, as towards the heav'ns
Ourselves to mount sublime: by them the sun,
When night to us unfolds his stars, survey'd;
And equal measuring, in alternate course,
With us, their months, their darkness, and their day.
Such are the specious fancies error feigns,

Aut redit a nobis Aurora, diemque reducit;
Nosque ubi primus equis oriens affavit anhelis,
Illic sera rubens accendit lumina vesper.

And when above Sol's fiery coursers glow,
Late Vesper lights his evening star below.

Ver. 1132. Such are the specious fancies error feigns,
In idle hour, to minds perverse and vain.] It is truly astonishing to behold the obloquy and contempt which men of enlightened understandings, of taste

VOL. I.
Amplexei quod habent perverse prima viaë.
Nam medium nihil esse potest, ubi inane locusque
Infinita: neque omnino, si jam medium sit,
Possit ibei quidquam hac potius consistere caussâ,
Quam quâ vis alià longe regione manere.
Omnis enim locus, ac spatium, quod inane vocamus,
Per medium, per non medium, concedat oportet
Æquis ponderibus, motus quaquamque feruntur.
Nec quisquam locus est, quo corpora quam venere,
Ponderis amissâ vi, possint stare in inani:
Nec, quod inane autem est, ulli subsistere debet,
Quin, sua quod natura petit, concedere pergat:
Haud igitur possunt tali ratione teneri
Res in concilium, medii cupedine victæ.

and elegance will frequently cast upon those who
differ from them in opinion, and merely on account
of such difference. According to the discoveries of
modern, and more accurate philosophy, the oppo-
nents of Lucretius were, in the present instance,
much nearer the truth than himself. But they had
imbibed a contrary system to his own; and what fol-
lows? the system they had imbibed must be false
and fanciful, and they had only imbibed it from
vanity or perversity of mind. How much is it to
be lamented that men, in other respects most liberal
and praise-worthy, should so frequently indulge in
reflections so uncharitable and disingenuous, upon
subjects of but speculative consideration alone; and
thus discover, where we should least expect to find
it, so large a portion of the pride and rancour of
the human heart?

But what was merely deemed idle, extravagants
or perverse, in the days of Lucretius, on the intro-
duction of the Christian religion, and for many cen-
turies afterwards, was regarded as a high crime and
heresy: and the punishment of imprisonment, con-
fiscation, and death, was scarcely severe enough to
atone for the diabolical dogma. In the note on
Book ii. v. 1065, I have stated with what terror
Copernicus at length consented to disclose to a few
friends the principles of that system which is now
universally accredited throughout Christendom, after
having concealed it from public notice for at least
thirty years. Yet so much did he dread a prose-
cution for heresy, even after he had divulged it,
that it is generally believed he fell a sacrifice to this
apprehension alone. For asserting the same system,
to wit, that the sun is in the centre, and not the
earth; and that the latter has a diurnal motion, and
is inhabited in its antipodal regions, Galileo was im-
In idle hour, to minds perverse and vain.
Where all is infinite, what spot precise
Can e'er be central? or were centre own'd,
Why towards such spot should matter rather tend,
Than elsewhere more remote, and deeper still?
For vacant space, through every part alike,
Central or not, must yield to things compact,
And pond'rous, as their varying weight compels;
Nor through the boundless void one point exists
Where things may rest, as if of weight depriv'd.
No power it boasts t' uphold; but still recedes,
As nature prompts, and opes the needed path.
Hence, by the love alone of centre struck,
Th' harmonious frame of things could ne'er be form'd.

prisoned even so late as the days of Milton, who visited him in his confinement: his works were publicly burnt, and he was at length only released upon making a public recantation, and submitting to the penance of repeating once a week, for three years, the seven penitential psalms. Virgilius, bishop of Saltzburg, during the papacy of Zachary, was reduced to the same dilemma; and when Boniface, archbishop of Mentz, accused him of maintaining the erroneous and blasphemous doctrine of the antipodes, this enlightened head of the church ordained, that if he should be convicted of holding so abominable an error, which he had uttered against the Lord, and against his own soul, that there are other worlds, other men under the earth, other suns, and other moons, a consistory immediately be convened; that he be degraded from the honour of the priesthood, and be excommunicated from the church. It was, indeed, the same principle that condemned, in our own country, that first, and most indefatigable philosopher of his age, Roger Bacon, to an imprisonment for ten years; his chemical discoveries being attributed to dealings with the Devil. During the zenith of the papal power, there are but few instances to be traced of a successful opposition to such frivolous and superstitious tenets as philosophy then exhibited: but I ought not to forget that of Ferdinand of Spain, who, on the offer of Columbus to engage in a voyage into the southern hemisphere in quest of the antipodes, instead of imprisoning him for heresy of doctrine, although opposed by the decrees of the church, by the opinion of the Christian fathers, and of all his own ecclesiastical councillors, adopted the belief of the enterprising navigator, and shortly afterwards reaped an ample reward for his liberality and strength of mind.
Præterea, quoniam non omnia corpora fingunt
In medium niti; sed terrarum, atque liquores,
Humorum ponti, magnasque e montibus undas,
Et quasi terreno quæ corpore contineantur:

At contra teneues exponunt aeris auras,
Et calidos simul a medio differrier igneis;
Atque ideo totum circum tremere æthera signis,
Et solis flammam per coeli carula pasci,
Quod calor; a medio fugiens, ibi conligat omnis:

[Quippe etiam vesci e terrâ mortalia secla;]
Nec prorsum arboribus summos frundescere ramos
Posse, nisi a terris paulatim quique cibatum
Terra det; at supra circum tegere omnia coelum;
Ne, volucris ritu flammam, mœnia mundi
Diffugiant subito magnum per inane, soluta;
Et, ne caetera consimili ranone sequantur:
Neve ruant coeli tonitralia templis superne,

Ver. 1160. And all envelop'd, volatile as flame,
Burst every bond, and dissipate, and die:] It
is impossible to peruse this sublime and exquisite
passage of Lucretius, without recalling to me-

memory a passage of well-known, and equal subli-
mity in Shakespeare; and though I dare not as-
sert that the latter was indebted for the idea to
the former, yet, in the prosecution of this poem,
the reader will meet with sentences and sentiments
to strikingly parallel, particularly in b. v. and vi. that
he will be disposed to attribute more learning to
the English bard than has generally been conceded
to him, and believe him to have been no stranger to
Lucretius:

—the great globe itself;
Yea, all, which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind.
Language cannot easily convey a stronger picture
of utter extinction, than either of the above images.
Lucretius tells us, that the whole would "fly off,
volatile as flame!"—Shakespeare, "as an insubstantial
pageant," or "vision!"—Lucretius, "that it would
dissipate, or utterly vanish away!"—Shakespeare, that
Moreo’er such sages urge not that the whole
Strives towards the centre equal; but terrene
Alone, and fluid matters; the deep main,
The mountain cat’ract, and the forms produc’d
From earth Dedalian: while the breezy air,
And the light flame, far from such centre stray,
Through ether trembling, and, with lambent fire,
Feeding, through time, the sun’s refulgent blaze;
As feeds maternal earth the myriad forms
Of herbs, and trees, and animated life,
From her own bosom nurtur’d, and sustain’d.
Thus, too, they teach that heav’n, with bound sublime,
Encircles all things, lest the world’s wide walls,
And all envelop’d, volatile as flame,
Burst every bond, and dissipate, and die:
Lest heav’n in thunders perish, and below
The baseless earth forsake us, downward urg’d:

it would “dissolve, without leaving a rack behind;”
without the slightest vestige of its evanescent exist-
ence. Mr. Wakefield, however, with his usual acu-
men, has traced out a similar image, and one of
equal grandeur and sublimity, in the Apocalypse,
chap. xx. 11. Και εἶδον βρόχον λικετας μεγάλον, και τον καθ’
μηκεν επ’ αυτον’ ἐνω ποσο πρωτῷον ἐφιτεσ τη γη, και το
Οὐρανός και τοπος αὐχ ευρεθε αυτος. “And I saw
a great white throne, and him that sat on it: from
whose presence the earth and the heavens vanished away,
and no place could be found for them.”

An idea not foreign from either of the above, but
more immediately parallel with ver. 1165, and
1166, occurs in the following passage of Klopstock’s
Messiah, in which he gives a terribly sublime picture
of the descent of the Almighty, and the final judg-
ment of mankind:

--- Er ruhet
Hoch auf Tabor, und hält den tiefer zitternden
erdkreis
Dass der staub nicht vor ihm in das Unermessliche
stäube.

High rested he o’er Tabor, and the globe
Deep-trembling, held; or all its mighty mass
Had crumbled at the right through space profound.
Terraque se pedibus raptim subducat; et omnes,
Inter permixtas rerum coelique ruinas,
Corpora solventes, abeant per inane profundum;
Temporis ut puncto nihil existet reliquarum,
Desertum praeter spatium, et primordia caeca.

Nam, quaquomque prius de parti corpora deesse
Constitues, haec rebus erit pars janua laxi;
Hac si turba foras dabit omnis materiam;
Hae si pernoscas, parva perductus opellal;
Namque alid ex alio clarescet; nec tibi caeca
Nox iter eripiet, quin ultima naturai
Pervideas: ita res ascendent lumina rebus.

Ver. 1170. —the doors of death are open.] —the door of Death stands open.
Thus Virgil:
—patet isti janua leto.

Æm. ii. 661. xxxviii. 17.
And loose, and lifeless, man’s dissev’ring frame,
Mmixt with the rushing wreck of earth, and skies,
Waste through all space profound; till nought remain,
Nought, in a moment, of all now survey’d,
But one blank void, one mass of seeds inert.
For once to act, when primal atoms fail,
Fail where they may, the doors of death are ope,
And the vast whole unbounded ruin whelms.

These subjects if, with trivial toil, thou scan,
Each, each illuming, midnight shall no more
Thy path obstruct; but nature’s utmost depths
Shine as the day: so things irradiate things.

Have the doors of Death been disclosed to thee?
The doors of the shadow of Death hast thou beheld?
THE

NATURE OF THINGS.

BOOK THE SECOND.
THE NATURE OF THINGS.

BOOK THE SECOND.

How sweet to stand, when tempests tear the main,
On the firm cliff, and mark the seaman's toil!
Not that another's danger soothes the soul,
But from such toil how sweet to feel secure!
How sweet, at distance from the strife, to view

Catches her child; and pointing where the waves
Foam through the shatter'd vessel, shrieks aloud.

Whether, however, this picture were, or were not, derived from the Nature of Things, there can be little doubt that Dryden, who was much better acquainted with Lucretius than Akenside, and had translated a variety of detached parts of his work, intended the following as an express copy:

No happiness can be where is no rest:
Th' unknown, untalk'd-of man is only blest:
He, as in some safe cell, his cliff does keep,
From thence he views the labours of the deep:
The gold-fraught vessel, which mad tempests beat,
He sees how vainly make to his retreat:
And when from far the tenth wave does appear
Shrinks up in silent joy that he's not there.

Beattie has caught the same idea, and introduced it, with his accustomed elegance, into his Minstrel:

And oft the craggy cliff he lov'd to climb,
When all in mist the world below was lost.
What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,
And view th' enormous waste of water tost
In billows length'ning to th' horizon round,
Now scoop'd in guls, with mountains now emboss'd.

But perhaps the figure is nowhere better preserved than in the following lines from an old song, quoted by B. Johnson in "Every one out of Humour:"

I wander not to seek for more:
In greatest storm I sit on shore,
And laugh at those that toil in vain
'To get what must be lost again.

Ver. 5. How sweet, at distance from the strife, to view] Nothing was more common, before the invention of the science of artillery, than for persons
who, from the importance of their station, were not allowed to be actively engaged in the battle, to mark its progress from the summit of some neighbouring hill; a post, however, which, from the nature of modern tactics, would be no longer free from danger, nor, from the volumes of smoke with which the combatants are covered, competent to a survey of what is transacting. It was from a windmill, on such an eminence as this, that Edward III. surveyed the heroic exploits of the Black Prince in the celebrated battle of Crescy; and Seneca, in his Troas, has a reference to a similar fact:

Est una magna turris et Troja super
Adsueta Priamo; cujus est fastigio
Summisque pinis, arbiter bellii sedens
Regebat acies: turre in hac, blando sinu
Fovens nepotem, cum metu, versos, gravi,
Danaos fugaret Hector et ferro et face,
Paterna puero bella monstrabat senex.

Sought oft by Priam, swells a spacious tower
High from the Trojan walls; o'er whose bold cope
Whose ramparts seated, arbiter of fate,
He rul'd the fight: here to his foster’d breast
Straining his grandson, while with fire and sword
Victorious Hector chas’d th’ affrighted Greeks
He show’d the boy where former fields were fought.

Not widely different; Cicero in the following passage to Atticus:

Nunc vero, cum cogar exire de navi, non abjectis, sed receptis gubernaculis, cupio istorum naufragia ex terra intueri; cupio ut ait amicus tuus Sophocles,——— from a cliff to hear
The dashing spray swell frequent o'er the soul.

Ver. 7. But sweeter far on Wisdom's heights serene,
To watch the giddy crowd that, deep below,
For ever wander, &c.—] Ovid is under many obligations to Lucretius; and the following extract, borrowed from the passage before us, is an instance in point:

Juvat ire per alta
Astra: juvat, terris et inerti sede relictis,
Nube vehi, validique humeris insistere Atlantis;
Palentesque animos passim, ac rationis egentes,
Despectare procul. Met. xv. 147.

'Tis pleasant mid the stars to soar sublime;
Pleasant, from earth, and earth’s gross region freed,
Contending hosts, and hear the clash of war!
But sweeter far on Wisdom’s heights serene,
Upheld by Truth, to fix our firm abode;
To watch the giddy crowd that, deep below,
For ever wander in pursuit of bliss;
To mark the strife for honours, and renown,
For wit and wealth, insatiate, ceaseless urg’d,
Day after day, with labour unrestrain’d.

O wretched mortals!—race perverse and blind!

Wra† in a cloud, on Atlas propt secure,
To watch far off, the busy throng that toil,
Bereft of reason.

To the same effect, and from the same source,
the pensive Muse of Cowper:
'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of retreat
To peep at such a world. To see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd.
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on th’ uninjur’d ear.
Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease,
The globe and its concerns, seem advanced
To some secure, and more than mortal height.

Statius has, therefore, compared to the sage himself this secure and elevated cliff, on which Lucretius and Cowper represent him as seated:
Stat sublimis apex, ventosque imbresque serenus
Despicat. THEB. ii. 35.

Though round its head the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sun-shine settles on its head.

Deserted Village.

Mr. Sotheby, in his version of Wieland’s Oberon, has given us the same idea, almost in the same words:
Sublimely rais’d to Heaven, his brow appears
The shrine of peace; and like a sun-gilt height,
Where never earthly mist obscur’d the light,
Above the stormy world, its tranquil summit rears.

The beauty of this description is, however, the translator’s own: for the rendering is so wide of the original that it is barely possible to trace the clue. In Wieland it occurs as follows:

—verschlossen der begier,
Von keiner furcht, von keinem schmerz betroffen,
Ist nur dem wahrem noch die heitre seele offen,
Nur offen der natur, und reingestimmt zu ihr.

Ver. 11. To mark the strife for honours, and renown,
For wit and wealth, insatiate——] In a similar manner, Denham describes the various pursuits of our own metropolis, from the brow of Cooper’s Hill:
Its state and wealth, its business and its crowd,
Seem, at this distance, but a darker cloud;
And is, to him who rightly things esteems,
No other in effect than what it seems.
Never have the practice or the precepts of any philosopher been more misrepresented and libelled than those of Epicurus. Indolence, and mere animal gratification, have been generally supposed to constitute the result of all his lessons, and the characteristic of all his philosophy. A life of indolence, however, could never have given either Epicurus, or Lucretius, that truly wonderful extent of knowledge, that deep research into the most curious phenomena of nature, and that power of argumentatively elucidating their own doctrines from facts, and, for the most part, from facts alone, which are to be traced in almost every page of this inimitable poem. And as to their corporeal pleasures let the passage before us speak, a passage perfectly consonant with the general precepts and practice of their system, and in which we meet with a rigid, and almost anchorite abjuration of every thing the world calls gratification or indulgence. I agree with Mr. Hume that Tasso had the es-ordium of the present Book strongly in his eye when he composed the fascinating address of the fair phantom, in Armida's garden, to Rinaldo; but I cannot, with him, admit that this Address contains all the spirit of the Epicurean system. The passage is as follows:

Of all ye toil for nature nothing asks] Never have the practice or the precepts of any philosopher been more misrepresented and libelled than those of Epicurus. Indolence, and mere animal gratification, have been generally supposed to constitute the result of all his lessons, and the characteristic of all his philosophy. A life of indolence, however, could never have given either Epicurus, or Lucretius, that truly wonderful extent of knowledge, that deep research into the most curious phenomena of nature, and that power of argumentatively elucidating their own doctrines from facts, and, for the most part, from facts alone, which are to be traced in almost every page of this inimitable poem. And as to their corporeal pleasures let the passage before us speak, a passage perfectly consonant with the general precepts and practice of their system, and in which we meet with a rigid, and almost anchorite abjuration of every thing the world calls gratification or indulgence. I agree with Mr. Hume that Tasso had the es-ordium of the present Book strongly in his eye when he composed the fascinating address of the fair phantom, in Armida's garden, to Rinaldo; but I cannot, with him, admit that this Address contains all the spirit of the Epicurean system. The passage is as follows:

O giovinetti, mentre Aprili, e Maggio
V' ammantan di fiorite, e verde spoglie;
Di gloria o di virtù fallace raggio
La tenerella mente ah non V' invoglie.
Solo chi segue ciò, che piace è saggio,
E in sua stagion degli anni il frutto coglie,
Questo grida natura; or dunque voi
Indurerete l'alma ai detti suoi?

Folli perché gettate il caro dono,
Che breve è sì, di vostra età novella?
Nomi senza figlietto, idoli sono
Ciò che pregio, e valore il mondo appella.
La fama, che invaghisce a un dolce suono
Voi superbi mortali, e par si bella,
E' un eco, un sogno, anzi del sogno un' ombra,
Ch' ad ogni vento si dilegna, e sgombra.

Goda il corpo sicuro, e in lieti oggetti
L'alma tranquilla appaghi i sensi frali;
Through what dread dark, what perilous pursuits
Pass ye this round of being!—know ye not
Of all ye toil for nature nothing asks
But for the body freedom from disease,
And sweet, unanxious quiet, for the mind?
And little claims the body to be sound:
But little serves to strew the paths we tread

Let thunders roll, and nimble light'nings fly;
Yet heed not you the threat'nings of the sky.
This, this is wisdom; hence each blessing flows:
This Nature bids, and this the path she shows.

O happy man! when youth reigns o'er your
hours,
And strews the paths of life with smiling
flowers.
Ah! let not virtue, with fallacious ray,
Or glory lead your tender mind astray.
Who learns the fruits, each season yields, to
prize,
Who follows pleasure, he alone is wise.
Know, this is Nature's voice! will you with
stand
Her sacred laws, and slight her high command?
Insensate he who wastes his bloomy prime,
Nor tastes the transient gifts of fleeting time.
Whate'er the world may worth or valour deem,
Is but a phantom, and delusive dream:
Say what is fame, that idol of the brave!
Whose charms can thus deceiv'd mankind en
slave?
An echo—or a shade—to none confin'd,
A shifting cloud dispers'd with ev'ry wind!
Then rest secure; in every offer'd joy
Indulge your senses, and your soul employ.
Past woes forget; nor antedate your doom
By vain presage of evils yet to come.

O why this impious toil! this lust of gain
That ever teems with turbulence and smart!
The little Nature needs we soon obtain,
But nought can glut the avaricious heart.
This, first of sages, Epicurus taught,
Fir'd by the Muse, or from the tripod fraught.
Delicias quoque utei multas substernere possint;
Gratius interdum neque Natura ipsa requirit;

A similar remark recurs in many other parts of the present poem, but particularly in b. v. v. 1139.
Yet truest riches—would mankind their breasts Bend to the study, in a little lie, With mind well pois’d: here want can never come.
The idea is indeed common to moralists in every age and nation. Thus Horace:
Jure perhorrui Late conspicuum tollere verticem— Bene est, cui Deus obtulit Parca, quod satis est, manu.
Well have I shunn’d to rear my brows Mid scenes of pomp and care: For happiest he whom God allows Enough, though nought to spare.
So the Hebrew sage, Prov. xxx. 8.
Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with food convenient for me.

Ver. 23. *What, though the dome be wanting, whose proud vault?* The description is as true to historic fact, as it is exquisite in poetical embellishment. The Roman Patricians, in the magnificence of their palaces, were at this time exhibiting all the splendour of the East. Their vaulted ceilings, and in many cases, the whole interior of their walls, were either overlaid with gold or ivory, or inlaid with a mosaic of both. Even the outermost courts or vestibules in Cleopatra’s palace, as we learn from Lucan, were lined with the latter, Phars. x. 119; while Nero, as Suetonius informs us, (in Nerone, c. 31) preferred the former, and overlaid his palace with sheet-gold alone. It is to the mosaic, or alternate inlay of the two, that Horace refers, in the following verses:

Non 
Mea remidet in domo lacunar.
With joys beyond e'en Nature's utmost wish.
What, though the dome be wanting, whose proud walls

And hum of bees, inviting sleep sincere
Into the guiltless breast, beneath the shade, &c.

Mr. Roscoe, in his life of Lorenzo de Medici, has favoured us with some verses of this highly-gifted sage, which are obviously drawn from the same exuberant fountain, and are at least equal to any of those I have already quoted.

Cerchi chi vuol, le pompi e gli alte onori
Le piazzie, e tempii, e gli edificii magni,
Le delicie, il tesor, qual accompagni
Mille duri pensier, mille dolori:

Un verde praticel pien di bei fiori,
Un rivolo, che l'herba intorno bagni,
Un augelletto, che d'amor si lagni,
L'ombrese selve, i sassi, e gli alti monti,
Gli antri oscuri e le fere fugitivi,

Qui me le toglie hor una, hor altra cosa.

Seek he who will in grandeur to be blest,
Place in proud halls, and splendid courts his joy;
For pleasure or for gold his arts employ,
Whilst all his hours unnumber'd cares molest.

A little field in native flow'rets drest,
A riv'let in soft murmurs gliding by,
A bird, whose love-sick note salutes the sky,
With sweeter magic lull my cares to rest.

And shadowy woods, and rocks, and tow'ring hills,
And caves obscure, and nature's free-born train

Each in my mind some gentle thought instils;

Ah gentle thoughts! soon lost the city cares among.

Ver. 23. — whose proud walls

A thousand lamps irradiate, prop sublime]

These, and the two ensuing verses, cannot but remind us of that exquisite painting of Milton:

Bb?
Si non aurea sunt juvenum simulacula per ædeis,
Lampadas igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,
Lumina nocturnis epulis ut subpeditentur;
Nec domus argento fulget, auroque renidet,
Nec citharae reboant laqueata aurataque templâ;
Quom tamen inter se, prostratei in gramine molli,
Propter aquæ rivum, sub ramis arboris altae,
Non magnis opibus jocunde corpora curant:
Præsertim, quam tempestas adridet, et anni
Tempora conspargunt viridanteis floribus herbas;
Nec calidæ citius decedunt corpore febres,
Textilibus si in picturis, ostroque rubenti,

From the arched roof
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps, and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha, and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky.

Ver. 29. Yet listless laid the velvet grass along
Hence, perhaps, Mr. Gray, in a passage admirably
picturesque, and exquisite:
Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader, browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'ercanopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the muse shall sit and think
At ease reclin'd.

In a beautiful Asiatic poem, entitled Mola Mud-
gara, or, A Remedy for Distraction of Mind, trans-
slated by Sir William Jones, we have a passage so
consentaneous with the present, that I cannot avoid
transcribing it. Here, however, the writer is a devo-
tee, as well as a poet: "To dwell under the man-
sion of the high gods, at the foot of a tree; to have
the ground for a couch, and a hide for vesture; to
renounce all extrinsic enjoyments, whom doth not
such devotion fill with delight?" Jones's Works,
i. 212.

Ver. 34. On down reclin'd, or wrapp'd in purple robe
The thirsty fever burns with heat as fierce, &c.]
Towards this passage, we observe Horace turning
his eye, in the first book of his Epistles:
Non domus et fundus, non æris acervus et auri
Tecta volantos

Nor splendid house, nor spacious land,
Nor wealth with wealth combin'd,
Can fevers from the flesh command,
Or troubles from the mind.

As he does also to the passage beginning at ver. 48,
relating to cares and terrors. We meet with it
the second book of his odes:
Non enim gaze, neque consularis
Summovet ictor miseros tumultus
Mentis, et curas laqueata circum
Tecta volantos
A thousand lamps irradiate, propt sublime
By frolic forms of youths in massy gold,
Flinging their splendours o'er the midnight feast:
Though gold and silver blaze not o'er the board,
Nor music echo round the gaudy roof?
Yet listless laid the velvet grass along
Near gliding streams, by shadowy trees o'er-arch'd,
Such pomp we need not; such still less when spring
Leads forth her laughing train, and the warm year
Paints the green meads with roseat flowers profuse.
On down reclin'd, or wrapp'd in purple robe
The thirsty fever burns with heat as fierce
Jacteris, quam si plebeiâ in veste cubandum est.
Quapropter, quoniam nihil nostro in corpore gaza
Proficiunt, neque nobilitas, nec gloria regni;
Quod super est, animo quoque nihil prodesse putandum:
Si non, forte tuas legiones per loca campi
Fervere quom videas, belli simulacra cienteis;
Fervere quom videas classem, lateque vagari;
Hiis tibi cum rebus, timefactæ, Religiones
Ecfugiunt animo pavidæ, mortisque timores;
Tum vacuum tempus linquunt, curâque solutum:
Quod, si ridicula hæc, ludibriaque, esse videmus;
Re verâque Metus hominum, Curæque sequaces,
Nec metuunt sonitus armorum, nec fera tela;
Audacterque inter reges rerumque potenteis
Vorsantur, neque fulgorem reverentur ab auro,
Nec clarum vestis splendorem purpuræaë:
Quid dubitas, quin omnis sit hae rationis potestas?
Omnis quom in tenebris præsertim vita laboret.
Nam, velutei puerei trepidant, atque omnia caeæs
In tenebris metunt; sic nos in luce timemus
Interdum, nihilò quæ sunt metuenda magis, quam

O holy innocence! hast thou not established here
thy rural throne, in these utmost borders of the
north, in this most abject climate of the world? and
dost not thou thus prefer these rude and unsheltered
sheds to the softer mansions of silk and down? This
picturesque description is consistent with the asser-
tions of our most credible travellers. Our own poet,
Dyer, therefore, is, in some degree, incorrect in
painting, as he has done in the first book of his
As when its victim on a pallet pants.

Since, then, nor wealth, nor splendour, nor the boast
Of birth illustrious, nor e’en regal state
Avails the body, so the free-born mind
Their aid as little asks. Unless, perchance,
The warlike host, thou deem, for thee array’d
In martial pomp, and o’er the fiery field
Panting for glory; and the gorgeous fleet,
For thee unmoor’d, and ardent,—can dispel
Each superstitious terror; from the breast
Root out the dread of death, and lull to peace
The cares, the tumults that distract thy soul.
But if all this be idle, if the cares,
The terrors still that haunt, and harass man,
Dread not the din of arms,—o’er kings and chiefs,
Press unabash’d, unaw’d by glittering pomp,
The purple robe unheeding—canst thou doubt
Man pants for these from poverty of mind,
Wand’ring in darkness, and through life misled?

For as the boy, when midnight veils the skies,
Trembles, and starts at all things,
Quae puerei in tenebris paviant, finguntque futura.
Hunc igitur terrorem animi, tenebrasque, necesse est,
Non radiei solis, neque lucida tela diei,
Discutiant; sed Naturae species, Ratioque.

Nunc age, quo metu genitalia materiae
Corpora res varias gignant, genitasque resolvant;

Ver. 55. For as the boy, when midnight veils the skies,
Trembles, and starts at all things, so, full oft,
E'en in the noon, men start—Seneca has quoted the two Latin lines corresponding to this version, in his Epistle 112, and has endeavoured to refute their illustration. He seems to apprehend, that the poet meaned to throw the blame of all the errors, into which men are perpetually plunging, upon their peculiar frame and constitution; and he is hence anxious to exculpate the Deity from a charge which, as the creator of mankind, would necessarily attach to him. “We do not start,” says he, “whilst in the light; but, unfortunately, we have made every thing dark around us: we therefore see nothing whatever; neither what will injure, nor what will benefit us. But we may acquire light, if we choose it; and hence alone may we acquire it—by the study of those things which relate to God and man.” Non timemus in luce, Lucreti, sed omnia nobis fecimus tenebras; &c. This opposition to our poet is altogether idle, and unworthy a philosopher of Seneca’s talents: the fact of error, as specified by himself, is the same which was before specified by Lucretius; and the means of avoiding such error is the same likewise—the study of Truth and Wisdom.

In direct repugnance to the taste and judgment of Seneca, Lucretius himself appears to have been particularly pleased with this simile: for he has reintroduced it both into the third and sixth book, and that without altering a syllable. See book iii. 55, and book vi. 35.

Ver. 58. —phantoms false
By darkness conjur’d,—The facetious Butler has some humorous verses to the same effect, which the reader will not be displeased with perusing in this place.

Who would believe what strange bugbears
Mankind creates itself of fears?
That spring, like fern, that insect weed,
Equivocally, without seed;
And have no possible foundation
But merely in th’ imagination;
And yet can do more dreadful feats
Than hags, with all their imps and teats,
Make more bewitch, and haunt themselves,
Than all their nursery of elves.

Hudib. Part III. iii. 1.

Ver. 60. A terror this the radiant darts of day] A favourite metaphor with our poet, as I have already observed. See note on b. i. 166. In the Complaint of Titus Andronicus, an old poem introduced into Dr. Percy’s collection, we meet with a figure not very dissimilar:

I shot my arrows towards heaven high,
And for revenge to hell did often cry.

This couplet is, however, obviously taken from Psalm lxiv. 3, 4.

Hide me from the plots of the malignant—
Who whet their tongues like a sword;
And aim poisonous words, like arrows,
E’en in the noon men start at forms as void
Of real danger as the phantoms false.
By darkness conjur’d, and the school-boy’s dread.
A terror this the radiant darts of day
Can ne’er disperse: to truth’s pure light alone,
And wisdom yielding, intellectual suns.

Come, then, and mark how seeds primordial form
Created things, and how, when form’d, dissolve:

To shoot secretly at the innocent.
Clandestinely shoot they, and are not seen.

In this version, I have followed the Syriac reading, as confirmed by twelve MSS. So, Sol. Songs, viii. 6. should be rendered

For love is strong as death
‘And’ jealousy cruel as the grave;
Its flames are arrows of fire,
Which Jehovah kindleth in the heavens!

See the note on this passage in my version of the Song of Songs.

Not dissimilar is the figure employed by St. Paul, Rom. xiii. 12. ἐνέσχυσα τῷ οὐρανῷ τοῦ θεοῦ, “Let us put on the armour of light.”—Dante appears to have had Lucretius in view, when composing the following verses:

Or come ai colpe degli caldi rui
Della neve riman nudo il suggetto,
E dal colore, e dal freddo primari;
Così rimasò te nello intelletto
Voglio informar di luce sì vivace,
Che ti tremolerà nel suo aspetto.

Now, as when vernal Sol begins to glow,
Down sinks the wintry mass of drifted snow
From Nature’s face before his burning gaze;
Thus from your mind the darksome vest shall fall,
That hides your intellects in sombre pall,
When truth divides the vale with piercing rays.

Boyd.

Vol. I.
Et, quâ vi facere id cogantur, quæque sit OLLIS
Reddita mobilitas magnus per inane meandi,

the most closely-vitrified flint may assume an aerial
form; and that iron has been found, not only in the
blood of animals, but in the juices of plants which
have been purposely guarded from the access of all
bodies of which this metal has been supposed to con-
stitute a component part. The elementary particles
of all bodies being thus capable of extreme division
and volatilization, M. Hombolt has conceived that
atmospheric stones, which fall to the earth, have
been previously volatilized by the medium of hy-
drogenous gas, which, inflaming in the upper re-
gions of the atmosphere, re-unites their primary cor-
puscles, that till then existed in a state of mutual re-
pulsion. The opinion which contends, that the ele-
ments of these masses are a simple aggregate of the
volatilized débris of substances emitted from the
earth, united by mere affinity of composition; that
of M. Patrin, who conceives that the substances
which feed volcanos and meteoric stones are of the
same description, and are furnished by the fluids of
the atmosphere which circulate through the upper strata of the globe, and are there variously modified
and combined; that of M. Izarn, who conjectures,
as I have already observed, that all gasses them-
selves are compounds, and that all the most solid
substances in nature are mere combinations of the
elementary matter of gasses, whence solid sub-
stances may as readily be gendered in the air as
beneath the earth: these theories all point to the
hypothesis of Epicurus as their common basis, so
far, I mean, as relates to the existence and diffusion
of elementary atoms through every point of nature,
through the earth, the atmosphere, and even the
immensity of space. Those who, reasoning from
M. La Place's calculation, respecting the projectile
force necessary to throw bodies from the moon to-
wards the earth, derive these substances from lunar
volcanos, approximate the Epicurean tenet, how-
ever, in a greater degree still; for such not only
admit the existence of the same material corpuscles
through different planets, but a power of actual com-
bination into the same aggregate substances
throughout every orb in the universe: while M.
Chladni, who conjectures that these bodies are
formed from substances exterior to the atmo-
sphere of the earth and other planets, substances
which have never incorporated with them, and
are consequently found loose in the vast ocean
of space, seems to embrace this part of the Epi-
curean theory in its utmost latitude. But it
is time to attend to the mode by which, ac-
cording to Epicurus, these elementary atoms are
united and combined. According to Democritus,
and the earlier atomic philosophers, the motions of
primary corpuscles were only produced by solidity,
weight, or re-action. Every atom was supposed to
be intrinsically ponderous, and of course to be con-
istantly descending, and that in a direction perfectly
rectilinear. As some atoms, however, were con-
ceived to be larger, and consequently more pon-
derous than others, it was imagined, that some must
move with more velocity than others—that the heav-
ier must overtake the lighter—that they must
impinge against each other with considerable force—
and that a new species of motion would be hereby
genenerated,—a motion by re-action, as the former
was a motion by mere weight. These laws being
either essential, or eternally imposed, every thing,
it was contended, must arise regularly and neces-
sarily: for the degree of resiliency, produced by the
impulse of atom against atom, is a result as cer-
tain, and, allowing for the effect of magnitude, and
consequent velocity, as calculable, as the measure
of distance produced by weight alone. Order,
therefore, it was asserted, must be the unavoidable
issue of such a combination of facts: and definite
results must, in every individual instance, follow,
with the certainty of fate, from definite causes.

But, by various experiments, which Epicurus had
been fortunate enough to make, it appeared, that
although, in dense mediums, bodies of greater sol-
idity, and consequently containing a larger quan-
tity of matter, descended with more velocity than
lighter and less solid bodies, yet, where no medium
at all existed, and they were surrounded by a pure
vacuum, as it was conceived, in space they must
Their force, their action, whence, and power to move,
Pass, and repass through all th’ immense of space:

ever be, the velocity of descent was, at all times,
equal: and that, of course, in passing through
space, the larger or more solid corpuscles could
never overtake the lighter. Hence Epicurus was
convinced, that, upon this theory, re-action and re-
silition must be totally impossible; for, as the pri-
mal atoms of matter could never reach each other in
a rectilinear course, they could never rebound, and
be thrown back into the sphere of action of atoms
still behind. And if it were possible to conceive
that, from such rectilinear motion alone, the com-
plex bodies of nature could in any way be produced,
(a motion that is perpetually fixed and unchangeable
in its operation,) then must there be, in every in-
stance, a fixed necessity imposed, not only upon the
facts, and events of matter in general, but also upon
the thoughts, volitions, and actions of intelligent
beings; the soul itself being, upon their hypothe-
sis, as truly and essentially material as the exterior
world around it; which moral necessity the atom-
ists, in general, did not chuse to admit.

To remedy these defects and inconsistencies, to
avail himself of the advantages of the motion by re-
action, and to preserve to the soul the power of
moral liberty, Epicurus conceived a third species of
motion; and maintained, as will be found in the se-
quel of the present Book, that material atoms did
dependently of which, the addition
not perpetually descend in a direction strictly recti-
linear, but occasionally oscillated, the time and
place being alike uncertain, from a direct line,
though in the smallest degree possible: hereby be-
stowing a motion upon them, in no small degree,
similar to the oscillations of the magnetic needle.
And his motive for conceiving this oscillation to be
so extremely minute, producing, as Lucretius ob-
serves, a declination from a right line, but not an
obliquity, was, that otherwise he would have been
opposed by palpable, or at least, ostensible facts:
for every thing that descends, appears to the eye to
descend in a line perfectly direct: the deviation or cur-
linear motion was, therefore, supposed by Epicurus to
be so minute, as altogether to elude the power of vi-
sion. This additional motion to the system of Democri-
tus is thus noticed by Plutarch, and by him ascribed
solely to Epicurus: Δια της κινήσεως, το κάτω
πλάγως Επίκουρος, δυνάμει της κινήσεως το κάτω σταθμόν
και το κάτω τετραγώνον. Plac. Phil. i. 23.

By this hypothesis, undoubtedly, its author was
able to account, in a much more specious manner
than any who had preceded him, for the motion of
material atoms by re-action; but it does not, in any
respect, appear calculated to solve the difficulties
concerning moral liberty, nor to administer to the
mind a greater degree of freedom than nature is
found to possess in any other department. For, if
the times and places in which primal seeds could
decline from a right line were, as Epicurus declared
they were, ever and alike uncertain, then must every
event around us, as well as every thought within
us, be altogether, and alike, contingent. If, on the
contrary, we remove the uncertainty, then must the
same necessity occur, which this addition is intended
to remove. Independently of which, the addition
itself was at best but a conjecture, and a conjecture
which the constant succession of facts rather con-
trived than supported: for, as Lucretius himself
acknowledges, bodies never appear to the sight
to move otherwise than in a rectilinear direction.
On both these accounts, this hypothesis of Epi-
curus was opposed with much violence, and certain-
ly with some success, by the immaterialists of the
Stoic and Platonic schools.

Among these antagonists Cicero appears to have
been one of its most formidable opponents; and,
from the friendship which subsisted between him-
self and Lucretius, no man can be conceived to have
heard more urged in its favour than the former. His
books on “the Nature of the Gods,” and “on
Fate,” are filled with arguments subversive of the
Epicurean theory. “What,” observes he, “can
be the cause of such a declination, and why is not
such cause assigned? If the rectilinear motion of ma-
terial atoms springs from gravity, why has not Epi-
curus told us by what means other atoms are freed
from this common bond? Have they cast lots among
themselves, or by what other means have they mu-
tually determined which atoms shall decline, and which shall persevere? And why, if they decline at all, may not the declination be several degrees removed from a right line, as well as the minutest degree imaginable? How, too, does it appear, if there be any necessity in nature for such declination, that the same necessity does not equally prevail among the declining as among the rectilinear atoms, in which case all the advantage of the hypothesis is destroyed in a moment?" These arguments of Cicero, and which Lucretius endeavours to combat, have from time to time been copied and re-advanced by every modern philosopher, who has entered the lists against the disciples of the atomic school of Epicurus: and they may be traced most fully, and triumphantly displayed, in the Anti-Lucretius of the Cardinal Polignac, and the "Creation" of our own countryman, Sir Richard Blackmore.

The most able supporter of the atomic school, in modern times, was Gassendi;—and, sensible of the weakness of this doctrine of an oscillation of atoms, and the curvilinear motion which depended upon it, at the same time convinced of the necessity of some free and uncontrolled action in nature, whence the mind obtains that moral liberty of which it appears conscious—he discarded the invention altogether—and contended, agreeably to the old hypothesis of Democritus, that moral spontaneity was obtained from the difference of velocity with which material atoms descended; a difference which, in a vast variety of cases, was altogether indefinite, and anomalous. Gassendi was supported in the re-advancement
Who deems primordial atoms e'er can rest,
And, resting, urge through matter motion still,
Far wanders from the truth. Primordial seeds
Through space unfathom'd as their flight they wing,
From their own gravitating pow'r must pass,
Or blows extrinsic; each o'er each, alike,
Casual prevails: for oft the mass of seeds
That prone descends, with seeds repugnant meet
In contest tough, and distant far rebound.
Nor wondrous this, of firmest texture form'd,
And nought t' obstruct the retro-cursive flight.
And though thou trace the seeds unequal heap'd
Of primal matter, still, reflect, th' entire
Knows nought of bottom, nought of spot profound
Where they may rest collected: space throughout
From human mould we reap our daily bread.
The globe around earth's hollow surface shakes,
And is the ceiling of her sleeping sons.

Ver. 82. — lamp of life,—] The phrase is strictly oriental. Thus, Sam. II. xx. 17. "Thou shalt no more accompany us to battle, lest thou quench the lamp of Israel." So Luke ii. 32. "A light to illumine the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." So the sentimental Sadi, in his "Book of Apothegms!"

Ver. 85. — Primordial seeds——
From their own gravitating pow'r must pass,
Or blows extrinsic; ——] The poet here enumerates the two first modes of motion common to material atoms, and admitted by Epicurus, of which a more particular account has already been given in note on ver. 63 of this book.
Inmensumque patere in cunctas undique parteis
Pluribus obtendit; certa et ratione probatum est.

Quod quoniam constat, nimirum nulla quies est
Reddita corporibus primis per inane profundum;
Sed magis, adsiduo varioque exercita motu,
Partim intervallis magnis conflicta resultant,
Pars etiam brevibus spatiiis nexantur ab ictu.

Et, quæquomque, magis condenso conciliatu,
Exiguis intervallis, convecta resultant,
Indupedita suis perplexis ipsa figuris;
Hæc validas saxi radices, et fera ferri
Corpora constituunt, et cætera de genere horum
Paucula: quæ porro magnum per inane vagantur,
Cætera dissipiant longe, longeque recursant,
In magnis intervallis; hæc aëra rarum
Subficiunt nobis, et splendida lumina solis.

Multæque præterea magnum per inane vagantur,
Conciliis rerum quæ sunt rejecta, nec usquam
Consociare etiam coitus potuere recepta:
Quois, utei memoro, rei simulacrum, et imago,
Ante oculos semper nobis vorsatur, et instat.
Contemplator enim, quom solis lumina quomque

Ver. 117. Not unresembling, if aright I deem,
Those notes minute that, when th' obtrusive sun]
For this comparison, the Epicureans are totally in-
debted to the atomic schools of Democritus and
Leucippus, who, as Aristotle informs us, in a pas-
sage quoted by Lambinus, illustrate these anomalous
Boundless exists, as, in our earlier verse,
Decisive prov'd, on ev'ry side immense.

Hence, then, primordial seeds through space profound Repose can never know: but rather, urg'd To ceaseless motions, varying and adverse,
By the rude conflict part far off rebound,
And part with speed unite, the sev'ring blow
Surmounted soon. Hence those, through trivial space Briefly repell'd, the vig'rous bond scarce broke,
With quick reunion intertwining strong,
Form the rude base of flints, and rigid steel,
And matters firm alike: while those, beyond Far wand'ring through the void, of feeble link Mutual possest, the liquid air create,
And the pure light the sun perpetual pours.

Nor these the whole compose. For seeds there are That through the boundless void for ever stray,
Of social bond abhorrent, and in turn Refus'd all compact in the frame of things:
Not unresembling, if aright I deem, Those motes minute that, when th' obtrusive sun

atoms by the express simile of motes meandering in the air, and visible in the sun-beams, when they dart through some crevice into a darkened chamber. Odes Δημοκρίτου μὲν περὶ τι περὶ δημοκρίτου φιλόσοφοι εἰσιν, &c. lib. i. sect. 2. The whole force and spirit of the illustration is lost sight of by Des Coutures, who totally
Insertei fundunt radieì per opaca domorum: Multa minuta, modis multis, per inane videbis Corpora misceri, radiorum lumine in ipso; Et, velut æterno certamine, prœlia pugnasque Edere, turmatim certantia; nec dare pausam, Conciliiis et discidiis exercita crebris: Conjicere ut possis ex hoc, primordia rerum, Quale sit, in magno jactari semper inani; Dum taxat rerum magnarum parva potest res Exemplare dare, et vestigia notitiai. Hoc etiam magis hæc animum te advortere par est Corpora, quæ in solis radiis turbare videntur; Quod tales turbæ motus quoque materiaï Significant clandestinos caecosque subesse. Multa videbis enim plagis ibi percita cæcis

omits the idea of a darkened room, into which only a single beam of light can pass at a time through a crevice in the shutter:

quom solis lumina quomque
Insertei fundunt radios per opaca domorum.

"Le solcil," says the Baron, in his version, "ce me semble, en fournit une image assez vrai-ssemblable; lorsque sa lumiere penetre dans les maisons, vous y voyez par le vuide, une infinité de petits corps," &c.

Ver. 122. There may'st thou view them, now in crowds combine,

So Dante, closely and elegantly copying our poet:

Così si veggion qui diritte e torte,
Veloci e tarde, rinovando vista,
Le minuzie de' corpi lunghe e corte
Muoversi per lo raggio, onde si lista
Tal volta l'ombra, che per sua difesa
La gente con ingegno ed arte acquista.
So, brisk, and tardy, in fantastic ring,
Their giddy flight the mazy atoms wing,
That on the sun-beam sport, whose lucid braid
Peeps, not unfrequent, through the shutter'd shade;
Book II. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Peeps through some crevice in the shutter'd shade,
The day-dark hall illumining, float amain
In his bright beam, and wage eternal war.
There may'st thou view them, now in crowds combine,
Now part discordant, o'er the restless scene
Urging the pigmy battle; and may'st hence
Learn what vast contests oft mid primal seeds,
Ceaseless, prevail, through boundless space propell'd.
Thus things minute instruct us, and unfold
The laws, at times, of things momentous most.

Such motes, moreo'er, and let the sage remark
Impress thy judgment, agitated thus
In the pure sun-beam, from the strife alone
Prove, in their primal seeds, some motion lurks
Unseen, and secret, whence the pigmy mass
Draws motion first. For oft the curious eye
Sees the light goss, by viewless force subdu'd,

That, with nice finger, rears dedalian art
To skreen the temples from its radiant dart.
The reader, acquainted with the Minstrel, cannot
but be reminded, in this place, of Beattie's fanciful
and picturesque description of the dance of the
warrior fairies, as represented to Edwin in his
dream:
The little warriors doff the targe and spear,
And loud enliv'ning strains provoke the
dance;
They meet, they dart away, they wheel
askance;
To right, to left, they thrid the flying maze;
Now bound aloft with vig'rous spring, then
glance
Rapid along.
So Thomson, describing the busy flight of in-
sects:
Thick in yon stream of light, a thousand
ways,
Upward and downward, thwarting and convolv'd,
The quiv'ring nations sport; till, tempest-
wing'd,
Fierce Winter sweeps them from the face of day.

Summer, 342.

D d 2
Conmutare viam, retroque repulsa revorti,
Nunc huc, nunc illuc, in cunctas undique parteis.
Scilicet hic’ a principiis est omnibus error:
Prima moventur enim per se primordia rerum;
Inde ea, quae parvo sunt corpora conciliatu,
Et quasi proxima sunt ad vireis principiorum,
Ictibus illorum caecis impulsa, cientur;
Ipsaque, quae porro paullo majora, lacessunt.
Sic a principiis ascendit motus, et exit
Paullatim nostros ad sensus; ut moveantur
Illa quoque, in solis quae lumine cernere quimus;
Nec quibus id faciant pligris adparet aperte.

Nunc, quae mobilitas sit reddita materia
Corporibus, paucis licet hinc cognoscere, Memmi.
Primum, Aurora novo quom spargit lumine terras,
Et variae volucres, nemora avia pervolitantes
Aëra per tenerum, liquidis loca vocibus obplent;
Quam subito soleat sol ortus tempore tali

Ver. 149. When first Aurora, o'er the dewy earth,
Now burns the main—along the saffron skies,
In rosco deck'd, Aurora’s chariot flies:—
From brooks and groves a thousand songsters spring,
All ethar charming with the strains they sing.

Ver. 150. through the pathless grove
A thousand songsters op their liquid throats,
All ethar charming— J To the same effect,
Spenser;
The whiles the joyous birds make their pastime
Amongst the shady leaves, their sweet abode,
And their true loves without suspieion tell abroad.

FAIRY QUEEN.
Turn from the path selected, backwards urg’d,
Now here, now there, through ev’ry point propell’d.
Such the perplexing power of primal seeds.

From seeds all motion springs; by impulse hence
Through molecules minute of seeds conjoin’d,
Nearest in power, protruded, though unseen.
Hence urg’d again, in turn, through things create
Of ampler form, till soon the sense itself
The congregated action marks distinct.
As in the lucid beam’s light woof we trace
Still motion visual, though unseen its source.

Nor small the motive power of primal seeds.
This, Memmius, should’st thou doubt, we thus confirm:
When first Aurora, o’er the dewy earth,
Spreads her soft light, and through the pathless grove
A thousand songsters ope their liquid throats,
All ether charming—sudden we survey

Ver. 152. —sudden we survey
The effusive sun, as with a garment, deck
With his own radiance, all created things;] So
Ps. civ. 1. 2.
With glory and majesty art thou clothed;
Thou art covered with light as with a garment.
This parallelism of imagery between the Hebrew
and the Roman bard, is as striking, as the imagery
itself is bold and appropriate.
It is thus imitated by Milton, in his address to
Light:

Before the sun thou wast; and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle didst invest
The rising world.

Thomson has a similar invocation, and composed
of similar imagery:
Prime cheerer Light!
Of all material beings first and best!
Efflux divine! Nature’s resplendent robe!
Without whose vesting beauty, all were wrapt
In unessential gloom!

Par. Lost, ii. 8.
Summer, 90.
Convestire suâ perfundens omnia luce,
Omnibus in promptu manifestumque esse videmus.
At vapor is, quem sol mittit, lumenque serenum,
Non per inane meat vacuum; quo tardius ire
Cogitur, aëriás quod sic diverberet undas:
Nec singillatim corpuscula quâque, vapores,
Sed conplexa, meant inter se, conque globata:
Quapropter simul inter se retrahuntur; et extra
Obficiuntur, utei cogantur tardius ire.
At, quæ sunt solidâ primordia simplicitate,
Quom per inane meant vacuum, nec res remorâ fit
Ulla foris, atque ipsa, suis e partibus unum,
Unum in quem coeppere, locum connixa feruntur;
Debent nimirum præcellere mobilitate,
Et multo citius ferri, quam lumina solis;

Perfectly accordant is the following splendid description of Klopstock, in his Messias:
—Hier füllen nur sonnen den umkreis;
Und, gleich ein hütle gewecht aus strahlen des urlichts,
Zicht sich ihr glane um den himmel herum. Ges. i.
Here only suns the vast horizon fill;
Whose intermingling beams a robe of light.
_Weave that enwraps the bright expanse of heaven._

Not foreign to the same elegant figure, is the following of Tarafa, an Arabian poet, in his Albecriyyo,
one of the seven metrical effusions which were suspended in golden characters in the temple of Mecca. He is describing the fair maid, of whom he was enamoured. I copy from Sir William Jones, “Her face appears to be wrapped in a veil of sun-beams; unblemished is her complexion, and her skin without a wrinkle.”

Wawejhin cāînna āshemṣa hballat ridâahâ

Ver. 155. _Instant in speed, unbounded in his blaze._] This inimitable description of the rapidity of light, is thus glanced at by Cowley, in his celebrated Hymn to the same power:
Swift as light thoughts their empty career run—
Thy race is finished when begun.

And so exact is this idea, to what was meant to be conveyed by Lucretius, that Creech, in his version of the Nature of Things, has thought he could not do better than copy the latter line verbally: accordingly, he has given us for his translation,
How swift the beams of the bright rising sun
Shoot forth! their race is finished when begun.
Th' effusive sun, as with a garment, deck
With his own radiance, all created things;
Instant in speed, unbounded in his blaze.
But the bright fluid, the pure stream he throws,
Flows not without resistance; many a wave,
Through space profound, ethereal checks its flight;
And many a self-engender'd power perverse,
Rear'd from its complex frame: perpetual hence
Lags the light fluid, doom'd to double strife.
But primal atoms, firm and solid sole
From pure simplicity, when through void space
Free and uncheck'd their easy course they wing,
One in themselves, at once their goal attain.
Hence than the rapid light more rapid still

Sir Richard Blackmore has likewise attempted an imitation of the same passage; but he is much more feeble than Cowley:

How soon the sun-beams at the morning's birth
Leap down from heaven, and light upon the earth!
Prodigious flight! they in few moments pass
The vast ethereal interposing space. Creæt. b. iv.

I have said, that these verses of Lucretius are imitable: perhaps the following are the nearest that approach them:

See heaven its sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day!

Ver. 166. Hence then the rapid light more rapid still
Rush they,—] It was not possible for Lucretius to have selected a more pertinent illustration of the speed with which the minutest atoms of matter may move, than by referring us to the phenomenon of light: the particles of which, although inconceivably minute, bear, however, no imaginable proportion, in point of subtlety, to these primal corpuscles. By referring us, moreover, to an acknowledged fact, he gains this additional advantage—that we must admit it to be possible for myriads of bodies to be moving, with incalculable velocity, around us, although we be not apprized of such motion, or even of their existence, by any of the senses we possess. Aristotle, and his followers, denied this corporeity of light, and of course, that it had any velocity, or could possibly move in time or space. See his treatise, De Anima, i. ii. And Frachetta, the Italian expositor of Lucretius, who had imbibed all the doctrines of the Peripatetic school, and was rivetted to
Multiplexque loci spatium transcurrere eodem
Tempore, quo solis pervolgant fulgura coelum:
Nam neque consilio debent tardata morari,
Nec persectari primordia singula quaeque,
Ut videant, quâ quidque geratur cum ratione.

At quidam contra hâc, ignarei, materiaï
Naturam non posse, deum sine numine, reddi
Tanto opere humanis rationibus admoderate;
Tempora mutare annorum, frugesque creare;
Et jam caetera, mortales quæ suadet adire,
Ipsaque deduct, dux vitae, dia Voluptas,
Rush they, in equal hour through ampler space
*Urg’d* than the beams that gild the glowing vault.
No pause for council need they, no delay,
Nor deep research to sever right from wrong,
Or prove what path their duty bids pursue.

Yet some there are, untaught, who dare contend
Primordial matter ne’er without the gods
Thus, in nice symmetry, to please mankind,
Could form th’ alternate seasons, rear the fruits
That gladden life, or urge those gentler joys,
Gay Pleasure, guide, and goddess of the world,

Calculation; and that when the earth is nearly in the
opposite point of her orbit, the eclipse uniformly
appears to take place about eight minutes later than
the tables predict them. Hence, it was fairly re-
resolved, that the rays of light consist of small cor-
puscles, not acting instantaneously, but requiring
about 16½ minutes to fly through a space equal to the
diameter of the earth’s orbit; and that this, amount-
ing to at least 196 millions of miles, the particles of
light move at the inconceivable rate of eleven mil-
ions of miles in a minute, which is nearly a million
times swifter than a cannon ball.

Allowing the materiality of light, it is not foreign
to our purpose, in this place, to notice the incom-
prehensibly small corpuscles of which it is composed.
I shall therefore just state, that from many accurate
experiments, Dr. Nieuwentyt has computed, that an
inch of candle, when converted into light, becomes
divided into 269,617,040 parts, with 40 zeros, or
ciphers annexed: at which rate, there must issue
out of it, when burning, 418,663, with 39 ciphers
more, particles in a second of a minute; which is
vastly more than a thousand times a thousand million
times the number of sands the whole earth can con-
tain, reckoning ten inches to one foot, and that 100
sands are equal to one inch. I have added this ob-
servation on the minuteness of the particles of light,
to give some faint idea of the inconceivably smaller
dimensions of the primal particles of matter; since,
according to the Epicurean doctrine, every corpuscle
of light is a body compounded of a large number of
such particles.

Ver. 172. Yet some there are, untaught, who dare contend
] The poet here alludes, both to the
Stoic system, and the popular theology: the former
of which maintained, that the world itself was a di-
vine and intelligent being; and the latter, that it was
the production of the gross and feeble gods, that were
worshipped by the people at large.

Ver. 177. Gay Pleasure, guide, and goddess of the
world,] Much unjust obloquy has been thrown
on our author, and the entire sect of Epicurus,
from an ill-founded idea, that the whole of their phi-
losophy consisted in carnal pleasures and indulgences.
This idea I have already controverted, in the note on
ver. 16, of this book. The assertion, contained in
the verse before us, that “Pleasure is the guide,
and goddess of the world,” was never meant by our
Ut res per Veneris blanditim secla propagent,
Ne genus obcidat humanum: quorum omnia caussâ
Constituisse deos quom fingunt omnibus rebus,
Magno opere a vera labœi ratione videntur.
Nam, quam vis rerum ignorem primordia, quæ sint,
Hoc tamen ex ipsis coeli rationibus ausim
Confirmare, aliisque ex rebus reddere multis,

poet to be applied, in the present instance, to his own
sect, but is merely employed as an apophthegm of uni-
versal admission and incontrovertible truth. Creech,
however, in his Latin edition of the present poem, is of
a contrary opinion, and condemns the dogma, thus ad-
vanced, as pregnant with audacity and impiety (audac-
ter et impie affirmat, &c.) But what then, it may be
asked, is the uninterrupted object of all human pur-
suits, if it be not pleasure or happiness? For what
other end do mankind either engage in toil, or desist
from it altogether? Why, else, do they either cling
to life, or free themselves from it by suicide? Why,
but from a hope of obtaining some degree, at least,
of comparative ease or happiness, or pleasure, or un-
der whatever other title may be ranked
That something, which still prompts th’ eternal
sigh,
For which we bear to live, or dare to die?
That the uniform and perpetual pursuit of man is
pleasure, is a truth which, if duly considered, can-
not but be acknowledged by the severest moralist, and
the most gloomy enthusiast. Young, in his “Night
Thoughts,” therefore, is not more poetical than ac-
curate, when he asserts, that
Pleasure’s the mistress of th’ ethereal powers;
For her contend the rival gods above.
Pleasure’s the mistress of the world below;
How would all stagnate, but for Pleasure’s
ray?
How would the frozen stream of action cease!—
The foes of Epicurus all were fools.
If it be observed, that pleasures vary to infinitude
in their kinds and objects; and that, while some
may be pure and praise-worthy, others, most cer-
tainly, are vile and contemptible—I admit the fact.
It is, however, still universally true, that the pursuit
of all mankind is pleasure; and it is equally true,
that the peculiar species of pleasure encouraged by
our poet is, in every respect, consistent with virtue,
and the dignity of man. In the present instance,
the pleasure immediately referred to by him, is love,
or sexual affection: but surely, it is possible to refer
to a passion thus universally seated in the heart of
every created being, without incurring the charge
either of impiety or impurity. Lucretius, as a poet,
deifies this passion, following the example of every
poet who preceded him. D’Avenant, in his Gondi-
bert, does the same: and where is the harm in repre-
senting the virtuous and temperate soldiers of this
prince as yielding to the force of Love, when, in the
form of Beauty, they behold her pass by with her
virgin-train? These are his words:
They vayled their ensigns as it by did move,
Whilst inward, as from native conscience, all
Worshipped the poet’s darling goddess Love,
Which grave philosophers did Nature call.
GONDIBERT, Cant. i.

Ver. 182. For, though the rise of things I never could
prove,] This passage of our poet; Sir Richard
Blackmore has first translated, and then attempted
to answer:
“ If I were doubtful of the source and spring
“ Whence things arise, I from the skies could
bring,
PROMPTS IN THE PANTING BREAST, LEST EVERY TRIBE
SHOULD FAIL ON EARTH, THE RITES OF VENUS SPURN'D.

These from the gods, as sovereign cause of all,
Such sophists trace, wide wand'ring from the truth.

For, though the rise of things I ne'er could prove,
Yet dare I, from the heaven's defective frame,
And many a scene alike perverse, affirm

"And every part of nature, proofs to shew
"The world to gods cannot its being owe;
"So full of faults is all th' unartful frame."—
Thus impotent in sense, though strong in rage
The daring Roman does the gods engage.

CREATION.

But Sir Richard has totally mistaken the meaning
of this "daring Roman:" which, indeed, is not
very extraordinary, for almost all the commentators
have done the same. Far from attacking the eternal
intelligence and first cause of all things, in conse-
quence of the moral and physical evils of the world,
he accounts for them briefly here, and more fully in
the 5th book, by adverting to the nature of matter
itself. This, the Epicureans, in common with all the
other Greek philosophers, conceived to have been
eternal, and uncreated. By its very nature, it is
subject to mutability in all its concrete forms; and
from its incessant changes, decompositions, and re-
combinations, proceed all the evils we meet with in
the world. But the intelligent First Cause, not hav-
ing created matter, of course could not alter its es-
sential tendencies; he could only endue it with cer-
tain powers of motion of which it was susceptible,
and thus benevolently draw forth its inactive cor-
puscles into forms of action and utility, of real,
though not of uninterrupted happiness. But had
this supreme intelligence created matter himself, it
would not, conjectures our poet, have exhibited the
evils it exhibits at present. I am confident, there-
fore, adds he, that the intelligent First Cause could
not have created it, and I know whence these evils

proceed: were I, however, ignorant of this, and had
formed no opinion upon subjects of cosmogony,
Yet dare I from the heaven's defective frame,
And many a scene alike perverse, affirm
No power divine this mass material rear'd
With ills so pregnant.

The contrary, as is well known, was generally
maintained: for the multitude attributed the abso-
lute creation of all things to the operation of some
one or more of their own absurd and inconsistent
gods: while, as I have already observed, the Stoic
and Platonic philosophers contended, that the world
itself was a god, or divine being, endowed with intel-
ligence, and existing from all eternity. Here, in-
deed, if I mistake not, we meet with much impiety
and much absurdity; and it is against these absurd
and impious opinions Lucretius levels his attack.

The origin of moral evil is very unsatisfactorily re-
solved upon every hypothesis: but the eternity of
matter accounts for it far more explicitly than any
other system asserted in ancient times, either in
Greece or Rome. Happiest he, however, even
among ourselves, who resigns this intricate subject
altogether; and, returning with suitable modesty to
the paths of common life, directs his views towards a
future state for a full explanation of difficulties which,
even at present, he cannot surmount. But as the
most solid, if not the only, proofs of a future state
are deducible from Christianity, the whole, or the
greater part of them, could not possibly have been
known, either to the Grecian sage or Roman poet.
See note on book ii. ver. 1100.

E e 2
De rerum natura.

Nequaquam nobis divinitus esse creatam
Naturam mundi: quamquam hæc sint praedita culpâ;
Quae tibi posterius, Memmi, faciemus aperta:
Nunc id, quod super est, de motibus expediemus.

Nunc locus est, ut opinor, in hiis illud quoque rebus
Confirmare tibi; nullam rem posse suâ vi
Corpoream sursum ferri, sursumque meare.
Nec tibi dent in eo flammârum corpora fraudem;
Sursus enim versus gignuntur, et augmina sumunt:
Et sursum nitidâ fruges, arbustaque, crescunt:
Pondera, quantum in se est, quam deorsum cuncta ferantur.
Nec, quom subsiliunt ignes ad tecta domorum,
Et celeri flammâ degustant tigna, trabeisque,
Sponte suâ facere id sine vi subicente putandum est:
Quod genus, e nostro quom missus corpore, sanguis
Emicat, exsultans alte, spargitque cruorem.
Nonne vides etiam, quantâ vi tigna, trabeisque,

Ver. 186. — *This, in order due, &c.*] Our poet makes good this promise in book v. ver. 206, where he reverts to this subject, and commences it with the four preceding verses.

Ver. 192. *Nor let th' aspiring flame, with specious boast, 
Heedless proceed thee.*] The admirer of Cowley will be here reminded of the following couplet:
Go, bid the stones a journey upwards make;
Go, bid th' ambitious flame no more ascend.

Ver. 204. *And springs not thus the ponderous trunk immers'd*] It is curious to observe how the same facts are sometimes recurred to by philosophers embracing opposite systems, in proof of the truth of the systems that thus differ. The very phenomenon Lucretius has here adverted to in explication of his own theory, Polignac has copied, to demonstrate Des Cartes' hypothesis of a gelenum:
No power divine this mass material rear'd
With ills so pregnant. This, in order due,
The muse shall full demonstrate: turn we now
To what of motion yet remains unsung.

And here, O Memmius! mark this precept well;
That nought corporeal, of itself, can e'er
Ascend sublime through regions urg'd above.
Nor let th' aspiring flame, with specious boast,
Heedless deceive thee. True, with upward flight,
E'en from the first, its spreading spires unfold;
And fruits, and plants their growth still upwards urge.
Yet as the weight by all possest, below
Drives all things, deem not thou, when the bright blaze
Flames through th' affrighted house, the crackling roof
Tumbling precipitate, then deem not thou
It mounts spontaneous but from foreign force.
Thus, from the wounded vein, the vital blood
Ascends, and pours its purple strength sublime:
And springs not thus the pond'rous trunk immers'd

Injice suber aquis immergens, injice ligna;
Ligna petent summum valido connisa nautu,
Prosilet superas celeri impetu suber ad undas.
Causa rei quam est ? nimirum liquor aquas
Fertur in ima magis quam lignum aut futile suber:
Libramen simul omne petit; depulsaque quantum
Unde sua supetat gravitate haec corpora, tantum
Debilitant liquidam, cui sunt commissa columnam.

Plunge cork, plunge timber through th' elastic wave:
Back bounds the timber, resolute to swim,
While the light cork, still loftier, tops the tide!
Whence this effect? hence clearly, that the wave
Is urg'd still deeper than the cork or trunk;
That all things claim their level; and that, hence,
As much as o'er such buoyant forms the stream
Triumphs in weight, themselves the stream divide.
Respuat humor aquae? Non, quo magis ursimus altum
Directa, et magnâ vi multei-pressimus ægre,
Tam cupide sursum revomit magis, atque remittit;
Plus ut parte foras emergant, exsiliantque?
Nec tamen hæc, quantum est in se, dubitamus, opinor,
Quin vacuum per inane deorsum cuncta ferantur,
Sic igitur debent flammæ quoque posse per auras
Aëris, expressæ sursum, subcedere, quamquam
Pondéra, quantum in se est, deorsum deducere pugnet.
Nocturnasque faceis, coeli sublime volanteis,
Nonne vides longos flammarum ducere tractus,
In quasquomque dedit parteis nātura meatum?
Non cadere in terrâ stellas, et sidera, cernis?
Sol etiam summo de vortice dissupat omneis
Ardorem in parteis, et lumine consérít arva;

_VER. 212._ — Falls not, at night,
The mimic star, the meteor trailing long
Its line of fire, &c.—[This beautiful pas-
sage of our poet has not been passed by heedlessly
by Virgil or Manilius, both of whom have intro-
duced a close imitation of it into their respective
poems. In the Georgics of the former, we therefore
read,]
Sæpe etiam stellas, vento impendente, videbis
Præcipites caelo labi, nocticque per umbram
Flammatarum longos à tergo albescere tractus.

**Dryden.**
To the same effect, we meet with, in Manilius,

_Præcipites stellæ passimque volare videntur_
Cum vaga per liquidum scintillant lumina mund-
dum,
Et tenuem longis jacuantur crinibus ignem;
Excurrentque procul, volucres imitata sagittas,
Albida dum gracili tennantur semita filo._

The common editions of this passage of Manilius,
in the last line, for _albida_ read _arida._ I have tran-
scribed it, with Mr. Wakefield’s very pertinent
emendation, which must, I think, obtain the sanc-
tion of every critic: and is altogether consonant
with the _albescere_ of Virgil, in the passage quoted
above. Thomson has retained the very same image
in his description of the same phenomenon, which, it
is probable, he borrowed from Lucretius or Virgil:

_Seen through the turbid fluctuating air,_
The stars, obtuse, emit a shiver’d ray;
In the clear stream, rejected by the wave?
Though deep we plunge it, with redoubled force
Still back it bounds, and, o'er th' elastic tide,
Rears half its solid bulk. Yet doubt we not,
Spite of such facts, that all things, uncontrol'd,
Through space tend downward. From control alone
The lambent flame thus mounts, tow'rds heav'n impell'd,
Else prone from native weight. Falls not, at night,
The mimic star, the meteor trailing long
Its line of fire, whene'er, amid the gloom,
Th' elastic ether opes the needed path?
The mid-day sun flings down his rays direct
And sows the fields with light: and the dread flash,

Or frequent seem to shoot athwart the gloom,
And long behind them trail the whitening blaze.

In like manner, Mr. Cumberland, in a passage which forms part of the description of Satan, after his overthrow by our Saviour:
High in mid-air, swift on the level wing,
Northward he shoots, and, like a comet, leaves
Long fiery tracks behind.

Milton had, long before, employed a similar image to delineate the flight of Uriel. Par. Lost, iv. 555.
So Escoiquiz, in his Mexico Conquistada, Cant. iv.
Nightly we see those strange and dreadful stars
Trail o'er our wretched town their length of fire.

These meteors were formerly conceived to be exhalations from mineral substances raised into the air by subterranean heat: and philosophers of every age, from the time of Aristotle, have deemed it their duty to investigate, and endeavour to account for their origin, in order to disperse the apprehensions with which they have inspired the vulgar of almost every nation, from Hindustan to Europe and America. The philosophy of modern times, however, has been more fortunate in its researches, than the ancient schools. Beccaria has proved, almost to a certainty, that the falling star is a mere electric phenomenon; and Volta has conjectured, with a high degree of probability, that the meteor, denominated ignis fatuus, or will-o'-the-whisp, is nothing more than an exhalation of hydrogen, or inflammable gas, from the surface of bogs, fens, and other putrescent bodies, conflagrated by the electricity of the atmosphere; most generally, perhaps, by the falling star itself.
In terras igitur quoque solis. vergitur ardor.
Transvorsosque volare per imbres fulmina cernis:
Nunc heic, nunc illic, abruptei nubibus, ignes
Concursant; cadit in terras vis flammea volgo.

Illud in hiis quoque te rebus cognoscere avemus:
Corpora, quom deorsum rectum, per inane, feruntur,
Ponderibus propriis incerto tempore ferme,
Incertisque locis, spatio depellere paullum:
Tantum, quod minumum mutatum dicere possis.
Quod, nisi declinare solerent, omnia deorsum,
Imbris utei guttae, caderent per inane profundum;

Ver. 217. *And sows the fields with light* — "In the same manner, our unrivalled Milton:
Now morn, her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
Advancing, *sowed the earth with orient pearl.*

Par. Lost, b. v. ver. 1.

Gesner has caught the same metaphor, and has frequently introduced it into his Death of Abel. Thus, in book i. Die untergehende sonne streute unausprechlichen glanz über sie hin. "The descending sun *sowed ineffable lustre all over it.*" The bold, and beautiful language of the Psalmist, contains, in many places, a similar image. Thus, xcvii.

*Light is sown on the righteous,
And gladness on the upright of heart.*

But, perhaps, the most daring use of this figure, at least in modern times, occurs in the eclogues of Garcilago de la Vega:

*Aves! que aqui sembras vuestras querellas!*
Birds! in these woods your soft complaints who sow!

Ver. 217. *— and the dread flash,
When thunder rends the skies, though wide it dart,]*

Nothing can be more natural or more beautiful than this short description of a thunder-storm. That of Thomson, which immediately precedes his episode of Celadon and Amelia, has been much, and deservedly admired. I insert, therefore, the parallel passage, for a comparison with Lucretius:

*Wide rent, the clouds
Pour a whole flood, and yet, its flame unquench'd,*

*Th' unconquerable lightning struggles through,*

*Ragged and fierce, or in red whirling balls,*

*And fires the mountains with redoubled rage.*

*Summer, 1145.*

Ercilla is equally natural and picturesque. He has obviously copied from Lucretius, and with a masterly hand:

*Agua rezia, granizo, piedra espessa*

*Las intrica das nubes desprendian,*

*Rayos, huenos, relampagos apriessa*

*Rompen los cielos y la tierra abrian.*

*Araucan. Cant. ix.*

From clashing clouds their mingled torrents gush,
And rain and hail with rival fury rush,
When thunder rends the skies, though wide it dart,
Now here, now there, amid the rushing rain,
Its forky fires—spends its chief strength on earth.

This, too, regard intent: that primal seeds,
When down direct their potent path they urge,
In time uncertain, and uncertain space,
Oft from the right decline—yet so minute
Veer they, no fancy less can e'er conceive.
Without this devious curve primordial seeds
Would drop successive, like the crystal show'r,

Bolts of loud thunder, floods of lightning rend
The opening skies, and into earth descend. Hayley.

Ver. 221. This, too, regard intent: that primal seeds,

The passage answering to this, and the four following verses, and comprising the same number of lines in the original, is dispatched in two verses alone in Creec'h's translation, and is of course most incorrectly and unfaithfully rendered. It is given thus:

Now seeds in downward motion must decline,
Though very little from th' exactest line.
He has totally omitted, as his commentator has justly observed, the

---incerto tempore ferme
Incertisque locis---

In time uncertain, and uncertain space

of Lucretius, though an expression of the utmost consequence in the position advanced, and on the imagined truth of which all its advantage depends. The version of Marchetti is far more accurate in this respect:

D'uopo è che' in tempo incerto, in luogo incerto, &c.
I have already observed, in the note on ver. 63 of the

present Book, that this third, or oscillatory mode of motion, was the entire invention of Epicurus; and was an improvement, as he apprehended, upon the old atomic philosophy, chiefly for the purpose of accounting for the moral liberty of intelligent beings: although he likewise contended, that from such oscillation alone proceeded the greater part of the conjunctions, unions, and adhesions of atoms to atoms; which, if the whole descended in a path strictly rectilinear, could not often take place, and of course the world not exist, as at present. "Deinde," observes Cicero, "ibidem homo acutus cum illud occurreret, si omnia decorum e regione ferrentur, et, ut dixi, ad lineam, nunquam fore ut atomus altera alteram posset attingere; itaque attulit rem commentitiam: declinare dixit atomum perplanum, quo nihil posset fieri minus. Ita efficac copulationes et complexiones et adhesiones atomorum inter se, ex quo efficeretur mundus, omnes partes mundi, quaeque in eo sunt," lib. i. de Fin.—Our poet will be found to apply this theory to the abstruse subject of moral liberty, in the passage commencing at ver. 257, of the present book, as he does to the combination and generation of physical bodies, at ver. 225.
Nec foret obfensus natus, nec plaga creata
Principiis; ita nihil umquam natura creasset.

Quod, si forte aliquis credit graviora potesse
Corpora, quo citius rectum per inane feruntur,
Incidere ex supero levioribus, atque ita plagas
Gignere, quæ possint genitaleis reddere motus;
Avius a verà longe ratione recedit.

Nam, per aquas quæquamque cadunt atque aëra deorsum 230
Hæc pro ponderibus casus celerare necesse est:
Propterea, quia corpus aërae naturaque tenuis
Aëris haud possunt æque rem quamque morari;
Sed citius cedunt, gravioribus exsuperata.

At contra nulli, de nullâ parte, neque ullo
Tempore, inane potest vacuum subsistere rei;
Quin, sua quod natura petit, concedere pergat.
Omnia quapropter debent per inane quietum
Æque, ponderibus non æquis, concita ferri.

Ver. 230. If then, there be, who deem the seeds of
things] Nothing can be more true to the phi-
losophic facts and experiments of the present
day, than the reasoning and observations of our poet, con-
tained in the passage extending from the present to
ver. 247. And it is truly astonishing to observe
how accurately he has anticipated the gravitation of
Newton, and the decisions of Boyle upon the air-
pump. It is a palpable error, observes he, to sup-
pose that bodies, falling in a perfect vacuum, differ
in the degree of their velocity; such difference pro-
ceeding entirely from the variation of the density or
tenuity of the medium through which they move,
and the solidity of the moving body.—Thus, in the
exhausted receiver of an air-pump, a guinea and a
feather, one of the heaviest, and one of the lightest
bodies we are acquainted with, descend with equal
rapidity, or, as our poet most accurately expresses it,
in equal time

Through the blank void, unequal weights descend
Of every fancied variance.

Gravity, observes Sir Isaac Newton, equally af-
facts all bodies, without regard either to their bulk
or figure, and exists in proportion to their quantity
of matter; so that all bodies consist of matter equally
Void of all contest, all re-active blow,
Whence nature sole her world of wonders works.

If, then, there be, who deem the seeds of things
More pond’rous, as their rectilinear course
Speeds through the void, the lighter soon may reach,
And thus the repercussive war commence,—
Far err they from the truth. For though, when urg’d
Through the pure air, or clear translucent wave,
Doubtless, all pond’rous forms more swift descend;
This, from the variance of resistance sole,
Flows, by such fluids form’d ’gainst things unlike,
The grosser quick-o’erpow’ring. But pure space,
In every part, in every hour the same,
Throughout resists not, the demanded path
Yielding submissive. Hence, in equal time,
Through the blank void, unequal weights descend
Of every fancied variance: and hence, too,

Heavy. It is the very philosophy of Lucretius, and expressed in nearly the same terms. All the arguments, therefore of Des Cartes, Polignac, and even the earlier adherents among the Greeks to the doctrine of a plenum, when urged on this subject, are as much addressed to the philosophy of Newton as of Epicurus, and are answered in the same manner.—If there be any difficulty in conceiving the origin of gravitation, or the power of attraction between body and body, when at a distance from each other, and when we are incapable of discerning any medium of communication, there is certainly a much greater difficulty in conceiving, as Lucretius has justly observed in the former book, how motion of any sort could ever be generated, if the whole of nature were full of matter equally solid. There is a much greater difficulty in conceiving, with Des Cartes, that a body descends from above by propulsion, or because the atmosphere is already so crowded with material substances, that it cannot admit the entrance of any thing projected towards it,—than in conceiving, with Lucretius, that it descends by the possession of universal gravity; or, according to Newton, by the property of mutual attraction, which is the cause of such gravity. For a fuller account of the different doctrines that have been occasionally maintained on this subject, I refer the reader to the note on ver. 1065, of the present book.
Haud igitur poterunt levioribus incidere umquam
Ex supero graviora, neque ictus gignere per se,
Quei varient motus, per quos natura gerat res.
Qua re etiam atque etiam paullum inclinare ncessse est
Corpora, nec plus quam minumum; ne fingere motus
Obliquos videamur, et id res vera refutet.
Namque hoc in promptu, manifestumque, esse videmus;
Pondera, quantum in se est, non posse obliqua meare,
Ex supero quom praecipitant, quod cernere possis.
Sed nihil omnino rectâ regione viaê
Declinare, quis est, qui possit cernere, sese
Denique, si semper motus connectitur omnis,
Et veteri exoritur semper novus ordine certo;
Nec declinando faciunt primordia motûs
Principium quoddam, quod fati foedera rumpat,
Ex infinito ne caussam caussa sequatur:
Libera per terras unde hæc animantibus exstat,
Unde est hæc, inquam, fatis avolsa, voluntas,

Ver. 252. —whence, resolus,
Flows through the world this freedom of the mind?
This question may as pertinently be asked in the present day, as in the age of Lucretius: for, although the Epicurean solution of it be very far indeed from satisfactory, and is, in some respects, even puerile, it still remains an undecided and perplexing proposition. Unquestionably, the mind is subject to as regular a chain of motives, volitions, and actions, as the natural world is to that of causes and effects. But to maintain with Bayle, Hume, and Priestley, that the necessity hence accruing is precisely the same, derived from the same source, and operating by the same system of laws, appears contrary both to facts and legitimate ratiocination. There is an argument advanced in Dr. Gregory's Dissertation on this subject, which I do not think has met with all the attention to which it is entitled,—A body placed
BOOK II. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

The grosser ne’er the lighter urg’d below
Can gain, triumphant; or the contest rouse
Whence spring new motions, and all nature lives.
Hence doubly flows it why the seeds of things
Should from the right decline; yet, in degree,
The least conceptibly, lest we should deem
The line oblique which nature ne’er assumes.
For nought more obvious, as the sight confirms,
Than that all weights, their downward course at will
Steering, obliquely never can descend;
But what keen sight of man can prove precise
That the swift cadence ne’er declines at all?
Had all one motion uniform, the new
Th’ anteriour skilful copying, if throughout
Primordial seeds declin’d not, rousing hence
Fresh springs of action, potent to subvert
The bonds of fate, and break the rigid chain
Of cause on cause, eternal,—whence, resolve,
Flows through the world this freedom of the mind?

in a central point, between two powers of equal and opposite attractions, must remain at rest for ever. Allowing these opposite powers to be situate north and south, it may, nevertheless, be propelled east or west; and, in that case, would proceed in a line perfectly direct. But if we change the relative positions of the attracting powers, and place them north and east; and at the same time propel the body from the same central point, it would not proceed either due north or due east, but would mark out a new course for itself immediately between the two points, and so fly off at an angle of 22½ degrees. But no moral instance can be adduced parallel to either of these cases in physics. No proof can be brought of the mind’s continuing for ever in a state of total inaction, merely because the motives operating upon it are precisely equal and opposite: nor, while we cannot even imagine that in cases in which the motives, although not
DE RERUM NATURA.

Per quam progredimur, quo ducit quemque voluptas; Declinamus item motus, nec tempore certo, Nec regione loci certâ, sed uti ipsa tulit mens? 260 Nam, dubio procul, hiis rebus sua quoique voluntas Principium dat; et hinc motus per membra rigantur. Nonne vides etiam, patefactis tempore puncto Carceribus, non posse tamen prorumpere equorum Vim cupidam tam de subito, quam mens avet ipsa? 265 Omnis enim totum per corpus materiai Copia conquiri debet, concita per artus Omneis, ut studium mentis connexa sequatur: Ut videas initum motûs a corde creari, Ex animique voluntate id procedere primum; 270 Inde dari porro per totum corpus, et artus.

diametrically opposite, are at variance in their direction, and cannot both be complied with at the same time, that a line altogether different, and immediately between the two, would be the necessary result; and that a man who had an equal inclination to walk from Lincoln’s-inn to Highgate, and to Mile-end, should be compelled, if he moved at all, to proceed to Hackney as a point nearly between the two. These are situations, as Montagne has justly remarked, that never can occur with respect to the mind: but they are facts which are daily occurring with respect to the exterior world, and which, in consequence, clearly elucidate, that a difference exists between them; a difference, as Lucretius observes, between mental motives, and material causation,—between moral and physical necessity.

Ver. 270. Dost thou not see, as down the barrier drops That reins the racer, &c.—] This beautiful picture of the unquenchable ardour of the race-horse, admirably heightened by the abruptness of the question which presents him immediately before us, is copied from our poet by Virgil in a variety of instances, and is also imitated by Statius.

Thus Georg. i. 512. but more particularly

Nonne vides, quum precipiti certamine campum Conripuere, ruuntque, effusi arcere currus—? GEORG. iii. 103.

Dost thou not see, as down the barrier drops, How, in rash strife, the rival cars contend Swift bursting o’er the plains?
BOOK II. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

This power to act, though fate the deed forbid,
Urg'd by the will alone? The free-born mind
Acts, or forbears, spontaneous; its own time,
Its place, alike uncertain: these the will,
Doubtless, alone determines, and, at once,
Flies the fleet motion through th' assenting frame.
Dost thou not see, as down the barrier drops
That reins the racer, instant though he dart,
Not half so instant darts he as his soul
Ambitious covets? Deep through all his frame
Th' elastic nerves must first the wish convey
Ere yet the consentaneous flight succeed.
Hence, obvious, springs all motion from the heart,
Rous'd by the mind's resolve, and instant urg'd
Through every nerve, through every quiv'ring limb.

Qui dominis, idem ardor equis; face lumina sur-
gunt;
Ora sonant morso; spumisque et sanguine,
ferrum
Uritur: impulsi nequeunt obsistere postes,
Claustraque compressae transfumat anhelitus ire;
Stare adeo miserum est, percunt vestigia mille
Ante fugam: absentemque ferit gravis ungula
campum.

STAT. THEB. vi. 390.

As pants the master, pants alike the horse:
Flames are his eyes; his champing mouth re-
sounds;
With blood and foam the bit burns; the strained
goal
In vain opposes, and its smoaking bars

Rehale the vapour of his smother'd ire.
So vast the toil to stand! a thousand steps
Die ere the contest, and his eager hoof
 Strikes, as though loosen'd, the far distant
plain.

There can be little doubt that Pope had this vigo-
rous passage of Lucretius or Statius in his recollec-
tion, when he compiled the following verses:

Th' impatient courser pants in every vein,
And, pawing, seems to beat the distant plain;
Hills, vales, and floods appear already crost,
And, ere he starts, a thousand steps are lost.

WINDSOR FOREST.

M. Delille has also imitated this passage success-
fully in his L'Homme des Champs.
Nec simile est, ut quom, impulsi, procedimus ictu,
Viribus alterius magnis, magnoque coactu;
Nam tum materiem totius corporis omnem
Perspicuum est nobis invitis ire, rapique,
Donec eam refrenavit per membra voluntas.
Jamne vides igitur, quamquam vis extera multos
Pellat, et invitos cogat procedere saepe,
Præcipitesque rapi; tamen esse in pectore nostro
Quiddam, quod contra pugnare, obstareque, possit:
Quois ad arbitrium quoque copia materiai
Cogitur interdum flecti per membra, per artus;
Et projecta refrenatur, retroque resedit?
Qua re, in seminibus quoque idem fateare, necesse est;
Esse aliam, præter plagas et pondera, causam
Motibus, unde haec est ollis innata potestas:
De nihilo quoniam fieri nihil posse videmus.
Pondus enim prohibit, ne plagis omnia fiant,
Externa quasi vi: sed, ne mens ipsa necessum
Intestinum habeat cunctis in rebus agundis,
Et devicta quasi, cogatur ferre, patique;
Id facit exiguum clinamen principiorum,
Nec regione loci certa, nec tempore certo.
Nec stipata magis fuit umquam materiai
Copia, nec porro majoribus intervallis:
Nam neque adaugescit quidquam, neque deperit inde.
A force far different this than e’er prevails
When aught without coerces. Passive, then,
Bends all the frame th’ extrinsic power beneath,
Borne down reluctant; till th’ awakening will
Unchains each member, and resumes her right.
For oft, though foreign force, with tyrant sway,
Rule us, resistless, headlong hurrying down—
Say—lurks no adverse something in the breast
Proud to withstand? full oft, at whose control,
Swift flows the nervous tide from limb to limb,
Bursting each bond—and, oft, as swift, retires?
Hence firm maintain we primal seeds some cause
Must feel of rising motion unbestow’d
By weight, or blow re-active, whence alone
Upsprings this secret power by man possest:
Nought forming nought, as reason proves precise.
For weight forbids the credence that alone
Things by re-action move; yet, lest the mind
Bend to a stern necessity within,
And, like a slave, determine but by force,—
Though urg’d by weight, in time, in place unfixt,
Each primal atom trivial still declines.
Nor interstitial more, nor more compact,
Was e’er this frame of matter; nor augment
Primæval seeds, nor e’er admit decay.
Quapropter, quo nunc in motu principiorum
Corpora sunt, in eodem ante actâ Ætate fuere,
Et posthac semper similis ratione ferentur:
Et, quæ consuerint gigni, gignentur eadem
Conditione; et erunt, et crescent, inque valebunt,
Quantum quoique datum est per foedera naturaï:\
Nec rerum summam conmutare ulla potest vis.
Nam, neque quo possit genus ullum materiaï
Ec fugere ex omni, quidquam est; neque, rursus, in omne
Unde coorta queat nova vis inrumpere, et omnem
Naturam rerum mutare, et vortere motus.

Illud in hiis rebus non est mirabile, quà re,
Omnia quom rerum primordia sint in motu,
Summa tamen summâ videatur stare quiete;
Præter quam si quid proprio dat corpore motus.
Omnis enim longe nostris ab sensibus infra
Primorum natura jacet: quapropter, ubi ipsam
Cernere jam nequeas, motus quoque surpere debent:
Præsertim, quom, quæ possimus cernere, celent
Sæpe tamen motus, spatio diducta locorum.
Nam sæpe in colli, tondentes pabula læta,
Hence every movement in anterior time
That e’er subsisted, still subsists the same,
And will through endless ages: all begot
Begotten must be, punctual to their kinds,
Exist, increase, and perish; following firm
The laws by nature fram’d; nor aught of power,
Act where it may, can change th’ entire of things.
For nought expands of spot where primal seeds
From the vast whole may fly; or e’er afresh,
Arm’d with new powers, re-enter, adverse thus
To nature’s plans, disorganizing all.

Nor this stupendous that, though primal seeds
Move on incessant, and, through different forms,
Rouse different actions, the vast whole to sense
Rests undisturb’d. For far beyond all ken,
Lies the prime base impalpable of things.
As this eludes all vision, so, alike,
Its motion too elude. E’en oft the sight
No motion marks where still the moving scene
Springs obvious, by the distance sole conceal’d.—
The fleecy flocks, o’er yonder hill that browse
From glebe to glebe, where’er, impearl’d with dew,
Lanigeræ reptant pecudes, quo quamque vocantes
Invitant herbæ, gemmantes rore recenti;
Et satiatei agnei ludunt, blandeque coruscant:
Omnia quæ nobis longe confusa videntur,
Et veluti in viridi candor consistere colli.
Præterea, magnæ legiones quam loca cursu
Camporum conplent, belli simulacra cientes;

Fin che l’ Aurora e la gelata brina
Dalle dorate ruote in terra sparse,
E s’udir le Alcione, &c.

Till, from her golden wheels, Aurora throw
On verdant meads the drops of sparkling dew,
And on the margin of the wavy flood
Aleyone her ancient plaints renew’d.

In his version of the above passage of Ovid, he has,
with a similar error, written

Now earth first glitters with the morning dew,
And birds, in bow’ry shades, their plaints renew.

Calpurnius, in his fifth eclogue, has a few verses
so extremely consentaneous with the imagery of Lucretius, more especially when accompanied with the classical amendment of Mr. Wakefield; that I should be guilty of an unpardonable omission, if I were to pass them by:

———wait till all
The crystal deus impearld upon the grass
Are touch’d by Phœbus’ beams, and mount aloft.

The term crystal is, with equal felicity, applied by
Ovid to the frost that, in the same manner, is scattered every morning over trees and fields, in the earlier spring:

Tempus erat vitrea quo primum terra pruinæ
Spargitur, et tectæ fronde queruntur aves.

This couplet of Ovid is imitated by Ariosto, in his Orlando Furioso; and it is somewhat singular, that Mr. Hoole, in his translation of both poets, has made use of the phrase glittering and sparkling dew, instead of glittering or crystal frost.

Ver. 52.

Lead forth betimes thy cattle; the moist air
Sweetens the herbage; lead them when, the shades
Fast flying, the cool glebe is thick besprent
With midnight dew-drops; and the gems of morn
Gleam o’er the greensward.

Ver. 330. One white mass forming o’er the verdant steep.] So, Dyer:
Such are the downs of Banstead, edg’d with woods,
And tow’ry villas; such Dorcestrian fields,
Whose flocks innum’rous whiten all the land.

FLEECE.
Book II.  

THE NATURE OF THINGS.  

The jocund clover calls them, and the lambs That round them gambol, saturate with milk, Proving their frontlets in the mimic fray—Press, at this distance, on the sight confus'd, One white mass forming o'er the verdant steep.  

Thus, too, when warlike squadrons crowd the field, Horrent in arms, with horses scarce restrain'd,
DE RERUM NATURA.

LIB. II.

Fulgur ubi ad coelum se tollit, totaque circum
Ære renidescit tellus; subterque, virûm vi,
Excitum pedibus sonitus, clamoreque montes
Ictei rejectant voces ad sidera mundi;
Et circum volitant equites, mediosque repente
Transmittunt, valido quatientes inpete, campos:
Et tamen est quidam locus altis montibus, unde
Stare videntur; et in campis consistere fulgur.

Nunc age, jam deinceps cunctarum exordia rerum,
Qualia sint, et quam longe distantia formis,
Percipe; multigenis quam sint variata figuris:

As when the legion o'er the plain afar
Unfolds its spreading cohorts rang'd for war;
When, opposite in arms, the squadrons stand,
And gleaming steel wide waves o'er all the land, &c.

The narrow space to which the Spartans were
confined at the battle of Thermopylz, has not al-
lowed our own countryman, Glover, to introduce the
latter part of the imagery selected by Virgil: but he
has thus described the former:

As o'er the main
In lucid rows the rising waves reflect
The sun's effulgence, so the Grecian helms
Return'd his light, which o'er their convex
pour'd,
And scatter'd splendour on the dancing plumes.

It may not be unentertaining to my readers, to
have an opportunity of comparing, with these de-
scriptions, a somewhat parallel passage in the Spanish
poet Lope de Vega. He is painting a rencontre
between the Spaniards and the Moors; and the
richness of dress, exhibited by both parties, enables
him to introduce an original simile.

Como en el triangular cristal se mira.
De varios y diversos tornasoles,
Campo, cielo, ciudad, o mar; y admira
Ver tan diversos nubes, y arebeles;
Assi la esquadra que entra y se retira,
De Moros Africanos, y Españoles
A la vista, que juntos confundian,
Jardín florido en Mayo parecían.

As in the crystal prism th' observer views
Heaven, earth, and ocean blend their various hues,
And crowded towns—while still the splendours fly
Still fit, perpetual, through each rain-bow dye—
Advancing thus, thus yielding o'er the plain,
The Moorish squadrons blend, and pride of Spain:
Thus intermingled, in confus'd array,
Rich as a garden in the month of May.

This description is, for aught I know, original; but
I must not omit to quote the close and beautiful
copy from Lucretius, that occurs in the third Canto
of the Lusiad, and affords us, in the Portuguese,
Book II. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Shaking the solid glebe, while the bright pomp
Flames through the skies, and gilds the glowing earth,
While groans the ground beneath their mighty tread,
And hills, and heavens re-echo to their shouts—
View'd from afar, the splendid scene that spreads
 Seems void of motion, to the fields affixt.

Come, now, my friend, and, next, perspicuous mark
What countless shapes primordial seeds assume,
How vast their variance: for, though myriads swarm

at least, a most admirable specimen of imitative harmony:

Mas ja cos escadros da gente armada,
Os Eboreses campos vão qualhados
Lustra co sol arnes, a lança; a espada
Vam rinchando os cavallos jaezados:
A canora trombeta embandeirada
Os coraçœes à pax acostumados:
Vay as fulgentes armos incitando
Pellas concavidades retumbando.

The glittering squadrons march in proud array;
On burnish'd shields the trembling sun-beams play:
The blaze of arms the warlike rage inspires,
And wakes, from slothful peace, the hero's fires.

With trampling hoofs Evora's plains rebound,
And sprightly neighings echo far around;
Far on each side the clouds of dust arise,
The drum's rough rattling rolls along the skies;
The trumpet's shrilly clangour sounds alarms,
And each heart burns, and ardent pants for arms.

MICKLE.

The glittering pomp that is reflected from the arms
of the warriors, is not forgotten in the well-known ballad of Chevy Chace:

Wer syx and thirtte Skottish knyghtes
On a day wear beaten down;
Glen-dale glytteryde with ther armor bryghte
Over castill, towar, and town.

But, above all, ought we to bear in mind that sublime description of Milton, in his Paradise Lost:

He spake, and, to confirm his words, outflew
Millions of flaming swords, &c. B. i. 663.

Whence, doubtless, Mr. Burke's bold and figurative description relative to the late queen of France.

Ver. 340. What countless shapes primordial seeds assume,] Having established the solidity, and consequent weight of atoms, together with their different modes of motion, our philosophic poet now proceeds to develop another of their properties; to wit, their variation of size and figure. This, though not a subject of ocular demonstration, he endeavors to establish by a variety of forcible arguments and analogies. Epicurus, in a variety of passages, but more especially in his epistle to Herodotus, had long before advanced the same doctrine: Τα ατόμα τω κατε-ματισμω και μικρά, ἐξ αυτῶν τε εἰς συγχώρεις γίνονται, &c.
Non, quo multa parum similis sint prædicta formâ, 
Sed quia non volgo paria omnibus omnia constant.
Nec mirum: nam, quom sit eorum copia tanta,
Ut neque finis, utei docui, neque summa sit uilla;
Debent nimirum non omnibus omnia prorsum
Esse pari filo, similique affecta figurâ.

Præterea, genus humanum, mutæque natantes
Squamigerûm pecudes, et læta armenta, feraeque,
Et variæ volucres, lætantia quæ loca aquarum
Concelebrant, circum ripas funtisque, lacûsque;
Et, quæ pervolgant nemora avia pervolitantes:
Quorum unum quod vis generatim sumere perge;
Invenies tamen inter se differre figuris.

Nec ratione alia proles cognoscere matrem,
Nec mater posset prolem: quod posse videmus;
Nec minus, atque homines, inter se nota cluere.
Nam sãpe ante deûm vitulus delubra decorat
Turisticemas propter mactatus concidit aras,
Sanguinis exspirans calidum de pectore flumen:
At mater, virideis saltus orbata peragrâns,

Ver. 357. Thus oft before the sacred shrine, perfum'd
With breathing frankincense, th' unsweeting calf
The whole of this description is inimitably exquisite, and the reader requires no criticism to make him feel its numerous and appropriate beauties. Of this Statius was fully sensible, and he has thus copied it:

Non secus ac, primo fraudatum lacte, juven-
cum,
Cui trepidæ vires, et solus ab ubere sanguis,
Seu fera, seu duras avexit pastor ad aras:
Nunc vallem spoliata parens, nunc flumina questu,
Nunc arbusta movet; vacuosque interrogat agros;
Of equal figures, oft unlike they meet.
Nor wond'rous this, since, such th' abundance form'd,
No bounds can chain, no numbers e'er compute.
Hence, not unfrequent, each from each, through space,
Must meet diverse, unkindred in their frames.

Thus nature varies; man, and brutal beast,
And herbage gay, and silver fishes mute,
And all the tribes of heav'n, o'er many a sea,
Through many a grove that wing, or urge their song
Near many a bank of fountain, lake, or rill,
Search where thou wilt, each differs in his kind,
In form, in figure differs. Hence alone,
Knows the fond mother her appropriate young,
Th' appropriate young their mother, mid the brutes,
As clear discern'd as man's sublimer race.
Thus oft before the sacred shrine, perfum'd
With breathing frankincense, th' affrighted calf
Pours o'er the altar, from his breast profound,
The purple flood of life. But wand'ring wild
O'er the green sward, the dam, bereft of hope,
Linquit humi pedibus vestigia pressa bisulcis;
Omnia consisens oculis loca, si queat usquam
Consipere amissum fetum: conpletque querelis
Frundiferum nemus, adsistens; et crebra revisit
Ad stabulum, desiderio perfixa juvenci.
Nec teneræ salices, atque herbæ, rore vigentes,
Fluminaque illa queunt, summis labentia ripis,
Oblectare animum, subitamque avortere curam:
Nec vitulorum aliae species par pabula latæ
Derivare queunt animum, curamque levare:
Usque adeo quiddam proprium, notumque requirit.
Præterea, tenerei tremulis cum vocibus hasdei
Cornigeras norunt matres; agnique petulci

Ver. 367. Nor shade for her, nor dew-distended glebe,
Virgil has been as attentive to this part of the description of our poet, as Statius. It is thus he represents the grief of a "brother-steer," who had lost his companion by the murrain, so admirably described in his Georgics:

Non umbræ alorum nemorum, non mollia possunt
Prata movere animum, non qui per saxa volunt
Purior electro campum petit amnis. 1. iii. 520.
Mean time, nor grassy mead, nor lofty grove,
The mournful mate's afflicted mind can move;
Nor yet from rocks delicious streams that roll
As amber clear, can soothe his sorrowing soul.

There is an episode, so perfectly similar, in the Aláameriyyo of the Arabian poet Lebid, which constituted one of the Moallakat, or Seven Poems, that were transcribed in letters of gold, and suspended in the temple of Mecca, that I cannot avoid inserting it, for a comparison with Lucretius. Those, who copy from Nature, cannot widely differ in their picture, let them copy when and where they may.

Afatilca am wahhshiyyahón masbúhón
Khadhalat waədiyaho alsiwari kiwámohá, &c.
The entire poem may be found in Sir William Jones's Works, vol. iv. in which we are also favoured with the following elegant version:

"Is this the swiftness of my camel? No; rather she resembles a wild cow, whose calf has been devoured by ravenous beasts, when she had suffered him to graze apart, and relied for his protection on the leader of the herd.

"A mother with flat nostrils; who, as soon as she misses her young one, ceases not to run hastily round the vales between the sand-hills, and to fill them with her mournful cries:

"With cries for her white-haired young, who now lies rolled in dust, after the dun wolves, hunters of the desert, have divided his mangled limbs, and their feast has not been interrupted.

"She passes the night in agony, while the rain falls
Beats with her cloven hoof th’ indented dale,
Each spot exploring, if, perchance, she still
May trace her idol; through th’ umbrageous grove,
With well-known voice, she moans; and oft re-seeks,
Urg’d by a mother’s love, th’ accustom’d stall.
Nor shade for her, nor dew-distended glebe,
Nor stream soft gliding down its banks abrupt,
Yields aught of solace; nor the carking care
Averts, that preys within: nor the gay young
Of others soothe her o’er the joyous green:
So deep she longs, so lingers for her own.
Thus equal known, thus long’d for, seek, in turn,
The tender heifer, tremulous of voice,

in a continued shower, and drenches the tangled
groves with a profuse stream. She shelters her-
sel under the root of a tree, whose boughs are
thick, apart from other trees, by the edge of a hill,
subsoil fine sands are shaken by her motion. (trepidation.)

“ At length, when the clouds are dispersed, and the
dawn appears, she rises early, and her hoofs glide on
the slippery ground.

“ She grows impatient, and wild with grief: she
lies, frantic, in the pool of Soayid, for seven whole
days, with their twin sisters. (Seven Nights.)

“ And now she is in total despair: her teats, which
were full of milk, are grown flaccid and dry, though
they were not worn by suckling, and weaning her young.”

Lucretius, among the moderns, has been copied, in
this tender and simple episode, by a variety of writers.
Of these, the best specimens I am acquainted with,
are that of Spenser, in his Fairy Queen, and that of
Delille, in his L’Homme des Champs. The authors
are common, and the reader may consult them at his
leisure. The elegant and express version of it, how-
ever, by M. le Blanc de Guillet, is not so much at
hand, and I shall therefore transcribe it as a fair spe-
men of his general success:

Non jamais dans leur coeur nul trait ne s’en efface,
Lorsqu’un jeune taureau, frappé d’un coup mortel,
Sous le conteau sacré tombe au pied de l’autel,
Sa mère, non plus mère, errante, désolée,
S’égaré dans les bois, éperdue, isolée,
La trace de ses pas est marquée en tous lieux.
Partout elle promène un regard soucieux.
Où peut-être cachée l’objet de sa tendresse ?
Toute à ce souvenir, elle revient sans cesse
Des pâtis a son toit, de son toit aux pâtis,
Par ces cris douloureux tour à tour attendris.
Plus de goût pour les fleurs, pour sa tendre feuillée,
Des perles du matin vainement émeillée.
Ni les gazons naissans, ni le cristal des eaux,
Ni les jeux, les combats d’autres jeunes taureaux,
Rien n’offre qu’un vain charme à sa douleur secrète,
Rien ne rend à son coeur le fils qu’elle regrette,
Ce fils si bien gravé dans ce cœur gémissant.

II h 2
Balatum pecudes: ita, quod natura reposcit;
Ad sua quisque, feri decurrunt ubera lactis.

Postremo, quod vis frumentum; non tamen omne,
Quidque suo genere, inter se simile esse videbis,
Quin intercurrat quaedam distantia formis:
Concharumque genus parili ratione videmus
Pingere telluris gremium, quâ mollibus undis
Litoris incurvi bibulam pavit æquor arenam.
Quâ re etiam atque etiam simili ratione necesse est,
Naturâ quoniam constant, neque facta manu sunt
Unius ad certam formam primordia rerum,
Dissimili inter se quadam volitare figurâ.

Perfacile est animi ratione exsolvere nobis,
Quâ re fulmineus molto penetralior ignis,
Quam noster, fluat, e tedis terestribus ortus.
Dicere enim possis coelestem fulminis ignem,
Subtilem magis, e parvis constare figuris;
Atque ideo transire foramina, quæ nequit ignis
Noster hic, e lignis ortus, tedâque creatus.

Ver. 380. — th' enamell'd shells, that paint
The bending shore; whose thirsty sands drink deep, &c.]
We trace Ovid turning his eye to this passage of our poet, in his elegy "to a female friend on a voyage;"

Nec medius tennes conchas pictorse lapillos
Pontus habet: bibuli littoris illa mora est.

AMOR, l. ii. eleg. 11. Seek not the midmost main for polish'd shells,
Or pictur'd jewels; these the strand presents
Thirsty and arid.

Camoens likewise, than whom few poets have been more profoundly versed in Greek and Roman literature, has copied from the same source. He is describing the Island of Love:

—cuja brachia area

Pintou de ruivas conchas Cytherea. Lus. Cant. ix.
And the gay-bleating lamb, their horned dams,
Lur’d by the milky fount that nurtures life.
The corn, moreo’er, the yellow harvest yields,
Matures not all alike;—e’en the same kind
In size oft varying to the curious eye.
Thus vary, too, th’ enamell’d shells, that paint
The bending shore; whose thirsty sands drink deep
The main’s soft waves, redundant roll’d along.
Hence doubly flows it why the seeds of things,
Compact by nature, by mechanic art
Shap’d not to one fixt model, each from each
Should differ oft in figure through the void.

Illumin’d thus, the mind with ease decides
Why heaven’s electric flash a subtler power
Boasts, than the flame by torches fed below:
That form’d than this of atoms finer far,
Triumphant piercing many a pore minute
By the dull taper’s blaze essay’d in vain.

So Akenside:
And painted shells indent their speckled wreath.

In like manner, Darwin, when describing the formation of the external scenery of the earth from the ocean, that
Præterea, lumen per cornum transit; at imber
Respuitur. Quâ re? nisi luminis illa minora
Corpora sunt, quam de quibus est liquor almus aquarum. 390
Et, quam vis subito, per colum vina videmus
Perfluere; at contra tardum contatur olivom:
Aut, quia nimirum majoribus est elementis,
Aut magis hamatis inter se, perque plicatis;
Atque ideo fit, utei non tam diducta repente
Inter se possint primordia singula quæque
Singula per quouisque foramina permanare.
Huc adcedit, utei mellis lactisque liquores,
Jocundo sensu linguæ, tractentur in ore;
At contra tetra absinthii natura ferique
Centaurii fedo pertorquent ora sapore;
Ut facile adgnoscas e lævibus atque rotundis
Esse ea, quæ sensus jocunde tangere possunt:
At contra, quæ amara, atque aspera, quomque videntur,
Hæc magis hamatis inter se nexa teneri;
Proptereaque solere vias rescindere nostris
Sensibus, introituque suo perrumpere corpus.

Omnia postremo bona sensibus, et mala tactu,
Dissimili inter se pugnant perfecta figurâ:

Ver. 404. The wormwood straight convulses, by the
imitation of this passage of our poet, Virgil thus ex-
tongue
presses himself:

Abbott'd, and writhing every sapid nerve.
Light, the clear glass pervades, while lymph recoils:
Whence springs the diff’rence, but that subtler seeds
Rear the bright sun-beam than the fountain form?
Free through the strainer flows the sparkling wine,
While the slow oil hangs heavy: in its course
Check’d, or by atoms of a grosser frame,
Or more perplex’d, and tangled; each from each
Hence severing tardy, and, with toil extreme,
Transuding sep’rate through th’ attenuate lawn.

Thus vary tastes: and while the dulcet draught
Of milk, or honey charms th’ enchanted lip,
The wormwood strait convulses, by the tongue
Abhor’d, and writhing every sapid nerve.
Hence may’st thou learn those seeds that rouse, combin’d,
A joyous flavour, round exist, and smooth;
While those that form the bitter, and austere,
Are hook’d, or jagged, and their path propel
Alone by wounding, hostile to the sense.

Thus all things live; from primal atoms rear’d
Of shape diverse, as deep within they ope

At sapor indicium faciet manifestus, et ora
Tristia tentantum sensu torquebit amaror.
This will the taste demonstrate, and the lip
Distorted turn, and hate the bitter sip.
Ne tu forte putes, serræ stridentis acerbum
Horrorem constare elementis lævibus æque,
Ac Musæa mele, per chordas organicei quæ
Mobilibus digitis expergefacta figurant:
Neu simili penetrare putes primordia formâ
In nareis hominum, quom tetra cadavera torrent,
Et quom scena croco Cilici perfusa recens est,
Araque Panchæos exhalat propter odores:
Neve bonos rerum simili constare colores
Semine constituas, oculos qui pascere possunt,
Et qui conpungunt aciem, lacrumareque cogunt,

Ver. 416. That make the strain mellifluous, when the fair,
With flying fingers, sweeps th' accordant lyre.]
The Latin of these two verses is possessed of uncommon beauty, and most appropriate rhythm: it is not possible to conceive of terms in any language better adapted to convey the idea of ease, dexterity, and rapid movement, than the mobilibus digitis of our poet; and I am very sensible that the phrase, flying fingers, in the version, although, perhaps, the most expressive, as well as the most literal our own language will afford, falls far short of the inimitable original. Mr. Wakefield has here quoted two lines from Maximianus, which, as he justly observes, have an elegance nearly equal:

Docta loqui digitis, et carmina fingere docta,
Et responsuram solicite lyricam. El. v. 17.
Skill'd with the flying fingers to discourse,
To feign sweet rhythms, and woo th' accordant lyre.
The verses of Lucretius cannot but remind us of the following, in Pope's Alexander's Feast:

Wake into voice each silent string,
And sweep the sounding lyre.

Or the still more animated and elegant couplet in Gray's inimitable Elegy:

Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or wake'd to extacy the living lyre.

Mr. Cumberland, in his Calvary, has a still nearer approximation to our poet, in the following:

—the minstrels strike
Their golden harps: swift o'er the sounding strings
Their flying fingers sweep.

Polignac has been equally mindful of his elegant antagonist:

—Ita quilibet arte
Strenuus Aoniæ citharam pulsare sonantem
Mobilibus digitis, chordisque animarque loquaces
Et lenocinio blandi modulaminis aures
Demulcere tuas, et citharæ sic pendet ab ipsis,
Nos ullos ut posit eâ sine promere cantus.

Anti-Lucr. v. 743.
BOOK II.  
THE NATURE OF THINGS.  

Some secret source of pleasure or of pain.
So deem not thou the saw's discordant scream,
Horrid, and harsh, flows from the same smooth seeds
That wake the strain mellifluous, when the fair,
With flying fingers, sweeps th' accordant lyre.
Nor deem those atoms like, from putrid scenes
That spring malignant, and th' essential sweets
Breath'd from CILICIAN saffron, or the blaze
Of fragrant altars fed from orient groves.
Nor canst thou form from the same source those hues,
On which the vision feeds with fond delight,
And those abhor'd, and hideous, or the germs
Pungent and keen, that rouse the sight to tears.

The minstrel, thus, inflam'd with sacred fire,
Whose flying fingers strike the sounding lyre,
Wake the shrill strings, and, o'er thy ravish'd ear,
Breathe the sweet balm of movements soft and clear—
So on the lyre depends, that nought of strain
Void of its influence, can his hands attain.
Nor ought I to forget the elegant imitation of this
passage of our poet, in the Oberon of Wieland,
Canto xi.

How does her rosy finger's subtle flight
In sweet confusion sweep each soul-felt string!

Ver. 419. —th' essential sweets
Breath'd from CILICIAN saffron,—] Cilicia, a
country of Asia Minor, was celebrated by almost
all the Roman poets for its unrivaled saffron. Prop-
ertyius has adverted to it in more than one place on
this account; and Virgil has thus announced the
same fact in his Culex :

Vol. I.
DE RERUM NATURA.

Aut seda specie tetrei, turpesque, videntur. 425
Omnis enim, sensus quæ mulcet quomque videntum,
Haud sine principiali aliquo laevore creatæ est:
At contra, quæquomque molesta atque aspera constat,
Non aliquo sine materiæ squalore reperta est.

Sunt etiam, quæ jam nec laevia jure putantur
Esse, neque omnino flexis mucronibus unca;
Sed magis angellis paullum prostantibus, ac quæ
Titillare magis sensus, quam lædere, possint:
Fæcula iam quo de genere est, inulæque sapore.

Denique, jam calidosigneis, gelidamque pruinam,
Dissimili dentata modo, conpungere sensus

Worthy, or worthless, Atta's sure to find
O'er flowers and saffron-blooms his drama stalk:
And, should I doubt, each bawls aloud, "for
shame!"

The same custom was evinced long afterwards, as
we learn from Seneca, in honour of Trajan: "balsamum,"
says he, "et crocum per graduæ theatri
fluere jussit." Epist. 21.

Ver. 428. While pain but springs from atoms hook'd
and harsh.] The same system has, with little
alteration, been continued, among many philosophers,
to modern times. In allusion to which, Thomson,
advertising to the pain produced by intense frost, attributes
the phenomenon to

Myriads of little salts, or hook'd or shap'd
Like double wedges, and diffus'd immense
Through water, earth, and ether.

Ver. 431. — These the nerves
Pain not, but titillate;——] Titillare, γεγομενων.
Cicero has observed, that this was the term employed by Epicurus to denote the agreeable excitation produced by the lighter pleasures of the senses.

At has leviores ducis voluptates, quibus quasi titillatio
(Epicuri enim hoc verbum est) adhibetur sensibus." De Nat. Deor. I. 40.

Ver. 434. — sauces, cater'd to the taste
From the pale inula, or grape's soft grounds.—] Among the sauces introduced at the Roman tables, one was manufactured from the lees of some of their favourite wines, and another from the root of the Inula or Elecampane, the Aster of Tournefort and
Linnéus. The wines principally employed, were those of Falernum and Cos, an island in the Ægean
sea, widely celebrated as the native soil of Hippocrates. Horace, in several of the Epistles in his second book of Satires, makes mention of both these
'Twere vain t' attempt: for all the soul that wakes
To various pleasure, boasts a base rotund;
While pain but springs from atoms hook'd and harsh.

Yet seeds there are between; not smooth complete,
Nor deeply jagged, but with angles shap'd
Just peeping o'er the surface. These the nerves
Pain not, but titillate; a sense perceiv'd
When sweets with bitters, sours with sweets combine,
As oft in sauces, cater'd to the taste
From the pale inula, or grape's soft grounds.

But fires and frosts spring different; from a base
Unlike indented, though indented each.

sauces, which were supposed to have the double property of stimulating the appetite, and, at the same time, assisting the digestion: thus,

Ver. 436. Yet fires and frosts spring different; from a base

Unlike indented, though indented each.]

Heat and cold were equally, among ancient philosophers, supposed to be substances suorum generum; the corpority of cold, however, became doubted about a century ago, and was, at length, universally denied; Boerhaave, I believe, being the last who contended for its substantial nature, in opposition to the doctrine, that it was nothing more than a mere negative quality. Yet, since it frequently occurs in the great cycle of the sciences, as in the operations of nature, that that which dies in one season revives in another, so the new tenet, that cold is a mere negative quality, has some prospect of perishing, and the antiquated
Corporis, indicio nobis est tactus uterque.

Tactus enim, tactus, pro divōm numina sancta!

Corporis est sensus, vel quom res extera sese

Insinuat, vel quom lædit, quæ in corpore nata est,

Aut juvat egrediens genitaleis, per Veneris res:

opinion, that it is a substance sui generis, resurging from its ruins. Professor Pictet invented, some years ago, an instrument, by which he endeavoured to prove, that cold bodies transmitted frigorific rays, which might be concentrated in a convex mirror, and sensibly affect a delicate air thermometer: and Count Rumford, building upon this idea, has engaged in a course of additional experiments, and written a very ingenious paper, in which he has given their result, and his own consequent opinion; which appears to be, that frigorific rays, or emanations, issue from all cold bodies in the same manner as calorific emanations from hot; and that the cold experienced on the summit of high mountains, as well as the regulated temperature of the earth, is produced by the intermixture of such frigorific rays transmitted from the heavens with the calorific rays of solar heat. But as whatever emanates or radiates must be a substance, the frigorific rays of cold bodies, and the calorific of hot, must be necessarily and equally substantial, and consequently, cold itself, as well as heat; which is the doctrine maintained in the text. See Philosoph. Trans. for 1804. Part I. Art. vii. Elementary heat, or fire, is still indeed ranked among philosophers as an independent and essential substance; though it seems doubtful how long, even heat itself may be allowed to preserve its primitive rank and dignity. Light and fire, it is generally maintained, are one and the same thing, produced by one and the same cause. But those who, with such a belief, entertain, at the same time, the theory of Euler with respect to light, must altogether discard the materiality of fire, and conceive of it, as Euler did of the former, to be nothing more than a vibratory motion of the particles of the combustible body, or of the elastic medium of the air, by which the sensation of heat is communicated to the touch in the same manner as the sensation of sound is excited in the ear. See note on ver. 166 of this book. And this, from some of his earlier papers, appears to have been the theory of Count Rumford himself, notwithstanding the discrepancy of such an opinion with that I have just noticed. Yet, perhaps, this discrepancy exists rather in the wording of his hypothesis, than in any necessary hostility of one part of it to another.

The comprehensive and elaborate theory of Epicurus, however, not only allowed an actual and material existence to elementary heat and cold, but attributed to the primary corpuscles of each, a certain and definite mechanical figure, by means of which their different operations were effected. Consistently, therefore, with the general position advanced by our poet, ver. 405, and following, that every thing pleasant and grateful to the senses is formed from atoms perfectly smooth and round, while, whatever is hateful and disgusting is educed from pointed or jagged atoms,—Epicurus determined, that the atoms of both elemental heat and cold, were pointed, or, as Lucretius terms them, indented: but, as exciting different effects, that they were pointed or indented differently: those of heat being in some degree round or orbicular, with little points abutting from the surface of the corpuscle, while those of cold, on the contrary, were angular and pyramidal, or polygons of three sides. In his epistle to Pythocles, he gives this reason for the conversion of water into ice, that "the orbicular atoms (meaning those of heat) are, at this time, extruded from the water, and those of a trigonic and acutangular
II. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

This if thou doubt, the touch shall quick decide.

For touch, O touch! ye powers of heav’n supreme!

Touch forms the genuine sense whence chief we trace

Whate’er without insinuates, or within

Springs up innate, injurious in th’ escape,

Or, like the genial tide by Venus rous’d,

Matutina parum cautos jam frigora mordent:

Now bite the morning frosts the unprepared.

In the same manner, in our own language, we use

the phrases frost-bitten, a cold biting wind, &c. Thus,

Shakspeare:

—Here feel we the icy phang,

And churlish chiding of the winter’s wind;

Which, when it bites, and blows upon my body,

E’en till I shrink with cold, I smile.

Ver. 438. For touch, O touch, ye powers of heav’n supreme!

Touch forms the genuine sense, &c.] The term touch, like simple perception, appears applicable to all the senses; but even in its appropriate and more restrained meaning, our poet may be justified in his eulogy, in consequence of its being a sense extending universally over the body, and not confined, as are the senses in general, to one individual organ. See note on ver. 341, b. i.

Faber has; unwarrantably, objected to this apostrophe, which, observes he, may be a poetic, but, certainly, is not a philosophic illustration, and, least of all, an illustration after the manner of Epicurus. Upon this subject, however, and in express contradiction to Faber’s opinion, Eusebius has justly observed, that “Epicurus was accustomed to indulge in similar apostrophes, or exclamations to the supreme powers, in all his books; binding himself by the most solemn oaths; and invoking the gods in almost all his discourses.” Ορκόν δὲ καὶ ἀρετοῖς μαραθον τοὺς ἐν τοῖς βίοις τεταγμένους, ομοιομοίωσαν καὶ Μαλαια, καὶ Νικαία, ισόγειας μετά τοὺς εἰρήκαντας, &c. P. Ev. xiv. 27.
DE RERUM NATURA.

Aut, ex obsenu quom turbant corpore in ipso
Semina, confundunt inter se concita sensum:
Ut, si forte manu quam vis jam corporis ipse
Tute tibi partem ferias, atque experiare.
Quapropter longe formas distare necesse est
Principis, varios quae possint edere sensus.

Denique, quae nobis durata ac spissa videntur,
Hae magis hamatis inter sese esse necesse est,
Et quasi ramosis alte compacta teneri.
In quo jam genere in primis adamantina saxa
Primâ acie constant, ictus contemnere sueta;
Et valdei silices, ac duri robora ferri,
Æraque, quae claustris restantia vociferantur.
Illa quidem debent ex lævisibus atque rotundis
Esse magis, fluido quae corpore liquida constant;
Namque papaveris haustus item est facilis quod aquarum:
Nec retinentur enim inter se glomeramina quaeque,

Ver. 455. — the diamond’s blaze,
Fearless of insult ——, This superior rigidity
of the diamond renders it, according to Pliny, proof
against almost every species of blow: insomuch that, if beaten on an anvil, the iron itself, both of the anvil
and the hammer, will yield before the diamond: In-
cudibus deprehenditur ita responsum ictum, et ferrum
utrinque dissipat. L. xxxvii. c. 2.

Ver. 457. — the brass
Discordant creaking from the public gates.] In
the same manner, Virgil describes the entrance into
the temple of Juno at Carthage:
Ærae cui gradibus surgent limina, nexæque
Ære trabes; foribus cardo stridebat abenis.
Æs. l. i. v. 452.
Brass were its rising steps, its joints were brass;
From brazen doors the jarring hinges creak’d.
And Milton, with more sublimity than either of the
Roman poets, the sounding of the gates of hell
when first unbarred by Sin:
Pregnant with pleasure; or, perchance, the frame
Affecting inly, as th' essential seeds
Collect tumultuous, urg'd to civil strife.
A feeling, this, full oft educ'd amain
Whene'er th' uplifted palm, from sport or ire,
Lets fall its vengeance o'er the redd'ning cheek.
Hence, from effects so various, various too
Must be the forms to primal seeds assign'd.

There are, moreo'er, that hard exist, and dense:
From atoms, these, more crook'd and clinging spring,
Like tangled branches intertwin'd throughout.
Such, mid the foremost, shines the diamond's blaze,
Fearless of insult, such the valid flint,
The steel's enduring vigour, and the brass
Discordant creaking from the public gates.
While those, revers'd, a fluent power that boast
Swell into birth from seeds rotund, and smooth,
Unlink'd th' essential globules, and with ease

———open by
With impetuous recoil, and jarring sound
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus.  

Par. Lost, b. ii. v. 879.

Klopstock has occasion to vary the painting: for
with him the infernal door or gate leads to the mansions of the blest, his paradise being situated in the centre of the earth. Hence, in the Messias, the description runs thus:

———schon stand der unsterblichen fuss an der heiligen pforte,
Die vor ihm, wie rauschender Cherubim flugel,
sich aufthat,
Hinter ihm wieder mit eile sich schloss.
Now stood th' immortal at the heavenly gate:
That with the sound of Cherub's rustling wings,
Op'd at his presence, and as quickly clos'd.
Et procurus item proclive volubilis exstat.
Omnia postremo, quae puncto tempore cernis
Diffugere, ut fumum, nebulas, flammasque, necesse est,
Si minus omnia sunt e laevibus atque rotundis,
At non esse tamen perplexis indupedita;
Pungere utei possint corpus, penetrareque saxa,
Nec tamen hærerere inter se; quod quisque videmus
Sentibus esse datum: facile ut cognoscere possis,
Non e perplexis, sed acutis, esse elementis.
Sed, quod amara vides eadem, quae fluvida constant,
Sudor utei maris est, minume mirabile quoiquam.
Nam, quod fluvidum est, e laevibus atque rotundis
Est; et laevibus atque rotundis mixta doloris
Corpora: nec tamen haec retineri hamata necessum:
Scilicet; esse globosa tamen, quom squalida constant,
Provolvi simul, ut possint conlaedere sensus.
Et, quod mixta putes magis aspera laevibus esse
Pour'd headlong down, dissevering as they fall.
Those, too, that quick fly off, as clouds or smoke,
Or lambent flame, if not from seeds educ'd
Rotund, and polish'd, doubtless, in their make
Nought know perplex'd, or hook'd, since arm'd with power
To pierce the Parian marble, nor to view
Cohering equal, like th' embracing briar:
Not jagg'd, but pointed, hence, the base they own.

Nor wond'rous this; that things of fluent frame
As the broad ocean, oft should strike the sense
With taste unlovely; for, though round, and smooth
The genial atoms whence all fluids flow,
Still, seeds discordant oft will intermix,
Rough, though globose, and by the tongue abhor'd,
Though fitted still the fluent mass to form.
This to confirm, to prove with polish'd seeds
Seeds harsh full oft combine, whence springs alone
Principiiis, unde est Neptuni corpus acerbum; 
Est ratio secernundi, seorsumque videndi. 
Humor dulcis, ubi per terras crebrius idem 
Percolatur, ut in foceam fluent, ac mansuescat. 
Liquit enim supra tetri primordia viri; 
Aspera, quo magis in terris haerescre possint. 
Quod quoniam docui, pergam connectere rem, quae, 
Ex hoc apta, fidem ducat: primordia rerum 
Finita variare figurarum ratione. 
Quod, si non ita sit, rursum jam semina quaedam 
Esse infinito debebunt corporis auctu. 
Nam, quod eadem una quois vis in brevitate 
Corporis inter se multum variare figuræ 
Non possunt: face enim minumis e partibus esse 
Corpora prima; tribus, vel paullo pluribus, auge: 
Nempe, ubi eas parteis unius corporis omneis, 
Summa atque ima, locans, transmutans dextera lævis, 
Omnimodis expertus eris, quam quisque det ordo
THE NATURE OF THINGS.

The main's disflavour—from the briny wave
The nauseous mass subtract, and all is sweet.
Thus Nature acts: through many a thirsty sand
The surge she filters, fresh'ning in its course,
Till freed, at length, from every acrid pow'r,
Tangled, and fixt behind, the dulcet lymph
Resprings to view, a calm and lucid pool.

This prov'd, what follows, as a truth deriv'd,
But that the forms of seeds, though varying much,
Ne'er vary endless; not unfrequent, else,
Full many a seed must boast a bulk immense:
For many a differing figure ne'er can lurk
In things minute. Deem, then, primordial seeds
Three fancied parts comprise, or grant e'en more,
Invert their order, let the right be left,
Depress the loftiest, the profound exalt,—

progressive proofs of this axiom are, if I mistake not, so clearly advanced by our poet, as to render all comment unnecessary. It is the doctrine of Epicurus himself, as we learn from Plutarch de Placit. Philosoph. 1. i. c. 3. as also from his own epistle to Herodotus, αὐτοὶ τὰς διαφοράς συν ἀπλως ἀπρόθεσμοι εἶναι, ἀλλὰ μηδὲν απεράστωσιν. "The simple forms of different atoms are not infinite, but merely indefinite."

Blackmore discovered, therefore, a scanty knowledge of the system of this philosopher, when, in his apostrophe to Lucretius, in the fourth book of his "Creation," he wrote thus:

Since to your uncompounded atoms you
Figures in number infinite allow,
From which, by various combination, springs
This unconfin'd diversity of things,
Are not, in this, design and counsel clear?

Sir Isaac Newton, as well as Lucretius would have advised him, had they been present, to search for other arguments of wisdom and design, than this infinitude of figures in the primal atoms of matter, and have added, that he could otherwise have no reason to hope for success.
Formarum speciem totius corporis ejus;
Quod super est, si forte voles variare figuras,
Addendum parteis alias erit: inde sequetur,
Adsimili ratione, alias ut postulet ordo,
Si tu forte volès etiam variare figuras.
Ergo formarum novitatem corporis augmen
Subsequitur: quà re non est ut credere possis,
Esse infinitis distantia semina formis;
Ne quædam cægas inmani maxumitate
Esse: supra quod jam docui non esse probare.

Jam tibi Barbaricæ vestes, Melibœaque fulgens
Purpura, Thessalico concharum tincta colore;
Aurea, pavonum ridenti inbuta lepore,
Pepla, novo rerum superata colore, jacerent:
Contemptus sudos Smyrnae, mellisque sapores;
Et cycnea mele, Phœbeaque, dædala chordis,
Carmina, consimili ratione obpressa silerent:

Ver. 503. Already else the purple woof superb
Of Melibœa, robbing for its dye
The Syrian coast,——] The Melibœa, here
alluded to, was a city of Thessaly, at the foot of
mount Ossa, and the birth-place of Philoctetes. It
was universally celebrated, as Vossius has observed,
for the manufacture of its purple dye; a tincture ob-
tained from them urex, or oyster fisheries, established
for this purpose in many parts around the coasts of
Thessaly and Syria. In this manner Virgil alludes to
it, in his description of the games instituted in com-
memoration of Anchises:

Victori chlamydem auratam, quam plurima
circum
Purpura Mæandro duplici Melibœa cucurrit;
Lib. v. v. 250.
The victor’s prize a golden robe, imbued
With Melibœan purple, from the shores
Of intricate Mæander.

Ver. 506. The peacock’s laughing plumage——] The
figure is bold, but not uncommon. I have already
noticed it in a note on B. i. 8. With Lucretius, it
appears to have been a favourite trope; and the reader
Soon will the pigmy mass exhaust complete
Its tiny change of figures: would'st thou, then,
Augment the variance, thou must add, perforce,
New primal matter, hence augmented sole.
Thus from fresh forms increase of size must flow
Perpetual; nor the seeds of things in shape
Can differ endless, or e'en once evince
A bulk immense, as erst the Muse has prov'd.

Already else the purple woof superb
Of Melibœa, robbing for its dye
The Syrian coasts,—already, dropt with gold,
The peacock's laughing plumage else had sunk
By gawdier hues o'erpow'red. The balmy myrrh,
The luscious honey never more had urg'd
A boast unrivall'd; e'en the swan's soft dirge
Had ceas'd, and Phœbus dropt his liquid lyre:

will again find it employed in v. 564 of the present book. With Mr. Gray, it seems to have been equally in favour. In a note on the above, v. 564, I have introduced one passage in proof or this assertion: in the following couplet, from the same exquisite poet, we meet with another:

The laughing flowers that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.

Gessner employs this figure with an equal frequency. I must restrain myself to a single instance, which I shall select from his "Death of Abel:"

"Ein buntes gemische von blumen—lachte der sonne entgegen." "The diversified clusters of flowers laughed beneath the rays of the sun."

Ver. 509. —e'en the swan's soft dirge

Had ceas'd,—] The poets of Greece and Rome have universally adopted the popular error, that the swan never dies, without uttering the most melodious death-song: an opinion, however, as we learn from Pliny, lib. x. c. 20, that neither the natural historians, nor philosophers of the same countries, ever countenanced. See, on this subject, the note on b. iii. 8.
Namque aliis aliud præstantius exoreretur.
Cedere item retro possent in deteriores
Omnia sic parteis, ut diximus in meliores:
Namque aliis aliud retro quoque tetrius esset
Naribus, auribus, atque oculis, orisque sapori.
Quæ quoniam non sunt, quin rebus reddita certa
Finis utrimque tenet summam; fateare necesse est,
Materiam quoque finitis differre figuris.

Denique, ab ignibus ad gelidas hiemisque pruinás
Finitum est, retroque pari ratione remensum est.
Omnis enim, calor ac frigus: medieique tepores
Inter utrasque jacent, explentes ordine summam.
 Ergo finitâ distant ratione creatâ:
Ancipiti quoniam mucroni utrimque notantur;
Hinc flammis, illinc rigidis insessa pruinís.
Quod quoniam docui, pergam connectere rem, quæ,
Ex hoc apta, fidem ducat: primordia rerum,
Inter se simili quæ sunt perfecta figurâ,
Infinita cluere: et enim, distantia quom sit
Formarum finita, necesse est, quæ similes sint,
Esse infinitas; aut summam materiaï

Ver. 526. But mark this truth, a truth connected
close.] Another axiom of the philosophy of
Epicurus, is here advanced in its course: which is,
that although the forms of primal atoms be not in-
site, yet the atoms of every existing form are so.

Our poet has, before, uniformly asserted, that the
atoms at large are innumerable: either, then, those
of every existing figure must be equally innumerable,
or those of some figures must be more numerous than
those of others. But as it is natural to suppose that
All things o’er all prevailing undefin’d.

Thus those by sense abhorr’d, as these belov’d,
To more abhorr’d would yield; each still o’er each,
In sight, or sound, in taste or smell diverse
More hateful rear’d, more hideous, and obscene.
But since such powers exist not, since a bound
Is stampt on all things, we must own, convinc’d,
That primal seeds in shape are bounded too.

From frost to fire, from fire to winter’s frost,
All, all has limits: heat and cold intense
Th’ extremes creating; while progressive warmth
Fills up, between, the modulated scale.
Thus each degree, though varying, varies not
For ever, by extremes adverse confin’d,
Combustion here, and there the polar ice.

But mark this truth, a truth connected close,
That all primordial seeds, of shape alike,
Alike are endless; for though few the forms
Those seeds admit, yet finite were themselves
Th’ ENTIRE of things, a doctrine erst disprov’d,
Finitam constare: id, quod non esse probavi.
Quod quoniam docui, nunc suaviloquis ego paucis
Versibus obtendam, corpuscula materiae
Ex infinito summam rerum usque tenere,
Undique protelo plagarum continuato.
Nam, quod rara vides magis esse animalia quaedam,
Fecundamque magis naturam cernis in illis;
At regio, locoque alio, terrisque remotis,
Multa licet genere esse in eo; numerumque repleri:
Sic, uti quadrupedum cum primis esse videmus
In genere anguimanos elephantos; India quorum
Milibus e multis vallo munitur eburno,
Ut penitus nequeat penetrari: tanta ferarum
Vis est; quarum nos perpauc a exempla videmus.
BOOK II. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Were finite too, by bounds surmountless chain’d.
Come, then, while thus, in short but sweetest verse,
We prove them infinite; prove hence alone
The world’s vast fabric lives, cemented strong
By blows re-active unremitted urg’d.

Few are the forms the casual sight surveys
Of brutes exotic; and, with us, but small
Their unprolific power: yet foreign climes,
And realms far distant, view each class complete,
Boundless in number. Thus, though seldom here
Heaves the huge elephant his pond’rous limbs,
Prince of the savage tribes; yet myriads guard,
As with an iv’ry mound, all India’s sons;
A mound no power can pierce. Such the vast stores
That Nature boasts in orders deem’d most rare.

Thomson, in his picturesque description of Asia, has not forgotten to introduce this gigantic animal:

—where the Ganges rolls his sacred wave,
Or mid the central depths of blackening woods,
High rais’d in solemn theatre around,
Leans the huge elephant.—Regardless he
Of what the never-resting race of men
Project: thrice happy! could he scape their
guile,
Who mine, from cruel avarice, his steps;
Or with his towery grandeur swell their state,
The pride of kings! or else his strength per-
vert,
And bid him rage amid the mortal fray.
Sed tamen, id quoque utei concedam, quam lubet esto
Unica res quaedam nativo corpore sola,
Quoi similis toto terrarum non sit in orbi;
Infinita tamen nisi erit vis materiai,
Unde ea progigni possit concepta, creari
Non poterit: neque, quod super est, procrecere, aliqua.
Quippe et enim sumant oculei, finita per omne
Corpora jactari unius genitalia rei;
Unde, ubi, quâ vi, et quo pacto, congressa coibunt,
Materiæ tanto in pelago, turbâque alienâ?
Non, ut opinor, habent rationem conciliandi:
Sed, quasi, naufragiis magnis multisque coortis,
Disjectare solet magnum mare transtra, cavernas,

Ver. 546. Yet could creation's utmost scope produce
A form unparalleled by all that breathes,
Alone and individual.—] It was the opinion of the
Epicurean school, that the earth itself was an immense system, unorganized indeed, but sustained, in some measure, like animals themselves, by the regular digestion or conversion of elementary atoms continually floating through the infinite void, and subject, like animals, to progressive decay. As, then, no animal is found to exist solitarily and individually in its own class, so, also, continuing the analogy, they deduced an additional argument for a plurality of worlds. The whole of this doctrine is more fully illustrated in the note on ver. 1132 of the present book, to which I refer the reader.

Ver. 557. ——As when the main,
Work'd into fury, many a mighty ship
Wrecks ruthless, and to'ward's every coast impels—
Silius appears, obviously, to have imitated this description of a tempest, in the following lines:

Sic Lagea ratis, vasto velut insula ponto
Conspecta, illis scopolis ubi lubifer Eurus
Naufragium spargens, operit mare: jamque per undas
Et transtra, et mali, laceroque aequi disco, velo,
Et miser fluitant, removend se quora, nautes.

Pum. 1. 322.

So strikes the Lagcean bark, the shore at hand,
Against some rock that skulks beneath the strand,
When arm'd with storms, and scattering ship-wrecks wide,
Fierce Eurus blocks the repercussive tide:
Masts, planks, and seamen, sails, and streamers torn,
O'er the wild waves in one rude wreck are borne,
Yet could creation's utmost scope produce
A form unparallel'd by all that breathes,
Alone and individual,—were the base
Not infinite whence first the monster sprang,
How sprang he then at all? nor birth were his,
'Nor e'en, though born, the power to nurture life.
But grant the primal atoms whence alone
Such individual springs, were finite found,
How, when, and where, by what concerted plan,
What pow'r innate, could e'er those atoms meet,
Through ocean, scatter'd of ungenial seeds?
These time could never join. As when the main,
Work'd into fury, many a mighty ship
Wrecks ruthless, and tow'rs every coast impels

There is a bold picture of the same phenomenon in Dyer's Fleece, which I will transcribe for a comparison. He is speaking of Lord Anson's trending round the coasts of Patagonia:

——fast-gathering tempests rous'd
Huge Ocean, and involv'd him: all around
Whirlwind, and snow and hail, and horror: now
Rapidly, with the world of waters, down
Descending to the channels of the deep,
He view'd th' uncover'd bottom of th' abyss,
And now the stars, upon the loftiest point
Toss'd of the sky-mixt surges. oft the burst
Of loudest thunder, with the dash of seas,
Tore the wild-flying sails, and tumbling masts,
While flames, thick-flashing in the gloom, re-veal'd
Ruins of decks and shrouds, and sights of death.
B. iv.

I much suspect, however, that this description of Dyer, more especially the latter part of it, is drawn from Voltaire, who thus expresses himself in his Henriade:

L'astre brillant du jour à l'instant s'obscurcit;
L'air siffle, le ciel gronde, et l'onde au loin mugit;
Les vents sont dechaines sur les vagues emues;
La foudre etincelante eclate dans les nues;
Et le feu des eclair's, et l'abyme des flots,
Montraient par-tout la mort aux pales matelots.

The reader may accept of the following version:

At once dread darkness veils the bright day-star;
Air sighs, heaven howls, and ocean groans afar:
Loose fly the wild winds o'er the tortur'd waves,
Through the rent clouds the pealing thunder raves;
And fires above, and boundless gulphs below,
To the pale crew, new deaths, new dangers show.

L. iv.
Antennas, proram, malos, tonsasque, natanteis;  
Per terrarum omnes oras fluitantia aplustra  
Ut videantur, et indicium mortalibus edant,  
Infidi maris insidias, vireisque, dolumque,  
Ut vitare velint, neve ullo tempore credant,  
Subdola quom ridet placidi pellacia ponti:  
Sic tibi, si finita semel primordia quaedam  
Constitues, aevom debebunt sparsa per omnem  
Disjectare aetus divorcei materiai:  
Numquam in concilium ut possint conpulsa coire;  
Nec remorari in concilio, nec crescere adaucta:

Ver. 559. — *towards every coast impels*  
Masts, yards, and streamers, cordon, sails, and helms,  
And planks dispersed,*— Cowper appears  
to have had this description of Lucretius before him,  
when writing the following lines, which compose a  
part of his very beautiful little poem, “On the Receipt  
of his Mother’s Picture out of Norfolk:”

But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,  
Always from port withheld, always distrest,—  
Me howling winds drive devious, tempest-tost,  
Sails ript, leems opening wide, and compass lost,  
And day by day some current’s thwarting force  
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.

Few poets have been more felicitous in their de-  
scription of a storm at sea, than the wild and enthu-  
siastic Wieland. It is thus he paints the tremendous  
tempest raised by the avenging Oberon, in con-  
sequence of the premature and unhallowed union of Sir  
Huon and Amanda:

Inzwischen bricht mit fürchtenlichem sausen  
Ein unerhörter sturm von allen seiten los;  
Des erdballs axe kracht, der wolken schwarze  
schoos

Giesst feuerströme aus, das meer beginnt zu  
brausen,  
Die wogen thürmen sich wie berge schäumend auf,  
Die pinke treibt in ungewissem lauf  
Der bootsmann schreit unsonst in sturmbetäubte  
ohren,  
Lant heult’s durchs ganzes Schiff, weh uns wir  
sind verloren!

Der ungezähmten winde wut,  
Der ganze horizon in einen höllenrachen  
Verwandelt, lutter glut, des schiffes stettes krachen,  
Das wechselsweis bald vor der tiefsten flut  
Verschulungen scheint, bald, himmelan getrieben,  
Auf wogenspitzen schwebt, die unter ihm zerstie-  
eben,  
Dies alles, stark genug, die todten aufzuschrecken,  
Musst endlich unser paar aus seinem taumel wecken.

CANT. viii. 18.

Meanwhile the tumult maddens more and more,  
Fierce from all sides at once a whirlwind breaks.  
Rock’d by rude gusts, th’ earth confus’dly  
shakes,

The welkin flames with lightning vaulted o’er:  
High in the air by surging tempests cast,
Masts, yards, and streamers, cordage, sails, and helms,
And planks disparted, teaching as they float
What dangers lurk unseen; what snares to lure
Unthinking mortals;—and forewarning loud
To fly the smooth temptation, nor e'en once
Trust the false waves, though deck'd in loudest laugh:
So, should'st thou make the primal seeds of aught
Once finite, instant the tumultuous war
Of adverse atoms, through the boundless void
Drives them far-distant—never more to meet,
Or met, cohere, or e'en, cohering, grow:

The world of waters bellows to the blast:
The vessel reels at random to and fro,
The boatswain calls in vain, while shrieks of woe
Ring thro' the staggering ship, all hope of safety past!
The wind's unbridl'd rage, the heaven that burns,
Enwrapt in flames like hell's sulphureous tides,
The crackling of the vessel's rifted sides,
That now, as rise and fall the waves by turns,
Sinks, buried in the dark, unfathom'd deep!
Now rocks upon the billow's ridgy steep,
While all beneath in foamy vapour dies;
These sounds, of power to force the dead to rise,
Awake the conscious pair from love's enchanted sleep.

I cannot close this note, long as it is, without re-
commending to the reader's perusal, at his own lei-
sure, that full, and, in my opinion, unrivalled de-
scription of a sea-storm, introduced by Camoens into
the sixth book of his Lusiad. The passage is far
too voluminous for insertion, but it begins thus:
Mas neste passo assi promptos estando,
Eis o mestre, que olhando os ares anda

O apito toca, accordão desportando
Os marinheiros d' húa e d' outra banda, &c.
When shrilly whistling thro' the decks resounds
The master's call, and loud his voice rebounds;
Instant from converse, and from slumber start
Both bands, and instant to their toils they dart, &c.
I quote from Mr. Mickle's version, who has tran-
slated the whole with admirable spirit. On the truly
poetical machinery by which this tempest was al-
layed, and the affrighted navigators conducted to
the desired haven, I have had occasion to refer al-
ready, in the note on Book I. v. 1.

Ver. 565. Trust the false waves, though deck'd in loudest laugh:] See note on Book I. 8. and
505 of Book II. and hence, with much probability,
the classical and accomplished Gray:
Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm:
Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,
That, buck'd in grim repose, expects his evening pay.

Book II. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

BARD ii. 2.
Quorum utrumque palam fieri manifesta docet res;  
Et res progigni, et genitas procrescere posse.  
Esse igitur genere in quo vis primordia rerum  
Infinita palam est, unde omnia subpeditantur.  

Nec superare queunt motus itaque exitiales  
Perpetuo, neque in æternum sepelire salutem:  
Nec porro rerum genitalis, auctificeique,  
Motus perpetuo possunt servare creatas.  
Sic æquo geritur certamine principiorum,  
Ex infinito contractum tempore, bellum.  
Nunc heic, nunc illic, superant vitalia rerum;  
Et superantur item: miscetur funere vigor,  
Quem puerei tollunt, visentes luminis oras:  
Nec nox ulla diem, neque noctem aurora, sequuta est,  
Quæ non audierit, mixtos vagitibus, ægos  
Ploratus, Mortis comites, et Funeris atri.

Illud in hiis obsignatum quoque rebus habere  
Convenit, et memori mandatum mente tener;  
Nihil esse, in promptu quorum natura videtur,  
Quod genere ex uno consistat principiorum:  
Nec quidquam, quod non permixto semine constet.  
Et, quæquomque magis vis multas possidet in sé,  
Atque potestates, ita plurima principiorum  
In sese genera, ac varias docet esse figuræ.
Facts without which Creation's self would fail, 575
As all must thus proceed, augment, mature.
And hence the primal seeds of all that live 580
Must, too, be boundless, whence each want is fed.

Nor can the mortal motions that wear out
The varied forms of things, with utter doom,
Prevail for ever: nor e'en those, revers'd,
Of genial pow'r, that quicken into life,
Can, through perpetual time, that life sustain.

Thus war eternal, midst the seeds of things,
With equal triumph reigns; now here, now there,
The vital pow'rs o'ercoming, and o'ercome.
The sigh funereal mingles with the bleat
Of babes just bursting to the light of heaven;
Nor night o'er day, nor morn o'er night prevails,
But marks the discord—Infancy's shrill cry
Mixt with sick moans, th' apparitors of Death.

This too, attentive, treasure in thy mind:
That nought the sight surveys, the soul conceives,
Flows from one class of primal seeds alone.
Whate'er exists is compound; and the more
The latent powers, the energies it boasts,
The more complex its nature; rear'd to life
From seeds more various, and of various shape.
Principio, tellus habet in se corpora prima,
Unde mare inmensum, volventes frigora, funtes
Adsidue renovent; habet, ignes unde oriantur:
Nam multis subcensa locis ardent sola terræ;
Eximiis vero furit ignibus inpetus Aetnae.
Tum porro nitidas fruges, arbustaque laeta,
Gentibus humanis habet unde extollere possit:
Unde etiam fluidas frundeis, et pabula laeta,
Montivago generi possit præbere ferarum;
Quâ re magna deum mater, materque ferarum,
Et nostri genetrix hæc dicta est corporis una.
First **Earth** herself th’ essential atoms holds
Of streams and fountains, whence the main renews;
Holds in herself the secret seeds of fires,
Oft the brown heath wide-parching, unperceiv’d,
And oft, like Ætna, blazing to the day:
And holds each embryon, whence, to glad mankind,
Springs the gay corn, the blossom’d fruit-tree springs,
Or whence the brutal tribes that roam at large
Draw their green banquets, and possess their shades.

Hence mighty **Mother of th’ Immortal Gods,**
Of brutes, and men, is **Earth** full frequent feign’d.

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the earlier ages of the post-diluvian world are divisible into three classes, the arkite, the solar, and the ophite. The first female divinity ever invented, was, according to Mr. Bryant, a deification of the ark, under the appellation of Isis, Aphrodite, or Venus; and from the circumstance of its containing, in its womb, the whole existing world of animals—even the patriarchs themselves, who were afterwards deified and worshipped—this deity was denominated, in Egypt, where the superstition took deepest root, Da-Meter, Δαμέτηρ, “the mother of gods and men,” the great first principle of all things. In the note above referred to, I have observed, from the same hypothesis, that she had two annual feasts appropriated to her honour; during which periods all her priests assisted in a public exhibition and procession of a little ark, typical of her original existence, and all the people pressed forwards to worship it; and that the greatest degree of joy and idolatrous exultation prevailed on these occasions. In process of time, however, as mankind descended from the period of the flood, this important event became less deeply impressed on their minds. They then beheld all things originating from the earth; from which they also conceived that the sun, moon, and stars, the habitations of their fabulous deities, and, consequently, that these deities themselves, primarily arose. On the earth, as well as the ark, they now therefore conferred the name of Da-Meter, or Δαμέτηρ, “the common mother of all things;” gods and men, as well as plants and animals; writing it, perhaps, originally, Γημέτηρ, Ge-Meter, or “Mother-earth,” which, by an easy convertibility, was transferred into the very title bestowed on Isis, or Aphrodite. Having thus transferred to the Earth the name or title originally applied to Isis, they also instituted a similar system of religious feasts, and this junior Da-Meter, or deified Γη, or Earth, had her own solemn processions and exhibitions, as well as the deified Ark or Isis—of which one is here described by our poet; processions and exhibitions, which were conducted with as much pomp and festivity as those originally invented in honour of Isis or Venus Da-Meter: the only difference consisting in this, that, instead of the sacred Ζήμ (Hip) or ark, in which, during one of the annual feasts, was placed an image of Osiris, or Nax, a crescent car was introduced, in which a female was placed, personifying the Goddess Earth herself; while, instead of pouring water into the ark to prove its soundness and freedom from leaking,
Hanc veteres Graiûm doctei cecinere poëtae
Sedibus in curru bijugos agitare leones:
Aëris in spatio magnam pendere docentes
Tellurem, neque posse in terrâ sistere terram.
Adjunxere feras; quod, quam vis ecfera, proles

sprays of roses, and other flowers, her own immediate productions, were scattered round on every side, and the priests and priestesses were overshadowed with immense quantities of crescent, or circular garlands.

Besides the name of Da-Meter, the ancients also bestowed upon the Earth, after her apotheosis, the additional appellations of Rhea, Ops, Cybele, and Mother of Ida. And, perhaps, the whole of these, like the term Da-Meter itself, were, originally, only so many different titles conferred upon Isis, Aphrodite, or Venus. The first is said to be derived from πη (Reo) to flow, and, consequently, means a fountain: "the fountain, or first source of all things:" but, from the admitted origin of Venus, is far more applicable to her than to the Earth. It is, moreover, contended, that πη and ζωη, the signification of which are nearly alike, were convertible terms, the latter being changed into the former by the use of the Attic dialect; and that they were derived from the same Egyptian radical, whence the modern Copts have acquired their ΤΣΕ and Ω, which still mean "to drink," or "partake of the fountain." But ζωη, ζωη, and Dia, were, doubtless, applied to Venus; and we can have little hesitation, therefore, in admitting that Rhea (πη) was, in like manner, appropriated to her originally; and, like Da-Meter, was hence deduced as a title for the deified Gu or Earth. With respect to the second term, Ops (εος), there can be no doubt, we are told, that this is of arkite origin, and an early appellation of Venus: and that hence Pelopia, or Thyatis, which are commutable terms for the same place, was a city peculiarly dedicated to this goddess. It is also asserted, that Cybele (obviously from Cu-Bel, "the temple of Bel," ) was only an additional appellation for Venus, Isis, or the arkite goddess: that Bel was the chief deity of the Syrians, and represented, like the Egyptians' εος, under the form of a serpent or dragon, which was, unquestionably, an arkite emblem. From Bel, or Belial, the Greeks obtained Βηζωης, which, consistently with this system, is interpreted by Hesychius Δφηώς, Draco: a remark advanced by Mr. Allwood in support of the Bryantine theory. As to the term Ida Mater, it is still more conspicuous, we are told, that this was deduced from Venus, than either of the others. Ida was the name of two mountains, one in Phrygia, and one in Crete: on the former, Venus was fabled to have received the judgment of Paris; and the whole island in which the latter was placed, was peculiarly consecrated to her worship. Admitting the primary hypothesis, it should seem to follow, from these observations, which I have selected with some care, that the whole of the names and titles of Γη, or the deified Earth, were derived from Isis, or Venus, the earliest female divinity personified by the idolaters of Babylon.

Ver. 607. **Paint drawn by lions in a car sublime:**

Virgil acquaints us with the same fact, in the following lines, as well as in many other places:

_Alma parens Idae Deum_, cui Dindyma cordi,
Turrisgerœque urbes, bijugique ad frana leones:

Æn. l. i. v. 252.

—great mother of the deities
With turrets crown'd, on Ida's holy hill,
Fierce lions rein'd, and, curb'd, obey thy will.

DRYDEN:

In this passage, the common editions of Dryden's translation give us _tigers_, instead of _lions_. Virgil himself, however, says nothing of _tigers_, and perhaps the English version is only a typographic error. Macrobius adds the following explanation to that of our own poet: and confirms, in a greater degree, the
Book II.  

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Her the sage bards of Greece, in ancient song,
Paint drawn by lions in a car sublime:
Hence, teaching how, in ether pois’d, she hangs,
Unpropt by aught beneath; the savage beasts
They yok’d, and rein’d, to demonstrate how sure

error of Dryden, or his transcribers: “hac dea leonibus vehitur, validis, impetu, &c.” L. i. c. 21. “This goddess is drawn by lions, animals renowned for their fire and impetuosity. These are qualities which are attributed to the heavens, within whose circumference is contained the air, that sustains and carries forwards the earth.” The motive assigned by Lucretius is, however, much more pertinent and natural.

Ver. 608. ———
in ether pois’d, she hangs
Unpropt by aught beneath; ———]To this couplet and opinion of Lucretius, Ovid refers, in that well-known passage of his Metamorphoses:

Nec circumfuso pendebat in acre tellus
Ponderibus librata suis.

Ere earth, self-balanc’d, was in ether hung.
Whence, perhaps, Milton:

And earth, self-balanc’d, on her centre hung.
The sublime author of the Book of Job has a passage perfectly parallel, Ch. xxvi. 7.

Achilles Tatius, a Platonist, and historian of the sixth century, gives us the following exemplification of the manner in which the earth is thus suspended:

Qual a materia seja não se enxerga,
Mas enxergasse bem que esta composto
De varios orbes, que a divina verga
Compos, e hum centro a todos so tem posto:

The second verse of this bit or couplet, has generally been supposed to refer to the creation of the world out of nothing; but it is hence obvious, that it rather alludes to the cosmology of Idumea, or of Egypt; from the latter of which countries, it is probable, that the philosophers of Greece derived the doctrine before us.

Achilles Tatius, a Platonist, and historian of the sixth century, gives us the following exemplification of the manner in which the earth is thus suspended:

Put,” says he, “a single seed of millet, or grain of any thing similar, into a bladder, and blow the bladder gradually full of air, and the seed or grain will be carried up, and retained in the middle of it. In the same manner, the earth, being on all sides pressed upon equally by the air, remains suspended in its centre.” In Arat. Phenomen. This method of philosophizing, however, cannot but remind us of the Indian story of the elephant and the turtle; and is nearly as deficient in its powers of explanation.

A very different, and certainly a more poetic, if not a more philosophic account, is offered by Lucretius, in its proper place, viz. Book V. 556, and following, of the present version; in which the reader will find a most elegant and complete development of the Ptolemaic system. In the mean time, I cannot avoid noticing, how strictly and exquisitely Camoens, who has adopted the same astronomic hypothesis, has adhered, in a variety of instances, to his great original. A single passage shall suffice for the present:

Qual a materia seja não se enxerga,
Mas enxergasse bem que esta composto
De varios orbes, que a divina verga
Compos, e hum centro a todos so tem posto:

The frame etherial various orbs compose,
In whirling circles now they fell, now rose;
Yet never rose nor fell, for still the same,
Was every movement of the wondrous frame;
Each movement still beginning, still complete,
Its author’s type, self-pois’d, perfection’s seat.
Obficiis debet molliri victa parentum:
Muralique caput summum cinxere coronâ,
Eximiis munita locis quod subintet urbeis:
Quo nunc insigni per magnas prædita terras
Horrifice fertur divinæ Matris imago.
Hanc variae gentes, antiquo more sacrorum,
Idæam vocitant matrem; Phrygiasque catervas
Dant comites, quia primum ex illis finibus edunt

Ver. 612. And, with a mural crown her brows they bound,
'Since with her towers she guards man's civic rights.' That her temples, in this grand
exhibition, were guarded with this mural wreath or coronet, is still further confirmed by the following
lines of Virgil:
——qualis Berecynthia mater
Invehitur currus Phrygius turrita per urbes.
L. vi. v. 784.
——in pomp she makes the Phrygian round
With golden turrets on her temples crown'd.

Ovid has likewise recorded the same fact, and offered the same explanation:
At cur turritâ caput est ornata coronâ?
But with a crown of turrets why bedeck'd?
Is it that turrets she to Phrygia taught?

The Greeks and Romans were accustomed, on public occasions, to distribute wreaths or coronets of
a variety of forms to citizens of distinguished merit of every kind: the decoration varying according to
the species of merit exhibited. The Corona Muralis, of which our poet is here speaking, was bestowed by
the commander in chief, as a mark of honour on the soldier who first scaled the walls of a besieged town.

It was composed of gold, and ornamented with embrasures, in imitation of the battlements of fortified
walls or towers: affording a happy emblem of the right which every distinct city or state has to regulate
its own political constitution, and to resist any hostile attempt or encroachment on the part of its neigh-
bours.

Our own poet Denham has here not unaptly compared the scenery of spires and battlements around
Windsor to this imperial diadem:

A crown of such majestic towers does grace
The gods' great mother, when her heavenly race
Do homage to her.

Ver. 616. Her many a stately, from boister legends, call
Parent of Ida, and with Phrygian nymphs
I have already observed, that there were two moun-
tains of much celebrity thus denominated among the
Greeks. One was in Phrygia, at a short distance from Troy, on the brow of which Paris is said to
have adjudged the golden apple to Venus: and the other in the island of Crete, where was the immediate
residence of the priests of 'This mighty mother of both gods and men,' who were named Curetes, but
who were themselves of Phrygian descent, and to whom our poet adverts in ver. 639. In either place,
therefore, this Idaean deity may have been supposed to have peculiarly resided.
The wildest young a mother's cares may tame;
And, with a mural crown her brows they bound,
Since with her tow'rs she guards man's civic rights.
Thus deckt, tremendous, round from realm to realm,
Still moves the solemn pomp, by all ador'd.

Her many a state, from holiest legends, call
Parent of Ida; and with Phrygian nymphs
Surround, her fair attendants; Phrygian term'd,
Since these the climes where first, as fame reports,
DE RERUM NATURA.

Per terrarum orbeis fruges coepisse creari.
Gallos adtribuunt; quia, numen quei violarint 
Matris, et ingratei genitoribus inventei sint,
Significare volunt indignos esse putandos,
Vivam progeniem quei in oras luminis edant.
Tympana tenta tonant palmis; et cymbala circum
Concava, rauco inoque minantur cornua cantu,

and living upon the labours of the plough. And,
3dly, As citizens, consociating for common security,
regulated by common laws, and defending themselves
from foreign attacks by walls and fortresses.

Ver. 621. Her priests are eunuchs]—There is a
fiction recorded by many ancient writers, that those
who had determined to devote themselves to the
priesthood of Cybele, or the Isca Mater, were
initiated into the office by a kind of baptism in the
river Gallus, a considerable stream in Phrygia: the
waters of which had no sooner approached their lips
than they became instantly delirious, and castrated
themselves. Many of the Christian fathers have al-
uled to this tradition. St. Jerom has related the
whole story as a truth; and Tertullian, from this effect
of the Phrygian river, denominates the high priest of
this goddess Archi-gallus.

There is no necessity, however, for attributing
to the waters of the Gallus any such miracle. The
enthusiasm engendered by superstition has in all ages
been equal to such an effect. The priests of Baal, in
the midst of their solemnities, were accustomed to
flout aloud, and mangle themselves with knives and
lancets, 1 Kings, xviii. 28; and long before this
period, a similar kind of penance and mortification
was so common even among the Hebrews themselves,
in the midst of their funeral ceremonies, that Moses
was expressly commanded by the Almighty to pro-
hibit so barbarous a rite. A similar prohibition was
also contained in the laws of Solon, and composed a
part of the Roman law of the twelve tables, Mulieres
genas ne radunto, neve lessum funeris ergo habento. The
devotees of Syria, the votaries of Isis, and Bellona,
were all equally severe upon themselves, yet none of
them have exceeded the fakirs of Hindustan. In the
time of our Saviour we learn, Matt. xix. 12.
that there were among the Jews some " who
had made themselves eunuchs for the king-
" dom of heaven's sake;" and it is well known, that
several centuries afterwards, Origen submitted volun-
tarily, and for the same reason, to the same barbarous
punishment. Origen, however, appears to have had
more to plead in his favour, than many others who had
equally mangled themselves. He had entered into
a vow of celibacy, which, from being poffessed of a
warm and sanguineous temperament, he did not at all
times find it easy to adhere to. His own confessions
indeed state him to have been frequently tempted by
concupiscent impulses; and fearful of his being led
astray by their violence, he emasculated himself to
preserve his virtue. In this respect, however, he was
peculiarly unfortunate; for after having submitted to so
cruel an operation, he was condemned by an ecumeni-
BOOK II.  

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

The field was cultur'd, and the harvest rose.

Her priests are eunuchs—emblem this devis'd
To teach that sons rebellious to their sires,
Or those the sacred fame that dare traduce
Of her who bore them, never shall themselves,

Worthless and vile, by gods* and men abhorr'd,

Boast aught of babe to glad their longing sight.

With vig'rous hand the clam'rous drum they rouse
And wake the sounding cymbal: the hoarse horn
Pours forth its threat'ning music, and the pipe

cal council, for not having had fortitude enough to
resist the temptations to which he was exposed, and
which constituted, it was added, a chief part of his
duty.

Ver. 627. With vig'rous hand the clam'rous drum they rouse
And wake the sounding cymbal: the hoarse horn

This wild uproar and intermixture of instruments,

priests, and people, are thus imitated by Ariosto:

Un muover d'arme, un correr di persone,
E di talacimanni un gridar d'alto,
E di tamburi un suon misto, e di trombe
Il mondo assorda; e'l ciel par ne rimbombe.

Ver. 629. — the pipe

With Phrygian airs distracts the madd'ning
mind; the movement, termed by the ancients, Phrygian, was the most enthusiastic, and

best calculated to fill the soul with fury, of any
musical mode the Greeks were acquainted with; and was, in this respect, diametrically opposite to the
Lydian, which had more of the modern piano, and

was well adapted to subdue the fiercer passions of the
breast, or melt it into feelings of tenderness and

love. Dryden, therefore, has, with much critical ac-
curacy, represented the old minstrel Timotheus as
selecting this latter genus for the purpose of soften-
ing the violence of soul, to which he had just before

excited the Macedonian conqueror by the true Phry-
gian movement:

Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures.

7
The wonderful accounts we have received of the effects of music in ancient times, compared with what occur in the present day, have induced many persons to regard the whole as fabulous: while others have imagined that, with all our boasting, the ancients far exceeded us in their knowledge of harmonics. This last is certainly, however, an erroneous opinion, for we do not know, anterior to the invention of Guido Aretine, in the thirteenth century, that musicians had ever the smallest idea of counterpoint, or the science of harmoniously combining the notes of different diapasons, which has infinitely added to the extent and perfection of the musical art. The Greeks had, unquestionably, three distinct genera, and perhaps a greater variety of modes than exist in the present day; but these genera were never blended together so as to produce the effect of harmony;—the diatonic being always employed separately from the chromatic, and this again from the enharmonic, and each merely differing from the other two by a variation in its intervals. How then comes it to pass, if there be any truth in the records or traditions referred to by Lucretius and Dryden, if almost every passion could be either excited or allayed, and a variety of diseases removed or mitigated by the skilful performer in past ages, that we so seldom meet with the same wonderful effects in the present day? I incline to believe, that much more is narrated of the effects of ancient music, than was ever justified by fact; but it would evince a most unreasonable scepticism, to discredit every thing that is related upon this subject, because many of the cases recorded are fairly and incontrovertibly attested. I incline to believe then, also, that much of this deficiency of influence among ourselves is produced by the very perfection itself, which the musical art has acquired in modern times; and that, on the great mass of the people,—in reality, on every one who is not a scientific student, and capable of remarking, by strict and rigid attention, the harmonic relation of the individual tones of one part with those of another,—pure and simple melody has a much more lively and empassioned effect than the most correct and elaborate piece of harmony, or music in parts, though performed with the advantage of the most brilliant execution. Of this, indeed, the experience of every day is a sufficient proof. Concerts of instrumental music, alone, are not so generally attended upon as those combined with vocal, in which there is less room for the display of harmonic relations: and, if I be not much mistaken, the attention of an un instructed audience is more rigidly fixt on a solo, whether vocal or instrumental, than on a trio or a glee. The mind of the multitude is distracted by the richness and variety of compound music; and the nervous system is rather generally agitated, than particularly excited to any individual passion. The grandest chorus in an Oratorio, or the fullest finale in an opera, produces much less impression upon an audience, than a single song, or unsupported air; and the Braes of Ballendyne, Logan Water, or the Birks of Endermay, give more sensible pleasure, than the most laboured passage of Haydn, Pleyel, Giornovichi, or Viotti. It is impossible for any one not to have noticed this, who has ever frequented places of public amusement. The former are never encored, but the latter repeated; and, provided the music be descriptive, or sentimental, even the merit of the voice itself is not of extreme consequence.—Mrs. Jordan receives as hearty a welcome as Madame Banti. Simple, unsupported melody, is within the comprehension of the people at large; but the complicated and elaborate overture, or chorus, is too perplexed for them to understand. The same thing occurs in other facts of a similar kind. Men of letters, and liberal education, may admire the majestic style of Dr. Johnson, or the brilliancy of Mr. Burke; but the uninstructed multitude will, at all times, be infinitely better pleased, as well as more affected, with the unadorned simplicity of De Foe’s Robinson Crusoe, or Keate’s Voyage to the Pelew Islands.

Music, moreover, is a stimulus, acting in some degree on all elastic bodies, animate or inanimate, with the force of a blow; and diminishing hereby,
With Phrygian airs distracts the madd’ning mind,
While arms of blood the fierce enthusiasts wield

and in various cases totally destroying, the attraction of cohesion. In some description of bodies, it produces more effect than in others; yet it does not appear, I believe, in any instance, that this effect, or influence, results from a mere assemblage of different sounds, or rather from a mere assemblage of the concordant sounds of different diapasons; but is singly excited by some individual tone of sound, simple and uncombined, and in a certain mysterious manner symphonicous with the constitution of the body affected. Dogs, rats, and other animals, who would be frightened away by a sudden burst of music in parts, have their attention frequently rivetted, in the most fixed and extraordinary manner, by the operation and frequent recurrence of certain notes consentaneous with their feelings, or nervous conformation.

The French, among other fancies, not long ago made a public trial of the effect of music upon elephants; and for this purpose, erected an orchestra near the booth of a male and female animal of this description. The concert was opened with some light, varied airs, and a base in F major, in the moderate character: it passed on to a trio, from Gluck in F minor; a solo, likewise in a minor key, and some few overtures played in full harmony by all the band together. The animals were at first frightened; but afterwards pleased with whatever was performed, and in whatever key. But the piece that far most affected them was the beautiful canzonette, O ma tendre Musette! executed as a solo, and without accompaniments. See Letter to the authors of the Decade Philosophique.

The Dutchman, who is related by Morhoff to have had a power of breaking goblets and wine-glasses with his voice when exalted to a certain pitch, was incapable of producing the same effect by an equal quantity of sound produced from a combination of different notes; and must have been so, though it had equalled the volume of the fifteen hundred musicans assembled a few years since, at Westminster-abbey, to commemorate the birth of Handel. Kircher, in the same manner, informs us of some particular stones that would tremble excessively at the sound of one peculiar organ-pipe, but were insensible to the action of every other. Such being the effect of the melopoea, or simple melody, upon the inanimate and brute-creation, it is impossible that it should not have an equal effect upon certain combinations or classes of human nerves: and I am persuaded, that in a variety of diseases, in which the nervous system is the chief seat of attack, it might often be introduced with advantage, were music ever scientifically studied as a branch of therapeutics. Among the ancients, we have many diseases mentioned as having been cured by music, which, I am very ready to confess, appear to have been much more benefited by its mechanical, than by its sympathetic effects. It was a common prescription in rheumatic and gouty complaints, as we learn from Theophrastus, Aulus Gallius, and even Galen himself. But it is highly probable, that all its beneficial results, or at least the greater part of them, in these cases, flowed rather from the exercise of dancing, with which it was always accompanied, together with the perspiration, and copious drinking, which attended such exercise, than from any internal or sympathetic influence it was capable of exerting. When, therefore, Pliny informs us, Lib. xxviii. cap. i. upon the authority of Cato, that persons, with strained and dislocated limbs, had frequently recovered from the use of a remedy of this kind, to render the assertion at all credible, we must believe, that, from the violence of the strain in the latter case, the limb had been merely supposed to have been dislocated, than that a reduction of the luxated bone should hence actually have occurred. Although, undoubtedly, if a man, who had dislocated his knee or his ankle, could be prevailed upon to engage in a brisk dance, the action of the dance itself might as effectually, in some instances, restore the injured joint to its due situation, as the more topical and scientific assistance of the chirurgical practitioner himself.

It is not even improbable, that the cure of the bite
Ingratos animos, atque inopia pectora volgi
Conterrere metu quae possint numine divae.

Ergo, quom primum, magnas inventa per urbēis,
Munificat tacitâ mortaleis muta salute:
Ære atque argento sternunt iter omne viarum,
Largificâ stipe ditantes; ninguinque rosarum
Floribus, umbrantes Matrem, comitumque catervam.
Heic armata manus, Curetas nomine Græcei
Quos memorant Phrygios, inter se sorte catervis
Ludunt, in numerumque exsultant, sanguine fletei:

of the tarantula, if, in reality, music have any effect
upon this disease at all,—of which the celebrated
Neapolitan professor Cirillo has much doubted, but
which is supported by the concurrent testimony of
Redi, Mead, and Fontana,—is performed in the same
mechanical way. Like opium, the poison of the ta-
rantula is found to produce a very considerable dispo-
sition to stupor and apoplexy. Strong, nervous sti-
lumants, continued till the violence of their influence
have subsided, must, in both cases, therefore, be highly
rational and beneficial; and it is not at all impro-
bable, in persons more especially of irritable constitu-
tions, that musical tones upon a key, adapted to the
peculiar genus of their nervous system, and incess-
antly persevered in, may protract life, whether ac-
companied with dancing, or not, but especially in
the latter case, till the extraneous and morbid matter
have ceased to operate, and be entirely discharged
through some of the emunctories of the body.
Quere, Is it altogether irrational to employ such a
stimulus in the desperate case of canine madness?
But in diseases strictly mental, the powers of the
melopoea might, I think, be more advantageously
studied and made use of, than in any other class of
disorders whatever; and upon which, indeed, it
might operate by its own sympathetic influence.
Alexander, Scipio, Saul, the attendants on Orphea,
or the Mater Ideæ of Lucretius, are not the only
persons of whom we have credible reports, that their
passions were either maddened or sobered by different
applications of different musical powers. Niewentyt
and South, in modern times, make mention of simi-
lar facts. Eric, king of Denmark, is reported to
have been roused, at all times, to the most furious
acts, by the performance of certain compositions of
a musician, whom he pensioned. And Boyle, who
has professedly written on this subject, relates the
case of a woman, who could never avoid shedding
tears, as also that of a man, who could never retain
his urine, upon the performance of particular tunes,
symphonous with their respective constitutions.

But it is not the music of the times, but the man-
ners also that have changed, and hereby rendered the
above, and similar effects, much less frequent than
might otherwise have been expected, even allowing
that the most scientific attention had been paid to
sympathetic melody. The simpler the sphere of life
in which mankind move, unquestionably the stronger
the passions to which they are subjected. Whether
the exercise of such violent passions be more or less
To fright th’ unrighteous crowds, and bend profound
Their impious souls before the pow’r divine.

Thus moves the pompous idol through the streets,
Scatt’ring mute blessings, while the throngs devout
Strew, in return, their silver and their brass,
Loading the paths with presents, and o’ershade
The heavenly form, and all th’ attendant train
With dulcet sprays of roses, pluckt profuse.

A band select before them, by the GREEKS
CURETES call’d, from PHRYGIAN parents sprung,
Sport with fantastic chains, the measur’d dance

for the general benefit of society, is not now an object of inquiry: but it is an indubitable fact, that before mankind become tamed into a relish for civil society and habit, education and example have taught them to command their own feelings; their passions, as they are fewer, are more active, and of course more easily worked upon by any consentaneous stimulus whatever.

Music, then, when employed in the form of simple and unsupported melody, is a natural stimulus, operating upon the constitution of inanimate, as well as animate beings; but far more impressively upon the latter. And we perceive clearly why, in the earlier and less cultivated ages of the world, the powers of melody were possed of a much more general influence than in the present day, even when carried to its utmost degree of perfection. We perceive, clearly, why the highland pipe, the reed of Pan, the harp of Ossian, or the rude and barbarous songs or instruments of the natives of Otaheite, Africa, or America, should possess a greater enchantment over their respective audiences, than the most elaborate music of Europe over the more polished societies to which it is addressed. The passions of the former are stronger, and they are sooner and more violently affected by the application of general stimulants of every kind.

Still, however, in the present day, and resisted as it is by the present complicated system of passions and manners, its effects are often too obvious to be questioned. And I am confident, that the science of melody might be much more effectually employed by our modern empyrics in the extirpation of a variety of chronic diseases, than the occult and pretended powers, either of animal magnetism, or metallic tractors. We need not recur for its effects, with the Platonic philosophers, to their anima mundi, nor, with Baptista Porta, to magic; its mode of influence is as obvious, and in definite circumstances, I apprehend, as unequivocal as those of gravitation, or muscular motion.

Ver. 640. A band select before them,—

Sport with fantastic chains, the measur’d dance

Weaving enfuriate,—] These kinds of devotional processions and dancings were not confined to Greece alone, but appear to have been in common use among ancient nations of every diversified religion. They constituted a part of the ceremonies of the Hebrews themselves; and hence, at the time of

N n 2
the removal of the ark from the family of Abinadab, "David, and all the house of Israel, played before Jehovah on all manner of instruments made of firwood, even on harps and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.—And David danced before Jehovah with all his might." Sam. ii. chap. vi. 5—14. And it appears, in the next chapter, that Michal, his consort, was cursed with barrenness, for having despised the sacred solemnity.

In the beautiful oriental story of Dushwanta, and Sacoontala, whence the poet Chahidas drew the subject for his Fatal Ring, a drama which Sir William Jones has elegantly translated from the Sanscritte, we meet with a similar procession. Dushwanta was on the road that led to the recluse habitation of the spotless Sacoontala: "He departed," says the historian, "under the escort of a numerous army, composed of horse and foot, of elephants and chariots; he marched along, amid the shouts of the soldiers, resembling the roaring of lions, the clangor of the shower of flowers was sprinkled down upon his head, while here and there troops of the priesthood stood chanting his praise." Wilkins’s Translation. See Dalrymple’s Oriental Repository, Vol. II.

But the Phrygian dance, here referred to, seems to be chiefly imitated, or, perhaps, only retained, in all its extravagance, on the annual return of the Hindu festivity of ablution in the waters of the Ganges. See Mem. Nat. Inst. Sciences Morales et Politiques, tom. iv. p. 41, 42. Mem. de M. Lescallier.  

Ver. 644. —shaking their tremendous crests.] The idea forms a part of the well-known description of Hector, when about to embrace his infant son, who immediately clung to his nurse’s bosom:

—πατρος φίλοι οὗν αυτοκτόνοι

Σειράς τιμώσα μια λαθραί νεωτέρω

Δινοι από αμφιθαλη χειρόν κορίτσι ναίοντα νοσαί.

II. Z. 467.

Scarc’d at the sight of his beloved sire,
The brass deep-dreading, and the hairy crest
That shook tremendous o’er his nodding helm.

Ver. 645. These picture, haply, the Dictæan train, Alike Curetes term’d, as fame reports, &c.] Saturn, in consequence of the decree of the Fates, that he should be dethroned and expelled his kingdom by one of his sons, was accustomed, according to the Greek mythologists, to destroy and devour them as soon as they were born, intending hereby to frustrate the determination of the Fates themselves. Rhæa, Cybele, or the Mater Idea of Lucretius, for she had an infinite variety of names, was the wife of Saturn, and was delivered of Jupiter in the island of Crete; whose life she endeavoured to preserve from the barbarous custom of her husband, by concealing him, at first, in a secret and retired cave, and afterwards, by entrusting him to the care of six brothers of his own age, named Curetes, whom she designed for, and afterwards actually made, priests to herself. These companions of the infant Jupiter she instructed, at all times, to encompass him, and drown his cries with their clashing shields, or the music of their cymbals; on which last instrument they had been already taught to perform, whenever Saturn was at hand, and hunting for the young divinity.
BOOK II.

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Weaving enfuriate, charm'd with human blood,
And madly shaking their tremendous crests.
These picture, haply, the Dictæan train,
Alike Curetes term'd, as fame reports,
Who drown'd the infant cries of Jove in Crete,

To the whole of this tradition Callimachus refers
In his hymn to Jupiter:

Οὐλαὶ ἔτη Κουρεῖται σὲ περὶ, παρὰν ἀρχαιότατο,
Ταῦτα παντελῶς, ἵνα Κρόνος οὐκ εἴη χρὴ
Αστείος ἤτοι, καὶ μη στο κουρεῖτος.

Thee the Curetes, when a babe, conceal'd
With close comming'd dance, and clashing shield;
Thus striking loud their arms o'er Saturn's ear
To drown thine infant cries of grief and fear.

The origin of this fable is thus developed upon
Mr. Bryant's system: From Da-Meter, or the
deified earth, "the common mother of gods and
men," Saturn proceeded, as her first-born offspring.
But Saturn, as his name imports, is a type, either
of Ether itself, or the ethereal fires, as the sun,
moon, and stars; and differs not essentially from the
Greek Ωυρῷος, which is literally, "the heavens."

In process of time, however, Saturn is feigned to
have married the deified Γας, or Da-Meter; and from
this junction proceeded Jupiter. But Xuth, or
Xuth-P'-Ait-Or, (Jupiter) "the temple of inspiration
of the radiant Xuth," or "Xuth, the sun,"
was, undoubtedly, an arkite deity; and so precisely
accords, as he is described by Herodotus, with
Noah or Osiris, that there can be no doubt of both
being the same person. Xuth, Jupiter, or Osiris,
was, therefore, the male deity, and supreme object
of arkite idolatry, as Isis, Aphrodite, or Venus, was
the female. The Curetes (Cur-Ait-Es, "most il-
nustrious luminaries,"') here spoken of as the compa-
nions or educators of Jupiter, were so many priests
ministering to him as the arkite deity: and the re-
mainder of the fable, which asserts the strong incli-
nation of Saturn to destroy and devour him, and
that these Curetes surrounded and defended him
with their shields, imports a contest between the
idolatry of the sun, and that of the ark, at a period
when the latter was either in a state of infancy, or at
a low ebb; and the vigour with which its cause was
espoused by its priests and votaries: a vigour, in-
deed, which, according to the prosecution of the
fable, was eventually crowned with the completest
success. For we are told, that Jupiter, or the arkite
deity, at length, overcame Saturn, or the solar deity,
and banished him from Heaven, affording a type of
the triumph of the arkite worship, or the religion of
Isis and Osiris in Egypt; from which country, there
can be no doubt that the Helladians derived the
whole of this story.

The fable of Saturn's devouring his own offspring
is, however, highly beautiful, if considered under
another and a more obvious allegory. Saturn, or
Chronos, was the first-born of Da-Meter, or the Dea-
Meter, and the great parent of all beings, whether
gods or men. As Chronos, he was also the sun
himself, the prime fountain of light and heat, which
his name immediately implies:—Chronos (Ὑρῷος)
meaning nothing more than irradiation, or ethereal
fire. According to the systems of most of the ancient, as
well as most of the modern philosophers, the cor-
ruption or destruction of one thing is but the gene-
ration of another;—and the heat of the sun destroys
what its heat has also brought to perfection. The
great luminary, and original fountain of all things,
was hence allegorically represented as devouring his
own offspring. The allegory became, in process of
time, a part of popular mythology; and human sac-
crifices were offered to him in Crete, Carthage, and
Latium, as also in every other country in which his
worship prevailed. See note on Book I. 302.
Armatae, in numerum pulsarent æribus æra,
Ne Saturnus eum malis mandaret adeptus,
Æternumque dare matri sub pectore volnus.
Propterea, magnam armatei Matrem comitantur:
Aut, quia significant divam prædicere, ut armis,
Ac virtute, velint patriam defendere terram;
Præsidioque parent, decorique, parentibus esse.

Quæ, bene et eximie quam vis disposta ferantur,
Longe sunt tamen a verâ ratione repulsa.
Omnis enim per se divôm natura, necesse est,
Inmortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur,
is thus said to have introduced among mortals the
Golden Age:

Is genus indocile ac dispersum montibus altis
Composuit, legesque dedit; Latiumque vocari
Maluit, his quoniam latuisset tutus in oris.
Aurea, quæ perhibent, illo sub rege fuerunt
Sæcula: sic placidâ populos in pace regebat;

Ver. 650. lest Saturn the shrill shriek
Should trace, and Rhēa shed eternal tears.] Of
Rhea, see the preceding note. Saturn is represented by
different traditions to have been the husband, the son,
and brother of Rhea. He was once imprisoned by his
brother Titan, in consequence of a dispute between
them, and liberated from his confinement by his son Ju-
piter. Still apprehending, however, in consequence of
the declaration of the oracle upon this subject, that Ju-
piter would seize from him his crown, and subvert his
government, he continued to devise a variety of plots
to destroy him; and hence it occurred, that Jupiter
was at length compelled to depose him; and actually
banished him from the island of Crete, over which he
had reigned. Saturn fled, with all speed, from the fury
of his son, who still pursued him, and secreted him-
self, according to Virgil, in the country which, on
this account, was afterwards denominated Latium,
or the hiding-place. Here he collected, from all
quarters, a large body of subjects, and appears to have
learnt wisdom from his adversity; for he drew up a
most excellent code of laws, governed with
impartial justice, and even paternal affection, and

Vossius, in consequence of Saturn's being reported,
by another tradition, to have been the son of Cœlum
and Terra (heaven and earth), believes him to be syn-

DRYDEN.
When round the boy divine, in arms they danc'd,
Boys still themselves, and beat to measur'd sounds
Their clashing shields, lest Saturn the shrill shriek
Should trace, and Rhea shed eternal tears.
Thus these the matron-goddess now precede:
Or else, perchance, they paint how ev'ry breast
Should burn with patriot fire, and ev'ry arm
Prove the firm guardian of a parent's years.

All these, though pageants well-devis'd, and bold,
Wide wander still from philosophic fact.
For, far from mortals, and their vain concerns,
In peace perpetual dwell th' immortal gods:

country of Latium, and the retreat of Adam from
the presence of the Almighty in the garden of Eden.
De Philosoph. cap. vi. Cicero, however, gives us
a very different derivation of the term Saturn; and
endeavours, at the same time, to account for the
romantic story of his eating his own children. "He
was denominated Saturn," observes he, "from his
extreme age—his having been saturated with years.
He is represented as having been accustomed to de-
vour his sons, because time consumes the different
spaces of months and years; and though filled with
the ages that are elapsed already, continues still insa-
tiable." Saturnus appellatus est quod saturetur annis,
&c. de Nat. Deor. 1. ii. The preceding note offers
however, if I mistake not, a much happier allegory.

Ver. 658. For, far from mortals, and their vain con-
cerns,
In peace perpetual dwell th' immortal gods:

These six verses are to be found, without any al-
teration, in Book I. 57, and following; in the note
on which passage I have observed, that the Epicu-
reans never meant to exclude the existence of beings
superior to man both in rank and happiness; be-
ings whom they denominated and regarded as
gods, but whose faculties were incapable, either of
creating, or governing the universe; and who were
themselves dependent upon the supreme cause of all
things. These exalted spirits seem to have constituted,
in the Epicurean creed, what the order of angels con-
stitute in the Christian, only with this difference, that
the latter, though perfectly happy, and exempt from
cares and sorrows, are constantly engaged in the su-
perintendence of the moral world. "Ne se peut-il
point," says Leibnitz, "qu'il y a un grand espace
au dela de la region des etoiles? Que se soit le ciel
empyreé ou non, toujours cet espace immense qui
environne toute cette region pourra être rempli de
bonheur et de gloire. Il pourra être conçu comme
l'ocean, ou se rendent les fleuves de toutes les creatures
bien heureuses, quand elles seront venues à leur per-
fection dans le systeme des etoiles." Theod. p. i. 19.
Without translating this passage, I shall give the
verses of Akenside upon it, who denominates this
seat of felicity, and, probably, with a reference to
Lucretius as well as to Leibnitz:
Semota a nostri aebus, sejunctaque, longe.
Nam, privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
Nec bene promentis capitur, neque tangitur ira.
Terra quidem vero caret omni tempore sensu;
Sed, quia multarum potitur primordia rerum,
Multa, modis multis, ecfert in lumina solis.
Heic, si quis mare Neptunum, Cereremque vocare

Th' empyreal waste, where happy spirits hold,
Beyond this concave heaven, their calm abode.

PLEAS. OF IMAG. I. 202.
The disembodied spirits of good and virtuous men, are represented in the same glorious system, as associating with them, and partaking of their felicity. No idea can be more consoling to those who are left behind; and it forms, as it ought to do, the common theme of our monumental apostrophes. Camoens thus begins a beautiful sonnet upon the death of his friend, Donna Catalina de Ataside.

Alma minha gentil, que te partiste
Taä cedo desta vida descontente,
Respona lâ no cee eternamente,
E viva en cã na terra sempre triate.

Go, gentle spirit! now supremely blest,
From scenes of pain and struggling virtue go!
From thy immortal seat of heavenly rest
Behold us ling'ring in a world of woe!

HAYLEY.

Ver. 663. Vice no revenge, and virtue draws no boon.] Happiness, according to Epicurus, was totally inconsistent with a subjection to human passions of every kind. The tranquil beatitude of superior beings could never, therefore, be disturbed either by suffering virtue, or triumphant vice. Upon this subject we have his own words, as recorded by

Diogenes Laertius, x. 139: To μακαριον, και αφθαρτι, ειτε αυτο πραγματα εχειν, ειτε αλλη παρηγει, ειτε ευς εγγιας, ειτε καιρις, συνισταται, which passage Cicero has thus rendered: Quod beatum aeternumque sit, id nec habere ipsum negotii quidquam, nec exhibere alteri; itaque neque ira, neque gratia, teneri. De Nat. Deor. i. 17. “That which is blessed and immotal can never be disturbed with concerns either of its own or of other beings; nor can it be affected either with love or hatred.”

Mr. Cowper, following the general, but erroneous opinion entertained concerning the tenets of this school of philosophy, is hence rather too severe upon it in the following verses:

Yet thus we doat, refusing, while we can,
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods, such as guilt makes welcome, gods that sleep
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amus’d spectators of this bustling world.

TASK, Book V.

Annaeus Seneca has imitated this verse of our poet most obviously, in the following address to Fortune:

—Sed cur idem
Qui tanta regia, sub quo vasti
Pondera mundi librata suos
Ducunt orbis; hominum nimium

DE RERUM NATURE. Lib. II.
Each self dependent, and from human wants
Estrang’d for ever. There no pain pervades,
Nor dangers threaten; every passion sleeps,
Vice no revenge, and virtue draws no boon.

Meantime the earth sensation never knows;
But, blest with the rude principles of things,
In various mode hence various forms she rears.
Call, if thou chuse it, the resounding deep
Neptune, and Ceres term the golden grain;

Securus ades? non solicitus
Prodesse bonis, nocuisse malis.

Whence springs it then, that thou, whose power
Sways every scene through every hour,
The radiant orbs, through ether hurl’d,
The balance of the buoyant world,
Should’st look with unconcern below
On human weal and human woe,
Unanxious to reward the just,
Or tread th’ unrighteous to the dust.

See also note on Book I. 62.

Ver. 667. Call, if thou chuse it, the resounding deep
Neptune, and Ceres term the golden grain;
Vida had, probably, our poet in his memory, when he wrote the following:
Quid cum Neptunum dicunt mare, vina Lyaeum,
Et Ceream frumenta———

They now name Ceres for the golden grain,
Bacchus for wine, and Neptune for the main.

It is not often the philosophers of a nation, but the people themselves, who thus multiply gods, and trace, in every attribute or operation of one Supreme Creator, a distinct and adorable existence. Hesiod enumerates thirty thousand deities, acknowledged and worshipped in his own day; and Bruxillus, long afterwards, indeed, declared in the Roman Senate, that the deities avowed by the state amounted to at least two hundred and eighty thousand. But the enlightened philosopher, whether among the Greeks or the Romans, who admitted a supreme intelligence of any kind, seldom divided the godhead, and contemplated this confused assemblage of popular divinities as nothing more than mere images of his different attributes and operations. In this belief the more intelligent of the poets themselves united; and most of them could associate with Æschylus, in the assertion: Ζeus εστιν αδικ, Ζεα τι γη, Ζεας ἐστιν ομονοι, Ζεα τι παρα. Strom. v. “Jupiter is the air, Jupiter is the earth, Jupiter is the heaven, all is Jupiter.” or, as Alexander the Epicurean expresses it: “the supreme power is sometimes denominated Jupiter, sometimes Apollo, sometimes Pallas.” Hunc deum appellavit aliquando Jovem, aliquando Apollinem, et aliquando Palladem. Albert. Magn. Phys. Tract iii. c. 13.

So Virgil:
Ab Jove principium, Muse: Jovis omnia plena.
All springs from Jove, and all of Jove is full.

It is the same among the Asiatics. The unlettered Hindu, like the unlettered citizen of ancient Rome, pays his homage to deities without number; but the learned regards the eternal Brem, as one and the same power under all this endless divarication,
Constituet fruges, et Bacchi numine abuti
Mavolt, quam laticis proprium proferre vocamen ;
Concedamus, ut hic terrarum dictitet orbem
Esse deùm Matrem, dum verâ re tamen ipse.

Sæpe itaque, ex uno tōndentes gramina campo,
Lanigeræ pecudes, et equorum duellica proles,
Buceriæque greges, eodem sub tegmine cœli,
Ex unoque sitim sedantes flumine aquai,
Dissimili vivunt specie, retinente parentem
Naturam ; et mores generatim quæque imitantur :
Tanta est, in quo vis genere herbæ, materiaï
Dissimilis ratio ; tanta est in flumine quoque.
Hinc porro, quem vis animantem ex omnibus una
Ossa, crōor, venæ, color, humor, viscera, nervei,
Constituunt ; quæ sunt porro, distantia longe,
Be Bacchus wine, its vulgar source forgot,
And e'en this mass of senseless earth define
Parent of gods; no harm ensues,—but mark,
'Tis fiction all, by vital facts disprov'd.

Thus varies earth in product; and, alike
In primal seeds, thus varies all she bears.
The steed, the steer, the fleecy flock that range
Beneath the same pure sky, from the same fount
Their thirst that quench, and o'er the flow'ry lawn
Crop the same herbage, differ still, through time,
In form generic; each parental stamp
Retaining close, from sire to sire propell'd.
Such the vast variance of primordial seeds;
Through every herb, through every fountain such.
Each form, moreo'er, of animated life
Compounded, flows from muscle, bone, and nerve,
Vein, heat, and moisture; yet e'en these comprize

The resemblance between this address, and the
following Orphic verses, in the Book de Mundo, as quoted by Apuleius, is peculiarly striking:

Zwos πρωτος γενέτο, Zwos ὥστατος αρχικόναυς,
Zwos κεφάλη, Zwos μάτσα. Δios ἐγκα πάντα τετυκταί.
Zwos ἀργυρος γενέτο, Zwos ἀργυροῖσι ἐπελο ἀργυροῖσι.
Zwos πάθος γαίης τα καὶ σφάλμασι αισθητοῖς.
Zwos πίω τινα τινα: Zwos άκαματα σωρος σωροι.
Zwos ποτος μέξα. Zwos ἅλος τῆς σφαλῆς ἄλειη.
Εν κρατος ἐν Δαίμονι γενέτο, μεγας αρχες απαντων.
Pαί αγα ει μεγαλύ ζώος ταδε σφαλη κινται.

Of which the reader may accept the following version:

Jove first exists, whose thunders roll above;
Jove last, Jove midmost: all proceeds from Jove.
Female is Jove, immortal Jove is male,
Jove the broad earth, the heavens' irradiate pale.
Jove is the boundless spirit, Jove the fire
That warms the world with feeling and desire.
The sea is Jove, the sun, the lunar ball,
Jove king supreme, the sov'reign source of all.
All power is his: to him all glory give,
For his vast form embraces all that live.
Dissimili perfecta figurâ principiorum.

Tum porro, quâquemque igni flammata cremantur,
Si nihil praeterea, tamen hæc in corpore aluntur,
Unde ignem jacere, et lumen submittere, possint;
Scintillasque agere, ac late differre favillam.

Caetera, consimili mentis ratione peragrans,
Invenies igitur multarum semina rerum
Corpore celare, et varias cohibere figurâs.

Denique, multa vides, quibus et color et sapor unà,
Religione animum turpi quom tangere pacto,
Reddita sunt cum odore; in primis pleraque donâ:
Hæc igitur variis debent constare figurâs:
Nidor enim penetrat, quà sucus non it in artus:
Sucus item seorsum, et seorsum sapor, insinuatâ
Sensibus; ut noscas primis differre figurâs.
Dissimiles igitur formæ glomeram in unum
Conveniant; et res permixto semine constant.

Quin etiam, passim nostris in versibus ipsis
Multa elementa vides multis communia verbis;
Quom tamen inter se versus ac verba, necesse est,
Confiteare alia ex aliis constare elementis.

Non, quo multa, parum communis, litera currat,
Aut nulla inter se duo sint ex omnibus eidem;
Sed, quia non volgo paria omnibus omnia constant:
Full many an atom, each, of shape unlike.

Thus fire itself is complex; for if nought
Deep blend besides, the germs, at least, combine
Of heat, smoke, ashes, and translucent light:
And reas'ning thus, thy vig'rous mind may deem
Still pow'rs beyond lurk deeper though unknown.

Oft the same substance, as the fragrant gums
Burnt o'er the altar to th' offended gods,
Emits both taste and odour, hence from seeds
Educ'd, of various figures; odours oft
Piercing the nerves that tastes essay in vain,
And tastes where odours fail: facts that evince
Their forms diverse; and prove that seeds unlike
Rear the mixt mass diffus'd through all that lives.—

Mark but these fluent numbers; many a type
To many a term is common; but the terms,
The numbers cull'd, as dif'er ing these from those,
From different types evolve: not so diverse
That the same type recurs not through the whole,
Or that, recurring, it recurs alone
From types too bounded; but from types alike
Sic aliis in rebus item communia multa,
Multarum rerum quom sint primordia, rerum
Dissimili tamen inter se consistere summâ
Possunt : ut merito ex aliis constare feratur
Humanum genus, et fruges, arbustaque læta.

Nec tamen omnimodis connecti posse putandum est
Omnia : nam volgo fieri portenta videres ;
Semiferas hominum species existere, et altos
Interdum ramos e gigni corpore vivo ;
Multaque connecti terrestria membra marinis :
Tum, flammam tetro spiranteis ore, Chimæras
Pascere naturam per terras omniparenteis :
Quorum nihil fieri manifestum est ; omnia quando,
Seminibus certis certâ genetrice creatæ,
Conservare genus crescentia posse videmus.
Scilicet id certâ fieri ratione necesse est :
Nam, sua quoque, cibis ex omnibus intus in artus
Corpora discedunt ; connexaque, convenienteis
Ecficiunt motus : at contra aliena videmus
Rejicere in terras naturam ; multaque cæcis
Corporibus fugiunt e corpore, percita plagis ;

Ver. 718. And Nature's all-prolific womb propel,
With breath of fire, Chimæras ;——] Hesiod,
in the same manner, has described this imaginary
monster :
Free to each term, yet ever new combin'd,
Flows the vast change, th' harmonious system flows.
Thus, through the world, the primal seeds of all,
To all things common, re-arrang'd diverse,
In myriad forms shoot forth; and herbs, and men,
And trees umbrageous own the same fixt source.

Yet not in endless modes combine the seeds
Of things at random; many a monster else
Would start tremendous, the fair frame of man
Sprout forth half-form'd, and trunks of trees have souls.
Shapes then would swarm half earthly, half marine,
And Nature's all-prolific womb propel,
With breath of fire, Chimaeras; things the sight
Meets never, since from seeds, and pow'rs precise,
All spring to life, and thus preserve their kinds.

Thus all must spring, since all, from every food,
To every tribe adapted, strait digests;
And, blending with each limb, the train renews
Of acts appropriate; while th' ungenial mass
Meets earth unchang'd: or if, perchance, absorb'd,
Quæ neque connecti quoquam potuere, neque inter 715
Vitaleis motus consentire, atque initari.
Sed, ne forte putes animalia sola teneri
Legibus hiis, quædam ratio disterminat omnes.
Nam, velutœi totâ naturâ dissimiles sunt
Inter se genitœ res quœque, ita quomque necesse est
Dissimili constare figurâ principiorum:
Non, quo multa parum simili sint prædita formâ;
Sed, quod non volgo paria omnibus omnia constent.
Semina quam porro distant, differre necesse est
Intervalla, vias, connexus, pondera, plagas,
Concursus, motus: quæ non animalia solum
Corpora sejungunt, sed terras ac mare totum
Secernunt, cœlumque a terris omne retentant.

Nunc age, dicta, meo dulci quæsita labore,
Flies off impalpable through pores extreme,  
Void of all union, and for life unfit.  

Nor deem each animated tribe alone  
Such laws avows—all nature feels their force.  
For since the diff'rence 'twixt created things  
Is total, their primordial seeds in form  
Must differ too: not that they ne'er commix  
Of equal shape, but e'en when mixt that still,  
From re-arrangement, the result is chang'd.  
Nor only in their forms thus vary seeds  
Primordial; but, alike, in weight, and pow'r,  
In concourse, motion, intervening space,  
And close connexion; changes that define,  
Not men and brutes alone, but bound secure  
From ocean earth, and earth from heav'n sublime.  

But haste we, many a truth lies yet unsung

**Phrastus,** and by others, Strato of Lampsacus, is a valuable relic of ancient times, and gives us by much the fullest account of any book whatsoever, of the general philosophy of the Greeks upon this subject, and even proceeds so far as to develop their mechanical use of colours in the arts of dyeing and painting. It is more valuable on this latter account, indeed, than on the former; for, in the former, the confused and erroneous ideas of the Peripatetics are still indulged in all their incomprehensibility. M. Amelihon, in his "Researches into the Colours of the Ancients, and the Arts which are connected with them," (See Memoires de l'Institut National, an iv. tom. i. Liter. et Beaux Arts,) does not appear to have been acquainted with the correct and elegant system of Epicurus upon the philosophy of colours: for, while he is altogether silent upon the writings of Lucretius, he gives the above-mentioned treatise all the eulogy to which it can possibly be entitled. "Ce traité annonce," says he, "un observateur profond, et il présente des vues véritablement philosophiques sur l'origine des couleurs, sur le passage d'une nuance à l'autre, sur la manière dont un peut, en unissant deux couleurs en créer, pour ainsi dire, une troisième, j'ose même avancer que les modernes avoient peu ajouté à ces connaissances jusqu'au moment où le grand Newton est venu changer toutes nos idées sur cette matière, en nous révélant, à la faveur du prisme, le grand secret de la nature sur la composition de la lumière, et sur la mécanisme des couleurs."
Percipe: ne forte hæc albis ex alba rearis
Principiis esse, ante oculos quæ candida cernis;
Aut ea, quæ nigrant, nigro de semine nata:
Neve alium quem vis quæ sunt inbuta colorem,
Propterea gerere hunc credas, quod materiaï
corpora consimili sint ejus tincta colore.
Nullus enim color est omnino materiaï
corporibus, neque par rebus, neque denique dispar:
In quæ corpora si nullus tibi forte videtur
Posse animi injectus fieri, procul avius erras.
NAM, quom cæcigenæ, solis quei numina numquam
Despexere, tamen cognoscant corpora tactu,
Ex ineunte ævo nullo conjuncta colore;
Scire licet, nostræ quoque menti corpora posse
Vorti in notitiam, nullo circumlita fuco.

M. Ameilhon had studied the system of Epicurus, he would have known, that much of this great secret of nature on the composition of light, and the mechanism of colours, had been elucidated, and publicly taught by this accurate philosopher, although it does not appear that he had ever made use of a prism for the analysis of coloured light: an invention and application which exclusively appertain to Sir Isaac. In the modern doctrine, however, there are many doubtful points, and the late experiments of Dr. Herschell, upon radiant light and heat, will, perhaps, establish a new era in this elegant study.

In advancing in his own day, what is now the generally accredited hypothesis, Lucretius was opposed by the philosophers of every school but his own; for they all contended, that colours were essential ingredients of the coloured body; although they differed, in some degree, from each other in their modes of accounting for the productions of colour. The Stoics conceived that it was a property inherent in the elementary particles of matter; the Pythagoreans, that it formed an essential part of the surfaces of those particles when combined; and the Peripatetics, that it resulted from different intermixtures of their four elementary qualities, heat, cold, moisture, and dryness; while the Platonists maintained, that colours were nothing more than different combinations of light and darkness. Against all these Lucretius manfully enters his protest; and in a chain of rationation, which does honour to the human intellect, proves that colour is a real quality, and not a substance; an accident or event, as he has termed it in ver. 509, Book I., and not a conjunction: that its actual existence is in the light.
Cull'd from my own lov'd labours. Deem not thou,
When aught of substance black or white the view
Solicits obvious,—deem not, in the germs
Of embryon matter, black or white inheres,
Or aught besides of tint, where aught occurs,
Rousing the vision; since the seeds of things
Live void of colours actual or conceive'd.
This shouldst thou doubt, contending nought exists
Through the wide world but must evince some hue,
The doubt flows groundless. He, whose sightless orb
Ne'er drank the day enlighten'd, still perceives
Whate'er exists though tints elude his ken.
Hence not essential colours to the form
Of things created: frequent e'en ourselves,

itself; and that all its variations and hues result from
different reflections or refractions of the solar beam.
Having fully established this truth by facts and
arguments, which reach to verse 846, he next proceeds,
in a more cursory manner, to observe, that
bodies are equally devoid of all other secondary qua-
lities, sound, smell, warmth, and moisture, as they
are of colour: and that nothing actually attaches to
them but their primary properties of solidity, figure,
extent, number, motion, or rest. Throughout the
whole of which, indeed, he is supported by the still
existing creed of Epicurus, who thus expresses him-
self in his epistle to Herodotus: καί μικρός, καί τοις άτο-
μους ουμάτιοι, μείζους ποιητή των φανερών προτίθη-
σαι τους σχηματος καί άρχους, καί μεγαίς, καί ένεαν 6ξ
ανακαισικος σχηματος συμφωνι σωτι. Ποιητής γαρ αλλιμ.
καί χρώμα τι, καί διμαθής, παρά των ζών των άτομων
μεταξίλλων, δι καί ταις άτομως εκ πυρηχώσιν. “The
particles of bodies are not to be conceived of as pos-
sessing any external qualities whatsoever, excepting
form, weight, magnitude, and those which neces-
sarily result from its peculiar configuration; for every
other kind of quality, as colour, for example, and
heat, entirely results from their different combina-
tions, and consequently change as these change.”

Ver. 756. —frequent e'en ourselves,
Mid the deep shade of night, by touch alone
Prove what surrounds us, every hue extinct.]

“Let us consider the red and white colours in por-
phyry: binder light but from striking on it, and its
colours vanish. It no longer produces any such ideas
in us: upon the return of light it produces these ap-
pearances on us again. Can any one think any real
alterations are made in the porphyry by the presence or absence of light; and that those ideas of whiteness and redness are really in porphyry in the light, when it is plain it has no colour in the dark? It has, indeed, such a configuration of particles, both night and day, as are apt, by the rays of light rebounding from some parts of that hard stone, to produce in us the idea of redness, and from others, the idea of whiteness. But whiteness or redness are not in it at any time, but such a texture that hath the power to produce such a sensation in us." Locke on Hum. Unders. Book II. c. viii. Lucretius could not have expressed the doctrine he meant to inculcate more pertinently; the instance of not perceiving coloured bodies in the dark is, perhaps, taken from himself; as most assuredly, is that passage of Virgil, in which he says:

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Jupiter, et rebus nox abstatit atra colorum.

Juv. vi. v. 271.

Jove o'er the heavens incumbent shadows streus,
And pitchy midnight robs the world of hues.

Ver. 759. All hues, more or, to all by turns convert;]
No assertion can be more strictly consonant with the discoveries of modern philosophy. Colours, according to the Newtonian theory, are of two kinds, primary, or simple, and secondary or heterogenous: the former consisting of all those produced by rays of light possessed of an equal degree of refrangibility, and an equal magnitude of their parts, as violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red: the latter, of all others compounded of the primary ones, or of a mixture of rays differently refrangible. But it is a curious fact, that even in the prismatic series of the seven original colours above enumerated, the middle colour of any three, in the order in which they occur, may be produced by a mixture of the two extremes: thus, a mixture of violet and blue gives us an indigo; indigo and green, a blue; blue and yellow, a green; and in this manner, each, as our poet observes, would convert to each, till the entire series was finished; when, if we were to pursue the experiment, it would again appear, that the last in the order, being red, combined with the second in the order, being indigo, would still produce the middle colour of the two, being, in this case, violet. It is probable, however, that Lucretius had his eye more immediately directed, in the present assertion, to colours refracted from the laminae of shells and spars, or the plumes of pigeons and peacocks; where, from a cause that will shortly be explained, the sight is perpetually beholding a conversion of one colour into another. But the primal
Mid the deep shade of night, by touch alone
Prove what surrounds us, every hue extinct.

All hues, moreo'er, to all by turns convert;
A change primordial seeds can ne'er sustain;
Since something still through nature must exist
All change defying, lest th' entire survey'd
Fall into nought; for that which once admits
Mutation dies, its pristine pow'rs destroy'd.—
Tinge, then, with caution, the prime seeds of things,

atoms of matter, as he has before endeavoured to demonstrate, can suffer no change whatsoever: consequently, such mutations of colour could not possibly occur, if such primal atoms themselves were essentially coloured; for neither could red seeds become blue, nor orange, green; nor could a mixture of any two whatsoever, produce a third different in colour from the two so combined.

From this theory, moreover, and the production of any middle colour in the prismatic series, from its two extremes, we may be able to solve a question, which I do not know has been hitherto solved by any philosopher:—why is green so much more pleasant and reposing a colour to the eye than any other? The probable reason is, that from its forming the middle of the seven primary colours, it partakes more equably of the nature of all the rest than any individual colour besides can do.

This doctrine, however, of the existence of seven primary colours in solar light, has, by no means, been uniformly admitted on the continent. Father Castel appears to have been the first who attempted to reduce the seven colours to three: he contended, that the blue, yellow, and red, were competent to all the phenomena of optics; and that the whole compass of tints and shades of tints may be produced by a binary combination of those elements in different proportions. The theory of Castel was improved by Mayer, who formed an equilateral triangle, of which each side was divided into twelve parts; the whole, in this manner, containing ninety-one cells or square compartments, omitting the small triangular spaces left on the upper margins. The three extreme cells were blue, yellow, and red; and the intermediate cells marked the series of gradations; those on the sides, the double combination; and those of the interior, the triple combination, according to their respective distances from the apices. The celebrated Lambert remarked, that the effects were modified by the vivacity of the colouring materials; and that it was requisite to state previously whether those were to be apportioned by their bulk or their weight. M. Achard succeeded in writing an elaborate essay on the same theory: and finally, M. Burja has attempted to show, that though white should result from a mixture of these primary colours, it requires the blue and red to be joined to an excess of yellow. The binary compounds are best produced by a mixture of equal parts, by weight, of the elementary tints; and the process may be repeated with the results, so as to afford any number of intermediate shades; which again may be darkened at pleasure, by the addition of similar mixtures of black and white. Memoires de l'Academie Royale des Sciences. Berlin, 1792.
Ver. 770. Much, then, import th' arrangement, and the powers, 

The kinds, connexions of primordial seeds, &c.] It is the language of Mr. Locke, and expressed with his own precision. Without multiplying extracts from his invaluable Essay, compare the present passage of our poet with the latter half of the sentence quoted from it in the note on verse 754 of the present book: "It has indeed, such a configuration, &c."

Ver. 776. Thus, when loud tempests tear the tortur'd main,] This change of colour in the ocean is thus accurately remarked, as well as beautifully described, by Ovid:

Fluctibus erigitur, coelumque sequare videtur Pontus; et inductas aspergine tangere nubes.
Et modo, cum fulvas ex imo vertit arenas,
Concolor est illis; Stygia modo nigrior unda;
Sternitur interdum, spumisque sonantibus albet.

Metam. I. xi. v. 497.

Up mounts the main tow'rs heaven, with giddy surge.
Lashing the clouds: now from the dread abyss
Sweeping the yellow sands, through every wave

Itself as yellow—blacker now than hell,
And now wide-whitening with resounding foam.

The poet, as well as the painter, is, therefore, left almost at liberty as to his choice of colour, when describing so variable a body as the ocean: and hence, with almost every colour has it been occasionally endowed. Ovid, in the above verses, has arrayed it in three diversities of hue,—black, white, and yellow; and every one remembers the green vesture which Shakspeare attributes to it in that fearful soliloquy of Macbeth:

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? no; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous sea incarnardine,
Making the green one red.

Nor is it in its liquid state alone that the sea thus changes in its hues: when converted into ice, the colours evinced are nearly as numerous and opposite. Thomson, therefore, and Ambrose Philips, are both equally true to Nature; though each pictures the icy mountains of the northern regions with a different tincture; the former telling us that

Thron'd in his palace of cerulean ice
Here Winter holds his unrejoicing court. WINTER.
BOOK II.  

THE NATURE OF THINGS.  

Lest, hence, thou ope the doors of death to all.  

But though material atoms thus live void  
Of hue; still many a diff'ring form is theirs,  
Whence hues they gender, and their variance stamp.  

Much, then, import th' arrangement, and the powers,  
The kinds, connexions of primordial seeds,  
Positions, impulse, and effects impell'd;  
Since, hence, with ease the mind may, instant, trace  
Why what is black this moment, should, the next,  
Pour o'er the view with alabaster dye.  

Thus, when loud tempests tear the tortur'd main,  

While the latter asserts that  
1. Here solid billows of enormous size  
Alps of green ice in wild disorder rise.  

EP. to the EARL of DORSET.  

So much, as Lucretius observes, a few verses above:  
—imports th' arrangement and the powers,  
The kinds, connexions of primordial seeds,  
Positions, impulse, and effects impell'd.  

Dr. Hutton seems to suppose, that the water of  
The sea, at a distance from the coasts, is generally of  
A dark blue, and that it becomes green as it approaches land, from an intermixture of yellowish mud; the natural blue and the adventitious yellow forming this colour. This, however, seems to be an unsatisfactory solution of the phenomenon, and one that will not universally apply. In quoting this gentleman's opinion, which I do from his translation of Ozanam's Recreations, I cannot avoid copying a most singular appearance of the sea-water, as to its assuming a variety of colours, which he himself witnessed in his passage from Europe to Guyana, in the year 1764, and which he thus relates:  

"I do not recollect that we beheld the sea luminous until our arrival between the tropics; but at that period, and some weeks before we reached land, I almost constantly observed that the ship's wake was interspersed with a multitude of luminous sparks, and so much the brighter as the darkness was more perfect. The water round the rudder was, at length, entirely brilliant; and this light extended, gradually diminishing, along the whole wake. I remarked, also, that if any of the ropes were immersed in the water, they produced the same effect.  

"But it was near land that this spectacle appeared in all its beauty. It blew a fresh gale, and the whole sea was covered with small waves, which broke, after having rolled for some time. When a wave broke, a flash of light was produced; so that the whole sea, as far as the eye could reach, seemed to be covered with fire, alternately kindled and extinguished. This fire, in the open sea, that is, at the distance of fifty or sixty leagues from the coasts of America, had a reddish cast. I have made this remark, because I do not know that any person ever examined the phenomena which I am about to describe.  

"When we were in green water, the spectacle changed. The same fresh gale continued; but in the night-time, when steering an easy course between
DE RERUM NATURA. Lib. II.

Vortitur in canos candenti marmore fluctus.

Dicere enim possis nigrum, quod sæpe videmus,
Materies ubi permixta est illius, et ordo
Principiis mutatus, et addita demptaque quædam;
Continuo id fieri ut candens videatur, et album.

Quod, si cæruleis constarent æquora ponti
Seminibus, nullo possent albescere pacto:
Nam, quoquomque modo perturbes, cærula quæ sint,
Numquam in marmoreum possint migrare colorum.

Sin alio atque alio sunt semina tincta colore,
Quæ maris ecficiunt unum purumque nitorem;
Ut sæpe ex aliis formis, variisque figuris,
Ecfectur quiddam quadratum, unâque figurâ;
Conveniebat, uti in quadrato cernimus esse
Dissimileis formas, ita cernere in æquore ponti,

770

775

780

the third and fourth degree of latitude, the fire above
described assumed a form entirely white, and similar
to the light of the moon, which at that time was
not above the horizon. The upper part of the small
waves, with which the whole surface of the sea was
curled, seemed like a sheet of silver; while on the
preceding evening it had resembled a sheet of red-
dish gold. I cannot express how much I was
amused and interested by this spectacle.

"The following night it was still more beautiful;
but at the same time more alarming, in consequence
of the circumstances under which I then found my-
self. The ship had cast anchor at a considerable
distance from the land, waiting for the new moon,
in order to enter the harbour of Cayenne. Being

anxious to get on shore, I stepped into the boat
with several other passengers; but scarcely had we
got a league from the ship, when we entered a part
of the sea where there was a prodigious swell, as a
pretty smart gale then prevailed at south-east. We
soon beheld tremendous waves, rolling in our wake,
and breaking over us. But what a noble spectacle,
had we not been exposed to danger. Let the reader
imagine to himself a sheet of silver, a quarter of a
league in breadth, expanded in an instant, and
shining with a vivid light. Such was the effect of
these billows, two or three of which only reached
us, before they broke. This was a fortunate cir-
cumstance, for they left the boat half filled with
water, and one more, by rendering me a prey to the
The dashing surge is rob’d in dazzling white,
This mayst thou fathom hence, and prove precise
Why, oft though black, from combinations new
Of its primordial atoms, added these,
And those withdrawn, oft, too, the deep should wear
A vest contrasted, whit’ning to the day.
But were its primal atoms ting’d themselves
Black, or but blue, concussion ne’er could change
The fixt result; nor turn the black or blue
To the pure polish of the marble bust.
Nor urge from seeds of varying tints, perchance,
Springs, when combin’d, the main’s resplendent face;
As in the cube mechanic many a shape
Diverse unites to rear its frame complete.
For as the keen sight in the cube surveys
Those varying figures, so the splendid deep,
Aut alio in quo vis uno puroque nitore,
Dissimileis longe inter se variosque colores.
Præterea, nihil obsciunt, obstantque, figuræ
Dissimiles, quo quadratum minus omne sit extra:
At varici rerum inpediunt prohibentque colores,
Quo minus esse uno possit res tota nitore.

Tum porro, quæ ducit et inlicit, ut tribuamus
Principiis rerum non numquam, caussa, colores,
Obcidit; ex albis quoniam non alba creantur,
Nec, quæ nigra cluent, de nigris; sed variis de.
Quippe et enim multo proclivius exorientur
Candida, de nullo, quam nigro, nata colore;
Aut alio quo vis, qui contra pugnet, et obstet.

Præterea, quoniam nequeunt sine luce colores
Essē, neque in lucem existunt primordia rerum;

Ver. 801. Though, doubtless, white flows rather from
the want
Of each existent tincture,—] It does not appear that Lucretius himself was perfectly acquainted
with the origin, either of the white or black hues of bodies: for he seems to imagine that these were
produced in the precise manner of all other colours: nor was either of them satisfactorily accounted for
till the time of Sir Isaac Newton, whose experiments upon this subject are clear and demonstrative.
From these experiments it follows, that no ray, or even particle of light, is issued from the sun, or any other luminous body, unpossessed of some one of the primary colours enumerated in the note on ver. 754. The rays of light, or the particles of which those rays are composed, never are nor ever can be colourless, and by this mean produce a white hue: the phenomenon of white, resulting from a due intermixture of all the differently coloured rays which the sun, or any other luminous body transmits. As these are perpetually blended together in the atmosphere, the atmosphere and the light itself appear white, or colourless. But such white or colourless beams, whenever separated by a prism, or other refracting substance, into distinct rays, immediately evince themselves to be compound bodies, and disclose the seven colours of violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. This is a fact, which no man would be disposed to credit, if it were not too obvious to be disputed: so totally contrary is it to what reason could expect a priori, that such deep and full colours as blue, green, and red, should be necessary to the production of white. And yet there are modes of proving this, without analyzing the light itself. For
Or aught of equal lustre, would evince,
The varying tinctures whence that lustre flows.
The diff'ring forms, moreo'er, the cube contains
Mar not its unity, but diff'ring hues
A blended tinge create, by each divers'd.

A cause like this, too, all effect destroys:
Since white or black springs not from seeds so dy'd,
But seeds commixt of various dyes possest.
Though, doubtless, white flows rather from the want
Of each existent tincture, than from seeds
With black, in part, imbu'd, or aught besides
Of-equal contrast, and as firm a foe.

And, since all colours live but in the light,
Were hues essential to the seeds of things

the phenomenon of white will be equally produced
by a skilful mixture of seven different powders, each
containing one of the seven prismatic colours enumera-
ated above, and proportioned to each other, as the
seven differently coloured rays are found to be propor-
tioned in a beam of light; or a circular piece of
card may be stained with distinct lines of the same
different hues, in the order in which they occur when
divided by a prism; and when swiftly twirled round
by a pin driven through its centre, the eye, from the
general intermixture of the colours that will necessarily
ensue, will perceive the whole assemblage converted
into a white. This white, however, will, in neither in-
stance, be perfectly pure; for it is not easy to ap-
portion the colours to each other with precision, nor
can the colours themselves be supposed to possess the
vivacity of the natural and essential hues of the solar
rays. And hence the hue which is derived from

these experiments, instead of being a pure and perfect
white, will appear muddy, or as though intermixed
with some portion of black. Bodies, therefore, which
produce no alteration in a beam of light, when thrown
upon them, but reflect all its colours equally, without
absorbing any one, must inevitably appear white
themselves; while those, on the contrary, that ab-
sorb the whole equally, and reflect no colour at
all, must give the appearance of black; and thus, by
destroying the light altogether, that impinges upon
their own surface, must, as far as that surface ex-
tends, produce the effect of total darkness. The
theory of Des Cartes on colours was not correct, but
he appears to have been the first philosopher who ra-
tionally accounted for the origin of the white and
black hues of bodies: and, in this respect, he has the
advantage of Lucretius.
Scire licet, quam sint nullo velata colore.
Qualis enim caecis poterit color esse tenebris,
Lumine qui in ipso mutatur, propterea quod,
Rectâ aut obliquâ percussus luce, refulget?
Pluma columbarum quo pacto in sole videtur,

Ver. 809. Hues born of sun-beams,—] Pindar is as correct in his philosophy, as he is elegant in his poetry, in the expression:

\[\text{σάμαραφωρωσ ακτινας.}\]
the purple beams of light.

Nor ought we to forget the appropriate and beautiful address of Cowley to Light, in his celebrated hymn on this subject:

All the world's bravery that delights our eyes,
Is but thy several liveries:
Thou the rich dye on them bestow'st.
A crimson garment in the rose thou wear'st,
A crown of studded gold thou bear'st.
The virgin lilies, in their white,
Are clad but with the lawn of almost naked light.

But nothing, either in Greek or Persian poetry, can surpass that very elegant figure of Gray's:

The bloom of young desire, and purple light of love.

In which he appears to have used the term purple, not in the modern and contracted sense of this expression, as confined to a single hue, but in the more extensive meaning with which it was applied by all ancient poets to every object highly beautiful and delicate, be its colour whatever it might. Whence Catullus applies it to the leaves of the oak: \[\text{quercus ramos purpureas;}\] and Albinovanus, even to the snow itself, \[\text{nivem purpureum.}\]

Whilst I am upon this subject, I cannot avoid noticing, that this much-admired verse of Gray's is not altogether so original as it is generally conceived to be. Tasso has the very same idea in his Jerusalem Delivered:

Gli empie d'onor la faccia, e vi riduce
\[\text{Di giovinezza il bel purpureo lume.}\]

Yet Tasso himself was not the inventor of it. For we thus trace it, verbatim, in Virgil, who applies it to Aeneas, as Tasso does to Godfrey:

\[\text{—lumenque juventa Purpureum, et latos oculis afflarat honores.}\]

L. i. 594.

The sprightly grace and purple light of youth Beam'd from his eyes.

The term purple, in all these instances, refers obviously to its original and more extensive meaning of magnificent, superb, or beautiful. It is in this sense Milton himself appears to have used it, in a passage strikingly parallel:

Here love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings.

Ver. 811. Thus the gay pidgeon, as his plumes he waves,

Drinks in new tinctures from the noon-tide blaze;]

So the truly classical Gray, in his "Bard:"

—and, soaring as she sings,

Waves in the eye of heaven her many-colour'd wings.

The whole description is thus beautifully and closely copied by Tasso:

Cosi piuma talor, che di gentile
Amorosa colomba il collo cinge,
Mai non si scorge a se stessa simile;
Ma in diversi colori al sol si tinga.
Or d'accessi rubin sembra un monile:
Or di verdi smaraldi il lume finge:
Or insieme gli mesce: e varia, e vaga,
In cento modi, i rignardanti appaga.

Ger. Cant. xv. 5.
These, too, would die in darkness: for, resolve,
What hues exist beneath the midnight gloom?
Hues born of sun-beams, changing but their shades
As, playful, changes the refracted ray?
Thus the gay pidgeon, as his plumes he waves,

Mr. Hoole's version of this passage is elegant, but
so general as to lose all sight of the original; and the
reader must, therefore, accept of the following:

Such, oft, the lovely colours that bedeck,
Amidst his am'rous sport, the pidgeon's neck.
No constant hue it keeps, but ever plays,
With tints diverse, beneath the solar rays.
Now all the ruby in rich necklace glows;
Now its own light the verdant emerald throws;
Now close they blend, and vague, and various still,
The gazer's eye with countless beauties fill.

The beautiful multiplicity of colours which are
thus produced, and perpetually variegated, results
from the resemblance of the filaments of the plumes
to prisms; and the nearer this resemblance can be
traced, both with respect to shape and transparency,
the more numerous will be the colours refracted, and
the greater their vivacity and richness.

With respect to the colours of precious stones, it
is a fact, now fairly decided in chemistry, that all of
them depend upon a solution of some peculiar metal
in some peculiar acid: and that, of the various met-
als, iron is more frequently employed by nature than
any other. But the immediate substance, or prepara-
tion of iron, by which the ruby and the emerald ac-
quire their appropriate hue, is altogether a modern
discovery, and was, I believe, first detected by M.
Vauquelin, in his analysis of the aigue marine, or
beryl. The investigation unfolded to him a new
earth, which is the basis, both of this jewel, and, as
he afterwards ascertained, of the emerald and ruby.
This new earth bears a considerable resemblance to
alumine, but, nevertheless, differs from it in several
radical properties: from the sweetness of its taste the
French chemist assigned it the name of Glycine.

When to this terrene basis is added some portion of
that peculiar preparation of iron which is denomina-
ted the oxyd of chrome, and which bears a great re-
semblance to lime, the beryl, the emerald, and the
ruby become the produce of the combination: and
the colour or specific gem depends upon the degree
of oxydation this chameleon-like metal has sustained;
when highly oxydated, producing a red tincture, and
a green when the oxydation is but small. For a far-
ther account of this process, see the French Annales
de Chymie, vol. xxv.

The admirable picture before us, of the changeful
colours in the plumes of the peacock, cannot but re-
mind us of Thomson's equally excellent description
of the opal:

Thick through the whitening opal play thy beams;
Or, flying several from the surface, form
A trembling variance of revolving hues
As the site varies in the gazer's hand.

Every one is acquainted with the very correct and
exquisite delineation of the pheasant in Pope's Wind-
sor Forest; which was translated into French verse
no later ago than 1798, with considerable accuracy and
spirit, by M. Viel de Boisjolin. If we compare it
with our own poet's description of the pidgeon, there
is a resemblance which may justly induce us to sus-
pect that Pope himself had Lucretius in his recol-
exction at the time of composing it:

See! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,
And mounts, exulting, on triumphant wings:
Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,
Flutters in blood, and, panting, beats the ground.
Ah! what avails his glossy varying dyes,
His purple crest, and scarlet-circled eyes.
Quae sita cervices circum collumque coronat.
Namque aliæ fit, utei claro sit rubra pyropo;
Interdum quodam sensu fit, utei videatur
Inter curalium virideis miscere smaragdos.
Caudaque pavonis, largâ quom luce repleta est,
Consimili mutat ratione obvorsa colores:
Quo quoniam quodam gignuntur luminis ictu,
Scire licet, sine eo fieri non posse putandum.
Et quoniam plagæ quoddam genus excipit in se.

The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold.
Without wandering from the subject, the reader may, with this, compare the following description of Mr. Mason:

——supreme in glittering state
The peacock spreads his rain-bow train, with eyes
Of sapphire bright, irradiate each with gold :
Meanwhile, from every spray, the ring-doves coo.

ENGLISH GARDEN.

These admirable verses cannot but remind the Portuguese reader of a similar description of Camoens, in his Lusiad:

Olha de Banda as Ilhas, que e esmaltao
Da varia cor que pinta o roxo fruto
As aves variadas que ali saltão
Da verde noz tomando seu tributo.

Here Banda’s isles their fair embroid'ry spread
Of various fruitage, azure, white, and red ;
And birds of every beauteous plume display
Their glitt'ring radiance, as from spray to spray,
From bower to bower on busy wings they rove,
To seize the tribute of the spicy grove.

MICKLE.

There is a bold and energetic illustration of this same phenomenon, of the intermixture and conversion of the solar hues, in Mr. Cumberland's Calvary, derived from a very different quarter; and which I shall introduce by way of contrast. Satan is represented as having received the annunciation of his final doom from our Saviour; his whole figure is immediately changed; and even the attendant demon Mammon,

——in ghastly silence stood,
Gazing with horror on his chieftain's face,
That chang'd all hues by ictu ; as when the north,
With nitrous vapours charg'd, convulsive shoots
Its fiery darts athwart the trembling pole,
Making heaven's vault a canopy of blood.
So, o'er the visage of th' exorcis'd fiend
Alternate gleams, like meteors, came and went.

Ver. 819. And as the stimulus the sight that strikes.] In the note on ver. 740 I have already enumerated the opinions of the principal sects of Grecian philosophers, as to the origin of colours; and have stated the resemblance which the theory of Epicurus bears to that of Sir Isaac Newton, and which is now almost uniformly adopted by philosophers in every European nation. It is not, however, in the origin or cause of colours alone that these two sages concur, but also in the mode by which the sight becomes sensible of them. It was an axiom, first advanced by Epicurus, and since nearly universally acquiesced in, that bodies can only operate upon each other by contact, or an approach so near as to answer the purpose of contact: but the coloured substances we behold, so far from touching our eyes,
Drinks in new tinctures from the noon-tide blaze:
Now glows the ruby, and now, ting’d with blue,
Sports the green emerald o’er his glossy neck.
Thus, too, the peacock, as direct, or bent
Falls the full beam, wears each prismatic dye.
Since, then, th’ impinging light each hue creates,
So, without light, each, instant, must expire.
And as the stimulus the sight that strikes

are generally at a considerable distance from them. Epicurus, therefore, conceived, that to produce in the sight the sensation of colour, minute elementary particles, infinitesimal as the corpuscles of light, were perpetually thrown off from the coloured substance, which, impinging upon the retina, became a stimulus to the sensation that immediately succeeded, whether it were a sensation of violet, green, or any other colour. When Des Cartes established his system of a plenum upon the ruins of that of Aristotle, he approved, in some measure, of this Epicurean principle of contact, but contended, as I have before observed, and especially in the note on ver. 166 of the present book, that there was no such thing as a transmission of minute and viewless particles from one body hereby operating upon another; maintaining, instead of such a doctrine, that where two substances at a distance acted upon each other, it was in consequence of a vibratory motion extended through the elastic medium of the atmosphere, excited by the acting substance, and hereby affecting the substance acted upon. This was his general theory; and hence he applied it to the subject now under our consideration. Denying, as he did, the transmission of extreme particles from a coloured body to the retina of the eye, he maintained, that the sensation and idea of colours arose from a peculiar vibratory motion excited in the atmosphere by bodies of peculiar colours, and communicated, in consequence, to the retina. Newton, however, who adopted the theory of Epicurus, respecting the materiality of light, and the perpetual emission of its particles from the sun, extended, along with Epicurus, this same theory to the solution of the sensation of colours as well.

Mr. Locke is also full upon the same hypothesis, to which he most cordially assented: and as it is impossible to give a clearer explanation of the meaning of Lucretius in the present instance, and more especially as it will serve to elucidate many succeeding phenomena to which he adverts, I shall take the liberty of transcribing from this most accurate philosopher, the following passage. He has just been speaking of the qualities of bodies, which, like Lucretius, he denies to exist in the bodies themselves:

"The next thing to be considered is, how bodies produce ideas in us: and that is manifestly by impulse, the only way we can conceive bodies to operate in.

"If then, external objects be not united to our minds when they produce ideas in it, and yet we perceive these original qualities in such of them as singly fall under our senses, it is evident, that some motion must be thence continued by our nerves, or animal spirits, by some parts of our bodies, to the brain, or the seat of sensation; there to produce in our minds the particular ideas we have of them. And since the extension, figure, number, and mo-
Pupula, quom sentire colorem dicitur album; 810
Atque aliud porro, nigrum quom, et cætera, sentit;
Nec refert, ea, quæ tangis, quo forte colore
Prædita sunt, verum quali magis apta figūrā;
Scire licet, nihil principiis opus esse colores,
Sed variis formis varianteis edere tactus. 815

Præterea, quoniam non certis certa figuris
Est natura coloris, et omnia principiorum
Formamenta queunt in quo vis esse nitore:
Quur ea, quæ constant ex illis, non pariter sunt
Omnigenis perfusa coloribus in genere omni?
Conveniebat enim corvos quoque ssepe volanteis
Ex albis album pennis jactare colorem;
Et nigros fieri nigro de semine cycnos,
Aut alio quo vis uno, varioque, colore.

Quin etiam, quanto in parteis res quæque minutas 820
Distrahitur magis, hoc magis est, ut cernere possis
Evanescre paullatim, stinguique, colorem:
Ut fit, ubi in parvas parteis discerpitur aurum,
Varies, from things that varying dyes educe,
Black, white, or aught besides, and nought imports,
Change how it may, th’ existing hue, but sole
The diff’rent figures whence those hues are rear’d:
Hence useless colours to the seeds of things,
From varying forms by varying frictions rous’d.

Since, too, no seeds defin’d with tints are stain’d
Defin’d alike, and every shape concurs
In all that springs, whate’er the hue evinc’d,
Whence flows it, then, that every class alike
Reflects not every tincture?—whence that crows
Robe not in white from seeds that white create?
Or that the downy swan, in black array’d,
Or hues as hideous, ne’er the sight appals?

As things, moreo’er, to parts minute divide,
Th’ anterior tincture fades. Thus fades away,
To dust impalpable reduc’d, the dye
Of gold refugent: thus the Tyrian woof,

the several organs of our senses, produce in us those
different sensations which we have from the colours
and smells of bodies, e. g. that a violet, by the im-
pulse of such insensible particles of matter of pe-
culiar figures and bulks, and in different degrees and
modifications of their motions, causes the ideas of
the blue colour, and sweet scent of that flower, to
be produced in our minds, &c.”

It is obvious, that this hypothesis of Locke is a
part of the very system of Epicurus and Lucretius;
Vol. I.

and was employed by them, as will soon appear
more at large, in the solution of all sensations
and ideas whatsoever. This system, moreover, when
minutely examined, tends, in no inconsiderable de-
gree, to explain the Berkleian dogma, that the
image of an object in the eye is altogether different
from the object itself. But, for a more explicit ac-
count and examination of this latter doctrine, and
its deductions, I must refer the reader to various
notes on Book IV. of this poem.

R r
Purpura, pœniceusque color clarissimus multo,
Filatim quom distractus est, disperditur omnis:
Noscere ut hinc possis, prius omnem ecclare colorem
Particulas, quam discedant ad semina rerum.

Postremo, quoniam non omnia corpora vocem
Mittere concedis, neque odorem; propterea fit,
Ut non omnibus adtribuas sonitus, et odores:
Sic, oculis quoniam non omnia cernere quimus,
Scire licet, quædam tam constare orba colore,
Quam sine odore ullo quædam, sonituque remota:
Nec minus hæc animum cognoscere posse sagacem,
Quam quæ sunt aliis rebus privata notarum.

Sed, ne forte putes, solo spoliata colore
Corpora prima manere; etiam secreta teporis
Sunt, ac frigoris omnino, calidique vaporis;
Et sonitu sterila, et suco jejuna, feruntur;
Nec jaciunt ullum proprium de corpore odorem.
Sic ut amaracini blandum stactæque liquorem,
Et nardi florem, nectar qui naribus halat,
Quom facere instituas; cum primis quærerere par est,

Ver. 849. Nor deem primordial seeds devoid alone
Of hues prismatic. Heat and cold severe, &c.;
Having incontestibly proved, that colours do not
inhere in the substances which excite the various
images and sensations of colours, our poet now
proceeds cursorily to notice, that all other secondary
qualities are as remote from the bodies to which they
apparently appertain, as the quality of colours. See
note on ver. 740 of the present book.

Ver. 855. Drawn from the fragrant nard, the
dulcet powers
Of marjoram, and myrrh,—] Thus trans-
lated by De Coutures: Lorsque vous voulez faire une
BOOK II.  

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Fritter'd to threads, its purple pride foregoes;
Hence proving clear that hues from things concrete
Evanish total ere to seeds dissolv'd.

From many a substance sound, or odour fine
Flies never; nor the race of man bestows
Odours, or sounds on all things. Judge then, hence
That, since not all things the keen sight discerns,
Full many a substance, too, as void exists
Of varying hues, as these of scent, or sound:
Things, than which nought the mind more clear perceives,
Whate'er the powers possest of, or denied.

Nor deem primordial seeds devoid alone
Of hues prismatic. Heat, and cold severe,
Moisture, and sound, these, too, they never know;
Nor aught of fluent odours, to the sense
Hateful or sweet. Thus when, to please the fair,
Some rich perfume the skilful artist plans,
Drawn from the fragrant nard, the dulcet powers
Of marjoram, and myrrh, with studious heed
Quoad licet, ac possis reperire, inolentis olivi
Naturam, nullam quæ mittat naribus auram:
Quam minume ut possit mixtos in corpore odores,
Concoctosque, suo contactos perdere viro.

Propterea, eædem debent primordia rerum
Non adhibere suum gignundis rebus odorem,
Nec sonitum; quoniam nihil ab se mittere possunt
Nec simili ratione saporem denique quemquam,
Nec frigus, neque item calidum tepidumque vaporem.
Cætera, quæ quom ita sunt tamen, ut mortalia constent,
Molli lenta, fragosa putri, cava corpore raro,
Omnia sint a principis sejuncta, necesse est;
Inmortalia si volumus subjungere rebus
Fundamenta, quibus nitatur summa salutis:
Ne tibi res redeant ad nihilum funditus omnes.

Nunc ea, quæ sentire videmus quomque, necesse est,
Ex insensilibus tamen omnia confiteare
Principiis constare: neque id manifesta refutant,

tryman Sir W. Jones has developed this plant to the
conviction, as I believe, of every one who will give
himself the trouble to follow him in his very accurate
investigation inserted in the Asiatic Researches, and
which he thus describes in the Linnéan style: Valeriana Jatamansi floribus triandris foliis ogordatis quaternis, radicalibus petiolatis. The Jatamansi of the
Hindus is also plentifully to be met with in Arabia,
and by the inhabitants of this latter country is de-
nominated Sumbul. As to the myrrh and marjo-
ram, they still occasionally preserve a place among
the perfumes of the present day. The liquid myrrh
of Lucretius, stacta liquor, is the resinous gum of an
Arabian tree, in its thorns and general appearance
very much resembling our Acacia vera. The mar-
joram or Amaracinus of our poet is the Origaum of
From the pure olive first a juice he seeks
Void of all scent, for nature such prepares,
Lest, with th' effluvia thus selected choice,
Aught else combine, and mar th' harmonious whole.

Thus void of scent primordial seeds must spring,
Thus void of sound; and hence nor scent, nor sound,
Can give to things created: for themselves
Nought can transmit but what themselves possess.
And hence, moreo'er, the powers of heat, or cold,
Vapour, or taste, these never can bestow,
Nor aught alike destructive, aught survey'd,
Viscous, unfirm, or fragile; aught educ'd
From bodies soft, putrescent, or relax'd;
These thou must sever from primordial seeds
If things created on a base be built
Immortal, whence the world's vast fabric lives,
And nought to nought can waste with utter death.

This full premis'd, now, Memmius, mark what flows;
That all the sentient forms the sight surveys,
Whate'er their powers, from senseless atoms spring.
Nec contra pugnant, in promptu cognita quae sunt;
Sed magis ipsa manu ducunt, et credere cogunt,

mere combination of material atoms, but of atoms organized in a peculiar mode: and that the whole is, hence, equally perishable, and must equally dissolve at death. The former part of the proposition alone, the creation of perception and sense from impercipient atoms, is discussed in the remainder of the present book; the latter part, or the mortality of the percipient principle, together with a variety of moral and philosophic deductions, unrivalled in their beauty and sublimity, form the basis of the ensuing.

In advancing this proposition, our poet had to contend equally against the popular creed, and the systems of other philosophers; but with a consistency which, I think, must be allowed him, even by those who differ from him in opinion, he follows up his principles through every legitimate avenue, and develops a chain of reasoning from vital facts and experiments, which has been seldom equalled by any philosopher upon the same subject since, and, as far as I am acquainted, surpassed by no one. From the Christian scriptures, indeed, those oracles of divine and unerring reason, we are clearly taught, not only that there will be a resurrection of the body, properly so called, but that the soul does not perish with the body at death; surviving its ruins, and being admitted, if virtuous, to a state of separate felicity. In this respect, therefore, the result of our poet's argument is erroneous: but, so far as it relates to the common origin of the whole man, to the materiality of the soul itself, it appears to me altogether unanswerable, and by no means contradictory to revelation. To render the soul immortal, why is it necessary that it should be immaterial? If, at the resurrection, the body at large will itself become immortal, why may not that portion, or arrangement of it, which is the source of thought, be immortal from its birth? Or why should it be supposed more difficult for thought to originate from matter, than gravitation, or any other property which it unequivocally possesses? In every instance in which the soul is represented in the Scriptures to have appeared after death, it has appeared in a material form;—nor could it, indeed, have been otherwise the subject of material vision, impalpably attenuated and refined, but still material, and capable of identification; freed from the laws of gravity, and able to permeate the pores of grosser substances. There is an insuperable difficulty that attaches to the doctrine of two distinct substances united in the human frame, of powers and qualities in every respect adverse to, and inconsistent with, each other, and possess of no common medium of action; and the war between Materialists and Immaterialists, as hitherto conducted, can never terminate. Admit that matter is competent to the whole; that, in a certain arrangement or modification, it can think; that, in the same state, it becomes attenuated, ethereal, or spiritualized; that such a modification of it is immortal from its first development, and every difficulty appears to vanish: a point of union is discoverable for antagonists, who seemed to be incapable of conciliation, and the sublime doctrines of revelation become coincident with human reason.

The grand motive for superadding an immaterial principle to living animals, is, because it is conceived that mere matter can never possess the power of sensation or thought. But why can it not possess such a power? Unquestionably, it cannot, in its state of utmost decomposition and simplicity: for, thus reduced, there is scarcely a power of any kind it can possess at all. But whoever minutely attends to the progressive chain of powers it acquires by progressive arrangements and organizations, from the simple possession of gravitation to that of chemical affinities, and fibrous irritability, must, I think, be led eventually to admit that it may ultimately prove the source of perception and thought, as well as of such other qualities. Mr. Locke declared openly, that he saw no impossibility in the production of thought from a solid substance, and conceived, (Book II. chap. 23 of his Essays,) that "created spirits are not totally separate from matter." It is hence triumphantly said, that Mr. Locke himself taught, even upon his own principles, to have been a Materialist. For, to suppose the em-
This every fact of every day, if scann'd,  
Far from resisting, proves a truth most firm;  

employment of two or more substances, where one is  
amply sufficient, is altogether unphilosophic, and in-  
consistent with the simplicity of nature.  

I have said that matter, in its utmost state of de-  
composition and individuality, is divested of all power  
whatsoever. The simplest and the most general  
power of which we find it posses, is that of gravita-  
tion. But a monad or individual atom of primitive  
matter, if placed alone in the immensity of space,  
could not possess even the property of gravitation:  
for gravitation implies the existence of two or more  
particles mutually attracting each other: and New-  
ton has justly ridiculed the idea of innate attraction  
as an absurdity. Matter, in all its compound forms,  
necessarily therefore evinces the property of gravita-  
tion: it must, however, be in a compound state, or  
even this simplest and most general of all properties  
could not be evinced. But the modes in which the  
different particles of matter combine, may be varied  
almost to infinity: and a different power must of ne-  
cessity be educed by every variation that occurs.  
Modified in one way, matter evinces the power of  
magnetism; in another way, that of electricity; and in  
a third, that of chemical affinities; and in a fourth,  
that of vegetable or fibrous irritability; till, at length,  
it acquire the strong stimulative perfection of the  
mimosa pudica, or the dioncea muscipula; and will  
either shrink from the touch of the intruding insect,  
or contract its fibres, and kill it by a clench. When  
then we ascend thus high, in what should seem to  
be the natural scale of sensation, it is attended, I  
think, with no great difficulty, to suppose, that ani-  
amal as well as vegetable irritability is the result of a  
peculiar organization of simple and unirritable ma-  
terial corpuscles.  

But let us examine, in a few words, the first ori-  
gin of animals, and their mode of acquiring exist-  
ence. In what does it differ from that of the ve-  
table world? The most severe scrutiny of man  
can trace no kind of irritability in the seeds of any  
description of plants. There is a peculiar organi-  
zation, but no species of feeling or irritability what-  
ever—not even in those of the plants I have just before  
made mention of, the mimosa, or the dioncea musci-  
pula, or even the hedysarum movens, which exhibits a  
perpetual motion in the sun-shine. But these seeds  
are entrusted to the earth: by the action of the earth  
their filaments are either evolved or augmented; a new  
state of organization, a new modification of matter  
is produced, and a new property, that of irritability,  
is created. In the same manner, the new-lain fec-  
cundated egg of an oviparous animal has no more of  
either irritability or sensation than the seed of a  
plant. It consists merely of matter in a peculiar,  
but certainly an insensate, state of organization.  
What then is superadded to it to produce the per-  
ception it is shortly destined to possess? The mother  
broods over it for a certain period of time; but the  
mother communicates nothing but heat, which is it-  
self a material substance: for a common oven, judi-  
ciously warmed, will hatch the inclosed chick just as  
soon, and as safely. A change, therefore, is pro-  
duced in a given time by the application of a definite  
quantity of heat, or of matter differently arranged in  
the organization of the interior substance of the egg,  
in the same manner as in that of the vegetable seed;  
and from a new modification of its matter is produced  
a new and superior property: the fetus becomes  
gradually endowed with the power of sensation.  

It is precisely the same thing in man. When the  
embryon descends from the ovarium into the uterus,  
upon one system of physiology, or when the seminal  
fluids of the male and female unite in the uterus, and  
form the first filaments of the fetus, upon another  
system, it is obviously at this time devoid of all sen-  
sation whatever. The placenta supplies it with oxy-  
gen, the liquor of the uterus, perhaps, with nutri-  
ment, though this is uncertain; yet no research  
whatever can trace any thing added to it, but differ-  
ent material substances. In process of time, how-  
ever, a new organization is gradually produced; for  
the first ovum, or embryo filaments, no more resembles  
the future fetus, than the seed or the egg resembles  
the future plant or bird; and, with the production of
a new organization, we trace the production of a new power, that I mean of sensation. From sensation, we afterwards discover the origin of ideas and thought. There is an admirable simplicity in the laws and operations of nature. It is the grand characteristic of creation: and we are sure to err in our reasoning, when we pre-suppose a greater complexity in the cause, than is necessary to produce a definite effect. I do not here follow up the vague opinion of Dr. Darwin, with respect to vegetable life, and vegetable sensations; because, if they be not founded upon fancy alone, there is too little ground for admitting them as philosophic truths. Those, however, who are acquainted with his Botanic Garden and Temple of Nature, but more especially with his Phytologia, well know that he contends, not only for the existence of a corporeal structure in vegetables, consisting of arteries, veins, lymphatics, muscles, umbilical vessels, sexual and respiratory organs, but also for that of nerves, and a common sensorium or brain; and the senses of love and hatred, pleasure, pain, and sleep. See chapter viii. of this last entertaining publication. Yet, the doctor himself has been in some degree exceeded by M. Patrin, who equally contends for a similar kind of sensation, if not of structure, in the mineral world; and conceives, from their assimilations and elective attractions, that minerals are as much organized in their own way, as any vegetables whatever; from the stone which we call brute, because we perceive not the relations which connect it with the rock from which it was separated, to the beautiful mineral vegetation denominated flos ferri, which so much resembles marine productions, and appears to be one of the intermediate links which nature has placed on the confines of her different kingdoms, to connect them with each other. See Nouveau Dictionnaire et Hist. Naturelle appliquée aux Arts, tom. xiv.

From these observations it should seem then that gravitation, chemical affinities, irritability, sensation, thought, all equally and progressively flow from various modifications of matter, and from matter alone. Nature indeed appears to show, and Lucretius, who is the poet of nature, undertakes to affirm, that no modifications of matter can continue for ever, and consequently that at death the dissolution must be entire; and the thinking principle of man, the material spirit which animates him, as necessarily perish as any other part of his frame. But the glorious revelation which "has brought life and immortality," the knowledge of the soul, and of a future resurrection "to light," teaches us, in a voice "which cannot lie," that matter may and will continue for ever uncorrupted and in an organized form: it establishes the triumphant belief, that the body at large shall hereafter arise from its grave, to the inheritance of eternal life; and that that part of it which constitutes the soul is immortal from its very birth. For a continuation of this subject, see note on Book III. v. 100.

Ver. 880. Thus into life th' insensate dunghill rears
The race of worms.] So Darwin:
Hence, without parent, by spontaneous birth
Rise the first specks of animated earth;
From nature's womb the plant or insect swims,
And buds or breathes, with microscopic limbs.

Templ. of Nat. i. 247.

Nor widely different Thomson:
Full nature swarms with life: one wondrous mass
Of animals or atoms organiz'd
Waiting the vital breath, when Parent Heaven
Shall bid his spirit blow.

Summer, 287.

The two English as well as the Latin poet obviously inclined to the doctrine of equivocal or spontaneous generation; the production of animals from the heat of the sun, or other adventitious stimuli, acting upon a proper nidus, without the express copulation of male and female: and it is wonderful to observe the necessity zoologists have felt themselves under of late years, to return in some measure to the doctrine advanced in the text. The creed is generally conceived to have been of Egyptian birth; and was in universal vogue among all the philosophic schools of Greece and Rome. It followed, however, as a natural
That sentient things, things void of sense create.

Thus into life th’ insensate dung-hill rears

consequence from the first principles of Democritus and Epicurus, and all those who, denying the immediate superintendence of a Divinity in the formation of the world, traced the production of all things, animals as well as vegetables, from certain apparently anomalous organizations of matter alone. The popular creed and the mythology of the poets coincided in the same hypothesis. When Ovid, therefore, who has copied from Hefiod his account of the antediluvian ages of the world, relates at length the destruction of every species of animals by the deluge, with the single exception of Deucalion and Pyrrha; he supposes the whole human race regenerated; and this, in obedience to the command of the oracle consulted on the occasion, not from coition of the surviving pair, but from casting the stones of the earth backwards over their shoulders, which suddenly softened and became possesst of human features: for, observes he,

Magna parens terra est: lapides in corpore terrae Ossa reor dici. METAM. 1. i.

Our mighty mother is the earth; the stones
Upon her surface doubtless are her bones.

In this fact, however, we trace at least the co-operation of man and woman, in the re-production of the human race. But nothing of the kind occurred, according to the same tradition, in the renewal of every other species of animals. For the poet shortly proceeds to inform us that,

Cetera diversis tellus animalia formis
Sponte sua peperit; postquam vetus humor ab igne
Percaluit solis; cenumque, uedeque paludes
Intumuer capere; facaruque semina rerum
Vivaci nutrita solo, cee matris in alvo,
Creverunt, faciamque aliquam cepere morando. Id.

All other tribes, howe’er diverse of make,
Earth bore spontaneus; and as down direct,
Th’ establish’d sun his radiant ether threw,
And the foul slime, the stagnant marsh below

Swell’d with his fire, the genial seeds of things
New bulk assum’d, new forms of life display’d.

Such was the opinion of the people, and such that of almost every school of philosophy. Aristotle, among naturalists in general, strenuously contended for this power of spontaneous generation; and having had the good fortune to become more popular throughout every European state, after the dissemination of the Christian religion, than any other philosopher, this doctrine likewise descended with his general code of tenets, till about a century ago the whole fabric sustained a severe assault from the united labours of Des Cartes, Bayle, Malbranche, and Newton, who maintained, that all animal life must necessarily be propagated by sexual commerce alone; and be continued either viviparously or oviparously.

But by experiments and observations which have since been made, and that with the most undeviating attention, it should seem that these are not the only means by which animal life is generated: that sexual commerce is by no means absolutely necessary in every instance, and that succeeding races are propagated in modes altogether as numerous and as diverse as in the vegetable world. The resemblance in this respect, between the two departments, is indeed most striking and astonishing; and it is equally certain in both cases, that although sexual intercourse, and oviparous and viviparous gestation, the medium I mean of seeds and bulbs or buds in the vegetable kingdom, and eggs and living fetuses in the animal, are generally employed by nature for this purpose, yet in each department there are also other modes of propagation, by no means unfrequently adopted. The armed polypus or hydra of Linneus multiplies its species, like the water-lentil, by sending off lateral shoots from the body of the parent reptile. The bell-polypus or hydra stentora increases by splitting longitudinally; and these divisions, and every succeeding race of divisions, continue to re-split every twenty-four hours, till the original stock in a few days produces an innumerable offspring. The funnel-shaped polypus
Stercore de tetro, putorem quom sibi nacta est,
Intempestivis ex imribus humida, tellus.

... Many vegetables have a power of propagating both by seeds and bulbs as well as buds, at the same time; that is, both oviparously and viviparously: and the aphid puceron or vine-fretter has been detected by Bonnet to possess a power perfectly similar, its young being viviparous in the full heat of summer, and oviparous in the latter and more chilly months of autumn. There are various other families of flies that are supposed to be equally gifted. The capability of ingrafting is not peculiar to vegetables; the fresh-water polypus and the sea-nettle (actinia) will endure the process with an equal degree of ease and effect.

The Young of many animals are brought into the world in a state of extreme imperfection, without the sense of sight, or the use of their limbs; and in other instances, they are able to assist themselves from the moment of their birth. So, while the seeds of most plants fall upon the earth in a dormant state, and require much care to render them productive, in the festuca vivipara and a few others, they begin to vegetate in the parent plant, and drop upon the soil with roots ready formed, perfect in all their powers, and capable of immediate increment.

... Most plants that are propagated by sexual connexion possess hermaphrodite corollas; that is to say, every individual corolla possesses both the male and female organs of generation in itself. The corollas of the cucumber, however, as well as all other plants of the class Monoea, are male and female separately, and require the conjoint faculties of the two to propagate their kind. There are other plants, again, that are male or female through every flower produced: and of consequence, unless the female herb be situated in the vicinity of the male, it will be barren through the whole term of its existence. Such is the order Dioecia of Linneus. Among animals we seldom meet with more than the organs of a single sex attached to each individual. Reports of hermaphrodites have not been uncommon, indeed, both amidst quadrupeds and mankind; and nature certainly appears to have sported occasionally in this way, but never in such a manner as to have rendered the possession of...
The race of worms, when once the mingling show'r
Wakes the warm ferment through the putrid mass.

The two sexes perfect in the same subject. But the earth-worm, dew-worm, snails, eels, oysters, and many other species of shell fishes, are complete hermaphrodites; and the number of animals of this class is so considerable, that M. Poupart believes it to exceed that of those which are divided into sexes. See Mem. de l'Acad. des Sciences. While these propagate their kinds from their own single exertions, there are other shell-fishes, as we learn from Mr. Adanson in his account of Senegal, that require the union of not less than three individuals for the same genial purpose. In like manner it has lately been proved by Mr. Girtanner, that the conferva fontinalis, first noticed by Dr. Priestley, requires heat, light, and water, though nothing else, for the production of this vegetable.

The hermaphrodite power of many of the animals here enumerated, has been long known to the world. It is mentioned by Homer and Athenaeus, but more particularly in the following verses of Oppian:

\[
\text{Αλλ' αὐξ ἐγχελσινιον 'ομοιον, ὡδ χιλοιας}
\]

\[
\text{Οὐ τοι ποιοῦσιν γαμμαν τίλες, οὐτε κολαν}
\]

\[
\text{Μεραιμιν, λεχαν δὲ παιράτουραν αὐτων ἤρωσιν.}
\]

\[
\text{Γνω μεν γε περιπόροιν' ἀλλαξε φυσιαν}
\]

\[
\text{Ἐγχελειοι, δημα γηρ αναστρωφων ἰμμαεις, &c.}
\]

Not thus conchs, eels, and polypi embrace,
Nor purple lampreys rear their embryo race.
In selfish coils, hermaphrodite, they sit,
And their own powers the vital spume emit,
Which gradual dropp’d on sands or slimy mud
A silver offering render to the flood.

Spalanzani detected many vegetable seeds, extremely diminutive in their form, the vitality of which it is almost impossible to destroy either by heat or chemical solvents. In like manner, he discovered the eggs of many animals confined in vegetable seeds, still possessing a power of producing their definite orders of insects, after such seeds had been exposed to the most intense heat of burning coals, and even the blow-pipe itself; and although reduced into the most subtle powder, after having hereby been converted into calces. Thus, too, many animals and vegetables have an equally wonderful power of resurrection after apparent destruction: among the latter may be mentioned the nostoc and tremella, which perpetually spring up after they have seemed to perish; and among the former the chaos redivivum, the vorticella or wheel-animal, the sloth, and the tile-eel, a new species discovered by Spalanzani in the impalpable dust of bricks and tiles. In the case of this last insect, the alternate process of death and resurrection was carried on with success, and with the same animalcule, for not less than eleven times, by keeping it dry and without sand, and afterwards moistening it with water. Eggs and seeds, after a torpor of months or even years, are occasionally revived on being moistened with warm water; and in like manner, some shell-snails in the cabinets of the curious have revived on the same application, after having been kept in a dry state for ten or twelve years.

It was in consequence of such experiments, that the Count de Buffon established a system which appears strongly inclined to resuscitate the doctrine of equivocal generation contended for by Lucretius. According to this celebrated naturalist, all matter swarms with organic germs or molecules, which serve for the nutriment of organized bodies, till they acquire a state of maturity, and augmentation ceases; and for their seminal stores afterwards. But independently of seminal secretion, he contends that when large quantities of these prolific germs are collected in any part of an animal body, wherever such germs are compelled to remain together, they create certain orders of living beings, which have always been regarded as real animals. The tenias, the ascari-rides, all the worms found in the veins, in the liver, in wounds, in pus, and most of those discovered in putrid flesh, have, according to this system, no other origin. The eels in paste and vinegar, the tadpoles in the male semen, and all the pretended microscopic animals, are only different forms assumed, according
Præterea, cunctas itidem res vortere sese:
Vortunt se fluviei in frundeis, et pabula læta
In pecudes; vortunt pecudes in corpora nostra
Naturam; et nostro de corpore sæpe ferarum
Augescunt vires, et corpora pennipotentum.
Ergo omneis natura cibos in corpora viva
Vortit, et hinc sensus animantum procreat omneis:
Non alià longe ratione, atque arida ligna
Explicat in flammas, et in igneis omnia versat.
Jamne vides igitur, magni primordia rerum
Referre in quali sint ordine quæque locata,
Et conmixta quibus dent motus, adcipliantque?

Tum porro, quid id est, animum quod percutit ipsum,
Quod movet, et varios sensus expromere cogit;

---

to circumstances, by this active matter, which has a perpetual tendency to organization. Hist. Naturelle tom. iii. See also note on Book IV, v. 1264, and Book V. v. 1104, of this poem.

When the conferva fontinalis, or green matter that grows at times so rapidly upon the surface of stagnant waters, was first discovered by Dr. Priestley; and, I believe still later, when the mucor or mouldiness which was first observed by Mr. Ellis to grow on the surface of all putrefying vegetable or animal matter, it was the fashion to suppose that these vegetable substances were produced from seeds floating in the atmosphere, and hence deposited on the waters or putrefactions where they were generated. But the experiments of Dr. Ingenhouz have long falsified this idea; and these have since been confirmed by some very curious and important ones by M. Patrin, who has completely succeeded in establishing the spontaneous generation of these very simple and newly discovered vegetables. See Nouveau Dictionnaire d'Histoire Naturelle appliquée aux Arts, tom. xiv. Dr. Darwin, who never suffered a system to lose any thing, when once imbibed by himself, seems to have carried this of spontaneous vitality to a most immoderate extreme. The reader may form some idea of its extravagance from the following passage with which he concludes one of his essays upon this subject. "But it may appear too bold, in the present state of our knowledge on this subject, to suppose that all vegetables and animals now existing, were originally derived from the smallest microscopic ones formed by spontaneous vitality; and that they have,
Thus all things change to all things: foliage, fruits, And the gay glebe to flocks, and herds convert; And flocks, and herds to man; and man, in turn, Feeds the foul strength of birds, and barb’rous beasts. From every food, thus nature’s chemic pow’r Builds up the forms of life; in every class Thus wakes the senses every class avows; As through the winter-stack full oft she spreads The rushing blaze, and turns the whole to fire.— Seest thou not hence, then, of what vast concern The modes in which primordial seeds combine, Act, or re-act, give motion, or accept? This creed what hinders? what perverts thy mind, And locks thy senses from a truth so plain That sentient things from things insensate flow? What but that stocks, and stones, and earth’s dull clod, by innumerable re-productions, during innumerable centuries of time, gradually acquired the size, strength, and excellence of form and faculties, which they now possess; and that such amazing powers were originally impressed on matter and spirit, by the great Parent of Parents, Cause of Causes! Ens Entium!” Additional notes to Temple of Nature. This theory of spontaneous vitality has been, however, expressly controverted by Redi, the father of experimental entomology, as well as by Trembley and Bonnet. But the general force of the argument advanced by the Roman bard does not depend upon its truth or falsehood. The fact remains the same, though the mode of accounting for it be different. It is equally true that ——into life th’ insensate dung-hill rears The race of worms:— Whether we believe they spring equivocally from organic molecules, swarming throughout the putrid and fermenting substance of the dunghill; or that this latter affords nothing more than a proper nidus for the deposition of the fecundated eggs of flies and worms, which, in process of time, are hereby thrown into action, generate a new organization, and produce the new power of sensation. For no one, I apprehend, will contend that the eggs of the fly or worm, when first deposited, are possess of more sensation than the substance of the dunghill itself; and, thus which theory soever we imbibe, the position of Lucretius follows equally as a truth, That sentient things, things void of sense create.
Ex insensilibus ni credas sensile gigni?
Nimirum, lapides, et ligna, et terra, quod unâ
Mixta tamen nequeunt vitalem reddere sensum;
Illud in hiis igitur foedus meminisse decebit,
Non ex omnibus omnino, quæquomque creant res,
Sensile, et ex templo me gigni dicere sensus:
Sed magni referre, ea primum quantula constant,
Sensile quæ faciunt, et quâ sint prædita formâ;
Môtibus, ordinibus, positurus denique, quæ sint;
Quarum nihil rerum in lignis, glebisque, videmus:
Et tamen hæc, quom sunt quasi putrefacta per imbreis,
Vermiculos pariunt; quia corpora materiaï,
Antiquis ex ordinibus permota novâ re,
Conciliantur ita, ut debent animalia gigni.
Deinde, ex sensilibus quom sensile posse creari
Constituunt, porro, ex aliis sentire suëti,
Mollia confaciunt: nam sensus jungitur omnis
Visceribus, nervis, venis, quæquomque videmus
Mollia mortali consistere corpore creta.

Sed tamen esto jam, posse hæc æterna manere:
Nempe tamen debent aut sensum partis habere,
Aut simileis totis animalibus esse putari.
At, nequeant per se partes sentire, necesse est;
Namque alios sensus membrorum respuit omnis:
Boast no sensation though alike educ’d?—
Yet mark, attentive, the sage muse ne’er yet
Has urg’d that all things doubtless must alike
Spring forth percipient, and with sense endu’d:
But that of vast concern, as hence alone,
Sensation ceaseless flows—the modes diverse
Of motion, order, form, with which, through time,
Primordial atoms blend:—modes the dull clod
Knows not, its frame unorganiz’d and rude.
Though the dull clod, or sapless root as dull,
When the moist show’r the putrid strife has rous’d,
Themselves the vermin race in crowds create;
Chang’d, then, their nature, from arrangements new,
And full empower’d perceptive life to rear.

Those, too, who hold that sentient forms throughout
Spring but from sentient seeds, those seeds must deem
Soft and unsolid, since unsolid all,
And soft each region, where sensation reigns,
Th’ interior bowels, and the flesh without;
And hence such seeds must doubtless waste to nought.

Yet grant their dates eternal: such must then
The total sense possess of things they rear,
Or sense of sep’rate parts: but parts alone
Have no perception, nor alone can live.
Each leans on each; the loose dismember’d hand
Nec manus a nobis potis est secreta, neque ulla
Corporis omnino sensum pars sola tenere.
Linquitur, ut totis animalibus adsimilentur;
Vitali ut possint consentire undique sensu.
Quî poterunt igitur rerum primordia dici,
Et leti vitare vias, animalia quem sint,
Atque, animalibus in mortalibus, una eademque?

Quod tamen ut possint, ab coetu concilioque
Nihil facient præter volgum turbamque animantum:
Scilicet, ut nequeant homines, armenta, feraeque,
Inter se se ullum rem gignere conveniundo.
Sic itidem, quâ sentimus, sentire necesse est.

Quod, si forte suum dimittunt corpore sensum,
Atque alium capiunt; quid opus fuit adtribui id, quod
Detrahitur? Tum præterea, quo fugimus ante,
Quâ tenus in pullos animaleis vortier ova
Cernimus alituum, vermeisque ecfervere, terram
Intempestivos quom putor cepit ob imbreis;

Ver. 943. —— from the warm ferment
Of earths putrescent, by the clouds bedew'd,
The vermin nations rise, with soul replete.] Thus
again Thomson, still evincing the same doctrine of
spontaneous vitality:
—— from the swampy fens
Drops pow’rless; nor can aught itself sustain,
From the full form, the total sense that flows. 925
What then remains but that each seed exists
An animal complete, endow’d throughout
With vital functions? but resolve, how then
Prove they th’ immortal principles of things?
Whence draw the pow’r, possest by nought that breathes, 930
To live through time, and brave th’ attacks of fate?

But grant e’en this: their combination still
No forms could rear, but those of sentient life;
Nor men, nor herds, nor savage beasts produce
Aught but themselves; the sense generic shown 935
Varying as varies the generic frame.

Nor urge that sentient seeds, at times, perchance,
Lose all sensation, and insensate live;
Why with an attribute so soon destroy’d
Robe them at all then? Rather, mark how soon 940
Th’ insensate yolk incipient life betrays,
And springs a vital chick: mark, as the muse
Has earlier sung, how from the warm ferment
Of earths putrescent, by the clouds bedew’d,
The vermin nations rise, with soul replete, 945

Where putrefaction into life ferments,
And breathes destructive myriads.

And Ovid, consistently with the same hypothesis, represents the putrescent carcase of an ox as giving birth to crowds of busy insects:
Scire licet gigni posse ex non sensibus sensus.
Quod, si forte aliquis dicet, dum taxat oriri
Posse a non sensu sensus, mutabilitate,
Ante, aliquo tamquam partu, quam proditur extra;
Huic satis illud erit, planum facere, atque probare,
Non fieri partum, nisi concilio ante coacto;
Nec quidquam conmutari sine conciliatu

— fervent examina putri
De bove; mille animas una necata dedit. Fast. i.
The putrid carcase now ferments amain,
And thousands spring to life for one that's slain.

Ver. 952. But from the sympathy of primal seeds:
The more minutely we become acquainted with the
operations of nature, the more clearly we perceive, that
in her physical as well as her moral department, there
exist certain inexplicable sympathies and antipathies which no exertion of man can possibly destroy.
Gravitation itself may be adduced as an instance of
general sympathy pervading every particle of matter,
and compelling it to associate for the common good.
The operation of the magnet upon iron, or their
mutual desire of approximation, may be regarded as
a particular sympathy: so also may the power of
metallic substances to attract the electric aura. But
as the attachment of this subtle fluid to metals at
large appears stronger in every instance than its
attachment to any other kind of substance, so does it
seem to give a preference to some metals beyond
what it discovers toward others: while, in the mean
time, it evinces an insurmountable antipathy to silk,
wax, glass, and all similar substances; the degree of
antipathy towards one substance exceeding that to-
wards another. The philosophy of chemistry un-
folds this doctrine in a light still more conspicuous:
and while it opens to us substances which will never
combine, and between which there appears to sub-
sist an eternal and insuperable dislike, it presents us
also with substances attached to each other by every
possible degree of affinity and elective attraction. Che-
mistry discovers to us, that oil will unite with alcohol,
but not with water; that alcohol will unite with
water, but not with alkali: that there is a sym-
pathy, affinity, or elective attraction between water
and calcareous earths, which enables the former to
embrace, or dissolve in its pores, a definite quantity
of the latter: that there is a stronger affinity be-
tween calcareous earths and acids, since a larger
quantity will here be absorbed in proportion to the
acid employed; while the menstruum, at the same
time, remains limpid: and that again, there is an
affinity far stronger than either, between acids and
alkalis, which may literally be said to destroy each
other by their embraces: and hence, when a due
proportion of alkali is added to an acid, in which
calcareous earth has been previously dissolved, the
acid will immediately take hold of the alkali in pre-
ference to the earth; its former connexion will be relin-
quished, and the calcareous solvend will be precipitated
to the bottom of the vessel. It is impossible, in
deed, to pursue this subject, to notice the different
elective attractions and repulsions, in many instances
duplicated, and even triplicated, that chemistry un-
folds to us, without being astonished at the faculties
exhibited throughout the whole world of brute, un-
aminated matter.

From unanimated matter these peculiar and mys-
terious affections ascend to vegetable life, and dis-
play to us germs, molecules, and fibrils, uniting, not
at random with germs, molecules, and fibrils, but
each selecting the other, the female the male, and
Thus spreading sense where sense was none before.

Nor deem sensation senseless seeds create
Sole from some change anterior, long educ’d
Ere into birth the sentient being springs.

What more fallacious? since nor birth complete
Nor aught of change can Nature’s self create
But from the sympathy of primal seeds:

the male the female; and this with the nicest discrimination of their specific powers of crassitude or tenuity, and consequently of reciprocal adaptation, without which no vital entity would ensue. So much imports it in the beautiful language of our poet, Book IV. 1320.

———that the seeds of life
With seeds should mix symphonous, that the gross
Condense the rare, the rare the gross dilute.

Let us mount still higher, and we shall perceive in the animal kingdom, even in man himself, that a variety of substances possess a kind of idiopathetic influence over some member or organ of the corporeal frame, which they never exert, or at least in a subordinate degree over every other. Alcohol has a specific connexion with the liver; turpentine with the kidneys; cantharides with the neck of the urinary bladder; jalap with the intestinal canal, opium and peruvian bark with the whole nervous system; the former diminishing sensation, and the latter preventing the recurrence of the spasm of intermittent fevers.

In a manner somewhat similar, one member or organ of the percipient frame appears to possess a species of intimacy or connexion with some other member or organ, though considerably remote from itself, which it does not discover towards the system at large. Thus, physicians trace a sympathy between the liver and the left shoulder, which is said to be frequently possessed of peculiar uneasiness during a decay of the former. The same kind of sympathy subsists between the head and the stomach;—between the stomach and the external capillary vessels; and between these, and the glands of the kidneys: an affection of the one producing generally an affection of the other, and vice versa.

The same kind of inexplicable sympathy may, perhaps, subsist between mind and mind, even allowing the mind itself to be material. And the view I have just taken of the natural world will, in some measure, unfold to us, I think, the cause of that species of moral affection, which has been termed pure, or platonic love, an elective attraction of mind to mind, which has been often denied by philosophers, and ridiculed by wits, and in many cases most justly, but which, if I mistake not, these observations seem to prove, may have a real foundation in nature. How mind operates upon mind we know not: into sensible contact it can never come: but neither does the sun or the moon in their operations upon the earth. The operation of motives and arguments is a long and circuitous mode of exciting reciprocity of affection: and it will often be found at last, that the affection thus produced, is of far inferior force, and indeed, of a nature altogether different from that excited by a certain indescribable sympathy, which sometimes compels the soul to feel more pleased with a person of less intellectual, and perhaps, even moral worth, than with another person whose endowments are confessedly superior.

This view of the subject may be carried still further, and affords some foundation for the belief of an occasional intercourse between ourselves and the spirits.
Principium; nequeunt ullius corporis esse
Sensus ante ipsam genitam naturam animantis:
Nimirum, quia materies disjecta tenetur
Aëre, fluminibus, terris, terrâque creatis;
Nec, congressa modo, vitaleis convenientiis
Contulit inter se motus, quibus omne tuentes
Adcensei sensus animantum quamque tuentur.

Præterea, quam vis animantem grandior ictus,
Quam patitur natura, repente adfligit, et omneis
Corporis atque animi pergit confundere sensus:
Dissoluuntur enim positurae principiorum,
Et penitus motus vitales inpediuntur;
Donec materies, omneis concussa per artus,
Vitales animæ nodos e corpore solvit,
Disparsamque foras per caulas eicit omneis.
Nam quid præterea facere ictum posse reamur
Oblatum, nisi discutere, ac dissolvere, quæque?

Fit quoque, uti soleant, minus oblato acriter ictu,
Reliquiæ motus vitalis vincere sæpe;

of our departed friends—between this world and
others around us. But I am aware that I am bordin-
ing on the regions of fancy; yet am I supported
in my excursion by the very system of Epicurus
himself, and consequently of our own poet, which
admits, that some such intercourse with superior
beings may be obtained by deep retirement, and men-
tal abstraction; and, what is of far more importance
to me, by the clear and unequivocal intimations of
revelation: the Jewish and Christian scriptures both
equally presupposing the superintendence of indi-
viduals, of distinct churches, nations, and the world
at large, by spirits or angels expressly delegated to
their respective offices. But I must leave the sub-
ject, which it would be, nevertheless, pleasant to
pursue. The reader may consult, if he chuse to
extend it farther, a German volume which has lately
been brought forwards, but I believe, not yet trans-
Nor, till the frame percipient be combin'd,
Can e'er perception flow; since wide through space,
In earth, in air, in streams, and lambent fire,
Are spread the rude materials, unarrang'd,
And void of social bond, whence first exists
Each vital motion, whence each guardian sense
Springs, and the complicated frame protects.

When too, abrupt, falls some tremendous blow,
Throughout the system suffers, every sense
Of soul, and body discompos'd alike.
Then fails th' arrangement of primordial seeds,
Each vital action fails; and, shook severe
Through every limb, the principles of life
Dissolve each fond connexion, quit their post,
And through th' external pores fly off at large.
For what but this can force extreme effect?
The dread solution, and the death of all.

But oft, when less the violence display'd,
The vital motions left may triumph still,
Vincere, et ingenteis plagæ sedere tumultus,
Inque suos quidquid rursus revocare meatus;
Et quasi jam leti dominantem in corpore motum
Discutere, ac pene amissos adscendere sensus.
Nam, quà re potius leti jam limine ab ipso
Ad vitam possint, conjectâ mente, revorti;
Quam, quo decursum prope jam siet, ire et abire?

Præterea, quoniam dolor est, ubi materiaï
Corpora, vi quadam per viscera viva, per artus,
Solicitata, suis trepidant in sedibus intus;
Inque locum quando remigrant, fit blanda voluptas:
Scire licet, nullo primordia posse dolore
Tentari; nullamque voluptatem capere ex se:
Quandoquidem non sunt ex illis principiorum
Corporibus, quorum motus novitate laborent,
Aut aliquem fructum capiant dulcedinis almaë:
Haud igitur debent esse ullo prædita sensu.

Denique, utei possunt sentire animalia quæque,
Principiis si jam est sensus tribuendus eorum;
Quid? genus humanum propriim de quibus auctum est,
Scilicet et risu tremulo concussa cachinnant,
Et lacrumis spargunt rorantibus ora, genasque;

Ver. 988. From those, forsooth, incited quick to laugh, most verbatim, from the first book; where the
Those down whose cheeks perpetual tears did run, &c.] These verses are borrowed, al-
And quell the mighty tumult, and recall,
From the rude grasp of fate, each active power
Marshal’d anew, and every sense relume.
For else, why rather should those powers retreat
Back from destruction with recruited strength,
Than still proceed, and burst the bars of life?

As pain, too, springs when, midst th’ interior frame,
Or limbs extreme, by sudden force convuls’d
Each vital atom shakes through all its course,
But yields to pleasure when the shock subsides,—
Since primal seeds can ne’er such shock sustain,—
No pain they know, nor e’er the fruit can pluck
Of dear delight; hence nought of sense is theirs.

But if, that things sensation may possess,
Their seeds primordial must possess the same,—
Say, from what seeds, then, springs the race of man?
From those, forsooth, incited quick to laugh,
Those down whose cheeks perpetual tears distil,

——For then must seeds
Hold powers adverse, and laugh, and shake their
sides,

While tears of anguish down their cheeks distil.

VER. 1011.
Multaque de rerum mixturâ dicere callent,
Et, sibi proporro quae sint primordia, quærunt:
Quandoquidem totis mortalibus adsimilata,
Ipsa quoque ex aliis debent constare elementis;
Inde alia ex aliis, nusquam consistere ut ausis.
Quippe sequar, quodquomque loqui ridereque dices,
Et sapere, ex aliis cadem hæc facientibus, ut sit.
Quod, si delirâ hæc furiosaque cernimus esse,
Et ridere potest non ex ridentibus auctus,
Et sapere, et doctis rationem reddere dictis,
Non ex semenibus sapientibus, atque disertis:
Quî minus esse queant ea, quæ sentire videmus,
Semenibus permixta carentibus undique sensu?

Denique, coelesti sumus omnes semine oriundi;
Omnibus ille idem pater est; unde alma liquenteis

Tum pater omnipotens foëcundis imbribus Æther
Conjugis in gremium Isetae descendit, &c.

Or, as it still more explicitly occurs in another
passage of the same poet:

A Jove principium, Musæ : Jovis omnia plena.

Jove hymn we first, for all is full of Jove.

Consimilar to, and almost synonymous with which,
are the following exquisite verses, that open the
Phenomena of Aratus:

Ex Æthi archimelth, toû oûpou' oûpou ëmpeî
Ætheth' ëmuâs ëd Æthi ëkthi meî agwâns,
Piastî ëd ëkthimwî agwânsî ëmuâs ëd ëkthmeî,
Kai ëkthimws' ëmuâs ëd Æthi ëkthimwî ëmuâns
Tou ywî kai ywîs otîwî.
And those deep-vers'd in causes, and effects,
Discussing grave the seeds that rear themselves.
For grant this system, and whate'er exists
Must spring from seeds minuter, endless urg'd,
And draw, progressive, every power display'd
Of thought, or laughter, from the parent stock.
This if thou smile at, and contend that things
With pow'r endow'd of laughter, speech, and thought
Still rise from seeds that no such pow'rs avow,
Why not concede, then, sentient things alike
May flow from seeds of total sense devoid?

All spring from heav'n, etherial, all that live:
The sire of all is Ether: he, full oft,

From God we spring—whom man can never trace,
Though heard, seen, tasted, felt in every place.
The loneliest path, by mortal seldom trod,
The crowded city, all is full of God;
Oceans, and lakes—for God is all in all—
And we are all his offspring.

This is the passage which St. Paul so successfully
refers to, and quotes in his animated oration to the
Athenians on Mars-hill: "For, in him, we live and
move, and have our being; as certain also of your
own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."
Acts, xvii. 28.

This quotation cannot but remind us of the follow-
ing consentaneous verses in Pope's Essay on Man:
All are but parts of one stupendous whole;
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
VOL. I.

That chang'd through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in th' etherial frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.

This kind of general proposition, only differently
interpreted, will apply therefore, as I have before
observed, to the tenets of most philosophers, ancient
or modern, as well as to the Christian system. It
constitutes an important doctrine in the ordinances of
Menu, and is particularly applied to the eternal
Gayatri, or mother of the Veda, "that divine and un-
paralleled light," as she is there denominated, "which
illumines all, delights all; from which all proceed;
Humoris guttas mater quom Terra receptit,
Feta parit nitidas fruges, arbustaque lacta,
Et genus humanum; parit omnia secla ferarum;
Pabula quom præbet, quibus omnes corpora pascunt,
Et dulcem ducunt vitam, prolemque propagant:
Quapropter merito maternum nomen adepta est.
Cedit item retro, de terrâ quod fuit ante,
In terras; et, quod missum est ex ætheris oris,
In dulcet drops descends of genial rain
And the bland \textit{Earth} impregnates. Timely, then,
Rises the glossy blade, the joyous leaf
Shoots forth, and man and beast, in countless tribes,
Fed from the various banquet of the fields,
Live their gay hours, and propagate their kinds.
Maternal, hence, is \textit{Earth} most justly nam'd.
Thus all things rise, thus all again return:
Earth takes what earth bestow'd; and back to heaven,

\hrule

\textit{Ver. 1002. —Ether: he, full oft,}
\textit{In dulcet drops descends} \textit{[More exquisitely still is the same idea conveyed by the Psalmist, lxviii. 8.}

The earth shook; \textit{the heavens also dropped};
Even Sinai itself at the presence of God,
At the presence of God, the God of Israel.

\textit{Ver. 1009. Maternal, hence, &c.] On this subject the poet descants more at large in Book V. 810, and following; where the same idea recurs almost in the same words; as it also does in Book V. v. 838.

It is to this and the ensuing verse that Klopstock appears to have had his eye directed, in the opening of the third book of his Messiah; and his paraphrase is truly beautiful:

\begin{quote}
Sey mir gegrüsst! ich sehe dich wieder, die du mich gebahrest,
Erde, mein mutterlicher land, die du mich in kühlendem schoosse
Einst bey den schlafenden Gottes begräbt, und meine gebeine
Sanft bedeckest.
\end{quote}

\textit{Ver. 1010. Thus all things rise, thus all again return:}
\textit{Earth takes what earth bestow'd; and, back to heaven, &c.] Epicharmus has a passage to this effect, which, it is probable, our poet had in his recollection, when he composed these verses: Συνεκρώθη, observes he, of the dead man, και διέκριθη, και απελευθέρων εις τόν θόν, παλαι' γα μεν εις γυν., σύνημα δε αιων. \textit{The component substance is now decomposed, and returned to the different quarters whence it sprang; its earthy parts to earth, its spirit to heaven above.} \textit{In the following verses of Euripides, the same idea, and probably derived from the same source, more nearly still approaches the passage of Lucretius now under our consideration:}

\begin{quote}
Όλος δὲ οὐκοσμίους εἰς τούς σωμάτ' αφικέτα,
Εἴ τινς απελευθέρων σύνημα μεν πρὸς αὐτέρα,
Το σύνημα δὲ οὐκ.\textit{When man returns to matter, whence he rose, He severs total; to the heavens ascends The spirit, and the grosser corse to earth.}

The doctrine was entirely that of Epicurus; and Du Rondelle has hence attempted to prove that Epicurus, notwithstanding a host of expressions apparently to the contrary, was, in reality, a believer in the immortality of the soul. But such a deduction is altogether fanciful, and completely disproved by the whole of Book III. of the poem before us.

\textbf{U u a}
DE RERUM NATURA.

Id rursum coeli relatum templam receptant:
Nec sic interimit mors res, ut materiai
Corpora confaciatur, sed coetum dissupat ollis:
Inde aliis aliud conjungit; et ecstit, omnes
Res ita convirtant formas, mutentque colores,
Et capiant sensus, et puncto tempore reddant;
Ut noscas referre, eadem primordia rerum,
Cum quibus, et quali positur, contineantur,
Et quos inter se dent motus, acdipiuntque:
Neve putes æterna parum residere potesse
Corpora prima, quod in summis fluitare videmus
Rebus, et interdum nasci, subitoque perire.
Quin etiam refert, nostris in versibus ipsis,
Cum quibus, et quali sint ordine quæque locata.
Namque eadem cælum, mare, terras, flumina, solem,
Significant; eadem fruges, arbusta, animanteis.
Si non omnia sint, at multo maxuma pars est

Ver. 1015. — every form commutes,
And every tint; perception springs amain,
And, instantaneous, wastes again to nought.} It is to this passage the cardinal Polignac directed his eye, when, in the fourth book of his poem, in opposition to the Epicurean system, he endeavoured to prove, from this perpetual change and transformation of things into things, that the world could not be eternal: an attempt which, so far as relates to Lucretius himself, was almost useless; since his first book is totally occupied with proofs, that all things have had a beginning, and he is immediately, in the present book, about to demonstrate, that the world itself, at least the present arrangement of the world, must have a termination. The verses, to which I refer, are as follow:

Semina de arboribus, de semine provenit arbos.
Nulla arbor igitur, nullum quoque semen ab avo.
Sic ortum cepisse diem noctemque necesses est:
Remount th’ ethereal dews from heav’n that fell.
Yet death destroys not the prime seeds of things,
But scatters only; atoms hence commix
With stranger-atoms, every form commutes,
And every tint; perception springs amain,
And, instantaneous, wastes again to nought.
Of such vast moment are the modes diverse
In which primordial seeds their posts arrange,
Act, and re-act, give motion, and accept:
For deem not seeds thus floating most minute
Through the vast whole, now obvious to the view,
Now quick disperst, can ne’er eternal live.
Such then, the moment, as already urg’d,
With which the types, these numbers that compose,
Change their positions, and retreat, or blend.
Thus the same letters, or with variance small,
Heaven, earth, and water, seas, and suns express,
Fruits, plants, and mortals; common are the types,
The terms but change from combinations new.

Nempe dies noctem sequitur; sequiturque diem.
Ver. estas, autunnum, hyems, annum ordine ducunt;
Inque vicem se secundum, mundi argumenta recentis,
Excipiunt. Inter sibi succedentia nullum est
Quod non potest aliud veniat.

ANTI-LUCRET. lib. iv. 1377.
Seeds spring from trees, the tree from seeds ascends,
Hence of eternal date can neither boast.
So night from day, and day from night must flow,

For midnight, noon, and noon-tide night succeeds.
Spring, summer, autumn, winter, lead the year
Around, harmonious; and with joint acclaim
The world demonstrate but of recent birth.
Things yield to things alternate; nor can aught
Be trace’d through nature nothing ne’er that rears.

Ver. 1024. Such then, the moment, as already urg’d,
With which the types, these numbers that compose,

See Book I. ver. 918, and Book II. 698.
Consimilis; verum positurâ discrepitant res:
Sic ipsis in rebus item jam materiaï
Intervalla, viæ, connexus, pondera, plagæ,
Concursus, motus, ordo, positura, figuræ
Quom permutantur, mutari res quoque debent.

Nunc animum nobis adhibe veram ad rationem:
Nam tibi vehementer nova res molitur ad aureis
Adcidere, et nova se species obtendere rerum.

Sed neque tam facilis res ulla est, quin ea primum
Difficilis magis ad credundum constet; itemque
Nihil adeo magnum, neque tam mirabile quidquam,
Quod non paullatim minuant mirari omnem.

Principio, cæli clarum purumque colorem,
Quemque in se cohibent palantia sidera passim,
Lunamque, et solis præclara luce nitotem:
Omnia quæ nunc si primum mortalibus essent,
Ex improviso si sint objecta repente;
Quid magis hiis rebus poterat mirabile dici,
Aut minus ante quod auderent fore credere gentes?

Nihil ut opinor; ita hæc species miranda fuisset:
Quam, tibi jam nemo, fessus satiate videndi,
Subspicere in cæli dignatur lucida templæ.
Thus change material things: their primal seeds
In scite, connexion, interval of space,
Position, motion, weight, attractive power,
In these as varying, varies the result.

Now bend thy mind to truths profounder still:
For stranger doctrines must assault thine ear,
And a new scene of wonders yet unfold.
Whate’er is new, though obvious and defin’d,
Gains not an easy credence; but when once
Flies the fresh novelty, th’ unsteady soul
Yields its full faith to facts mysterious most.

The vault of heav’n cerulean, spangled thick
With stars, and with th’ effusive lustre cheer’d
Of sun, and moon refulgent—were, at once,
This scene celestial o’er the race of man
To burst abrupt—how would the nations start!
What wonders, then, be trac’d! with what vast toil
Would e’en the sage the prospect preconceive!
Yet now, full sated with the scene sublime,
Man scarce lifts up his listless eyes to heaven.

Ver. 1049. Yet now, full sated with the scene sublime,
Man scarce lifts up his listless eyes—Aken-
Desine quapropter, novitate exterritus ipsâ,
Exspuere ex animo rationem; sed magis acri
Judicio perpende: et, si tibi vera videntur,
Dede manus; aut, si falsum est, adcingere contra.
Quærît enim rationem animus, quom summa loci sit
Infinita foris, hæc extra moenia mundi,
Quid sit ibei porro, quo prospicere usque valet mens;
Atque animi jactus liber sit, quo velit ipse.

Principio, nobis in cunctas undique parteis,
Et latere ex utroque, infraque, superque, per omne
Nulla est finis, utei docui, res ipsaque per se
Vociferatur, et elucet natura profundi.
Nullo jam pacto veri simile esse putandum est,
Undique quom vorsum spatium vacet infinitum,
Seminaque innumero numero, summâque profundâ,
Multimodis volitent, æterno percita motu;
Hunc unum terrarum orbem, coelumque, creatum:
Nihil agere illa foris tot corpora materiai;
Quom præsertim hic sit naturâ factus, et ipsa,
Cease, then, alarm'd by aught profound, or strange,
Right reason to reject; weigh well the proofs
Each scheme advances; if by truth upheld
Embrace the doctrine; but, if false, abjure.
Ur'd thus, by truth,—beyond the world's wide walls
Since space spreads boundless, the redundant mind,
Free in its flights, pants, ardent, to discern
What fills those realms where sight can never soar.

And first, th' entire of things, above, below,
Search where thou wilt, on every side alike
Spreads unconfin'd: this, as already taught,
Right reason proves, and many a clam'rous fact.
Then deem not thou, since thus perpetual space
Flows infinite, and infinite the seeds
That, from exhaustless founts, in endless modes
Fly through the void, by endless motions ur'd,
Deem not this visual system of the heav'n's
Alone exists, unparallel'd by aught,
And that all matter elsewhere sleeps supine.

Ver. 1067. Deem not this visual system of the heav'n's
Alone exists, unparallel'd by aught;
And that all matter elsewhere sleeps supine.

The plurality of worlds is a doctrine of ancient date;
discredited, indeed, by Thales and Empedocles, and
even by Pliny; but asserted and maintained by De-
moecritus, Pythagoras, Epicurus, Heraclitus, Anax-
mander, and a host of other philosophers, both
Greek and Roman, whose names it would be easy to
e numerate. Such, indeed, was the advance which
some sages had made towards the Copernican system
itself, that not only the diurnal motion of the earth
round its own axis was maintained by many of them,
a doctrine which, as we learn from Cicero, (Tusc.
Quest.) was first introduced by Nicetas, of Syracuse;
but Philolaus, one of the earlier disciples of Pytha-
goras, actually discovered its annual motion in the
ecliptic, and represented it as revolving, like a star,
round the central fire. With a conjecture, thus bold and accurate, thus capable of leading on to the full development of the grand and total fact itself, it is astonishing that mankind should have suffered themselves to have remained, for more than two thousand years afterwards, the dupes of system after system, alike unsatisfactory, perplexing, and even inapplicable; more especially when we reflect that, according to his own confession, it was this happy conjecture of the earlier Pythagoreans that, first of all, gave Copernicus himself the idea of that theory, which he so thoroughly unfolded, and by which he has so justly immortalized his name. Aristarchus, the Samian, indeed, as we are assured by Archimedes, revived the doctrine of Philolaus, about a thousand years after its first invention, but with an unaccountable want of success.

The first geometrical idea that appears to have been entertained of the world at large, as most coincident with sensible appearances, was that of an immense but irregular plane, encircled on all sides by a boundless expanse, out of which the celestial luminaries daily ascended, forming an arch over the atmosphere by their quotidian path, and sinking every evening to repose. It was long after this, that the globular figure of the earth was demonstrated, or even imagined: but when once this latter opinion began to prevail, it was easy to conceive the existence of celestial spheres. The sun, the moon, and the planets, had now, therefore, three several spheres assigned them for their habitations; and the stars were supposed to be fixt, like gems, to the concave surface of an immense crystalline shell, which embraced the whole in its circumference. The spheres thus bestowed upon the celestial bodies, although capable of explaining some few of the phenomena that occurred, were very incompetent to an explanation of the whole, and other spheres were hence conceived, and added to those already acknowledged to exist. And so considerable were the multiplications of spheres bestowed on the heavens by Eudoxus, Callippus, Aristotle, and Fracastorio, that they amounted, in the era of this last philosopher, about two centuries ago, to no less a number than seventy-four: and the overloaded hypothesis became as intricate and inexplicable as the heavens were imagined to be themselves. The embarrassment was felt, and it was attempted to be relieved by another and a more artificial system, that I mean of Epicycles and Eccentric Circles. This, which was the original invention of Apollonius, received its last improvements from Ptolemy; from whom it has, in general, derived its name. In this system, the spheric motions were still continued, but every luminary, whilst revolving in its own orb, was supposed to have the centre of its orb carried at the same time round the circumference of another circle. By the introduction of this theory, several difficulties were undoubtedly removed; but multitudes still remained; and to obviate these was introduced the contrivance of the Equant, or Equalizing Circle. For a more full and particular account of which, as also for a more complete history of the whole of this branch of natural philosophy, I refer the reader to La Place's System de la Nature.

This system of Ptolemy, or of Epicycles and Eccentric Circles, continued, after its invention, till the new theory of Copernicus, introduced in the sixteenth century. Copernicus was highly dissatisfied with the theory in general use; its complications were most perplexing, and its multifarious corrections fatigued the imagination; nor did it solve half the difficulties which were perpetually arising. He resolved, therefore, with patient investigation, to examine all the different theories and conjectures on the same sublime subject, which had ever been entertained by philosophers, or of which any account could be traced. He, at last, arrived, as I have before observed, at the opinion of some of the first disciples of Pythagoras, respecting the revolution of the earth in the ecliptic: and from this moment he resolved to make this conjecture the basis of a new theory. Instead, therefore, of continuing motion to the sun, he resolved to conceive of the sun as a permanent body; and instead of
Since too, of its own nature the vast mass
Sprang forth spontaneous, rousing every pow'r

continuing the earth in a state of quietude, he transferred the motion of the former to the latter. And thus, by fixing the sun in the centre of the planetary system, by making all the planets revolve around it, in different orbits, and with different velocities, by comprehending the orbits of Venus and Mercury within that of the earth, and throwing those of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn beyond it; and, at the same time, by conceiving the revolution of the earth round its axis from west to east, while this axis remained always parallel to itself, though inclined, in some degree, to the plane of the earth's orbit, he solved, at once, almost every difficulty which no other system could solve; and introduced a theory, plain, simple, and intelligible, in the stead of crude, fanciful, perplexed, and unsatisfactory hypotheses. Whatever is new, however, as Lucretius has just before asserted, with much truth,

—though obvious and defin'd,

Gains not an easy credence.

Copernicus was convinced of this: he was fearful of the laugh of some philosophers, and of the hypercriticism of others; and, probably, foresaw the anathemas which the bigotry of the Roman church very shortly afterwards thundered out against his system: in consequence of which, he kept the entire plan concealed from the public eye for thirty years after its invention. At last, in the extremity of old age, he suffered it to be extorted from him; but died as soon as it was printed, and before it was published, being, as is generally supposed, terrified to death at the prospect of a persecution for heresy.

The mode in which the planetary system actually moves was thus established by the immortal labours of Copernicus. But the express difference and precise velocities of these motions, were reserved to be unfolded by junior philosophers: and as soon as the prejudices of the world, which were at first so powerfully excited against the new theory, began to subside, it is truly astonishing to notice the improvements which poured in from sages of almost every country in Europe, upon the Copernican doctrine, and the sudden blaze of information that irradiated the human mind. Amongst those, however, who most contributed to this increase of knowledge, I ought not to conceal the names of Tycho Brahe, Galileo, Kepler, and Des Cartes; and, last of all, the name of our own countryman, Sir Isaac Newton. But to pursue the history of the experiments and observations of these, and other philosophers of nearly the same era, and of high and deserved renown, would occupy too much space; and be deviating too widely from the main scope of these notes. Some farther information on the same subject, however, as being more intimately connected with the Epicurean doctrines there referred to, will be found in note on ver. 528, Book V. of this poem. I cannot consent, however, to suppress the names of those three pre-eminent labourers in the philosophic vineyard, upon whom the whole spirit of Newton appears to have been poured forth after his decease: I mean Clairaut, Euler, and D'Alembert; all of whom pursued the doctrine of gravitation till they established it as a principle of universal action: to the two former of whom we are indebted for elaborate theories of the moon, as also of the derangements of Saturn and Jupiter; and to the latter, for the doctrine of the precession of the equinoxes.

With the astronomic or cosmogonic doctrine of the Hindus and other Oriental nations, we are not at present much acquainted. Some information, however, upon this subject, but principally connected with mythology, may be found in the note on Book I. v. 865. of this poem, in which I have observed that the Hindus, in conjunction with the Chinese, conceive the same kind of subtle spirit to pervade all natural bodies, and encompass creation; which was conjectured, with a trifling variation, both by Des Cartes and Newton; which invisible fluid, the Brahmins denominate in their Vedas, a ṛṣīḥ elem. But a much greater resemblance to the Newtonian system exists in the Hindu doctrine of the natural and universal attraction of the elementary particles of matter. This doctrine is stated to occur in a variety
Tandem coaluerint ea, quæ, conjecta repente,
Magnarum rerum fieren t exordia semper,
Terrai, maris, et coel, generisque animantium.
Quà re etiam atque etiam taleis fateare necesse est
Esse alios alibe congressus materiaï,
Qualis hic est; avido conplexu quem tenet æther.

Præterea, quom materies est multa parata,
Quom locus est præsto, nec res, nec caussa moratur
Ulla; geri debent nimirum, et confieri, res.
Nunc, et seminibus si tanta est copia, quantam
Enumerare ætas animantium non queat omnis;
Visque eadem, et natura, manet, quæ semina rerum
Conjicere in loca quæque queat, simili ratione
Atque huc sunt conjecta; necesse est, confiteare
Esse alios aliis terrarum in partibus orbeis,
Et varias hominum genteis, et secla ferarum.

Huc adcedit, uti in summâ res nulla sit una,
To every mode of motion, rashly oft,
Oft vain and fruitless, till, at length, it form'd
Th' unchanging rudiments of things sublime,
And heav'n, and earth, and main, and mortals rose:— 1075
Hence doubly flows it, other systems still,
Like ours, must deck the vast ethereal void,
Enfolded in its avaricious grasp.

Ample, moreo'er, the matter thus requir'd,
The place at hand, the cause efficient full,
Whence new creations may for ever spring.
Since, then, so boundless the great mass of seeds
That endless ages ne'er could cast th' amount,—
Since the same pow'r presides, the nature still
That rear'd this visual system, and alike
Those seeds can mould to systems such as ours—
The fact flows doubtless, mid the void immense,
That other worlds in other parts must rise,
Peopled with reas'ning, and with brutal tribes.

Add, too, that nought, through universal space,
Unica quæ gignatur, et unica solaque crescat;
Quin aliquois siet secli, permultaque eodem
Sint genere: in primis animalibus indice mente
Invenies sic montivagum genus esse ferarum,
Sic hominum geminam prolem, sic denique mutas
Squamigerûm pecudes, et corpora cuncta volantum.
Quapropter, cœulum simili ratione, fatendum est,
Terramque, et solem, lunam, mare, cætera, quæ sunt,
Non esse unica, sed numero magis innumerali;
Quandoquidem vitæ depactus terminus alte
Tam manet hæc, et tam nativo corpore constant,
Quam genus omne, quod hiis generatim rebus abundans.

Quæ bene cognita si teneas, Natura videtur
Libera continuo, dominis privata superbis,
Ipsa suà per se sponte omnia diis agere expers.
Nam, pro sancta deûm tranquillà pectora pace
Quæ placidum degunt Ævom, multumque serenum!

Ver. 1102. These truths avow'd, all nature shines at
once,
Free in her acts, no tyrant to control,
Self-potent, and uninfluenc'd by the gods.]
But by what gods is she uninfluenced, and from
whose tyranny is she now freed? Certainly, in the
first place, she is uninfluenced by, and totally liberated
from, that capricious and arbitrary tyranny to which
the gods of the people were supposed to be perpetu-
ally subjecting her: exciting storms to avenge this
man, and sunshine to prosper that; actuated by their
own passions, and unmindful of the common good.
From the tyranny of these capricious deities, it was
the laudable aim of Lucretius to represent the uni-
verse as for ever freed. But there were deities, or
blessed and immortal spirits, admitted under his own
system—spirits whose faculties were far superior to
those of mankind, yet who were, nevertheless, incom-
potent to create or govern the world. From the in-
adquate power and authority of these, therefore,
the poet, at the same time, asserts the world to be
liberated: for, which of them, he inquires, is able
to sustain the mighty labour, or fulfil the mysterious
purposes that are daily accomplishing? But surely
he meant not to deny all divine control whatso-
ever; for it was expressly affirmed by the Epicurean
philosophy, that matter in a disorganised state is to-
tally destitute of all sensation and intelligence; that
Springs single, the sole progeny produc'd,
The sole sustain'd; still countless every class,
Those, chief, percipient: the wild, mountain-herds,
The race of man consociate, the mute fish
With quiv'ring fin, and all th' aerial tribes.

Hence, too, nor heav'n, nor earth, nor sun, nor moon,
Nor the broad main, nor aught besides, alone
Can live, but each unlimited in kind.
Each the same substance, the same seeds of death,
Bears in its frame, that stamp the ranks diverse
More obvious, gender'd by connubial love.

These truths avow'd, all nature shines at once,
Free in her acts, no tyrant to control,
Self-potent, and uninfluenc'd by the gods.
For O, ye powers divine! whose tranquil lives
Flow free from care, with ceaseless sun-shine blest,—

there is no such thing as chance, (upon which subject, see the preceding life of Lucretius,)and that there certainly exists an unknown and unsearchable Being, to whom even the gods themselves are subject, and who exerciseth an unresisted authority among the inhabitants of the earth:

A Power unknown, who, from his awful, shades
O'erturns all human grandeur! treads to dust
Crowns, ensigns, rods!—the proudest boasts of state!
And laughs at all the mockery of man!

This inscrutable being Epicurus represented as enjoying all immortality, and beatitude: at his mere will and command, the heavens, the planets, and all the phenomena of nature were produced; and to him he exhorts that mankind cease not to address their prayers and adorations. See Appendix to the life of Lucretius. This sublime passage has been hitherto totally misunderstood, and, of consequence, totally misinterpreted, by all the commentators upon our poet, whom I have yet met with, whether in Italian, French, or English, who have uniformly, and with unpardonable indolence, followed each other, and represented their author as an absolute atheist.
DE RERUM NATURA.

Quis regere inmensi summam, quis habere profundi
Indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas?

Ver. 1105. For O, ye powers divine! whose tranquil
lives
Flow free from care, with ceaseless sun-shine
blest,—] There is, in Mr. Cowper’s Task,
an observation upon the doctrine here vulgarly supposed
to be advanced, so well though at the same time so
severely expressed, that I cannot avoid inserting it in
this place:
Some say that in the origin of things,
When all creation started into birth,
The infant elements receiv’d a law
From which they swerve not since. That under
force
Of that controlling ordinance they move,
And need not his immediate hand, who first
Prescrib’d their course, to regulate it now.
Thus dream they; and contrive to save a God
Th’ incumbrance of his own concerns,
and spare
The great artificer of all that moves —
The stress of a continual act, the pain
Of unremitted vigilance and care
As too laborious and severe a task!

Book vi.

Ver. 1107. Who the vast whole could guide, midst
all your ranks?
Who grasp the reins that curb th’ entire
of things?] There is a grandeur and
sublimity in this passage which it is perhaps impossi-
ble to surpass. Yet it cannot but remind us of some
parts of the fearful and magnificent reply of the
Almighty to Job out of the whirlwind.

The following may suffice as an example:

Chap. xxxviii.
4 Say, where wast thou when first the world uprose
Fresh from its God? thy wisdom doubtless
knows!
5 Who plann’d its bulk, its limits, its design?
Stretch’d o’er its breadths the plummet and the
line?
6 What forms its basis? props its nether pole?
Who rear’d the top-stone o’er the mighty whole,
7 When, at the sight, the stars of morning sang,
And heaven’s high cope with shouts of rapture
rang?—
12 With thee coeval, is the dawn thy slave?
Springs, at thy nod, young phosphore from the
wave?
16 Hast thou the deep pervaded or descried
The dread abyss whence ocean draws his tide?
Who the vast whole could guide, midst all your ranks?
Who grasp the reins that curb th' entire of things?

17 Are to thine eyes the gates of death reveal'd?
The gates where death's dread shadows lurk conceal'd?
31 Canst thou the teeming Pleiades restrain?
Or break Orion's icy bands in twain?
32 Whirl round th' undevious Zodiac? or the dance
Of bright Arcturus and his sons advance?
33 Know'st thou the laws that regulate the spheres?
Is it from thee that earth their power reveres?
34 Lift to the clouds thy voice, and will they swarm
Round thee in robes of show'rs and torrent storm?
35 Will, at thy call, the lightnings rush, and say,
"Lo! here we are,—command, and we obey?"

CHAP. xl.
9 Hast thou an arm like God? like him to roll
The volleying thunders round th' affrighted pole?
10 Come! cloath thyself with majesty and might,
Let glory gird thee with unsuffering light;
11 Shoot from thy nostrils flames of arrowy fire,
Search out the proud, and let them feel thine ire:
12 Search out the proud, and crush them to the dust;
With their own arms exterminate th' unjust.

For the few variations from our standard text,
which are offered in this version, it is necessary to subjoin
a remark or two.

Ch. xxxviii. 4.—"Thy wisdom doubtless knows."
The common reading runs thus, conditionally: "Declare
if thou hast understanding?" but the original rather
implies an irony than a condition, and may be rendered
with infinitely more force, "Declare, for
doubtless thou hast understanding." The particle
in the expression (יִדְּעָהּ לְעַיִן) is as clearly
affirmative in the present instance, as in Hos. xii. 11. or
Ps. cxxxix. 19. where it is uniformly so rendered.

The astronomic terms employed in v. 31, and 32,
have puzzled the critics in every age, Hebrew, Greek,
and Latin, as well as those of more modern times.
The synonymous renderings of the Septuagint seem
evertheless to be correct so far as they extend, not
withstanding the original is differently interpreted in
several versions of greater antiquity. Admitting the
Septuagint version, the Pleiades are elegantly opposed
to Orion, as the vernal renovation of nature is opposed
to its brumal destruction—the mild and open benignity
of spring, to the severe and icy inactivity of winter. The Pleiades are a constellation of seven
stars in the sign Taurus, and make their appearance
in the spring-time, whence they are denominated by
Virgil, Vergilii. The Hebrew term Chimah (חימה),
with which the constellation Pleiades is supposed to correspond, is peculiarly beautiful in its origin, and implies whatever is desirable, delightful or lovely, for
such is the meaning of the radical verb חים. It is probably from יִנְה (Chesil or Orion) that the Hebrews
derived the name of their first winter month
which they denominate Chisleu, and which corresponds with a part of our own November: the constellation itself appears towards the latter part of November, through December, and a part of January,
and hence offers a correct and elegant synecdoche for
the winter at large. The Arabians still employ the
term חסיל (Chesil) to express coldness and inactivity:
olium, torpor, frigus. This, however, is not the
word introduced into the Arabic version of the passage
before us, but יִנְה.

The translators of the Septuagint did not know
the real meaning of the Hebrew term חים
(Mazaroth), and have therefore retained it without
offering any synonym, in which conduct they have
been imitated by our own standard bible. St. Chrysostom has given us two interpretations: מָזוּרֶת גְּרֶשֶּם יִנְהַמְּלָכִים רְבָּאִים, פְּלֵיַדְּאִים. כְּלַל שֶּׁאֶצְּלָה מִגְּרֶשֶּם יִנְהַמְּלָכִים רְבָּאִים
VOL. I.
Quis pariter coelos omnes convortere, et omnes
Ignibus ætheriis terras subsire feraceis;
Omnibus inve locis esse omni tempore praesto,
Nubibus ut tenebras faciat, coelique serena
Concutiat sonitu? tum fulmina mittat, et ædeis
Ipse suas disturbet; et, in deserta recedens
Sæviat, exercens telum; quod sæpe nocenteis
Præterit, examinatque indignos, inque merenteis?

Multaque, post mundi tempus genitale, diemque
Primigenum maris, et terræ, solisque, coortum,
Addita corpora sunt extrinsecus, addita circum
Semina, quæ magnum jaculando contulit Omne:
Unde mare et terræ possent augescere; et unde
Adpareret spatium coeli domus, altaque tecta
Tolleret a terris procul; et consurgeret aër.
Nam, sua quoique, locis ex omnibus, omnia plagis
Corpora distribuuntur, et ad sua secla recedunt:
Humor ad humorem, terreno corpore terra,

obviously the Zodiac, and is so expressly rendered by
Sextus Empiricus, and many others. The two words,
moreover, are written alike in the Septuagint, as well
as by Theodoret; and in more than one Hebrew codex
the proper character is restored, the lamed being again
converted into a resh.

Of שׁעַע, or as it is written chap. ix. 9, שׁע (Aish),
there seems to be no doubt; almost every interpreter
and commentator having referred it to the star
Arcturus, in the constellation Bootes. It is supposed
to be the nearest visible star in the northern hemi-
sphere; and the expression “Arcturus with his sons,”
being hence understood as poetically descriptive of
the northern hemisphere itself, (the only part of the
heavens surveyed by the inhabitants of Idumæa,) it
forms as beautiful a contrast with Mazaroth or the
Zodiac, as Chimah forms with Chesil.

The latter clause in v. 12, is rendered in our bible
version, “and tread down the wicked in their place.”
This is borrowed from St. Jerom; “et conterc im-
Turn the broad heav'ns, and pour, through countless worlds,
Th' ethereal fire that feeds their vital throngs?
Felt every moment, felt in every place.
Who form the louring clouds? the light'ning dart,
And roll the clam'rous thunder, oft in twain
Rending the concave?—or, full deep retir'd,
Who point, in secret, the mysterious shaft
That, while the guilty triumphs, prostrates stern
The fairest forms of innocence and worth?

Long after the wide world had ris'n, the sun
Shot his young beams, and earth and sea rejoic'd
In infant being—still primordial seeds,
From the vast compass of th' ENTIRE, conjoin'd;
Conjoin'd from ev'ry part; hence earth and main
Increas'd; hence the broad mansions of the heav'ns
Spread wider; and th' ethereal dome was fill'd
With new-born air; for all, harmonious, blend
Kinds with their kinds, and thence those kinds augment.
Earth from the seeds of earth, from fiery, fire,
Crescit; et ignem ignes procudunt, ætheraque æther:
Denique, ad extremum crescundi perfica finem
Omnia perduxit rerum Natura creatrix;
Ut fit, ubei nihil jam plus est, quod datur intra
Vitaleis venas, quam quod fluit, atque recedit.
Omnibus hiis ætas debet consistere rebus;
Heic, Natura suis refrenat viribus auctum.
Nam, quæquamque vides hilare grandescere ad auctum,
Paullatimque gradus ætatis scandere adultiæ,
Plura sibi adsumunt, quam de se corpora mittunt;
Dum facile in venas cibus omnis inquit, et dum
Non ita sunt late disparsa, ut multa remittant,
Et plus dispendii faciant, quam vescitur ætas.
Nam certe fluere atque recedere corpora rebus

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Ver. 1135 For all with gradual growth that swells,
and thus
Climbs, by degrees, the scale of life adult, &c.

I have before had occasion to notice, in note on ver. 544, of the present book, that, upon the Epicurean theory, the world itself was regarded as an immense though disorganized system, and analogically compared, on account of many of its powers, to the system of animals themselves. Yet we must not conceive, from the verses before us, or any other, in which the same comparison or allegory is pursued, that Epicurus ever conceived the system of the world to be an animal in its own frame, or in any way endowed with perceptions or ideas. This, indeed, was the express creed of many of the Grecian schools, but it was always strenuously opposed by Epicurus himself. Thus, Xenophanes, the founder of the Eleatic sect, asserted, that God and the world are one and the same thing; and that whatever exists is an individual homogeneous being. Thus too, Pythagoras and Plato speak in almost the same terms of the universal spirit, while the Stoics advance the same of the soul of the world, the spiritus intus, by which all nature exists, and is supported. And when, in modern times, Spinoza informs us, that there is no difference of substances; that the whole, and every part of the material world, is a being necessarily existent, and that God himself is the universe—he does not essentially differ from the Stoics, from Pythagoras, or Plato. It is against all such systems as these, however, whether ancient or modern, that the Epicurean theory is immediately directed. With respect to the popular mythology of his countrymen, Lucretius is perpetually protesting against, and even, at times, deriding their credulity as to any divine power possessed by the earth, the main, or the stars: asserting, that if the multitude
Air from aerial, from the dewy, dew:
Till all-prolific Nature rears at length
To full perfection the vast frame of things,
And the gorg’d system can no more absorb
Than what flies casual from th’ external pores.
Then boasts the whole completion; Nature, then,
Restrains all progress, every power matur’d.

For all with gradual growth that swells, and thus
Climbs, by degrees, the scale of life adult,
Far less emits than what its frame receives.
Wide through the system flows the genial food
Tow’rds every part disperst: yet not so wide
That much transudes external, and the day
Thus loses larger than the day digests.
For still, though much evanish, ampler still
Multa, manus dandum est; sed plura adcedere debent,
Donec alescundi summum tetigere cacumen.
Inde minutatim vircis et robur adultum
Frangit, et in partem pejorem liquitur, ætas.
Quippe et enim, quanto est res amplior, augmine adempto,
Et, quo latior est, in cunctas undique partis
Plura modo dispargit, et a se corpora mittit;
Nec facile in venas cibus omnis diditur ei;
Nec satis est, pro quam largos exæstuat æstus,
Unde queant tantum suboriri, ac subpeditare.
Jure igitur pereunt, quom rarefacta fluendo
Sunt; et, quom externis subcumbunt omnia plagis:
Quandoquidem grandi cibus ævo denique defit;
Nec tuditantia rem cessant extrinsecus ullam
Corpora confacere, et plagis infesta domare.

Sic igitur magni quoque circuim mœnia mundi
Expugnata dabunt labem, putreisque ruinas.
Omnia debet enim cibus integrare novando,
Et fulcire cibus; cibus omnia subtentare.
Nequidquam; quoniam nec veneæ perpetiuntur
Quod satis est, neque, quantum opus est, natura ministrat.
Jamque adeo fracta est ætas; ecsetaque tellus
Vix animalia parva creat, quæ cuncta creavit
Secla, deditque ferarum ingentia corpora partu.
The nutriment that spreads, till the full form
Gains by degrees, its point of perfect pow’r.—
Then back, by gradual march, its strength declines,
Its fond perfection; and, from day to day,
Melts all its vigour.—This the ceaseless course
Of things created. But those chief, with speed,
Waste into nought that boast a bulk immense;
Since wider, here, the surface whence, each hour,
Flies off the light effluvium, nor with ease
Winds the fresh food through all the mighty mass,
By ceaseless strife exhausted, and a store
Asking far ampler than the store receiv’d.
Thus all must perish, unsupply’d within,
And, from without, by blows tumultuous urg’d;
Blows that, resistless, from whate’er adjoins,
Ply their full vigour till the victim yields.
Thus shall the world’s wide walls hereafter sink
In boundless ruins: thus, though yet sustain’d
By food appropriate, and preserv’d entire.
For not for ever will her powers digest
The due recruit, nor Nature’s hand supply.—

E’en now her glory fades, and the faint earth,
That erst uprear’d such giant forms of life
In ev’ry class profuse,—scarce now protrudes,
Haud, ut opinor, enim mortalia secla superne
Aurea de coelo demisit funis in arva;
Nec mare, nec fluctus, plangentes saxa, crearunt;
Sed genuit tellus eadem, quae nunc alit ex se.

Ver. 1168. *For deem not thou some golden chain from heavn*

*Each tribe conducted down to realms below:* —
Most of my readers must be apprized that the poet, in these verses, refers to the chain which Homer has described in his Iliad, as connecting the earth with the heavens, and from which gods and men are alike suspended:

Σημείωσεν Χρυσόν έξ ουρανον ημεροστάτης:
Πατέρας ο' έξ αυτίσκει διόν τεσσαραν Σινανα. ὃ τ. v. 18.

It is generally conjectured by the critics, however, that the terms σημείωσεν Χρυσόν, "the golden chain," are here only employed metaphorically. Plato, therefore, conceived, that under this figure the poet meant to represent the sun, whose animating influence, as he travels through the ecliptic, connects and binds the whole system together: while Macrobius asserts it to typify the uninterrupted chain of causes and effects which are continually linked together throughout the universe. In this last sense, Pope himself appears to have understood it, if we may judge from the parallel passage in his translation, which is rather indeed a paraphrase than a literal version; not a syllable of the last of the two following lines being written by Homer himself, excepting the word heaven:

Let down our golden everlasting chain,
Whose strong embrace holds heaven, and earth, and main.

Ver. 25.

Milton, however, has clearly conceived the description of Homer in its literal sense, as Lucretius had done before him. For, with a manifest reference to the passage before us, he represents Satan as looking towards the eternal throne, and beholding —fast by, hanging on a golden chain,

That mortals sprung: —

And it is an extraordinary fact, that many of the modern Greeks, in the Archipelago, and all the Turks, from the Mufti to the peasant, still literally believe that the earth, as well as the fixed stars, are suspended from the seven heavens, of which they conceive the ethereal regions consist, by massy and everlasting chains. They likewise conceive, according to the account given us by Mr. Eton, in his "Survey of the Turkish empire," that the sun is a vast ball of culinary fire, about as large as the whole Ottoman province, and that the eclipses of the moon are occasioned by a great dragon's attempting to devour this luminary.

The chain referred to by Lucretius, which reached from heaven to earth, and conducted, according to Homer, the race of gods, as well as the progenitors of mankind, from the former to the latter, bears a striking resemblance to the vision of the patriarch Jacob in his journey to Padan-aram; "And he dreamed, and behold! a ladder set from the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold! the angels of God ascending and descending on it." Gen. xxviii. 12.

Ver. 1170. *Nor from the boist'rous billows of the main*

That mortals sprung: —

Lambinus conjectures that, in writing these verses, Lucretius had in his mind that beautiful passage in the Iliad, in which Patroclus upbraids Achilles on account of his stern resentment against Agamemnon, and his obstinate determination, not to engage any more in the
With utmost toil, a scant, and puny race.
For deem not thou some golden chain from heav’n
Each tribe conducted down to realms below;
Nor from the boist’rous billows of the main
That mortals sprung: earth from herself produc’d
The various ranks that still herself sustains.

Trojan contest, although the Greeks were at this
moment discomfited, and on the point of ruin. “It
was impossible for thee,” says he, “to have sprung
from Thetis and the noble Peleus, but rather,
Some rugged rock’s hard entrails gave thee form,
And raging seas produc’d thee in a storm—
So rough thy manners.

A conception which Virgil has imitated with much
felicity in his Jlineid, Book IV. v. 365.

Frachetta, however, in his Italian exposition, as
well as our own learned countryman Mr. Wakefield,
has a different conjecture, and supposes the poet to re-
ter to the philosophic system of Thales, who main-
tained that all things were produced from water: of
which system, as well as of our poet’s opposition to it,
some account has already been given in Book I. ver.
785, and the note belonging to it.

These conjectures are both ingenious and elegant,
but to me they are not sufficiently satisfactory. As
to the former, no one in the time of Lucretius, or
indeed, at any other time, could possibly believe
that Homer meaned to represent Achilles as having
actually arisen from the stormy sea: and to suppose,
therefore, the present verses designed to resist such
an opinion, is to suppose them designed to fight with
the air, and to resist an opinion that never was enter-
tained. The latter conjecture is entitled to superior
attention; but no reason is offered by the learned com-
mentators, and I suspect none can be offered, why
the poet should advert once more to this opinion of
Thales, rather than to those of Heraclitus, Anaxime-
nes, Onopides, or any other philosophers, whose

systems our poet has equally before discussed, and
endeavoured to subvert.

Following up the popular mythology to which he
manifestly adverts, in his first instance, of a golden
chain, he much rather appears to me to have that part
of the same mythology in view which represents the
gods at large, the creators or progenitors of man-
kind, and consequently mankind themselves, as or-
iginally produced from this element: an opinion which
we know was held, from the following address of
Juno to Venus:

Et/µι yap ov-jou; τονος τιττρα γυαλς
’Ιξιανυ τε θεια γενεσιν, και μετερα Ταπι,
Ο’ι μ’ ε ετας δεμας ευπτεον κδ’ ανταλλακτ.

For lo! I haste to those remote abodes,
Where the great parents, sacred source of gods,
Ocean and Tethys, their old empire keep,
On the last limits of the land and deep.
In their kind arms my tender years were pass’d.

Or, which is nearly the same thing, Lucretius may,
in these verses, allude to the birth of Venus indi-
vidually: Venus, who was the immediate parent of
the Roman people, and who, with more appropria-
tion than any of the deities besides, may have been
said, upon the vulgar mythology of the day, to have
arisen from the ocean, the fluctus plangentes saxa,
“the boisterous billows of the main,” as he expresses
himself in the very passage under consideration: this
goddess, who was the life of all life, and the de-
light of gods and men: under all which characters
our poet has represented her in his invocation at the
opening of the first book.
In reality, the two doctrines here referred to, of the origin of man from the sun, or the ethereal heavens, and from water, are parts of an almost universal mythology, and form two of the grand pivots on which nearly every system of ancient idolatry appears to have turned. Our poet refers to them again, in Book V. 801, and almost in the same words.

It has been the object of Mr. Bryant's literary labours, to trace these doctrines to their fountain-head; and though his system seems, in many places, to require foundation, and to be too extravagant in its etymologies, it applies so ingeniously, both to the records and traditions of the most ancient times, and is so truly comprehensive and pertinent, that the reader will perhaps thank me for offering, in the present place, some analysis of it, as since enlarged and attempted to be confirmed by other writers.

These gentlemen begin with supposing, that the mythology of all nations, ancient or modern, ascends no higher than the period of the deluge; and that, whatever conceptions the Pagan world may have entertained of an antediluvian existence, such as those of a paradise, and a golden age, such conceptions are little more than mere isolated traditions, unconnected with the mythologic systems which were afterwards invented and multiplied. It is generally conjectured, upon this theory, that the first object of idolatrous deification after the flood, was the sun; that every species of Pagan theology has originated from solar worship; and that the name of almost every deity and fabulous hero of the Oriental world, as well as of those imported thence into Greece, is referable to the sun himself, or to some rite or ceremony appertaining to solar worship. Such is the conjecture generally entertained upon this theory, and which was contended for by Mr. Bryant himself; but there are others of the same school, who do not contemplate the worship of the sun as the most ancient species of idolatry, nor that from which every mythologic fable has originated. The mythology of the whole Pagan world is, by such inquirers, resolved into three grand systems of idolatry, each of nearly equal date, and all intertwining and combining with each other in every possibility of variety—the worship of the Ark—the worship of the Serpent,—and the worship of the Sun. Of these, the Arkite idolatry is conceived to be, in some measure, the most ancient; then the institution of Serpent or Ophite worship; and lastly, that of the Sun.

On the fall of the flood, and the resting of the ark upon mount Ararat, the vessel that had preserved the survivors of the human race from the destruction that prevailed around them, and the patriarch who had contrived and guided this wonderful machine over the shoreless ocean, were at first contemplated with gratitude and reverence: and when idolatry, or the worship of sensible images began, in a generation or two afterwards, to supersede the pure and spiritual worship of the Creator, both were deified, and the system of arkite idolatry commenced. Noah was regarded as a god, and the vessel in whose capacious womb the patriarch himself, with his family, and all that appertained to his family, was preserved, as a goddess, and the common parent of all things. Hence the origin of the fable of Venus, or the common parent of all things, rising from the flood; hence she acquired the name of Demeter, (Demeter,) or, according to the Chaldeans, Da-Mater, which is literally "the Mother" of Gods and men; a term, undoubtedly, long afterwards applied, under another system, both to Ceres and the Earth, but which, on its first invention, was the peculiar appellation of Venus, or the Egyptian Aphrodite. From the same historic fact we trace, too, the origin of the fable of the great mundane egg floating on the surface of the mighty waters, and containing, within itself, the rudiments of the future world. Hence, again, the origin of the worship of Isis and Osiris, and the ceremony among the Egyptians of the mystical enshrinement of the latter, a mere personification of Noah, in an ark or vessel, which was conveyed twice a year with great pomp and splendour through the public streets, and amidst the adoring multitude, under the name of the former. Hence, the Xuth, Zuth, or
Then, too, spontaneous, from the soil she rear'd
Those luscious fruits, those vines that gladden life;

Oannes, the chief god of the Babylonians and Chaldeans, and the Dagon of the Canaanites, are often represented with the body of a man, and the tail of a fish; a figure precisely similar to that which the Hindus bestow upon their own deity Veeshna, during his incarnation, which comprises the first avatar of their chronology.

The form of the ark was a source of additional idolatry, and laid the foundation for worshipping almost everything that was possess of a circular, or crescent shape. Hence, the adoration paid to the moon, or to Venus Demeter, under the appellation of Diana; hence the representation of Isis, the Venus Demeter of Egypt, with a crescent upon her head, and the reverence on her account universally paid to the cow, as well as the apis, or bull, both which animals, from the crescent curvature of their horns, were deemed sacred to herself.

The element on which the ark floated, as well as the form of the ark itself, was also an object of idolatrous veneration; and when, after the dispersion of the Cushites, in consequence of their idolatry on the plains of Shinar, one branch of them travelled towards Egypt, and another towards Hindo, they equally carried with them the worship of water, and transferred the rites to which they had been accustomed, to the Nile and the Ganges. They regarded the annual inundation of these rivers as a type of the universal deluge; and the fertility which ensued upon their subsiding, as an emblem of the renewal of the world; and were punctilious in their devotions to these extraordinary streams, as well on their rise as their fall. From the Nile, the Indus and the Ganges, this river-worship was propagated to other streams, till, under the creative imagination of the Greeks, the minutest rill was supposed to be an object of divine adoration, and to be actuated by a peculiar genius, or godhead. Hence too, among the Egyptians more especially, the veneration that was paid to the Ibis, which is only another name for the ark, and which was an aquatic fowl of the crane kind, highly useful among themselves from its destroy-

ing locusts, canker-worms, serpents, and other noxious animals, with which their country was infested.

This deification of the ark and its builder, as well as the element that sustained them both, has enriched the vocabulary of almost every mythology, but particularly that of Greece, with a vast variety of terms, as well as laid the foundation for a long catalogue of proper names of the most celebrated persons and places. Among the Chaldeans, there were two terms more particularly employed to signify an ark, or water-vessel, and these are Erech and Men: from the former, or Erech, are derived Erecca, Arecca, Argo, Argos, Arcas, Arcadia, Archon, and all their infinitude of compounds: while the Chaldaic radical itself is still retained among the Northern nations in the term Erich, Henric, Henricus; and affords ourselves, as well as many other European tribes, a basis for the terms arc, a segment of a circle, being the form of the vessel fabricated by Noah, and ark, the vessel itself. From the latter appellation, Men, are deduced Menes, Menu, Minos, Manes, Meon, and Moon; this last term, like the word arc, alluding to the construction of the vessel, and, in the first instance, applied to this planet in her crescent form alone.

Among the ancient Egyptians, with whom one branch of the family of Ham settled almost immediately after their dispersion from Babylon, occupying the valley, which, from their own family name, Cushites, or descendants of Chus, was denominated Cusen, or Gishen—the term for an ark, or water-vessel, was hip, and this term seems to have been also immediately impressed into the sacred service of arkite mythology. The holy appellation, hip, or ark, was applied to the water-fowl, most useful to these people, which was, in consequence, denominated Hibis, or Ibis. The Aphrodite, Venus Demeter, or mother of gods and men, was denominated Hippodamia: and in Arcadia there was an annual festival, in honour of Neptune, who was no other than the Egyptian Osyris, or Noah sailing over the world of waters in the sacred hip, or ark, denominated
Ipsa dedit dulceis fetus per pabula læta:
Quæ nunc vix nostro grandescunt aucta labore;

Hippocratia: whence, according to Hesychius, Hip, Hippa, Hippia, Hippos, are synonymous with Apyoj, which, as just observed, is obviously derived from the Babylonian Erech, and is, altogether, parallel with the Egyptian Hip. Even in the Chaldaic vocabulary itself, we meet with Barsippa, which is generally interpreted a barge, ship, or ark, but which, more accurately, means the "son, or offspring of Ippa," or the ark, and may be easily made to apply to Noah, or any of his family, who were preserved in the maternal womb of this buoyant machine. From this the Greeks derived their ΒΟῦ, and a vast variety of modern languages, a term of similar import: but without pursuing such deductions any farther in the present case, I shall refer the reader to the note on B. iii. 1048, where the same subject is resumed upon another occasion. I shall here only observe, that the Egyptian month, in which the Nile began to rise, and the procession of the sacred ark, or hip, of Isis to be exhibited, which corresponds with the 25th of our June, and constitutes the eleventh month in their calendar, was, in consequence, denominated ΗΠ, only a duplication of the radical ΠΙ, omitting the aspirate; and, as this radical was applied to sacred purposes, may be translated, consistently with Oriental costume, "the most sacred month, or season."

The Babylonians appear also to have had another word significative of an ark, which was Bad, or Boud, and hence, says Mr. Alwood, the ancient (Bostoc) Boutsus, which was sacred to Isis, or Aphrodite, and means no other than the city of the Bout, boat, or ark. Our own term boat, he derives from this radical, and perhaps the words bout, and about, which imply a turning round, revolution, or circle, may, like the word are, on which I have commented already, be derived from the crescent form of this machine. Probably, also, the term (Boteoc) Botrys, a city of Phœnicia, may be indebted to the same origin. But this Bouts, Hip, or Ark, was, as I have already observed, deified and worshipped as the great origin of all things: and may we not hence derive the Boodh or divinity of the Hindus and Birmans, the Booden of the Ceylonese, and the Oden or Woden of the Goths; for the Boodh of Hindu is the Dios Mercurii, Wednesday, or Wodens-day of modern Europe? This divinity of the Hindus is, by the Siamese, denominated Poot, or Pood, and by the vulgar Poo: whence, probably, again, the Chinese Fo, or Foe: but the Siamese deanimate their own deity Gautma, or Gaudma, terms which, nevertheless, originate from the common radical Boodh, or Bout, and which not only serve as a basis for the Siamese Gautma, but in all probability for the German Got, and our own English terms God and good. In reality, a very little analytical examination will prove that almost all the names for the Supreme Being, both in ancient and modern times, may be traced to a Chaldaic origin, and had an embryo existence in Babylonia, prior to the destruction of Babel, and the dispersion of the sons of Ham towards Egypt and Hindustan.

Those I have already enumerated arise from the name of the ark, or vessel itself, in which the great progenitors of mankind were preserved in the midst of the unbounded deluge, and which was afterwards deified and admitted to divine rites. Yet divine rites were not only bestowed, in the idolatry of succeeding ages, upon the ark itself, but, as already observed, upon the builder of the ark, upon the fabricator, as well as the fabric. Noah, among the Chaldeans, passes under the appellation of Thoth, Theut, or Thuth, or, as it is written by Herodotus, Xuth: in the idolatry of Babylon, he was deified as the supreme god, the origin of all things, "the father of gods and men." Hence, Thuth, or Tuisto, is a father or progenitor in old German, even to the present day: hence the Tautus of Phœnicia, and the Teutates of the Celts. Noah, thus deified, became the chief divinity of Greece and Rome: from Thuth, or Xuth, they obtained Zeus (Zus) or Jupiter; from Thoth, Theus (Θεός), Dios (Δios), and Deus: from Zeus (Zus) Zee (Zea), which, by an easy commutability of gender, was, as Hesychius informs us, a title for Venus,
And crown'd with pasture, and with glossy corn,
Those fields where man now toils almost in vain:

or Aphrodite Demeter, under the character of Diana.
The word Dios is still the common term for God in the Spanish language; and hence the Italian Dio, and the French Dieu.

From the proper term Noah, the builder of the ship, the Greeks also derived the substantive (Naus) Nauss, the "ship" itself, and Danaüs or Da-Naus which is literally "the ship or ark;" and the entire fable respecting whom, including the fifty sons and daughters, or priests and priestesses, that were united together, and the leaky vessel or ark that the latter were sentenced to pour water into for ever, originates, as is shown in the note on Book iii. 1046, from the arkite idolatry of Babylonia, or perhaps, more immediately from the religious rites of Isis and Osiris, which constitute but a type of the former. From the Greek term Nauss (Nauς) the Latins derive their navis; and it is curious to observe, that almost every modern language of Europe has acquired its name for a ship or water-vessel, either from Noah the builder of the vessel, or the hip or ark he constructed, from the fabricator or the fabric itself.

The deification which the idolatrous descendants of Ham conferred upon their common progenitor Noah, they also conferred upon Ham himself, and hence he too was regarded as the Thoth, Xuth, Zeus, or supreme god of his people. Surveying no object around them so powerful and glorious as the sun, these deities were next compared to the sun, and deduced their titles from him. Like the present princes of the East, they were designated lords of the sun, the moon, or the stars, and often designated the sun himself. Hence Ammon or Hammon (Ham-On) is literally Ham the Sun; the shrine of whom, under the additional title of Jupiter Ammon, which was situated in the desert bordering upon Egypt, was the most renowned of any in antiquity. It is probable that the origin of all solar worship proceeded from such an appropriation of titles, and it easily accounts for that intermixture of terms which we meet with in many ancient names, obviously of Chaldaic origin, and the combination, and frequently the confusion, of these different systems of idolatry. Thuth and Ham, in consequence hereof, were regarded as the sun himself, or the pure ethereal heavens in which he resides, and whence he distributes his blessings; hence from Thuth, Thoth, or Thor, we derive (Ai-Thor) Æther, the region or temple of Thoth, the Sun, or Jupiter; and hence Jupiter and Æther, amidst the Greeks and Romans, were convertible terms. But the supreme origin of all things, as I have before observed, was also represented, in arkite idolatry, under the feminine gender, as the Aphrodite, Venus Demeter, or common mother of all created beings. And hence the term Ai-Thor was also applied to this female divinity, who was denominated by the Egyptians Ίπτύρα and Ίπτύαττα (Athor); whence Ίπτύρα Δώκι Κή of Herodotus, lib. ii. 41; and Thyatira in Libya. And whence, in all probability, the Thor or divinity of the Goths. The Gothic Thor, however, was a masculine deity, and of course synonymous with the Xuth of the Chaldeans, and the Xuth-Pi-Ait-Or, or, with a Doric contraction, Xu'-P'-Ait-Or (Jupiter, the place or region of inspiration of Xuth the Sun) of the Romans;—hence, in hebdomenal time, the Dies Jovis and Thursday or Thor’s-day are appropriated to the same period. Xuth, according to Herodotus, vii. 94, had a son whose name was (Ió) Ion, and the Ionians were denominated from him: but the true interpretation of the term Ion is “a dove;” and it is hence obvious, observes Mr. Alwood, whence this fable originates, the Ion or Dove having been put forth from the ark by Xuth in quest of dry land. Whence also the appropriation of this bird to Venus, who was a symbol of the ark deified under a female form. Herodotus tells us in the same passage, that the inhabitants of Achaæs, prior to the arrival of Danaüs and Xuthus, were called Pelasgi Ægiales, but that on this event they changed their name to Ionians.

From the idolatry of the Babylonians, thus transferred to the sun and the starry firmament, proceeded
the worship of fire, which was justly supposed to be representative of the sun; a system of religion which, prior to the introduction of the Christian, pervaded almost all nations, and which is still predominant in South America, as well as in many other regions. The temples dedicated to the sun, or the deity of fire, were each of them denominated a Pyramid, which is almost literally Pi-Ur-Am-Ait, and with the contraction P'-Ur-Am-Ait—"the place of inspiration of the radiant Ham," or "Ham the Sun." They were built upon one model, and it is easy to perceive that this model was deduced from the figure of an ascending flame of fire, which originates with a broad basis, and terminates in a pointed apex. Egypt and Hindu abound with buildings of this description, and the pagodas of China do not essentially vary from it. Hercules, who is a deity of high antiquity among the eastern nations, and in reality is only another name for Jupiter or Ham, is denominated from radicals altogether analogous with the term Pyramid; for it is literally Ur-Cal-Es, "an eminence dedicated to the effulgence of fire;" or rather, "an ascending flame of fire." And the descendants of the Heraclidae in India are to this day denominated Surya-Bans, which literally "children of the Sun." This appellation indeed, children or descendants of the Sun, of Xuth, or Jupiter Ammon, was in a more restricted sense conferred upon the heroes of antiquity alone; but in a more general sense upon all mankind, since Hammon, or Ham the Sun, was worshipped as the common father of all. And hence the fable alluded to by our poet, in the verse immediately foregoing, of mankind having descended from heaven or the sun, by means of a golden chain appended from the ethereal regions for this purpose.

While the Sun was thus at first admired and afterwards worshipped for his splendour and power, the serpent also, in the very same period of the world, attracted an equal degree of notice as an emblem of providence and protection; and was supposed in consequence hereof to possess, in a superior degree, the qualities of wisdom and prudence. The beautiful and variegated scales of this reptile seem at first to have engaged the attention and admiration of mankind; and its power of enveloping its food or prey in a complete circle of defence, to have laid the foundation for its moral character, and the reverence which was paid to it afterwards. As an emblem of divine protection, we find it therefore hieroglyphically represented as encompassing the great mundane egg, while floating on the waters of the deluge, both in Egyptian and Hindu memorials. The serpent in some hieroglyphics, and particularly on the walls of the great temple of ancient Thebes, is exhibited with wings, or as a draco volans; and when sustaining this figure, the same emblem of providential protection is continued, by its hovering with its wings extended over the egg or ark that is represented as floating below. The Egyptians denominated the serpent (Egypt. Πόν) hoph, whence the Greeks derive their Orph. And when in process of time this reptile became deified, he was called Hob, Oub, or Ob-El, "the Serpent-God;" and the temples or buildings erected to his worship, which instead of being cones, like the pyramid or temple of the Sun, were cylindrical, were each of them termed an Obelisk, Ob-El-Es-Ca, "a temple of the radiant or illustrious Serpent-God." From the name of this deity the Greeks derive their Pelops, P'-El-Ops, "the oracle of the Serpent-God;" Pelop in Phrygia, Pelopia, Pelopia daughter of Thyestes son of Pelops, and a vast variety of other names. Pelops, in Diod. Sic. i. 317, edit. Wessel, is said to have been enamoured of Hippodamia, the beautiful daughter of Enomaus, and to have put all his rivals to death in order to obtain her; which he eventually accomplished. Who does not see in this fable, and under these names, an emblem of the ark or Hippa, built or created by Noah, and borne up and protected by a serpent or dragon, either hovering over it or coiled around it, together with its safe deposit on mount Ararat, and the triumph of the Serpent or Ophite worship? Ænomiä is Ain-Am-Ees, "the fountains of Ham the Sun;" and Hippodamia, Hip-Ad-Am,
Where faints the steer, the ploughman faints fatigu'd,
And the keen share so wastes, mechanic art

"the ark of the supreme Ham." Ænemius is, therefore, only another name for Ham, or Noah the progenitor of Ham: and Hippodamia was frequently an appellation for Aphrodite, Venus, or the fabric which Ham and his father constructed; and which may, with the utmost propriety, be entitled the offspring of either of them. The city of Pelopia mentioned above, was the same with Thyatira, which, as previously noticed, was sacred also to Venus.

I have already observed, that between the arkite and solar worship there subsisted the closest degree of intermixture and combination; and that, from the origin of solar worship itself, this must necessarily have been the case. But from the observations immediately preceding, it evidently appears that at least an equal degree of intimacy must have taken place between the arkite and the ophite idolatry; the serpent being regarded merely as the protecting power of the ark or erech, enveloping it with its pliant volumes, or hovering over it with its guardian wings. Yet, from the lustre and coruscation of its scales, and, more particularly still, from its occasionally forming the figure of a complete circle, it became also a type of the Sun himself, and was not unfrequently regarded as such. Hence the word Europa, is by analysis Eur-Op, or Eur-Oph, "the Serpent of the Sun." And hence we obviously account for the connexion, intertexture, and occasional confusion of these three distinct systems of idolatry, and not unfrequently trace a reference to all of them in the same proper names of cities or family. Thus Cecrops, king of Athens, means (Ca-Cur-Ops, or contrac.tedly Ca-C'r-Ops,) "the temple of the Solar Ops," or, "the Serpent of the Sun." But Cecrops is feigned to have been the descendant of Erectheus, while Erectheus, on the contrary, is (Erech-Theus or Theut) "Thesus the lord or chief of the erech or ark." In like manner I have observed, that Venus and Theut or Theus were the same deity, only with a different gender; yet one of the sacrifices offered to Venus was entitled (Zacori) Zacoria, and her priests were entitled (Zacori) Zacori; but Zacoria and Zacori are obviously borrowed from Za-Cur, which radically means "the Sun," or, "the glorious Lord of day." From the Chaldaic term Cur, the Greeks derive their Kypœs, which was a title of honour, and Kypes (the island of Crete), as well as Curium a town in Cyprus, both of which were sacred to Venus. From the same term, also, is derived the Kypote, Curetes, Cur-Ait-Es, ("the emanations of the Supreme Sun,") or priests of Jupiter, to whose office our poet has already alluded, ver. 614 of the present book. Hence Creas or Cresna, "the Sun," in the Erse tongue; Cheres in the Egyptian; Cores among the Persians; and Cora among the Peruvians. In like manner, Kircher applies the terms Baal and Bel, by which the idolatrous Canaanites designated their supreme deity, the Sun, to Venus, and represents him with his lower parts of the form of a fish: but Bel or Baal, being masculine, he is more properly Thoth, Oannes, or Noah. Yet Kypa (Cu-Bel, or "the temple of Bel") is an undoubted appellation of Venus in the character of Da-Meter, or "the great parent of all things."

From this ingenious theory, connected with a general survey of ancient history and mythology, on which I have dwelt the longer in an individual note, that I might bring the whole into one comprehensive point of view, it should seem that all the different systems of idolatry that have been exhibited in past, and are perhaps exhibiting in present ages, ramify from the three radical fountains of arkite, solar, and ophite worship; all of which were adopted at a very early period after the deluge, and were propagated over the globe, on the dispersion of the sons of Chus, in every different direction, after the ruin of their celebrated tower and city of Babel: and we see obviously from what quarter the two most popular opinions of the origin of mankind, here adverted to by our poet, were derived—to wit, their descent from the sun, or the ethereal regions; and their creation from the waves of the ocean. They were also occasionally stated, and that too not upon philosophic principles, but mythological fable, to have
Usque adeo pereunt fetus, augentque labore!
Jamque, caput quassans, grandis subspirat arator

arisen from the earth; but this was by no means so
general a belief as the two preceding, and was or-
dinarily confined to the Titans and giants, or to such
deified heroes as, like Erebtheus, were immediately
connected with the rites of Ceres, and the cultivation
of corn. See on the former subject, note on Book I.
767; and on the latter, note on Book VI. v. 1.

I have asserted, that these three systems of ido-
latrity, though in themselves distinct and separate, yet
were perpetually blending and amalgamating; and I
shall subjoin, as an additional proof of such asser-
tion, that all the three types whence these idolatries
originated, were equally admitted as emblems, though
as nothing more, into the religion of the Jews. On
the reverence which was paid by this people to the
element of fire, I have already animadverted in the
note on Book I. v. 693. It was in the character of
a flaming pyramid or burning bush, that Jehovah
appeared to Moses on mount Horeb, and to the
Hebrews at large on the promulgation of the law
from mount Sinai. The formation of a memorial
ark was expressly commanded by God himself, on
the establishment of the written law, and an express
canon of ceremonies ordained on the occasion.
And when this rebellious people were deservedly
plagued, in their journey through the desert, with
disease and mortality, from the bite of multitudes of
venomous serpents sent among them for this purpose,
the Almighty commanded them to erect a fiery
serpent, upon a lofty pole or pillar, as an emblem of
his providence and healing power, by looking towards
which all who were diseased immediately became sound.
Other literary observations, in connection with the same
theory, the reader may find in the notes on Book I.
1214. Book V. 24. and 1483, and Book VI. i.

Ver. 1173. Then, too, spontaneous, from the soil she
rear’d
Those luscious fruits, those vines, &c.—] To
the same effect, Ovid:

Ver erat aeternum, placidique tepentibus auri
Mulechant zephyri natos sine semine flores.
Mox etiam fruges tellus inarata ferebat,
Nec renovatus ager gravidis canebat aristis.

METAM. Book I. v. 101.

The teeming earth, yet guiltless of the plough,
And unprovok’d, did fruitful stores allow.
The flowers unseen, in fields and meadows reign’d,
And western winds immortal spring maintain’d.
In following years the bearded corn ensu’d
From earth unask’d, nor was that earth renew’d.

DRYDEN.
Can scarce supply th' exhaustion:—such the call
For labour now, so foods forbear to rise.
Thus musing, the rude husbandman shakes oft

In a passage, predicting the return of these happy
days, Virgil, as well as Ovid, has been indebted to
our poet:
Molli paulatim flavescet campus arista,
Incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva,
Et duræ quercus sudabant rosida mella.

ECL. IV. v. 28.

Pope’s beautiful imitation of this passage, will
serve as a version of it:
The swain, in barren deserts, with surprize,
Sees lilies spring, and sudden verdure rise;
And starts amidst the thirsty wilds to hear
New falls of water murmuring in his ear.

The opinion of a golden age, or anterior period of
superior happiness, is common to most nations, and
probably originated from different traditions concern-
ing the Garden of Eden. The modern Bramins
look back to such an epoch with as firm a belief in
its existence as the ancient Greeks: and the Saturn
of the latter is the Dushwanta of the former. There
is a poem in Sanscrit with this title, or rather entitled,
Dushwanta and Sacontala, which is said to be even
older than the astra of Calidas, which thus refers to
this age of consummate beatitude. “During the
reign of Dushwanta, no one worked at the plough,
or in the mines, because the earth yielded her riches
spontaneously; nor any one offended against the law.
As the people delighted in justice, so they obtained
justice, and the object of their wishes. There was no
fear of thieves, no dread of poverty, no apprehension
of disease. The clouds rained in due season, the
fruits were full of juice, and the earth abounded with
herds, and flocks, and every precious thing.” Oriental
Repository, Vol. II.

An opinion, somewhat similar, is to be traced
among most of the Christian fathers. St. Cyprian
thus expresses himself, in an epistle to Demetrios:
Scire debes jam mundum non illis viribus stare qui-
bus prius steterat, &c. “Acquaint thyself with this
fact, that the earth is not now posset of the same
degree of vigour which she posset formerly. On
this subject, although the Scriptures, and our most
eminent divines, were silent, yet the world itself
would speak, and even testify the cause of so woeful
a change. We enjoy not in Winter the same abun-
dance or quantity of showers for fertilizing the
scattered seeds which was formerly bestowed: we
feel not in Summer the same quantity of heat for
ripening the fruits of the earth. In the Spring it-
self we have less promise of plenty; and in the Au-
tumn the trees and general herbage are less abundant.
Even in the bowels of the earth, there are fewer
fossils and precious stones: less silver and gold; for
the metals themselves are diminishing, and their
veins of ore are contracting daily. There are fewer
harvest-men in the fields, fewer sailors on the ocean,
fewer soldiers in the camp. There is less innocence
in civil life; less justice in the municipal courts, less
constancy in friendship, less skill in the arts, less
discipline in our morals. All things, indeed, must
diminish, as they necessarily hasten to decay, and
will shortly attain their last hour of existence.”

This is a dismal picture for succeeding gene-
rations to contemplate, and probably, the worthy
father has a little too highly coloured it. But the
principle advanced both by himself and Lucretius, so
far as it relates to natural phenomena, is countenanced,
I think, in some measure, as well by physical and phi-
losophic views, as by divine revelation. Although
not an animalized, homogeneous being, the earth is,
at least, a systematized material substance; and it
seems totally contrary to the nature of things, that
a material substance of any kind should either con-
tinue for ever, or exist without gradual decay. Such
gradual decay, indeed, is the common course of
nature at large; for every thing, great or small, is
by degrees dissolving into its original elements. Nor
is this species of destruction confined to the globe we
inhabit. Suns, and whole planetary systems, have already disappeared from their stations in the horizon, dissolved, perhaps, to primitive non-entity, or resorbed in the material and central mass of universal nature, from which they were at first projected, and new creations have been discovered in their stead. What is there then, in the system of the earth itself, to enable it to resist the common fate? Upon every analogy of reasoning, it also must eventually yield, and it is probably decaying at the present moment. The increasing ingenuity of man may enable it to produce the necessaries of life to the last period of its existence; but without such increase, either of toil or ingenuity, its growing defects would become daily more conspicuous. In what manner this existence is finally to terminate, is of little consequence; most probably, by the operation of fires and long anterior to the period of the earth's total incapacity of production from any other cause. And such, indeed, is the opinion advanced by our poet himself in his fifth book. The elemental fire contained in its own central bowels, whether electric or culinary, is conceived, upon every geologic system, to be immense. Many philosophers of the first reputation in our own age, have calculated, that the great body of the earth derives, at least ten times as much heat from the extrication of these elemental and central fires, as it does from the Gyration of the sun. And the ravages the whole globe is sustaining from earthquakes and volcanoes, the sure and dreadful effects of such latent and most powerful causes operating upon confined gasses, and vast beds of combustible materials, are, in every respect, deeper and wider than those produced by any other cause. It is no improbable conjecture then to suppose, even prior to its total incapacity of production from mere age, that the immediate dissolution of the earth may be effected by the explosion of some immense and central volcano operating over every portion of the globe at the same moment, and perhaps reconverting it into the same species of comet which Buffon supposed it originally constituted. See note on Book I. 646.—It was from an explosion of this sort, occurring in the central and opaque mass of universal nature, that Dr. Herschell conceives the earth originally, and indeed all the existent systems of the universe, were emitted. See note on Book I. 1112. And this idea of the dissolution of the earth, by a general conflagration, is corroborated by the express prophecies of the Scriptures, which inform us (2 Pet. cap. iii. v. 10—12.), that "the heavens shall be dissolved with fire, and shall pass away with a great noise: that the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." See note on Book V. ver. 425.

It may, perhaps, be observed, in reply to the idea of this gradual decay and final dissolution of the earth, that although all compound material bodies do suffer such gradual decay, and are continually changing, yet that the essential atoms of matter cannot be conceived to suffer any change; a fact, indeed, contended for by Epicureans themselves: and that as, according to another of their principles, the destruction of one substance is but the generation of a second, the great body of the earth itself must, at all times, have the same quantity, and the same unvaried quality of material atoms as the means of recruiting its different forms and phenomena; in consequence of which, that we have no reason to conceive that the great body of the earth either gradually is decaying, or ever can experience such a change as may produce its total dissolution; and that Epicurus reasoned inconclusively upon his own principles when he formed such an idea.—But Epicurus reasoned from the living fact itself, a foundation upon which all philosophy should be built, as far as the fact was capable of applying, and from a close and obvious analogy where the fact ceased. Whoever examines nature must allow, that there is a sufficient quantity of elemental atoms to recruit the individual system of every animal and vegetable, as well as the general orb of earth itself: but the individual systems of animals and vegetables are not recruited for ever. New
His weary head; his thriftless pains bewails,
Thriftless too sure: and, while his wand'ring thought

animals and new vegetables of the same orders and species, are continually springing up, it is true, and new worlds may, in like manner, be created from the ruins of the present. Why the individual systems of animals and vegetables are not suffered to be thus eternally recruited, we know not: but there is, through all creation, an express and determinate law of nature, or the God of nature, that this individual renewal of system shall not be perpetuated for ever. The Christian, indeed, looks forwards, with joyful hope, to a time when this law shall be done away: when “there shall be new heavens, and a new earth;” and “this mortal shall put on immortality:” and the principles of sound and genuine philosophy, as well as the veritable assurances of the sacred Scriptures, concur in justifying such an expectation. The former intimate to man, that such an event may occur; the latter, that it most decidedly will.

There is, I know, a school of philosophers in this country, as well as in France, who ridicule every idea of this sort; who, denying all evidence adduced from revelation, and confining themselves solely to the experienced train of events, the actual laws and phenomena of nature, strenuously contend, that there can be no such thing as a resurrection of the body. But what have these men of wisdom substituted in its stead? Why, truly, that nature, instead of degenerating, is becoming daily more kindly and prolific; and that the body itself, in its present mode of existence, is gradually attaining an increase of longevity, and will, in a few generations, acquire the possession of complete immortality: that man is becoming, and will become, more virtuous; that the universal passions of the soul are bending, by degrees, to the judgment and correction of the mind; that perpetual health will, in consequence, soon succeed to disease; tranquillity to war; the whole orb of earth be duly populated;—and there being no more necessity for the multiplication of the animal species, that the sexual organs themselves will gradually disappear, and vanish!!! And yet these are the men who, discarding every thing mysterious, or acquired by supernatural revelation, pretend, more than all others, to confine themselves to the experienced facts and events before them!!! But it is useless to pursue such fanciful and absurd speculations any farther. They are undermined by the very first principles on which such pretended sages affect to build this philosophic Babel: for what one law, or phenomenon of nature, can they conjure up, to countenance such unfounded and puerile assertions? Every mode and variety of life, virtuous and vicious, tranquil and tumultuous, temperate and luxurious, has been alternately resorted to; but man, in every instance, has still proved mortal. Every pretended nostrum and elixir, for the prolongation of existence, has been tried, and in many instances faithfully tried, according to the rules of the empirical prescriber, but all equally in vain. Yet these new and philosophic empirics boldly come forwards, and, though rigid adherents to the laws of nature, and the experienced train of events, without the addition of any one fact, and in direct contradiction to nature herself, pretend to assert, that they have discovered this stupendous secret:—that life and immortality depend on the mere volition of the mind: and that the man, who ardently desires to live, may, even in this world live for ever!!! See Condorcet’s Essaie sur le Progres de l’Esprit humain; and Mr. Godwin’s Political Justice.

There is a greater degree of resemblance between these equalizing philosophers, and that sect of Christians, who are denominated Millenarian, than either are, perhaps, desirous of acknowledging. For interpreting in too literal a sense, a passage in the Revelations of St. John. these latter are looking forwards with holy hope, to a period in which righteousness and truth will prevail for a thousand years over the whole earth, to the utter exclusion of vice, error, and every mental and corporeal evil: a period in which the life of man will be elongated, and every one exist in the bonds of harmony and love. This belief, which was common in the first ages of the church, has never been without its adherents: and
Præteritis, laudat fortunas sæpe parentis.
Tristis item vetulæ vitis sator, [acta peragrans]
Temporis, incusat numen, cœlumque fatigat;
Et crepat, antiquum genus ut, pietate repletum,
Perfacile angustis tolerarit finibus ævom,
Quom minor esset agri multo modus ante viritim:
Nec tenet, omnia paullatim tabescere, et ire
Ad capulum, spatio ætatis defessa vetusto.

if Origen opposed it successfully in his own era, our
own countryman, Whiston, inculcated it so strenuously in his day, that even in the present, there are
no small numbers of Christians who admit the doc-
trine into their creed. And for this, they have, at
least, more reason than the philosophers, for main-
taining their absurd and preposterous tenet. The
former, although mistaken in their interpretation,
actually make an appeal to an accredited prophecy :
while the latter can make no appeal whatsoever: de-
serting revelation, they are totally opposed by the
facts and experience of revolving ages. I ought not
to omit adding, in this place, that M. Kant appears,
in some measure, inclined to this idea of a perpetual
improvement and perfectibility. "Philosophy,"
says he, "has its millennium as well as Christianity,
in which, philanthropy is to be developed in all its
generous and extensive operations, and in which its
fairest projects are to be realized. This millennium
is daily approximating, and its arrival is accelerated
by moral and intellectual discussions." See, on this
subject, a small essay of the Professor's, imported by
De Boffe, 1798, and entitled, Idée de qui pourrait
être une Histoire universelle dans les Mains d'un
Cosmopolit.

Ver. 1181. Thus musing, the rude husbandman
shakes oft

*His weary head;—*] An action still fre-
quent in the present day, and constantly indicative
of sorrow, or some other evil. Virgil has copied
the phrase in the following instance:

Turn quassans caput, hæc effudit pectore dicta :
Æn. vii. v. 292.

*Her head then shaking, thus the goddess spoke.*

Ver. 1186. Then, luckless planter of degenerate vines!
*His day he curses, then all heav'n he tires,*] In the
manuscript copies in which the original of these two
lines occur, they are so marred, and so differently wri-
Weighs, with the present, the fair times elaps’d,
Envies the lot the men of yore enjoy’d.
Then, luckless planter of degenerate vines!
His day he curses, then all heav’n he tires,
Mutt’ring that earlier times, though virtuous more,
Should, thus, have more been favour’d,—thus have rear’d
An ampler harvest e’en from narrower farms,—
Heedless that all things by degrees must fail,
Worn out by age, and doom’d to certain death.

Ten, that in almost every printed edition, the editor, not being able to comprehend their meaning, has omitted them altogether. For this reason, they are not to be found in any translation that I have ever met with, either English or foreign. Heinsius contends, they should be given thus: Lib. III. cap. 8.

Tristis item vetulae vitis sator, atque victas,
Temporis, incusat nomen, seclumque fatigat.

Then luckless planter of degenerate vines
The world he tires, and his own name abhors.

Mr. Wakefield’s lection, the reader will perceive, is as follows:

Tristis, item, vetulae vitis sator, (acta peragrans)
Temporis, incusat nomen, calumque fatigat.

In the translation I have relinquished, however, the phrase, acta peragrans, “contemplating the past,” as not existing in the generality of the best editions and manuscript copies; but I have admitted the ingenious reading, and, in my opinion, very valuable emendation of nomen for nomen, and calum for seclum, inserted into the present edition of the original, upon the authority of many ancient copies.

The entire passage cannot, perhaps, but remind many of my readers of Hesiod’s description of the fifth age of the world:

O! might I ne’er this fifth rude age survey,
Posterior born, or hurried first away:
This age of iron toil, degenerate grown,
Where night and day man lives but to bemoan,
Fruitless to labour, and to sweat, in vain—
For such th’ enormous ills the fates ordain.
THE

NATURE OF THINGS.

BOOK THE THIRD.
ARGUMENT.

From the nature and properties of atoms, discussed in the two preceding books, the Poet advances to a more detailed account of their results under different states of combination and modification. The book opens with a panegyric upon Epicurus; and a brief sketch of its chief object, viz. to root from the heart that undue attachment to life, which is the source of many of the worst passions of the soul. Of the nature of the soul:—its chief residence in and about the heart; its general extension to the body at large; in what sense it may be said to differ from the mind, and in what to be synonymous with it. That the soul is altogether material, and compounded of different gases inhaled from the atmosphere: in consequence of its materiality, that it is mortal, and perishes with the body. The anxiety and terror of mankind upon contemplating the prospect of death, whether as a state of annihilation, or of future punishment. No truth in the popular mythological fables respecting a posterior state of torment;—and hence, the absurdity of any undue anxiety on either account. The best means of moderating such anxiety, and consequently, of giving to life its truest relish and enjoyment.
O ! Tenebris tantis tam clarum extollere lumen
Qui primus potuisti, inlustrâns conmoda vitæ,
Te sequor, o Graiæ gentis decus! inque tuis nunc
Ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis ;
Non ita certandi cupidus, quam propter amorem,
Quod te imitare aveo. Quid enim contendat hirondo
Cycnis ? aut quid nam tremulis facere artubus hædei

VER. 1. O glory of the Greeks ! who first didst chase
The mind’s dread darkness with celestial day,]
In the following passage of Lope de Vega there is an
apostrophe so closely resembling the present, as to give
us the idea of a copy, whether the author intended it
or not. It is intrinsically beautiful, and needs no
apology for its citation :

O nueva luz ! o claro sol ! responde,
Del antiguo valor reliquias santas !
La escura noche que me vida escondè,
Ya que con rayos de oro te levantas,

Huya de mí, que con tu lumbre pura
Por medio de la muerte va segura.

HERMOSURA DE ANGELICA, Cant. ix.

O glorious sun ! O new resplendent light !
Remnant most saint of what was once ador’d—
The shades that wrap’d me deep in ten-fold
night
Fly now thine orb its golden beams have pour’d.
Who boasts the guidance of a ray so pure
Through secret deaths may march, and dangers
most obscure.
THE NATURE OF THINGS.

BOOK THE THIRD.

O Glory of the Greeks! who first didst chase
The mind's dread darkness with celestial day,
The worth illustrating of human life—
Thee, glad, I follow—with firm foot resolv'd
To tread the path imprinted by thy steps;
Not urg'd by competition, but, alone,
Studious thy toils to copy; for, in powers,
How can the swallow with the swan contend?

In the common editions of the original, half the spirit of this address is destroyed by making the first line commence thus: "E tenebris tantis."—The Bodleian and Cambridge copies, and one of the two Leyden MSS. formerly belonging to Isaac Vossius, write, "A tenebris tantis;
" which certainly offers no improvement. The Vienna copy, an ancient manuscript fragment in the same library, and the other MS. of Vossius, give us, as in the text, "O! tenebris tantis." Mr. Wakefield has judiciously availed himself of this animated variation, and no reader, I trust, will condemn me for following him in its selection.

Ver. 8. How can the swallow with the swan contend? In adopting this antithesis, Lucretius appears to have had his eye directed to Theocritus: who, on the death of Daphnis, makes her lover exclaim:

The mountain-howl with Philomel's sweet song
Shall now contend.

Creech, by some unaccountable error, has altered the term swallow to larks, and hereby destroyed the entire sense and beauty of the passage:
DE RERUM NATURA.

Consimile in cursu possint, et fortis equi vis?
Tu, Pater! es rerum inventor; tu patria nobis
Subpeditas præcepta: tuis ex, inclute, chartis,
Floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia limant,
Omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta;
Aurea, perpetua semper dignissima vitæ.

— for how can larks oppose
The vigorous swan? they are unequal foes.

Admitting the feigned musical note of the swan,
The lark might still vie with him; but the broken
chirp of the swallow could have no such pretensions.
It was, moreover, a very general belief among the
multitude in Greece and Rome, that the swan, when
dying, sang more melodiously than any bird; while
the harsh and idle twittering of the swallow was held
in the utmost contempt. Thus, Anacreon, address-
ing himself to the latter, inquires,

Τι στα σίλιες ποικαί,
Τι κατὰ κριλάν.

Which Cowley has thus translated, or rather para-
rphrased:

Foolish prater! what dost thou
So early, at my window do,
With thy tuneless serenade?

And thus also Nicostratus:

Εἰ το σύγχροι καὶ πολλα καὶ σαλιες λαλιν
Ην τον φρονίμων παρασκηνον, ως κρλδον;
Ελεγεν αν όμως πωδροντερα πολο.

If in prating from morning till night
A sign of our wisdom there be;
The swallows are wiser by right,
For they prattle much faster than we.

Whilst such, on the contrary, was the high esteem
entertained for the supposed music of the swan, that
the poets were, uniformly, fond of arrogating this
appellation to themselves. Pindar, Virgil, and many
others, have been often thus denominated; and it is
to the swan that Horace refers in the following
verses:

Jam jam residunt cruribus aspere
Pelles, et album motus in alitem
Superne, nascenturque laves
Per digitos humerosque plumae.

Lib. II. Od. 20.

Now, now harsh scales my legs invest;
A whitening bird, above, I grow:
O'er all my fingers, arms and crest,
I feel the downy plumage flow.

There is a passage in the first book of Cicero's
Tusculan Questions, that forms so admirable a com-
ment upon this comparison of Lucretius, that I can-
not avoid translating it. "The chattering and im-
portunate swallow," says he, "is an emblem of the
ignorant: but the swan that never sings till he feels
the approach of death, seems to possess some pre-
sentiment that death is not without its blessing;—
hence he becomes an emblem of the wise."

The Abbé Delille, in his description of this mag-
ificent bird, has alluded to the same popular
tradition, in the following elegant verses:

Au milieu d'eaux s'eleve, et nage avec fierté
Le cygne au cou superbe, au plumage ar-
gené;
Or the young kid, all tremulous of limb, 
Strive with the strength, the fleetness of the horse? 
Thou, sire of science! with paternal truths
Thy sons enrichest: from thy peerless page,
Illustrious chief! as from the flow'ry field
Th' industrious bee culls honey, we alike
Cull many a golden precept—golden each—
And each most worthy everlasting life.

"Lucrctius," says he, in a note on this passage,
"regards the discoveries of Epicurus as a present
made to all Greece."

How much more classical is
the interpretation of Marchetti:

Tu di cose inventor; tu padre sei;
Tu ne fergi paterni insegnamento, &c.

Ver. 14. —-we alike

Cull many a golden precept———

It is known
to every one, that the moral verses of Pythagoras
were denominated χρυσαί ἔρτη, "golden verses:" and
Faber conjectures, with much propriety, that Lu-
cretius refers to this appellation in the present simile.

Dyer has an allusion to the same passage, drawn from
the sweet employment, and the indefatigable industry
of the bee. The English bard is referring to his
own clerical capacity:

For me, 'tis mine to pray that men regard
Their occupations with an honest heart,
And cheerful diligence, like the useful bee,
To gather for the hive not sweet alone,
But wax, and each material. Fleece, b. ii.

Mason has employed a similar figure in his impres-
sive Elegy on the Death of Lady Coventry. He is
addressing the vain, the young, and the proud:

——while borne on busy wing

Ye sip the nectar of each varying bloom,
Nor fear, while basking in the beams of spring,
The winter storm that sweeps you to the tomb;
Think of her fate!
Nam simul ac ratio tua cœpit vociferari
Naturam rerum, divina mente coortam,
Diffugiunt animi terrores; moenia mundi
Discedunt, totum video per inane geri res:
Adparet divōm numen, sedesque quiete;
Quas neque concutiunt ventei, nec nubila nimbis
Adspargunt: neque nix, acri concreta pruinâ,
Cana cadens, violat: semper sine nubibus æther
Integer, et large diffuso lumine, ridit.
Omnia subpeditat porro natura, neque ulla
openly admit to be the creator of the universe, which
it has been generally, though, in some sense, falsely
conceived he did not admit,—with a most licentious,
and unpardonable use of the pen, attempted, by in-
roducing the negative haud, to make sense of what
is much better sense without it. The ingenious de-
vice, as it was conceived, soon multiplied, and has
hence found its way into the greater number of mo-
dern editions. Without repeating in this place
what appears to have been the real creed of Lucre-
tius respecting the existence of a Supreme Intel-
lence, and primary Creator, I beg leave to refer the
reader to the biography prefixed to the volume be-
fore him, and to the notes on Book II. v. 182, and
v. 1100. It is from such errors, and wilful perver-
sions of the text, as that now under consideration,
that Lucretius has often been made to assert propo-
sitions, and uphold doctrines, which, in reality, by
no means appertain to his system. In the present
instance, the original meaning is first misconceived;
—then the text is hardly and unnecessarily trans-
formed; and at last, with idle triumph, advances
a commentator upon this spurious passage, and
declares, that the writer of it hereby asserts, che
Epicuro hà insegnato la natura non dipendere da
Dio: “that Epicurus taught, the world did not
proceed from God.” Frachetta Spositione, Lett. iii.
For as the doctrines of thy godlike mind
Prove into birth how nature first uprose,
All terrors vanish; the blue walls of heaven
Fly instant—and the boundless void throughout
Teems with created things. Then too we trace
The powers immortal, and their blest abodes;
Scenes where the winds rage never—unobscur’d
By clouds, or snow white-drifting,—and o’erspread
With laughing ether, and perennial day.
There nature fills each want, nor aught up-springs

Ver. 19. All terrors vanish:—] It is to this
passage Bruno alludes in the following exulta-
tion: Spento a fatto il terror vane e puerile della
morte, si conosco una parte della felicità chi apporta
la nostra contemplazione secundo i fondamenti della
nostra filosofia: atteso che lei togli il fusco velo de
pazzo sentimento circa l’orco, ed avaro Caronte,
one il piu dolce della nostra vita ne si rape, ed
avvelena. Della Causa, Principio, &c. “The
vain and puerile fear of death is extinguished, when
once a man is acquainted with but a single part of that
felicity which a contemplation of the principles of
our philosophy essentially produces; for till then, the
thick darkness of idle conjecture respecting hell, and
avaritious Charon, hurries him away, empoisoning,
and totally destroying almost all the happiness of his
life.”

Ver. 23. Scenes where the winds rage never—un-
obscur’d
By clouds, or snow white-drifting,—and o’er-
spread
With laughing ether, and perennial day.] I have
had occasion to observe before, in note on Book I.
v. 57, that the state of tranquillity and beatitude, at-
tributed by Lucretius to the angelic natures who
form his secondary gods, perfectly coincides with

various descriptions of Homer respecting the gods of
the people. The passage before us is obviously imi-
tated from the following:

‘Η μη αφ’, ως ιτωι, απικα γλακωκτις Αἴτην
Οδηγησθη’, ὅπερ φανε διόν ιδιον ἀσφάλεις αἰών,
Ερμήσθη, ὅπερ άσθσθη τιμασθησθαι, ooust ποτιν' ομερω
Δαιταις ϑω χρω ιττηλασται αλλα µαλ αδην
Πιστασαι αειφωλοι λυθη τθ επιδεχομεν αηιλη.

Odyss. Z. 42.

The seat of gods, the regions mild of peace,
Full joy, and calm eternity of ease:
There no rude winds presume to shake the skies,
No rains descend, no snowy vapours rise;
But on immortal thrones the blest repose
While the bright heaven with living lustre glows.

Not widely different Mr. Cumberland, in the fol-
lowing verses, which comprize a part of the dialogue
between Satan and Gabriel:

Heaven knows no winter; there no tempests
howl:
To breathe perpetual spring, to sleep supine
On flowery beds of amaranth, and rose,
Voluptuous slavery, was Gabriel’s choice.

7
calvary.
Res animi pacem delibat tempore in ullo.
At contra nusquam adparent Acherusia templae;
Nec tellus obstat, quin omnia despicientur,
Sub pedibus quæquamque infra per inane geruntur.
Hiis ibi me rebus quædam divina voluptas
Percipit, atque horror; quod sic natura, tūa vi
Tam manifesta patens, ex omni parte reiecta est.

Et, quoniam docui, cunctarum exordia rerum
Qualia sint, et quam, variis distantia formis,
Sponte suā volitent, æterno percita motu;
Quoque modo possint res ex hiis quæque creari:
Hasce secundum res animi natura videtur,
BOOK III.  THE NATURE OF THINGS.

To mar th’eternal harmony of soul.—
Yet nought exists of hell’s infernal reign:
Nor hides the solid earth the scenes from sight
Spread through the void beneath.—On these vast themes
As deep I ponder, a sublime delight,
A sacred horror sways me—Nature thus
By thy keen skill through all her depths unveil’d.

Since, then, we erst have sung the make minute
Of primal seeds; how, in spontaneous course
Re-active urg’d, their various figures fly,
And, hence, how all things into life ascend,
Next let our daring verse the frame unfold

Thus, Homer:

Through every nerve
A sacred horror thrills, a pleasing fear
Glides o’er my frame.

In the following exquisite passage of Ossian, we
meet with a similar, and equally beautiful contrast of feeling: “He retired in the sound of his song. Car-
ril joined his voice. The music was like the memory
of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the
soul.” Battle of Lora.

In like manner, and equally true to nature, the
sentimental Wieland:

Versaneyht mir, junger mann! Es war ein augen-
blick,
Ein traum aus besser zeit! so iists! und auch so
bitter!

—a dream of happier days
So sweet, yet ah! so bitter!—o’er me came.

OBERON, i. 23.

Ver. 31. —Nature thus
By thy keen skill through all her depths unveil’d.]
Atque animæ, claranda meis jam versibus esse;
Et metus ille foras præceps Acheruntis agundus,
Funditus humanam qui vitam turbat ab imo,
Omnia subfuscans mortis nigrore; neque ullam
Esse voluptatem liquidam, puramque, relinquit. 40
Nam, quod sæpe homines morbos magis esse timendos
Infamemque ferunt vitam, quam Tartara leti;
Et se scire animæ naturam, sanguinis esse,
Of soul, and reasoning mind;—and chase, far chase
Those fears of future torment that distract
Man's total being; with the gloom of death
Tinge all things; nor e’en suffer once the tide
Of present joy to flow serene and pure.

For though, full oft, men boast they far prefer
Death to disease, or infamy of name,
Assert they know the soul but springs from blood,

Once, he encouraged an indulgence in the enjoyments
it presented: pleasure became his prime object; and
wherever it was to be traced, he pursued it; not,
however, the pleasures of the vain, the ambitious, or
the voluptuous; for these, he well knew, carried
with them a sting which poisoned all the gratification
they presented; but the pure, satisfactory, and
permanent pleasures of temperance, benevolence, and
the study of nature. His preparation for death, or the
contemplations by which he endeavoured to disarm
it of its terrors, were, in like manner, as different
from those of other philosophers, as his regulations
for the enjoyment of life. As the latter part of the
book before us is entirely devoted to this subject, it is
unnecessary to enter upon its consideration in this
place. Armed, as the Christian is, with an infinitely
better panoply than the arguments of Epicurus can
possibly afford him, he may, nevertheless, peruse them
with satisfaction, and even improvement: he may add,
to the motives presented to him by Revelation, whatever
can be derived from the suggestions of nature.

Ver. 46. — the soul but springs from blood.] This
was the common belief among all ancient nations:
and those, therefore, who conceived that death was
not a complete termination of existence, were under
the necessity of conceiving, at the same time, that
there was some other principle besides the soul, or
animal life, which constituted a part of the nature of
man. To this effect, we have still remaining a verse
of Empedocles:

"Αμα γαρ αερίων περιπλακάς, σοι ουρα.
The heart’s warm blood in mortals forms the
soul.

On this account, Homer correctly applies to death
the epithet of *purple*, *πορφυρός*, Ιιαδ V. v. 83.
And Virgil, imitating him, asserts

*Purpuream vomit ille animam, et cum sanguine mista,
Vina refert moriens;*  Εν. ix. v. 349.

His purple soul he vomits; mixt with wine
Back flows the vital fluid as he dies.
The same idea was prevalent among the Jews.
Thus the Almighty is represented as declaring to
Moses, “the blood is the life of all flesh, the blood of
it is for the life thereof.” Levit. xvii, v. 14. Mil
ton has borrowed the same idea; and, in describing
the death of Abel, affirms

—he fell, and deadly pale
Groan’d out his soul, with gushing blood effus’d.
Nor is such a belief confined to ancient times, or
the uninstructed multitude. Bonnet, Buffon, Blu-
menbach and Darwin, have all contended, that the
blood, when once rendered perfect in the animal
system, becomes itself highly animalized; or, in the too
fanciful language of the last of these naturalists, “ob-
tains a kind of vitality,” and “a propensity to unite with
the fibrils of the organ, for the support of which it
is separated, and which sympathetically manifests
even a superior efficiency for such union.” Phy-
tolog. i. 7.
Aut etiam venti, si fert ita forte voluntas,
Nec prorsum quidquam nostræ rationis egere;
Hinc licet advortas animum, magis omnia laudis,
Jactari causam, quam quod res ipsa probetur:
Extorres iidem patria, longeque fugatæ
Conspectu ex hominum, fedatei crimine turpi,
Omnibus aërumnis adfectæ denique, vivunt;
Et, quoquoque tamen miserei venere, parentant,
Et nigras mactant pecudes, et manibus divis
Inferias mittunt; multoque in rebus acerbis
Acrius advortunt animos ad religionem.
Quo magis in dubiis hominem spectare periclis
Convenit, advorsisque in rebus noscere, quid sit:
Nam verae voces tum demum pectore ab imo

Ver. 47. Or, if the humour urge them, is but air.

Ver. 53. —fell new victims, and the infernal powers
Implore with black oblations; the sacrifices
Offered to the infernal deities, or manes of deceased
Persons, to obtain their favour, were denominated
inferiae, and were always selected of a black colour.

This practice of offering sacrifices, both to the super-
ior and inferior gods, has been common in every
country that has acknowledged the existence of a good
and evil principle; whether these principles have con-
sisted of two, or of a greater number of deities: to the
former sacrifice, the people being urged by gratitude,
to the latter by fear. Such was the practice among
Or, if the humour urge them, is but air,
And hence, that useless all the lore we bring:—
Oft flows the boast from love of praise alone.
For when of home debarr’d, from every haunt
Of man cut off, with conscious guilt o’erpower’d,
Midst every ill such boasters still survive:
Still fell new victims, and th’ infernal powers
Implore with black oblations; through their breast
Religion thus with ten-fold force propell’d.
Through doubtful dangers, hence, through straits severe
Pursue the race of man; then sole ascends
Truth from the lowest bosom, then alone

most Oriental nations, and even the Druids of our own country. Zoroastres commanded the offering of prayers to Arimanuis the principle of evil, as well as to Oromasdes the principle of good: and the bra- mins of the present day, adore Seeva, the destroyer of things, as well as Vishnu, the creating and preserving spirit; and regard him, indeed, as coequal and coeternal with the latter. The Jews themselves were not unfrequently guilty of the same idolatrous conduct: and even Solomon, in the midst of his prosperity, did not refrain from paying divine honours to Moloch, the evil demon of the Ammonites. See 1 Kings, cap. xi. v. 7. Hence Mil- ton, speaking of this idol:

the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
His temple right against the temple of God,
On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence,
And black Gehenna called, the type of hell.

PAR. LOST, Book I.

Ver. 56. Through doubtful dangers, hence, through straits severe
Pursue the race of man; then sole ascends
Truth from the lowest bosom,—] To the same effect, Ariosto, in the following stanza:

Alcun non puo saper da chi sia amato
Quando felice in su la rota siede:
Però, c’ ha i veri, e i finiti amici a lato,
Che mostran tutti una medesma fede.
Se poi si cangia in tristo il lieto stato,
Volta la turba adulatrice il piede:
E quel, che di cuor ama, riman forte,
Ed ama il suo signor dopo la morte.

ORLAND. Fur. Cant. xix.

None see the heart when placed in prosperous state,
On Fortune’s wheel, such numbers round them wait
Of true and seeming friends; when these no less
By looks declare that faith which those possess.
But should to fair, succeed tempestuous skies,
Behold! how soon each fawning suppliant flies:
Eliquentur; et eripitur persona, manet res.

Denique, avarities, et honorum cæca cupidio,
Quæ miseros homines cogunt transscendere fines
Juris; et interdum, socios scelerum atque ministros,
Nocteis atque dies niti præstante labore
Ad summas emergere opes: hæc volnera vitae
Non minumam partem mortis formidine aluntur.

Turpis enim ferme contemptus, et acris egestas,
Semota ab dulci vitæ, stabilique, videtur;
Et quasi jam leti portas contario ante.

Unde homines, dum se, falsa terrore coactei,
Ecfugisse volunt lange, longeque remosse;
Sanguine civili rem conflant, divitasque
Conduplicant avidei, cædem cæde adacumultantes:

While he who truly lov'd, unmov'd remains,
And to his patron dead his love maintains. 

Ver. 60. E'en restless avarice, and love of fame,

So oft to deeds unrighteous that seduce.] Frachetta and Faber have bestowed a most high and
deserved applause upon these, and the thirty ensuing
verses, in which the poet justly and forcibly pours,
trays many of those envenomed passions which are
excited in the bosom from an undue dread of death.
The following lines of Dr. Young are in strict con-
sonance with the same delineation:

Ah! how unjust to Nature and himself
Is thoughtless, thankless, inconsistent man;
Like children babbling nonsense in their sports,
We censure Nature for a span too short;
That span too short we tax as tedious too;
Torture invention, all expedients tire,
To lash the lingering moments into speed,
And whirl us (happy riddance!) from ourselves.

Art, brainless Art, our furious charioteer,

Drives headlong tow'rs the precipice of death,

Death most our dread, death thus more dreadful made.

Night Thoughts.

Ver. 61. So oft to deeds unrighteous that seduce,

And spread the growing guilt from man to man.]

It is well worth while to compare, in this place, Er-
cilla's Address to Avarice, with the present painting
of Lucretius:

O incurabil mal! o gran fatiga!
Con tanta diligencia alimentada;
Vicio comun, y pegajosa liga,
Voluntad sin razon desenfrenada:
Del provecho, y bien publico enemiga,
Sedienta bestia, hydropica hinchada,
Principio y fin de todos nuestros males,
O insaciable codicia de mortales.

Arancan. Cant. ix.

O curseless malady! O fatal pest!
Embrac'd with ardour, and with pride carest;
Flies all profession, and the fact unfolds.
   E'en restless avarice, and love of fame,
So oft to deeds unrighteous that seduce,
And spread the growing guilt from man to man,
By ceaseless toil urg'd on, and night and day,
Striving the croud t' o'ertop—these pests of life
Draw half their vigour from the dread of death.
For infamy, contempt, and want severe,
These chief embitter mortals; these, they deem,
Death's foremost train; and, studious these to shun,
Far off they fly, still wand'ring from the right,
Urg'd on by fear, and kindle civil broils,
And murder heap on murder, doubling thus,
Ceaseless, their stores insatiate: raptur'd high

Thou common vice, thou most contagious ill,
Bane of the mind, and frenzy of the will!
Thou foe to private, and to public health;
Thou dropsy of the soul, that thirsts for wealth,
Insatiate A'rice! 'tis from thee we trace
The various mis'ry of our mortal race.

So in the Hitépadésa of Vishnusarman, as translated by Sir Wm. Jones: "Through covetousness comes anger; through covetousness comes lust; through covetousness come fraud and illusion: covetousness is the cause of all sins."

Ver. 70. ——kindle civil broils,
   And murder heap on murder,—] This description of culprits our poet first enters upon his list, as deeming them first in magnitude of guilt. A bard of our own nation, of no contemptible abilities, appears to have been of the same sentiment; and in a poem on the Day of Judgment, having seated the Almighty on his throne, and led forwards the caitiffs of the earth, he asserts:

——First among these
Behold the mighty murderers of mankind:
They, who in sport, whole kingdoms slew, or they
Who, to the tottering pinnacle of pow'r,
Waded through seas of blood!

Glynn.

Ver. 71. ——doubling thus,
   Ceaseless, their stores insatiate:—] Juvenal has obviously copied this verse of the original:
   ——per fraudes patrimonial conduplicare.
Doubling by fraud their patrimonial stores.

Sat. xiv. 229.

Ver. 72. ——raptur'd high
   When breathes a brother his last languid groan;]
Macrobius justly observes (Saturnal. Lib. vi. cap. 2.) that Virgil has imitated this verse of Lucretius in the following:
   ——gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum,
Georg. ii. v. 510.
Stain'd with the blood of brothers, they rejoice.
Crudeles gaudent in tristi funere fratris;  
Et consanguineum mensas odere, timentque.

Consimili ratione, ab eodem saepe timore  
Macerat invidia: ante oculos illum esse potentem,  
Illum adspectari, claro qui incedit honore;  
Ipse se in tenebris volvi, coenoque, queruntur.  
Intereunt partim statuarum, et nominis, ergo;  
Et saepe usque adeo, mortis formidine, vitae  
Percipit humanos odium, lucisque videndae,
When breathes a brother his last, languid groan;
And with mistrust, through ev’ry nerve alarm’d,
Joining the feast some jovial kinsman forms.

From the same source, the same deep dread of death,
Springs Envy poisoning all things: mortals, hence,
Lament to power that this, to glory that,
Crown’d with the people’s plaudits, should ascend,
While all unnotic’d, ’mid the crowd obscure
Themselves still jostle; pining ev’ry hour,
For names, for statues; and, full oft, so strong
From dread of death, hate they the light of heaven,

Ver. 77. *Springs Envy poisoning all things:—*

The poetical patriarch of Greece, from whom I have just quoted, has, in the same book, a bold and correct personification of the same passion, which he represents as perpetually haunting mankind in the midst of all their pursuits, while Modesty and Justice retreat from the world to their native skies, and leave it a prey to every calamity:

Ver. 77. —morts, hence,

Malignant, muttering *Envy*’s hateful form
Now haunts mankind, and mightier mischiefs swarm.

From the broad earth tow’rs heav’n their native skies
Fair Modesty and manly Justice rise;
Round their bright limbs ethereal vestments flow:
Man marks their flight, and faints beneath his woe.

The following verses of Thomson are more full in their delineation of the same passion, in conjunction with others, which are closely connected with it:

Convulsive Anger storms at large; or pale
And silent, settles into fell Revenge.

*Base Envy withers at another’s joy,*
And hates that Excellence it cannot reach.

*Desponding Fear,* of feeble fancies fully

And silent, settles into fell Revenge.

*Hatred,* winding Wiles,
Coward Deceit,
And joyless Inhumanity pervades,
And petrifies the heart.

*EPIST. i.*

In pride, in reasoning pride our error lies.
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies:
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
Ut sibi consciscant moerenti pectore letum;
Oblitei fontem curarum, hunc esse timorem;
Hunc, vexare pudorem; hunc, vincula amicitiai
Rumpere; et, in summâ, pietatem evortere suadet:
Nam jam sepe homines patriam, carosque parenteis,
Prodiderunt, vitare Acherusia templae petentes.
Nam, velutei puerei trepidant, atque omnia cæcis
In tenebris metuunt; sic nos in luce timemus
Interdum, nihil quo sunt metuenda magis, quam
Quae puerei in tenebris pavitant, finguntque futura.
Hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque, necesse est,
Non radiei solis, neque lucida tela diei,

Ver. 82.  ——— in strong
From dread of death, hate they the light of heav'n,
That, sick at heart, through their own breasts
they plunge
The fatal steel:——] Martial has an epigram
founded upon the same idea, and entitled to a quotation
in the present place:
Hostem cum fugeret, se Fannius ipse peremit,
Hic rogo, non furor est, ne moriare, mori?
L. ii. Epig. 80.
The foe pursu'd, and Fannius quick
Destroyed himself while flying.
Yet who besides a lunatic
Would flee from death by dying?
This strange and inconsistent effect of fear is well commented upon in the following verses of Butler:
who tells us, that it will often
Do things not contrary alone
To th' force of nature, but its own:
The courage of the bravest daunt,
And turn poltroons to valiant.
For men as resolute appear
With too much as too little fear;
And when they're out of hopes of flying,
Will run away from death by dying. Hudibras.
The passage in our own poet, however, bears a much nearer affinity to one in Ercilla's Araucana, and an affinity that seems to indicate an allusion on the part of the Spanish bard. He compares the Indians, who were surprized in their fort, to the villain who is continually trembling for his fate, and conscious of merited punishment:
Como los malhechores, que en su officio,
That, sick at heart, through their own breasts they plunge
The fatal steel: heedless that this alone,
This pungent dread, engenders all their cares,
Nips the keen sense of shame—turns friends to foes,
And bursts the bonds that harmonize the heart.
For, goaded hence, hell ever in his sight,
Man oft betrays his country; and, for gold,
Yields up the rev'rend form that gave him birth.
For as the boy, when midnight veils the skies,
Trembles and starts at all things—so, full oft,
E'en in the noon, men start at forms as void
Of real danger as the phantoms false
By darkness conjur'd, and the school-boy's dread.
A terror this the radiant darts of day
Can ne'er disperse. To truth's pure light alone,

Much of this passage is imitated, though feebly, by
Blackmore, in his Creation:
Carus, we grant no man is blest but he
Whose mind from anxious thoughts of death is free;
If dread of death still unsubdu'd remains,
And secret, o'er the vanquish'd victor reigns
Th' illustrious slave in endless thraldom bears
A heavier chain than that his captive wears
What are distinctions, honours, wealth, and state? &c.

Ver. 92. For as the boy, when midnight veils the skies, With this simile, certainly a very pertinent one, Lucretius appears to have been particularly delighted; for he repeats it in this place, from Book II. v. 55, and recurs to it once more in Book VI. v. 35.
Discutiant; sed Naturae species, RATIOQUE.

Primum, animum dico, mentem quem sese vocamus,

Ver. 99. And wisdom yielding, intellectual suns.] The following idea of Moliere is perfectly parallel, and his advice, when applied to the subject before us, is well worth attending to.

Consulta ta raison, pares ta clarté pour guide,
Voi si de tes soupçons l'apparence est solide;
Ne demeus pas leur voix.

D. GARCIE de NAVARRE, Act ii.

Consult thy reason; be her lamp thy guide;
Weigh well thy views; let reason still decide;
Her voice abjure not.

Ver. 100. First, then, the mind, the spiria nam'd at times,] It is enough to confound the pride of the most confident philosopher, if it be not deemed libellous to the character of a philosopher to conceive that he can be confident, to reflect on the very little he knows, after all his reading and researches, of the substance that constitutes the existence, either of himself, or of external objects. Matter, even in its simplest form, inactive as it may appear to be, is the most fugitive thing imaginable: and, although the atomic system, which reduces the whole to primordial and extreme corpuscles, equally devoid of all properties but those of solidity and motion, and which conceives, that all compound bodies whatsoever, are but different combinations of such corpuscles, be most consistent with the experiments of modern chemistry, and form a grand principle in the Newtonian theory — yet, when we have advanced thus far in our researches, we are but upon the threshold of natural philosophy; a thousand phenomena are incessantly crowding upon us, which still demand explanation, and baffle the most enterprising efforts of curiosity and conjecture. Such then being the disappointments to which we are exposed in our investigations into the external world; it cannot be a matter of surprise, that when we ascend higher, and endeavour to develop the world of sensation and thought, to unlock its secret springs, and trace its delicate dependencies, we should be still more subject to miscarriage, disagreement and error. One general conclusion however, it becomes us to draw from our discrepancy and ill-success, and that is, to entertain a generous and liberal complacency for the presumptions and conjectures of each other.

Lucretius, who has endeavoured to demonstrate in the last book, v. 873.

That all the sentient forms the sight surveys,
Whate'er their powers, from senseless atoms spring,
now enters upon the great business of applying this axiom to the peculiar constitution of man; hereby maintaining, that the human soul, or principle of vitality and thought, is as purely material, as essentially derived from simple primordial corpuscles, as any other part of him. This he undertakes to prove in a series of twenty-eight arguments, extending from the present passage to v. 858 of the book before us; after which he deduces from such an established doctrine a variety of moral reflections, which, in point of wisdom, sublimity, and poetic excellence, never have been surpassed by any poet or philosopher whatever; and which are possessed of this peculiar advantage, that they are of universal application, let our system of ethics or religion be what it may. Respecting all these arguments, however, Frachetta has most illiberally declared, in his Exposition, sono in guisa redicula, che non porta il pregio di rigittarle — they are, in themselves, so ridiculous, as not to be worth the expence of refuting them. But he nevertheless attempts a refutation, and proves the absurdity of so general and dogmatic an assertion, by completely failing, if I be not mistaken, in the whole of his attempt.

In pursuing the scope of his inquiry, our philosophic poet first endeavours to develop the substance of the soul; secondly, its more immediate seat, or presence-chamber; and, thirdly, its durability: and it may be of use to the reader, previous to his entering into the general detail of this important subject, to be made acquainted, by as brief a sketch as possible, with its leading ideas and dependencies.

The immateriality of the soul, strictly and properly
And wisdom yielding, intellectual suns.

First, then, the mind, the spirit nam’d at times, so called, is a conception altogether modern: yet few, even in modern days, embrace the conception in a state of unmixed and perfect purity. Berkeley, who denied the existence of a material and external world, was, unquestionably, a proselyte to this belief; for, if there be no such thing as matter, the soul itself cannot be material. Des Cartes was a proselyte in an equal degree; for he not only maintained the existence of the soul’s immateriality, but denied that it had any one property in common with matter. The difficulties, however, attendant upon these two hypotheses, and which I have endeavoured concisely to enumerate in the preceding life of our poet, are so extreme, that I believe few are to be found, in the present day, who profess them to their utmost extent. Generally speaking, some degree of materiality, such, at least, as will enable the soul to assume a material configuration, or to be capable of occasional vision to material organs, some phantasm, shade, or shadowy appearance, some capacity for the enjoyment of corporeal delights, however spiritualized and refined, are uniformly supposed to attach to it, even after its separation from the body. With such, the soul is not strictly immaterial: it cannot exist without an etherial or gaseous substratum, or vehicle: in reality, it cannot exist in a state separate from matter; and the poet before us has no contest with such persons otherwise than as to its powers of durability or incorruption, concerning which a revelation, posterior to his own era, has clearly ascertained to us that he was mistaken; but which nothing but such a revelation could have ascertained. Such persons may, therefore, peruse every argument which the text discloses, without dismay; they may admit their truth, without shuddering for the result: since the result to which nature and the poet would equally lead us, we now know to be subverted by a law of incorruption, communicated to us by the Christian Scriptures.

Coeval with our poet, there were as few who had a right to differ from him, so far as his principles applied, as there are in the present day. The generality of his contemporaries unquestionably, as among ourselves, believed in the soul’s survival after the dissolution of the body; but they did not believe in its survival as a spirit strictly immaterial, or in a state of actual separation from matter. The soul conceived of by the multitude was a compound substance, sometimes supposed to consist of a shade and spirit, and sometimes of a shade, spirit, and ghost, to each of which a distinct and separate region was allotted, as I have already observed in the note on Book I. v. 136: but each of which was, at the same time, apprehended to be possessed of a material configuration, as well as organs, and subject to material pleasures or pains. The soul of the philosophers, notwithstanding all their boasting, was, in reality, as little exempt from matter, and as little capable of a separate existence, as that of the people. Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoras, equally held the soul to be a compound being, of which a part, at least, was material. According to the opinion of the first, the human soul consists of an emanation of the Deity, united to a portion of the material soul of the world; and on its separation from the body, it is still surrounded by an \( \text{e}_\text{X}_{\text{X}}\text{X}_{\text{X}}\), or material vehicle, till the resorption of the divine emanation into the divine nature, and the return of its mundane elements to the soul of the world, whence they issued. In consequence of which, it is not only necessarily material in a part of its constitution, but altogether incapable of a separate existence, or existence \( \text{per} \text{ se} \), strictly so called. The theory of Aristotle was not widely different; and, with respect to Pythagoras, from whom there can be no doubt that both Plato and Aristotle derived their ideas, he not only conceived the human soul to be a compound of an immaterial mind, and of sensitive matter, the former of which he denominated \( \varphi_{\text{m}} \), and maintained to be immortal; and the latter \( \varepsilon_{\text{O}}\), and to perish with the body; but imagined that the \( \varepsilon_{\text{O}} \), or immaterial mind, when it quitted the body upon dissolution, was still surrounded by an \( \text{e}_\text{X}_{\text{X}}\text{X}_{\text{X}}\), or vehicle of material ether, in a circumvolution of which it continued till some other body was
prepared for it, being totally incapable of existing by itself, or in a state of total separation from matter.

In effect, each of these philosophers equally believed in the existence of a soul, or intelligible principle in the material world, independently of any communication from the supreme, or immaterial divinity; and, thus believing, they indirectly maintained, that matter of itself, under some modification or other, was capable of sensation and thought. But if pure, unmingled matter, be capable of such results, why have recourse to a second substance for that which matter alone is competent to exhibit? Why complicate causes, and multiply the machinery beyond the necessity of the case? Such appear to have been the views of Epicurus, and consequently of our own poet, upon this abstruse subject; and hence they discarded from the soul, or principle of thought and intelligence, every thing but simple, unalloyed matter. In the gradual operations of nature, they traced from matter alone, the origin of general gravitation, magnetism, irritability, and sensation: and, they hence saw no occasion for the introduction of a foreign substance, in the formation of thought, the mere result of this last quality, when sufficiently accumulated, or concentrated.

On these accounts, therefore, the system of Epicurus had to oppose, both the belief of the people, and the dogmas of other philosophers, who, as appears above, united in the conception, that an immaterial, as well as a material principle, was concerned in the creation of the human soul. But there were certain classes of materialists, as well as immaterialists, whom the present system had equally to counteract; and especially those who, like Aristoxenus, maintained the soul, or sentient principle, to result from the harmonious adaptation of organ to organ, and limb to limb, as a whole; and those who, following the tenets of Democritus, conceived that it consisted alone of a certain number of percipient primordial atoms, interspersed throughout the body in the midst of a much larger mass of impercipient.

In opposition to these two last opinions more especially, Lucretius attempts to prove, in the first place, that the sentient principle consists alone of a combination of certain ethereal gasses, or auras, imbied with the breath from the atmosphere, secknotted in due proportions by the bronchial vessels and lungs, and hence conveyed to the heart; and, secondly, that in consequence of such mechanism, the heart and precordia are the chief seat of the soul, or intelligent spirit; hence radiating, as from a centre, towards every organ and extremity of the entire system. Modern chemistry, applied to modern anatomy, has, in many instances, as the reader will perceive in the prosecution of the present work, made a very considerable approach towards the former of these dogmas; it has proved, that the blood, as well as various other fluids, after their union with these secknotted gasses, is possessed, in the language of M. Blumenbach, of a kind of perpetual bildungstrieb, or formative nidus, while through the whole course of the nerves it has enabled us to trace a secretion and incessant efflux of what is, in our own day, denominated pure galvanic aura: a fluid which is probably separated by the vast gland of the brain, and which we now know, to a certainty, constitutes the living principle, or spirit of animation.

From the immense importance of the heart and brain to the preservation of life and health, it has, under almost every theory, been conceived, that the mind or soul, whether material or immaterial, resides more immediately in the one or the other of these organs, than in any different part of the human system. In modern times, the brain has had the greater number of votaries; and some physiologists have pretended to view it with so microscopic an eye, as to detect the particular portion of the brain which it condescends more directly to occupy. This, by Des Cartes, was supposed to be the pineal gland; while Bonnet asserted it to be the corpus callosum. Others, on the contrary, and by far more
That which controls, which measures sentient life,
Forms of this mortal make a part as clear

generally of late, have regarded the whole mass of
the brain as equally constituting the mental presence-
chamber; or, in other words, as being equally con-
tributory to the production of sensorial power. Hence
it was maintained by Dr. Priestley, not only that the
brain at large is the grand sensorium, or residence of
the mind, but that the quantity of intelligence, in
every instance possessed, depends upon the quantity
of the brain compared with the bulk of the respective
animal: and Dr. Soemering, a German physician of
considerable ingenuity, pursuing the same idea, has
attempted to prove, by a variety of observations and
experiments, that the degree of intelligibility is al-
ways in proportion to the bulk of the brain compared
with that of the nerves; the comparison, in both in-
stances, accounting for the superiority of intellect in
man: while Dr. Gall, of Vienna, whose lectures on
cranioscopy were lately suppressed by the emperor of
Germany, as supposed to be derogatory to various
doctrines of the Catholic religion, at the same time that
he apprehended the entire brain to be of equal and es-
sential service in the production of general intelli-
gence, imagined also that different portions of this
prodigious viscus are appropriated to different pas-
sions and affections, and that the excess of such pas-
sions and affections was in proportion to the inordi-
nate bulk of those parts which engendered them:
whence he conceived the idea, that by collecting a
considerable number of human sculls, and especially
of those remarkable for any very prominent quality of
the mind, he would be able, from the comparative
indentations or impressions which such appropriate
and augmented compartments of the brain must ne-
necessarily have excited in the bones of the cranium in
their earlier and infantine softness, to determine the
precise divisions of the brain, in which every affection
and passion was generated; and vice versa, from no-
ticing, in the living subject, the prominence which
such luxuriencies or excesses had produced in the
form of the cranium, to carry to perfection the art of
physiognomy, and ascertain the ruling passion and
degree of intelligence of every man, upon his first
appearance.

To examine the merits or demerits of these va-
rious conjectures, in the present place, is impossible;
and I hasten, therefore, to observe, that however
widely the idea may be propagated in modern times,
that the brain is the chief seat of the mental func-
tions; it cannot be more general than the belief in
former periods, that the powers and affections of the
mind depended primarily upon the heart. So com-
mon indeed was this latter conception for a long pe-
riod, and so deeply imbued with it is every exist-
ing language, that ourselves, and every other nation,
still continue to ascribe to the heart, in popular and
colloquial dialect, every virtue and vice, every debased
and exalted feeling.

It only remains for me to observe, that, as Epi-
curus conceived the entire soul to be material, con-
sistently with what nature and experience point out
with regard to every other material substance, he
also conceived it to be corruptible, and of course,
that it perished with the body. A divine and glo-
rious revelation has since taught us, however, what
we could have been taught by nothing else, that
matter is not necessarily corruptible in any state of
organization; that the corruptible body itself shall
hereafter put on incorruption, and death be swal-
lowed up of victory. Such being, therefore, the fu-
ture and indubitable privilege of the material body,
there is no reason why, even from its birth, such
matter may not be the privilege of the material spirit; upon
which subject, I have already remarked at large, in
the life prefixed to the volume before us. Such an
idea, however, whether relating to the soul or the
body, could not readily suggest itself, either to Epi-
curus or Lucretius, or the suggestion must have
been instantly renounced, as inconsistent with the
dictates and phenomena of Nature. Left, as they
were, to the cold and comfortless belief, that the
present life is the whole range of being allotted to
mortals, and death the utmost limit and utter ex-
Atque oculei, partes animantis totius exstant.

Quam vis multa quidem sapientum turba putarunt
Sensum animi certà non esse in parte locatum;

...tinction of their existence, they wisely endeavoured to improve, to the utmost of their ability, the first, and to fortify and prepare themselves against the approach of the second. The sources of consolation, which were open to them, are still open to us, and by no means unworthy of our attention; although, with the christian scriptures in our hands, they are not the only, nor even the richest, consolations which are addressed to us. With these sources the present book concludes, and I think I may add, that there is not a reader, whatever be his religious creed, who, upon a perusal of them, will not derive an equal degree of gratification and improvement. The celebrated Essay on Man, by Mr. Pope, is founded on the same principles, and altogether as destitute in its appeal to a state of future existence; but the motives to contentment and resignation, advanced by Pope, bear no comparison with those exhibited by Lucretius. They are less animated, less cogent, less interesting, and less applicable. See note on Book II. v. 874.

Ver. 100. First, then, the mind,—

Forms of this mortal make a part as clear
As the keen eye, the finger, or the foot.] Mr. Locke’s sentiments upon this subject are known to every one. Locke was an immaterialist; but he appears to have approximated the doctrine of Berkeley, in denying that we have any clear idea of the substance of matter, and that all our knowledge of it results from our ideas of a certain combination of primary and secondary qualities, connected with the idea of an aptitude in such qualities to give or receive alterations. (See Essay on Hum. Unders. Book II. chap. 23.) Having thus declared our ignorance as to the substance of matter, he advances a step farther, and asserts, with our own poet, that we have no reason to pronounce matter incapable of thinking; and that, for any thing that appears to the contrary, it is as capable of intelligence as of any other property. But why then have recourse to an immaterial spirit, if matter alone be competent to all the phenomena of intelligence and thought without it? The dilemma is obvious; and it has been repeatedly observed of Mr. Locke, that he must have been a materialist, if he had abided by the legitimate consequences of his own reasoning. The principles upon which he argues are entirely those of the Epicurean school; and Polignac, in his Anti-Lucretius, has attacked him with no small degree of asperity, and certainly, with no small degree of success, for his incongruity in this respect:

Mirari, satis hie nequeo, quis tetricus horror,
Despectusque sui, qua mortis prava libido?
Lymphatas hominum mentes incesserit, ut se,
Corpore mortales cum sint natique sepulchro,
Mortales animo esse velint penitusque caducos.
Tantus amor nihil! tanta est veerodia!

ANTI-LUCR. B. v. 10042.

With mute surprize I mark this dread deprav’d,
This self-contempt, this low-born lust of death
That goads the cheated minds of men to wish,
Since born to die, and mortal in the flesh,
The soul may too be mortal, and expire.
Of blank annihilation such their love!
Their madness such!

The name of Locke is not mentioned by Polignac in this passage, although it occurs in several others: but M. Bougainville, the translator of the poem into French, who was intimately acquainted with the cardinal during the greater part of the time of his writing it, tells us openly, in his prefixed abstract, that Locke was the philosopher against whom this passage was immediately directed; and it cannot be denied, that the doctrines it refers to were his own.
As the keen eye, the finger, or the foot.
Here cleave we firm, though many a sage contends
The mental sense no part specific frames,
Verum habitum quemdam vitalem corporis esse, 'Apponov Graiei quam dicunt; qui faciat nos Vivere cum sensu, nullâ quom in parte siet mens: Ut bona sæpe valetudo quom dicitur esse Corporis, et non est tamen hæc pars ualla valentis; Sic animi sensum non certà parte reponunt: Magno opere in quo mi divorsei errare videntur. Sæpe itaque in promptu corpus, quod cernitur, ægrum; Quom tamen ex alià lætamur parte latenti: Et retro fit, ubei contra sit sæpe vicissim, Quom, miser ex animo, lætatur corpore toto: Non alio pacto, quam si, pes quom dolet ægri. In nullo caput interea sit forte dolore. Præterea, molli quom somno dedita membra, Ecfusumque jacet sine sensu corpus onustum; Est aliud tamen in nobis, quod tempore in illo Multimodis agitatur, et omneis adcipit in se Lætitiae motus, ac curas cordis inaneis.

Nunc animam quoque ut in membris cognoscere possis Esse, neque harmoniâ corpus retinere solere; Principio, fit utei, detracto corpore multo, Sæpe tamen nobis in membris vita moretur; Atque eadem rursum, quom corpora paucâ caloris Diffugere, forasque per os est editus aër, Deserit ex templo venas, atque ossa relinquit;
But springs the vital product of the whole. 
This the Greek schools term Harmony—a sense 
Of living power while still th’ essential soul 
No point appropriates—as corporeal health 
Flows not from sections but the form entire. 
Thus, deem they, springs the mind; a tenet fraught, 
If right we judge, with error most absurd. 
For oft th’ external frame disease sustains, 
While all escapes within: and thus, revers’d, 
The mind oft sickens while the body thrives: 
As, when the gout the tortur’d foot inflames, 
The distant head still boasts its wonted ease. 
When, too, sweet sleep o’er all the wearied limbs 
Spreads his soft mantle, and locks every sense, 
Still something stirs within us—something urg’d, 
E’en then to various motions, and alive 
To joy’s glad impulse, or fictitious fears.

Yet more; to prove the soul a part exists 
 Constituent of the body—to subvert 
This fancied Harmony—mark oft how life 
Mid the dread loss of many a limb endures; 
While instant as the vital heat but ebbs, 
The vital breath flies off—pulsation stops, 
And heart, and limb all lifeless lie alike.
DE RERUM NATURA.

Noscere ut hinc possis, non æquas omnia parteis
Corpora habere, neque ex quo fulcire salutem:
Sed magis hæc, venti quæ sunt calidique vaporis
Semina, curare in membris ut vita moretur.
Est igitur calor, ac ventus vitalis, in ipso
Corpore, qui nobis moribundos deserit artus.

Quapropter, quoniam est animi natura reperta,
Atque animæ, quasi pars hominis; redde harmoniai
Nomen ad organisicos saltu delatum Heliconis;
Sive aliunde ipsei porro traxere, et in illam
Transstulerunt, proprio quæ tum res nomine egebat:
Quidquid id est, habeant; tu cætera percipe dicta.

Nunc animum atque animam dico conjuncta teneri
Inter se, atque unam naturam confacere ex se;
Sed caput esse quasi, et dominari in corpore toto,
Consilium, quod nos animum, mentemque, vocamus:
Idque situm medià regione in pectoris hæret.

Ver. 135. As these exist, then, heat and vital air,
Health through the members sickens or abounds.] —Calor ac ventus vitalis—

In modern chemistry, caloric and vital air. Drs.
Crawford and Lavoisier, if they were now alive, might
have been, and Dr. Beddoes perhaps actually may be,
surprized to see their own hypothesis so strenuously
and philosophically contended for by Lucretius. I
reserve, however, all comparison of the Epicurean
system with these modern theories, till the poet
more fully explains the essential and compound sub-
stance of the soul, and, on this account, refer the
reader to note on v. 240 of the present book.

Ver. 136. —let such sages still
Hold the term harmony,—deduc'd, perchance,
From the sweet chords of Helicon; ——] Aristotesius, the author of this system, I have already
observed, was a musician of high repute. See note
on v. 104.
Hence may'st thou judge that not in every part
Dwells the same portion of percipient power,
Nor health from each flows equal; but that those:
Chief nurture life, and check its flight abrupt,
Rear'd from aërial seeds, or fluent heat.
As these exist, then, heat and vital air,
Health through the members sickens or abounds.

This prov'd precise—that soul, that mind exists
Part of the body—let such sages still
Hold the term harmony—deduc'd, perchance,
From the sweet chords of Helicon; let such
Still something mean whate'er that something be,
No name of theirs expresses: thou, meanwhile,
Quitting such contests, mark what yet remains.

The soul, the mind, then, one same substance forms
Minutely blended; but, in vulgar phrase,
That call we mind, or spirit, which pervades,
As chief, the heart's deep avenues, and rules
The total frame. Here grief, and terror spring,
Heic exsultat enim pavor, ac metus; hae loca circum, 
Lætitiae mulcet: heic ergo mens, animusque, est. 
Cætera pars animæ, per totum dissita corpus, 
Paret; et ad numen mentis, momenque, movetur: 
Idque sibi solum per se sapit, et sibi gaudet, 
Quom neque res animam, neque corpus, conmovet unâ. 
Et, quasi quom caput, aut oculus, tentante dolore, 
Læditur in nobis, non omni concruciæmur 
Corpore; sic animus non numquam læditur ipse, 
Lætitiæque viget, quom caetera pars animâ 
Per membra atque artus nullâ novitate cietur. 
Verum, ubi vehementi magis est conmota metu mens, 
Consentire animam totam per membra videmus: 
Sudoresque ita, palloremque, existere toto 

Ver. 153. Of its own powers, mind reasons and 
results, 
While soul, like flesh, can never rouse alone.] The terms mind, soul, and spirit, as I have already 
observed, are generally used synonymously in the 
Epicurean philosophy: but when in conformity 
with popular language, it makes a difference; it then 
applies the term, mind or spirit, to that more con-
centrated part of this ethereal substance which it 
imagined to reside in the heart and precordia; and 
the term soul, to its more dilute and distant radiations, 
that give life and energy to the other organs, 
and especially the limbs and extremities. The com-
mentator on Creech’s translation appears to have 
been totally unacquainted with the physiology of the 
Epicurean soul; and is hence continually pointing 
out errors and contradictions, which only existed in 
his own misconception of the poem. 

Ver. 161. o'er all the frame 
Spreads the cold sweat, the livid paleness 

Ver. 162. ———o'er all the frame 
Spreads the cold sweat, the livid paleness 

Ver. 162. ———o'er all the frame 
Spreads the cold sweat, the livid paleness 

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Ver. 162. ———o'er all the frame 
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Ver. 162. ———o'er all the frame 
Spreads the cold sweat, the livid paleness
Here pleasure plays; and here we hence conceive
Dwells mind, or spirit; while the remnant soul,
Through ev'ry limb diffus'd, the mind's dread nod
Obeys, and yields submissive to its will.
Of its own powers, mind reasons and exults,
While soul, like flesh, can never rouse alone.
As oft the head, or eye, some anguish keen
Sustains, while yet the gen'ral frame escapes,
So, in itself, the mind, full oft, endures
Rapture or pain, while yet the soul at large,
Spread through the members, nought of change perceives.
But when the mind some shock severe subdues,
The total soul then sympathizes: then,
Should deadly horror sway o'er all the frame
Spreads the cold sweat, the livid paleness spreads,

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For the benefit of such of my readers as may not
be acquainted with it, I shall insert the very elegant
and justly celebrated translation of these verses by
Phillips. Catullus and Boileau have given equally ex-
cellent versions in Latin and French.

'Twas this bereav'd my soul of rest,
And rais'd such tumults in my breast;
For while I gaz'd, in transport toss'd,
My breath was gone, my voice was lost:
Corpore, et infringi linguam; vocemque aboriri,
Caligare oculos, sonere aureis, subcidere artus.

Denique, concidere ex animi terrore videmus
Sæpe homines: facile ut qui vis hinc noscere possit,
Esse animam cum animo conjunctam; quæ, quam animi vi
Percussa est, exin corpus propellit, et icit.

Hæc eadem ratio naturam animi, atque animaê,
Corpoream docet esse: ubi enim propellere membra,
Conripere ex somno corpus, mutareque voltum,
Atque hominem totum regere, ac vorsare, videtur;
Quorum nihil fieri sine tactu posse videmus,
Nec tactum porro sine corpore; nonne fatendum est,
Corporeâ naturâ animum constare, animamque?

Præterea, pariter fungi cum corpore, et unâ
Consentire animum nobis in corpore cernis.
Si minus obfendit vitam vis horrida teli,

Ver. 173. Since bursts from sleep the body.]} In the
original, Conripere ex somno corpus—videtur. Creech
has totally omitted to translate this part of the
power of the mind over the whole frame; and, what
is more extraordinary still, the accurate and elegant
Marchetti has completely subverted our poet's mean-
ing, and represented the mind as plunging the body
into sleep, instead of rousing it out of it:

e ciò senz' alcun dubbio insegna
Che l'essenza dell' animo e dell' anima
Incorporea non e', ch' ove tu miri
Ch' ella perge alle membra impulso, e moto;
Che nel sonno le immerge.

The proposition itself is deduced from a passage of
Epicurus, in Diogenes Laertius, x. 67, ὁ λεγομενος;
Clouds dim the sight, the palsied tongue is mute,
Tingles the ear, and every limb dissolves.
Oft, too, from mental terror faints the frame;
Whence mayst thou mark how close the bond that knits
The soul and spirit; this exciting that,
And that, when rous'd, deep-rousing every nerve.

Hence prove we, too, that both alike exist
Corporeal:—hence, since every member yields
With quick submission to the joint behest:
Since bursts from sleep the body, since the face
Obsequious varies, and the total man
Feels the full sway profound; for nought can act
Where touch subsists not, nor can touch subsist
Void of corporeal base:—can we, then, doubt
That soul, that spirit must corporeal spring?

In all, moreo'er, of ease or anguish keen
The body feels, th' assenting mind partakes.

Thus, when some deadly dart through many a nerve,
Ossibus ac nervis disclusis, intus adacta;
At tamen insequitur languor, terræque petitus
Suavis, et in terrā mentis qui gignitur aestus;
Interdumque quasi exsurgendi incerta voluntas:
Ergo corpoream naturam animi esse, necesse est;
Corporeis quoniam telis, ictuque, laborat.
Is tibi nunc animus quali sit corpore, et unde
Constiterit, pergam rationem reddere dictis.

Principio, esse aio persubtilem, atque minutis
Perquam corporibus factum constare: id ita esse,
Hinc, licet advortas animum, ut pernoscere possis.
Nihil adeo fieri celeri ratione videtur,
Quam sibi mens fieri proponit, et inchoat ipsa.
Ocyus ergo animus, quam res se perciet ulla,
Book III.  THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Mid many a bone, tremendous, winds its way,
Quick faints the spirit:—a fond wish to die
Now sways, and now the native love of life.
Material, hence, the mental frame must live,
Since by material arms so soon assail’d.

Now list attentive, while we next unfold
Its make mysterious, and to sight educe.
First, then, we firm maintain the mind results
From seeds of matter, most minute and smooth.
This hence we prove, that nought so swiftly speeds
As what the mind determines and completes;
The mind, whose keen rapidity o’erpowers

Si pedibus cessere tuis, racione carebunt:
Pectoris at median regionem si tetigere,
Qua nostræ placuit tibi mentis templis locari,
Tunc disceptabunt de mundo et origine rerum,
Ac de sorte suæ: sint corpora sedita leti,
Necne; quid ad vitam possit conferre beatam:
Jus populis dicent, orabunt legibus orbem,
Invidia quam natura negat, positione dabit vim.

ANTI-LUCR. Lib. V. v. 531.

See from new motions, new arrangements, see,
What matter sole can gender. Different sites,
Change as they may, or figures, I can sound;
But mind I trace not still, nor mind’s results.
And hence enraged, I mark thee, the pure mind
Strive from the body, like the brain t’ educe;
Strive from a mass to rear it, of themselves
Whose separate atoms ne’er to mind pretend:
Enrag’d, I mark, and reason rages too.
Yet, if organic be thy mind, it craves,

Like other organs, its appropriate food;
As through the frame each limb its food demands.
Hence thrives the mind through all its inmost make,
As through its inmost make each membrane thrives.
So crumbs of bread, once swallow’d and absorb’d,
And haply through the blood’s meandering tube
Wand’ring—if to the foot their course they bend
Know nought of reason; but if once they reach,
O’erjoy’d, the midmost bosom, where alone
The mind thou own’st its mystic temple builds,
Of fate they argue, and the world’s first rise
And birth of nature; whether death destroy
Or not for ever; what may best promote
The bliss of life; define the rights of man
And plan for nations harmonizing laws.
So problems prove what jealous nature shrouds.
Ante oculos quorum in promptu natura videtur.
At, quod mobile tanto opere est, constare rotundis
Perquam seminibus debet, perquamque minutis:
Momine utei parvo possint impulsa moveri.
Namque movetur aqua, et tantillo momine flutat;
Quippe volubilibus, parvisque, creata figuris.
At contra mellis constantior est natura,
Et pigrei latices magis, et constantior actus:
Haeret enim inter se magis omnis materiae
Copia; nimirum, qui non tam laevibus exstat
Corporibus, neque tam subtilibus, atque rotundis:
Namque papaveris, aura potest subpensa levisque
Cogere, ut ab summo tibi diffluat altus acervus;
At contra lapidum conjectum, spicarumque,
Nenu potest: igitur, parvissima corpora pro quam
Et laevissima sunt, ita mobilitate fruuntur.
At contra, quæquamque magis cum pondere magno
Asperaque inveniuntur, eo stabilita magis sunt.
Nunc igitur, quoniam est animi natura reperta
Mobilis egregie, perquam constare necesse est

Ver. 195. But what thus rapid moves, from seeds
must spring.
Most exquisitely subtle, and rotund,—] This, likewise, is a position copied from Epicurus. Αλλα τοις λογις εν αλλοις (Επικουρος), και ες ατομω αυτων (τω φυσιν) συκοινωναι λιποτατοι και στρεγγολι
τατοι. Diog. Laert. x. 66. The rapidity of motion, here contended for by Lucretius, was admitted by other philosophers, besides those of his own school: by Pythagoras and Plato more especially. Motion, however, of every kind, in the subtler metaphysics of Aristotle, was conceived a mere quality of matter, and which could not possibly appertain to an immaterial spirit. Aristotle denies, therefore, (de Anim. cap. i.) that the soul can be moved in any way, being of itself the fixed and undisturbed cause of
All that the sight marks instantaneous most,
But what thus rapid moves, from seeds must spring
Most exquisitely subtile, and rotund,
Rous'd into action by minutest force.
Thus moves the fluent stream, urg'd on with ease,
Since rear'd from atoms polish'd, and exile,
While the tough honey, of compacter frame,
More tardy flows, and ampler force demands.
For more tenacious here the total mass,
From heavier seeds engender'd, tenuous less,
And less globose. Thus zephyr's gentlest breath
Wide scatters, oft, the seeds the poppy rears,
Heap'd in the sun-beam,—while the grosser mass
Of congregated stones, or missile darts
Feels no impression. Hence material things
Move brisk or sluggish, as from atoms rear'd
Light and globose, or denser, and more rough.

Since then the mind, in every act, we trace
Most voluble, from seeds of subtlest size,
Corporibus parvis, et laevibus, atque rotundis:
Quae tibi cognita res in multis, o bone! rebus
Utilis invenietur, et obportuna cluebit.

Hæc quoque res etiam naturam dedicat ejus,
Quam tenui constet textura: quamque loco se
Contineat parvo, si possit conglomerari.
Quod simul atque hominem leti secu ra quies est
Indepta, atque animi natura, animæque, recessit:
Nihil ita libatum de toto corpore cernas
Ad speciem, nihil ad pondus; mors omnia præstat,
Vitalem præter ventum, calidumque vaporem.

Ergo animam totam perparvis esse necesse est
Seminibus, nexam per venas, viscera, nervos:
Qua tenus, omnis ubi e toto jam corpore cessit,
Extima membrorum circumcæsura tamen se
Incolomem praestat; nec defit ponderis hilum:
Quod genus est, Bacchi quom flos evanuit, aut quom
Spiritus unguenti suavis diffugit in auras;

Ver. 228. So from the juice of Bacchus, when flies off
Its flow'r ethereal, from the light perfume
When mounts th' essential spirit,—] This
description of Lucretius is highly beautiful, and in
the truest vein of poetry. Blackmore has copied the idea, but the ethereal spirit has evaporated in its pas-
sage:
The fragrant vapours breath'd from rich per-
fumes,
From Indian spices, and Arabian gums,

Ver. 229. Its flow'r ethereal,—] Thus, Thomson:
Such its pure essence, its ethereal soul.

Spring, 509.

And hence, again, we are at no loss for the true
meaning of a passage in ode xx. of Anacreon, which
has been differently rendered by the commentators:
Book III.  THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Rotund and light, its mystic make must spring:
A fact, O friend to truth! thou oft shalt find
Of utmost moment in what yet remains.

Hence learn we, too, of what attenuate frame
The mind consists; and to what trivial space
Must shrink its texture if compacted close—
That, when in death the wearied body sleeps,
And soul and spirit wander from their post,
E'en then the sight no diminution marks
In weight or figure; death usurping sole
The warm-breath'd vapour, and the vital sense.

From seeds minutest, hence, the soul entire
Must flow,—through all the frame profusely pour'd;
And, e'en when fled, still leaving every limb
Its wonted weight, its figure most precise.
So, from the juice of Bacchus, when flies off
Its flow'r etherial, from the light perfume

\[\textit{Deh porgetimi de fiore}
Di quel almo e buon liquore.\]

Give me the flower of Bacchus, give!
Without his balm I cannot live;
And o'er my burning temples shower
The leaves of many a humid flower.

For \textit{eis cro} Faber introduces \textit{exi cro}, making it agree
with \textit{avtis}, and then regards it as merely a part of
the same image which is conveyed in the ensuing verses. The whole \textit{spirit} and \textit{flower} of the passage
is hereby, however, totally destroyed. The Italian
translator, Regnier, is correct in his version:

It was, probably, on this account, from the \textit{volatility}
of this \textit{etherial flower}, that Bacchus is often re-
presented, in antique busts and medals, with \textit{wings};
and especially in the famous gem which is still in the
collection of baron Stosch, famous alike for its
Aut aliquo quam jam sucs de corpore cessit:
Nihil oculis tamen esse minor res ipsa videtur
Propterea, neque detractum de pondere quidquam.
Nimirum, quia multa minutaque semina sucos
Ecificiunt, et odorem, in toto corpore rerum.
Qua re etiam atque etiam mentis naturam, animæque,
Scire licet perquam pauxillis esse creatam
Seminibus; quoniam fugiēns nihil ponderis aufert.

Nec tamen hæc simplex nobis natura putanda est:
Tenuis enim quædam moribundos deserit aura,
Mixta vapore; vapos porro trahit aëra secum:
Nec calor est quisquam, quoi non sit mixtus et aër.

Chemistry is daily becoming so popular a pursuit, as well for entertainment as profit, in almost every art and science, and its own technical dialect is hence so perpetually and imperceptibly blending with colloquial language, that it is perhaps unnecessary to offer any apology for the introduction of the term gass, since every one is acquainted with its meaning, and there is no other term in modern speech that will so forcibly express the import of the Latin phrase here adopted by our poet—tenuis aura. We come now to the analysis of the Epicurean soul; in explaining which, if the student of Lavoisier should in some instances trace an erroneous chemistry, he will, nevertheless, be astonished at the general resemblance which it bears to this boasted theory of the present day; and will be truly surprized to find himself so much at home whilst in company with a poet and a philosopher who flourished nearly two thousand years ago.

The sentient principle then, upon the Epicurean hypothesis, is a system or combination of gasses.
BOOK III.  
THE NATURE OF THINGS.

When mounts th' essential spirit, or from man
Th' excreted lymph exhales—the curious eye
Nought marks diminish'd,—the same weight survives,
The same fixt bulk, since from minutest seeds
Springs the light scent, th' ethereal spirit springs.

Hence doubly flows it why the mind's pure frame
Must, too, be rear'd from seeds of subtlest size,—
Hence, as its flight no visual change creates,
But bulk alike, and substance still endure.

Yet not unmixt its nature: the light gass
Breath'd from the dying, in its texture blends
Heat, air, and vapour, ever each with each

From the prime necessity of air to the existence of
man, that part of him which is alone capable of de-
termining whether he do, or do not exist, has, in all
ages, and among all people, derived one of its most
common names from this fluid, and is alternately de-
nominated breath, spirit, and air, terms in themselves
convertible, and etymologically the same. Thus, in
the creation of the first parent of the human race,
we are told, Gen. ii. 7, that God "breathed into his
nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living
soul." The term blood was often, indeed, in a man-
er somewhat similar, employed, as I have already
observed in the note on v. 46 of this book, to import
the life of sentient beings; but was always restrained
to the simple phenomenon of existence, or to the
signification of that part of the percipient principle
which immaterialists intend by the animal, in opposi-
tion to the intelligent soul; while the words air, breath,
spirit, have been uniformly applied as synonymous
denominations for the mind, or thinking principle,
the mens animi of our poet.

Vol. I.
Rara quod ejus enim constat natura, necesse est
Aēris inter eum primordia multa moveri.

Such has been the language, and such the popular idea of all ages; but Epicurus is the first philosopher upon record who attempted to reconcile the general belief and language of mankind with natural phenomena, and to develop, with the penetrative ken of science, the constituent parts of that aerial substance from which the sentient principle was supposed to be derived; to trace their separation or secretion; and to apportion to each its relative power in the production or renovation of life, perception, and intelligence.

Such being a summary of the Epicurean doctrine upon this subject, I shall next, as briefly as possible, compare it with what has been advanced in more modern times, and since chemistry has been connected with physiological pursuits.

And here, the first thing I shall notice is the position of Lucretius, that the body derives the whole of its elementary heat, now denominated caloric, univocally with his own term calor, from respirable, or atmospheric air. The cause of animal heat was never scientifically developed, till the celebrated treatise of the late Dr. Crawford appeared on this subject, about fifteen years ago. Prior to this era, it was attempted to be accounted for in various, and indeed contradictory ways: some attributing it to the reciprocal friction of the different particles of blood; others, to their friction against the sides of their vessels: some referring it to the action of the solids of the body against the solids; others, again, to fermentations, supposed to be perpetually occurring through the whole system. But none of these solutions were satisfactory, and every one in turn yielded to the rest. The experiments, however, of Dr. Crawford, but more especially those of Lavoisier, who has perfected this theory, while they confute the conjectures hazarded by every former philosopher from Hippocrates to Cullen, establish, upon the firmest basis, the hypothesis advanced by our poet; and resolve the phenomenon of animal heat into atmospheric air, inhaled in the act of respiration, and chemically decomposed in its passage through the lungs.

The atmosphere is a vast laboratory, in which innumerable processes of analysis, solution, precipitation, and combination, are incessantly taking place. The air itself is a confused mixture of particles ejected from animal, vegetable, and mineral substances, and more especially from water, either entire or decomposed, through which the fluids of light, heat, and electricity, as well as an infinitude of other gasses, are continually passing and repassing. Vapour, therefore, of some kind or another, must, at all times, constitute an essential part of atmospheric air, yet the portion it constitutes is but small, seldom, in general, exceeding a hundredth part of the whole: the rest consisting of elementary heat, or caloric, a most active and volatile substance, largely diffused through all nature, of azotic gass, or mephytis, and of a most recondite fluid, which it is the boast of modern chemistry to have discovered characteristically; which, when separated, is found to be three or four times purer than atmospheric air in the gross, and will hence preserve combustion and animal life three or four times as long. This mysterious gass, though suspected by modern chemists, from the era of Van Helmont, was by no means fully traced, or its properties fairly specified, until the experiments of Dr. Priestley gave it "a local habitation and a name:" for he obtained it from a variety of substances in a pure and uncombined state, and denominated it dephlogisticated air; adverting, in this appellation, to a system of his own founding, and known by the phrase of the phlogistic system. It soon, however, became a matter of great doubt, among contemporary chemists, whether there were any such thing as phlogiston in nature; and hence Lavoisier banished the name altogether from the French school of chemistry, and re-denominated the newly-discovered aura, vital air, or oxygen. Oxygen, in its state of purity, and freed from every other substance, is never volatile, but remains fixed to the body it inhabits; yet combined with the elementary heat or caloric of the atmosphere, it is volatized instantaneously, and exhibits itself by a thousand magnificent and stupendous properties. It is this, indeed, that gives
Compacted; vapour, in its ample pores,  
Absorbing heat, and heat etherial air.

life and spirit to the whole atmosphere; for, when once abstracted, atmospheric air becomes totally unfit for the purposes of respiration, vegetation, or combustion. It occupies about a fourth part of the common air of the atmosphere: the remainder of which, as incapable of supporting the phenomena of animal life, is denominated mephytis, or azotic gass: and which, as filling nearly three quarters of the atmosphere, may be well entitled to the appellation of air alone.

Respiration, then, is an action contributing to the renovation of life by the communication of atmospheric air to the praecordia; the air so communicated, in a manner, to the present moment undetermined, becoming hereby decomposed or separated into four, or perhaps a greater number of simpler gasses, of which each contributes, in a greater or less degree, to the preservation of life and sensation; and especially the caloric, which seems to afford that continual supply of heat that is absolutely necessary, from the freedom with which every individual member parts with its heat to circumjacent and external substances; and more especially still, the oxygen, which, by Spallanzani and Girtanner, is supposed to stimulate the heart itself into action, and to be the immediate cause of all muscular irritability, and consequently of vitality itself. A small portion, however, of this important gass, we detect returning from the lungs in the act of expiration, combined with a substance generated in the blood; and which, from its resemblance to various properties of charcoal, the French chemists have named carbon; the fluid produced from this union, and discharged in expiration, is denominated carboneic acid gass.

I pretend not to affirm what was the immediate aura understood by Lucretius as the fourth and most important substance in the composition of the animal spirit; and which, he tells us, was so recondite as to be incapable of being traced otherwise than by its effects. To the oxygenous and the galvanic gass it has an equal and an astonishingly striking resemblance. If we suppose our poet intended something like the former, although he has not given it its modern name, he has described the very thing itself, endowed it with its characteristic properties, asserted its entire supremacy, and established it in its immediate seat of empire, the heart and lungs. He has given us, indeed, whether we allow this to be a fact or not, as complete a statement of the gasses of which the animal breath or spirit consists, as if he had lived in the present day. And what is more extraordinary still, though he enumerates the three substances of heat, air, and vapour, as fluids rejected in the act of expiration, he makes no mention of the return of this fourth, and, in his era, unnamed substance; while, nevertheless, as already observed, he deems it the most powerful agent in the composite spirit inhaled, and the sensorial faculty engendered. The following table of the Epicurean and Lavoisierian analysis of respirable air, will still more clearly point out the resemblance between them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respirable air of Lucretius contains</th>
<th>Respirable air of Lavoisier contains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calor;</td>
<td>Caloric;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vapor;</td>
<td>Vapour,—exhalation from water, and other substances;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aër;</td>
<td>Azote, occupying three-fourths of the whole atmosphere, and hence, more properly than any other simple fluid, denominated air;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed; but which is of far more importance than all the rest to the renewal and prolongation of animal life, eluding all sensible investigation, and only traced from its effects.</td>
<td>Oxygen, without which it is impossible for life to subsist: the boast of modern chemistry, and which was totally devoid of name and generic character till the present era.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jam triplex animi est igitur natura reperta:
Nec tamen haec sat sunt ad sensum cuncta creandum;

It must be confessed, however, that even oxygen itself, although generally supposed at one time, and even at the present moment by Humboldt, and several other chemists, to be the sole cause of fibrous irritability, was never conceived altogether competent to the production of muscular motion and sensation: it approximated the development of the vital spirit, but did not completely unfold it. Hence other gasses have alternately been glanced at, as affording the chief fomes of this recondite and attenuate power. Electricity has been principally studied with this express view; and the study has, at length, been crowned with a success, which, though by no means perfect, opens to us, perhaps, the way to perfection. In consequence of the experiments of Cotugno, Vassali-Eandi, Galvani, Volta, and many other celebrated philosophers, it has ultimately been demonstrated, that animals are capable of generating or exciting an electric aura in their own bodies, as well as of receiving it from without; that this electric aura is possessed of all, or nearly all, the properties of common or metallic electricity,—but that it acts in a manner somewhat different; whence, from M. Galvani, one of its most successful investigators, it has been denominated, by way of distinction, Galvanism, or galvanic gas: that it is a volatile and instantaneous fluid, apparently propagated through the nerves, and operating upon them exclusively; and that it is the immediate cause of all muscular motion and sensation. To recapitulate the experiments by which these results have been ascertained, would require a quarto volume instead of a limited note: many of them, however, have excited so much popular attention as to be already known to most of my readers, and the rest may be easily collected from Aldini's late "Account," and Wilkinson's "Elements."

The mode by which the body, or rather the nerves, become possessed of this mysterious and truly spiritual aura, is still doubtful. That it is rather received from the surrounding atmosphere than communicated by our food, is, I believe, generally admitted; and hence, like caloric and oxygen, it commonly enters into the system in the act of respiration, and forms a constituent part of the calor ventusque vitalis referred to by our own poet. But it is uncertain, whether it thus enter in a state of pure galvanization, and is merely propagated through the blood to the brain, or whether it reach the brain in a more concrete form, and be secreted by this curious and enormous gland from the common mass of the blood that passes to it through the carotid arteries. The experiments and observations which have hitherto been made, are considerably more in favour of the latter, than of the former opinion. In consequence of this important discovery of a sensitive, or galvanic gas, the Lavoisierian theory of respiration has itself been subject to some doubts, and various new hypotheses have been started in its stead, or rather, perhaps, various amendments have been attempted; among which last I shall briefly mention, that much of the power formerly attributed to the oxygenous, has been transferred to the galvanic aura; that the cells of the lungs are conceived to be galvanic organs, and that animal heat is rather hence derived and propagated, than from the absorption of caloric.

Into these differences I cannot enter: it is sufficient for me to have pointed out, that the vital spirit of our poet seems to have been established by the experiments of modern chemistry, and that it results from a peculiar system or combination of various infinitely volatile and attenuate auras obtained from the atmosphere in the act of respiration, and existing, like the grosser fluids and organs themselves, by a continuity and catenation of supply. It should, unquestionably, appear from analogous facts and experiments, that a soul, thus constituted, must necessarily perish with the body; and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that our poet should have strenuously entertained such a belief. But, be the soul what it may, the Christian scriptures teach us the contrary: they unfold to us, that the soul is immortal from its birth; as they do also, that the body shall be im-
The Nature of Things.

Triple the substance, hence, the soul that builds;
Yet e'en the whole perception ne'er can form:

mortal from its resurrection. That the power of the
Deity is able to support its existence in a separate
and gaseous, or etherialized state, and to continue to
it the property of personality, no one has a right to
deny, till he can prove that the exercise of such a
power implies a contradiction. That a possession of
the common organs of the body is not absolutely ne-
necessary for the production and renovation of such a
spiritualized system, we may form some conjecture
from the fact, that many animals, well known to us
at present, and whose powers of irritability and sen-
sation proceed alone from the possession of oxyge-
nous and galvanic auras, are totally destitute of those
organs which, in other animals, appear absolutely re-
quise to their production, and derive them from
other means. Thus, insects in general, even those
which, like the fire-fly and glow-worm, are capable
of secreting light, have neither lungs nor heart, and
receive the vital gasses through the pores of their
skin: while the polypus, and in fact all the zoophy-
tic order, have neither heart, brain, stomach, nor
viscera of any description, but an individual cavity,
or tube alone, for the purpose of vital and sentient
organs. There are, again, many other animals both
aqueous and marine, which have no brain, although
they have a heart and lungs: while the leech is not
only destitute of brain, but of nerves of every kind:
it has a muscular organization, it is true, but the
keenest anatomist has not hitherto been able to trace
any thing like a nervous fibril. It is, perhaps, more
extraordinary still, to notice that the land tortoise,
which is possessed of a brain, is well known to exist
for six or seven months with the total abstraction of
this important organ. Fishes, moreover, absorb at-
mospheric air in general, not by the lungs, for they
have none, but by gills, which answer their pur-
pose: and several of them, as the torpedo, gymno-
tus electricus, and silurus, seccern the galvanic aura,
of which it contains the basis, not by the brain, but
by an organ, which enables them to seccern it in a
much larger quantity, and at will; an organ which
is a natural voltaic pile; and, like the voltaic pile, ena-
bles them to communicate it, in an aggregate state, to
other animals upon contact, in the mode of sensible
and often very severe shocks. In many animals, the
organs themselves change, and in some repeatedly,
during the period of their existence. In the moth,
the butterfly, and indeed almost all the lepidopterous
class, the entire insect, in the course of its very brief
duration, undergoes not less than three distinct me-
tamorphoses. From an egg it becomes a worm,
from a worm an aurclia, from an aurclia an active and
aerial fly. Its organs experience an equal variation,
and receive and separate the vital gasses in an equally
different manner; yet the animal itself continues the
same, and loses nothing of its personality. Other
equally curious instances might be enumerated, if
necessary; but these are sufficient to prove, that a
system of senso rial power, and, consequently, of per-
ception, volition, and action, resulting from a combi-
nation of vital auras, may exist without the possession
of those organs which, at first sight, appear abso-
lutely essential to such existence; and we may hence
form some idea of the etherial texture of the soul,
the "celestial body which God giveth it," to adopt
the triumphant words of the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 38,
40, when, freed from the flesh, and dropping its ac-
customed organs, it defies the power of death, and
enters upon a state of separate existence.

These observations I have thrown out, however,
rather as hints towards a future theory, than as a
theory actually formed and insisted upon; as I have,
also, the preceding resemblance between the aerial
gasses of the Epicureans and of modern chemists, as
a matter of curiosity, rather than from any idea of
derogating from the claims of later periods, or a pre-
tension that Lucretius was acquainted with some of
the most important discoveries of our own age. It
is sufficient to have proved, that Epicurus and his
followers contended for the existence of gasses most
singularly similar to the caloric, the oxygen, the gal-
vanic aura of the present day. We must not, how-
ever, indeed we cannot, suppose, that the Greeks
were unacquainted with chemistry, though they had
Nihil horum quoniam recipit mens posse creare
Sensiferos motus, quædam quei mente voluant.
Quarta quoque hiis igitur quædam natura necesse est
Adtribuatur: ea est omnino nominis expers:
Quâ neque mobilius quidquam, neque tenuius, exstat,
Nec magis est parvis et lævisbus ex elementis;
Sensiferos motus quæ didit prima per artus:
Prima cietur enim, parvis perfecta figuris;
Inde calor motus, et venti cæca potestas,
Adcipit; inde āer: inde omnia mobilisantur:
Concutitur sanguis, tum viscera persensiscunt
Book III.

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

For nought in each subsists of pow’r t’ excite
Those sensile motions whence perception flows.
Hence some fourth substance, doubtless, must we deem,
Conjoint existing; which, though void of name,
Springs from minutest atoms, lightest most
And most attenuate; deep-endow’d with power
Of fleetest speed, and hence, that first begets
Those sensile movements that the frame pervade.
This first begets, as form’d from subtilest seeds,
Next heat th’ incipient action, vapour next
Partakes, and air posterior, till the soul
Rouses throughout: then flows the blood, then feels

corded by Pliny, ii. 68, and Diogenes Laertius, in
Vit. Anaxag. ii. 10. Aristotle, in his first book of
Meteorics, supposes these stones to be carried upwards from the earth in the course of a violent tem-
pest: καὶ οὖς, says he, ὁ ἐν αὐτοῖς ποταμός ἐπεσέ κάθος ἐν
τοις αἰρέσ ὑπὸ πυρόπασος αὐρίον εὖ ἔγινεν μὲν ἡμῖν τούτῳ ἐν τι
καὶ οὖς κομβός αὐτῷ, ἡμῖν ἐγινεν αὕτῃ εἰ ταῖ
Ver. 248. Hence some fourth substance, doubtless, must
we deem,

Conjoint existing; which, though void of name,—

That this was the opinion of Epicurus, we learn
from Plutarch, who tells us expressly that he admitted
the existence of these four fluids in the composite
spirit of man. Εὔκμητος (τῷ ἔνισχε ὀλίγῳ) προκεια
τιεραμένη, ἐν τοις πυραμεν, ἐν τοις αἰραμεν, ἐν τοις
πυραμετακιν, ἐν τιεραμεν τοις ἐκτελοφυκοῦ ἐν τις ἂν
αὐθιτικο. De Plac. Phil. iv. 3. Having thus given
a statement of the Epicurean soul or spirit, and its
component parts, it may not be unentertaining to my
readers to be informed of the opinions of the Grecian
philosophers in general upon this subject, who have ac-
quired the greatest share of celebrity, and whose doc-
trines were bowed to with superior deference. Cicero
will save us the trouble of a deep investigation; for he
has enumerated the tenets of thirteen Grecian sages
on the point in question, in the first book of his
Tusculan Questions. I. Some, says he, held the
mind to be the heart itself. II. Others, not the
heart, but that it is an undescribable something
seated in the heart. III. Others esteemed it a part
of the brain. IV. Others, that it was not the brain,
but a something seated in the brain. V. Empedoc-
cles taught, that it was a collection of blood resident
in the heart. VI. Some, again, held it to be a breath,
or aura. VII. Zeno maintained, that it consisted
of particles of elementary fire. VIII. Aristoxenus,
that it resulted from a general harmony of the sys-
tem. IX. Pythagoras and Xenocrates, that it was
a number. X. Plato, that it was a compound of three
passions, occupying three distinct seats: 1. Reason,
Omnia; postremis datur ossibus, atque medullis,
Sive voluptas est, sive est contrarius ardur.
Nec temere hosp dolor usque potest penetrare, neque acre
Permanare malum, quin omnia perturbentur;
Utque adeo vitæ desit locus, atque animai
Diffugiant partes per caulas corporis omnes.
Sed plerumque fit, in summo quasi corpore, finis
Motibus: hanc ob rem vitam retinere valemus.

Nunc, ea quo pacto inter sese mixta, quibusque
Compta modis, vigeant; rationem reddere aventem
Abstrahit invitum patrii sermonis egestas:
Sed tamen, ut potero summatim adtingere, tangam.

Inter enim cursant primordia, principiorum
Motibus inter se, nihil ut secernier unum
Possit, nec spatio fieri divisa potestas;
Sed quasi multitæ vis unius corporis exstant.
Quod genus, in quo vis animantum visere volgo,
Est odor, et quidam calor, et sapor; et tamen ex hiis
Omnibus est unum perfectum corporis augmen.
Sic calor atque aër et venti caeca potestas

residing in the head; 2. Anger, in the heart; 3. an ἅταξις, a perpetual motion. XIII. Democri-
tus and Epicurus, a combination of most attenuate
atoms. —a perfect non-entity. XII. Aristotle, that it was
Each vital organ,—till, through every bone,
E'en to its central marrow, winds, in turn,
The sinuous rapture, or the sense of pain.
Yet pain, thus deep within, can never pierce
With keen corrosion, but the total man
Shakes from his basis—life no more subsists,
And the light soul through every pore flies off.
Hence less profound descends, in general ills,
Th' excited action, and man still survives.

And here, in phrase appropriate, would we prove
In what firm bonds, what various modes, the make
Of each with each commixes, but the dearth
Of terms select restrains us; yet attend
While thus our utmost efforts we essay.

Each primal substance, then, with each coheres
In every act so firm that nought conceiv'd
Can sever; nought can central space admit;
But as the powers they live of one joint frame.
As the fresh victim blends in every limb
Heat, taste, and odour, while the total builds
But one compacted mass, so here, alike,
But one same nature flows from heat and air,

Ver. 258. ——through every bone,
   E'en to its central marrow, winds, in turn,
   The sinuous rapture, or the sense of pain.] Virgil has imitated a part of this, in the following verse:

   AE. ix. 66.

—duris dolor ossibus ardet.
   ——grief the hard bones corrodes.
Mixta creant unam naturam, et mobilis illa
Vis, initum motus ab se quae dividit ollis;
Sensifer unde oritur primum per viscera motus.
Nam penitus prorsum latet hae natura, subestque;
Nec magis hac infra quidquam est in corpore nostro;
Atque anima est animae proporro totius ipsa:
Quod genus, in nostris membris et corpore toto
Mixta latens animi vis est, animaeque potestas;
Corporibus quia de parvis, paucisque, creata est.
Sic tibi nominis hae express vis, facta minutis
Corporibus, latet; atque animae quasi totius ipsa
Proporro est anima, et dominatur corpore toto.
Consimili ratione necesse est, ventus et aer
Et calor inter se vigeant conmixture per artus;
And mystic vapour, and the power unnam’d
That rears th’ incipient stimulus, and first
Darts sentient motion through the quiv’ring frame.
Far from all vision this profoundly lurks,
Through the whole system’s utmost depth diffus’d,
And lives as soul of e’en the soul itself.
As with each limb the general spirit blends,
Though ne’er discern’d, so subtle and so few
Its primal seeds—so, through the spirit, spreads
This form ineffable, this mystic power,
Soul of the soul, and lord of mortal man.
Thus, too, commixt must vapour, heat, and air,
Live through each limb united; and, though oft
Each rise o’er each triumphant, still uprear

and lord of lords.” In like manner, Pope has rendered the phrase, ἰδιός ὑπέρθεν ὁ πάνω ἥχος, “god of gods.”

Γινείται εκεῖ οὐδὲ μηδὲν ἰδιός ὑπέρθεν ὁ πάνω ἥχος

IL. viii. 16.

Let him, who tempts me, dread those dire abodes,
And know th’ Almighty is the god of gods.
Marchetti has well translated this passage of our poet:
sta nel corpo ascosa
Alma di tutta l’alma, e signoreggia
In tutto il corpo.
Polignac has imitated it; but, as I have before observed, he did not understand the physiology of the Epicurean soul:
Nam res perpetitur quae tot simul anxia motus,
Res ea quae timet atque cupit, gaudetque, dolenteque,
Quae sentit, varios et sensos comparat, una est

Ac simplex : ideo non constat partibus ullis.—
Quae pars imperio sic nata videbitur una ?
Quae pars regina tandem regina futura est ?
Quae pars mentis erit versus mens ?

ANTI-LUC. Lib. V. v. 874.

For what, thus anxious, can such movements bear,
Can hope and fear, can sorrow and rejoice,
Can feel and judge of feelings, must be one;
One in itself, nor can of parts consist.—
Thus, one by birth, what part shall rule the rest?
Parts of one lord, what part be lord itself?
What part of mind to real mind pretend?
But Lucretius is no where better illustrated than in the following passage of the well-known speech of Hamlet to his friend Horatio:

Give me that man
That is not Passion’s slave, and I will wear him
In my heart’s core; ay, in my heart of heart.
Atque aliis aliud subsit magis, emineatque;
Ut quiddam fieri videatur ab omnibus unum:
Ne calor, ac ventus seorsum, seorsumque potestas
Æris, interimant sensum, diductaque solvant.

Est etiam calor ille animo, quem sumit in irâ,
Quom fervescit; et ex oculis micat acribus ardor.
Est et frigida multa, comes Formidinis, aura;
Quâ ciet horrorem membris, et concutit artus.
Est etiam quoque pacati status æris ille,
Pectore tranquillo fit qui, voltuque, sereno.
Sed calidi plus est illis, quibus acria corda,
Iracundaque mens facile ecfervescit in irâ:
Quo genere in primis vis est violenta leonum,
Pectora quei fremitu rumpunt plerumque gementes;

Ver. 297. Heat springs superior in the mind enrag'd,
When burns the total system, and the eye, &c.] Lucretius now proceeds to the doctrine of Temperaments, or Idiosyncracies; and endeavours to prove, that the moral habit of man depends upon the relative quantity of the different component parts of atmospheric air that are separated and absorbed by different systems: that those which separate and absorb a larger proportion of calorical or elemental heat are naturally disposed to irascibility, and the more violent passions, and so of the rest. The doctrine of Temperaments was admitted into the system of all the Greek philosophers. Omnes antiqui, says Galen, in hoc videntur concordati, corporis complexionem animæ sequi virtutem. Tom. vi. De Incantatione. "They all appear to have coincided in this fact, that the virtues of the soul are derived from the peculiar constitution of the body." Galen, however, attributes the origin of this hypothesis to Aristotle and Theophrastus. But the doctrine of Temperaments, inculcated by these latter philosophers, and strenuously supported by Galen himself, differed essentially from that of Epicurus, as being derived from the greater or less relative proportion of some one of the four elements over the rest, in the formation of the animal machine:—substances which were asserted, by the Epicureans, to be no more elemental than any other substances, and to be alike produced from the common primordial corpuscles of matter united in a peculiar arrangement. The doctrine of Aristotle, nevertheless, took the lead in the Arabian schools of physic, as it did also in those of philosophy; and, with the resurrection of science in Europe, mankind were universally affirmed to be of a hot, or cold, a moist, or dry temperament, according to the preponderance in their constitutions, of fire, air, water, or earth. But Galen had long before contended, that in some constitutions, there was not merely a
BOOK III. 

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

One frame harmonious, lest the power of air, 295
Of heat, or vapour, each from each disjoin'd,
Mar all sensation, and fly off dissolv'd.

Heat springs superior in the mind enrag'd,
When burns the total system, and the eye
Darts forth its lurid lightnings: vapour chill
Th' ascendance gains when fear the frame pervades,
And ruthless Horror, shiv'ring every limb;
While the pure air, of tranquillizing power,
Smooths all the visage, and the soul serenes.
Heat sways, as urg'd already, in the form
With acrid breast, that rouses soon to ire;
Chief in the rampant lion, whose proud heart
Bursts with impetuous roaring, nor can bound

preponderance of one element, but of two combined, and this, therefore, introduced another class of temperaments, or rather doubled the original number; for we had now, sanguineous, phlegmatic, melancholic, and bilious: the first proceeding from a mixt prevalence of heat and moisture; the second, of cold and moisture; the third, of dryness and cold; the fourth, of dryness and heat. The temperaments of Galen, however, with many of his other doctrines, have been falling, during the present century, into considerable disrepute; although Boerhaave contended that such a division was not destitute of its use in medicine: "αὐτὴ ἡ τελευταία, ἠς θετεῖ, "vel sanitatis temperie's proinde difficulter ad singu- laria capita determinari potest; sed tamen proposita antiquis divisio in temperiem calidam, &c. aliquem in medicinâ usum habet." Instit. Medic. sect. 889.

As the doctrine of Aristotle and Galen, concerning Temperaments, has been sinking into oblivion, that of Epicurus has had various efforts made for its revival. One of the most strenuous attempts I have ever witnessed, though apparently without any direct reference to the passage before us, is in a volume written a few years ago, by Dr. Oakley of Northampton, and entitled, Pyrology. In this singular and fanciful dissertation, the author boldly undertakes to prove, that all the varieties of moral and physical idiosyncracies, or constitutions we meet with, result alone from the different proportions of elementary heat, or caloric, (ca- lor is the term employed by our own poet,) that insinuates itself into the frames of different persons; and that, merely upon this difference of proportion, it depends, whether a man will be possessed of indolence, activity, wit, or madness.

Ver. 305. — that rouses soon to ire;
Chief in the rampant lion, whose proud heart
Bursts with impetuous roaring,
DE RERUM NATURA.

Nec capere irarum fluctus in pectore possunt.
At ventosa magis cervorum frigida mens est,
Et gelidas citius per viscera concitat auras;
Quae tremulum faciunt membris exsistere motum.
At natura boun placido magis aëre vivit;
Nec minus, irai fax numquam subdita percit
Fumida, subfundens cæcæ calignis umbram;
Nec gelidis torpet telis perfixa vaporis:
Inter utrasque sita est, cervos sævosque leones.

Sic hominum genus est; quam vis doctrina politos
Constituat pariter quosdam, tamen illa relinquit
Naturâ quoiusque animi vestigia prima:
Nec radicitus evelli mala posse putandum est,
Quin proclivius hicc’ iras decurrat ad acreis;
Ille metu citius paullo tentetur; at ille
Tertius adcipiat quædam clementius æquo:
Inque aliis rebus multis differre necesse est
Naturas hominum varias, moresque sequaceis;
Quorum ego nunc nequeo cæcas exponere caussas,

Hence, Virgil:
Hinc exaudi gemitus iraque leonum
Vincla-recusantium, et serà sub nocte rudentum:
Here rage and roaring prove the lion’s haunt
Fearless of chains, at midnight loud and ghaunt.

Ver. 318. —though education oft
Add its bland polish,— Thus, Horace,
elegantly and accurately:
Doctrina sed vim promovet insitam,
Rectique cultus pectora roborant:
Utcumque deceere mores,
Dedecorant bene nata culpæ.

En. viii. v. 15.
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Th’ enfuriate tide that ceaseless raves within.
For ampler vapour mark the timid deer:
Quick spreads its chilling dew through every limb
In many a tremour quivering; while the ox
Proves, through his placid life, a temper form’d
From air supreme.  Him ne’er the torch of ire
Maddens abrupt in clouds and smoke involv’d,
Nor shudd’ring fear transfixes; but, remote,
’Twixt both he stands, and lifts his honest front,
The trembling deer, the lion gaunt and grim.

Thus varies man: though education trim
Add its bland polish, frequent still we trace
The first deep print of nature on the soul,
Nor aught can all—erase it: ever, whence,
This yields to sudden rage, to terror that,
While oft a third beyond all right betrays
A heart of mercy.  Thus, in various modes,
The moral temper, and symphoneous life
Must differ; thus from many a cause occult
The sage can ne’er resolve, nor human speech

But education fires the mind,
Its native strength recalls,
When Genius, loose, and unconfin’d,
To Vice a captive falls.

Ver. 319.  ——frequent still we trace
The first deep print of nature on the soul.

Thus, Akenside, and in nearly the same words:
—to with wise intent
The hand of Nature on peculiar minds
Imprints a different bias, and to each
Decrees its province in the common toil.

Pleas. of Imag. b. i.
Nec reperire figurarum tot nomina, quot sunt Principiis, unde haec oritur variantia rerum.

Illud in hiis rebus videor formare potesse;
Usque adeo naturarum vestigia linqui
Parvola, quae nequeat ratio depellere dictis;
Ut nihil impedit dignam diis degere vitam.

Haec igitur natura tenetur corpore ab omni;
Ipsoque corporis est custos, et caussa salutis:
Nam communibus inter se radicibus haerent,
Nec sine pernicie divelli posse videntur.
Quod genus, e turis glebis evellere odorem
Haud facile est, quin intereat natura quoque ejus:
Sic animi atque animae naturam corpore toto
Extrahere haud facile est, quin omnia dissoluantur;
Inplexis ita principiis ab origine primâ
Inter se fiunt consorti praedita vita:
Nec sibi quæque, sine alterius vi, posse videtur
Corporis, atque animi, seorsum constare potestas:
Sed communibus inter eos conflatur utrimque
Motibus, ad census nobis per viscera, sensus.

Præterea, corpus per se nec gignitur umquam,
Nec crescit, neque post mortem durare videtur.
Non enim, ut humor aquæ, dimittit sæpe vaporem
Qui datus est, neque ea caussa convellitur ipse,
Sed manet incolomis: non, inquam, sic animaï
Find phrase t' explain; so boundless, so complex,
The primal sources whence the variance flows!
Yet this the muse may dictate that so few
The native traces wisdom ne'er can rase,
Man still may emulate the gods in bliss.

Thus through each limb th' impressive spirit spreads,
Lord of the body, the prime fount of health,
Thus with each limb in league so close combines
Nought void of death can sever them in twain.
As the clear frankincense its fond perfume
Can ne'er desert till both together die,
So, from the flesh, the spirit and the soul
Part not till each one common fate dissolve.
So live they mutual, so, from earliest birth,
In interwin'd existence, that apart,
Nor this nor that perception can possess,
The joint result of each, by effort joint
First kindled, and through all the frame diffus'd.

This frame, moreo'er, alone can never spring,
Can never thrive, the dread attack of death
Can never conquer. For, with aim sublime,
Though the light vapour from the tepid lymph
Fly off profuse, while yet the lymph itself
Discidium possunt artus perferre relictei;
Sed penitus pereunt convolsei, conque putrescunt.
Ex ineunte ævo sic corporis atque animæ
Mutua vitaleis discunt contagia motus,
Maternis etiam membris, alvoque reposto;
Discidium ut nequeat fieri sine peste, maloque:
Ut vides, quoniam conjuncta est caussa salutis,
Conjunctam quoque naturam consistere eorum.

Quod super est, si quis corpus sentire refutat,
Atque animam credit, permixtam corpore toto,
Subscipere hunc motum, quem sensum nominitamus;
Vel manifestas res contra, verasque, repugnat.
Quid sit enim corpus sentire quis adferat umquam,
Si non ipsa palam quod res dedit, ac docuit nos?
At, dimissâ animâ, corpus caret undique sensu;
Perdit enim, quod non proprium fuit ejus in ævo;
Multaque præterea perdit, quem expellitur ævo.

Ver. 361. Hence those who hold the body never feels,
But sole the spirit through the body pour'd, &c.]
Such was the opinion of Epicharmus, who appears to have regarded the body as a mere cage, or machine, in which the soul was included. The answer is drawn from Epicurus himself, who thus asserts: οὐ μὲν ἡλπίζει τὰ σωμάτια (the power of perception) οὐ μὲν ἐπὶ τὸν λεῖτον αὕριομαστὶ ὑπεραγαίτο ποιεῖ τὸ λεῖτον αἴρισμα τῷ παρόνιον εἰσίν τινάς πάντων, μεταλληθή
ti αὐτὰ τοιοῦτον συμμετοχάς; οὐ γὰρ αὐτῷ τὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι ἐν τῇ

Cicero was of precisely the same opinion. See the first book of his Tusculan Questions: Nos enim, says he, ne nunc quidem cernimus ea quae videmus; neque enim nullus sensus est in corpore; sed, ut non solum physici docent, verum etiam medici, qui ista aperta et patefacta viderunt, vide quasi sunt ad oculos, ad aures, ad nares, a sede animi perforatae. "For neither do we discern those things which we behold, nor is there any sensation in the body: but there are, as it
THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Exists uninjur’d—the deserted limbs
Not harmless, thus, can bear the soul’s escape,
Doom’d to one ruin, and one common grave.
So, from their first crude birth, the vital acts
Of soul and body each solicit each
With fond contagion, from the earliest hour
The new-form’d fetus quickens in the womb,
No power can sever them devoid of death.—
Since life but flows, then, from the two combin’d,
Combin’d alone their natures must subsist.

Hence those who hold the body never feels,
But sole the spirit through the body pour’d,
Each vital fact oppose: for how, resolve,
Could man e’er deem the body crown’d with sense
But from such facts instructed and confirm’d?
True—body feels not when the spirit flies,
For sense from each springs mutual, and, in death,
Not sense alone is lost, but much besides.

The creed absurd opposing ev’ry hour:
For oft the eye-ball, &c.
And it is, probably, to this opinion that Butler alludes in the following verses:

He knock’d his breast as if’t had been
To rouse the spirits lodg’d within.
They, waken’d with the noise, did fly
From inward room to window-eye,
And gently opening lid, the casement,
Look’d out, but yet with some amazement.

HUDIBR. I. ii. 975.
Dicere porro oculos nullam rem cernere posse,
Sed per eos animum ut foribus spectare reclusis,
Difficile est, contra quom sensus ducat eorum;
Sensus enim trahit, atque acies detrudit ad ipsas:
Fulgida præsertim quom cernere sæpe nequimus,
Lumina luminibus quia nobis praepediuntur;
Quod foribus non fit: neque enim, quâ cernimus ipsei,
Ostia subscipiunt ullum reclusa laborem.
Præterea, si pro foribus sunt lumina nostra,
Jam magis exemptis oculis debere videtur
Cernere res animus, sublatis postibus ipsis.
Illud in hiis rebus nequaquam sumere possis,
Democriti quod sancta viri sententia ponit;
Corporis atque animi primordia singula, privis
Adposita, alternis variare, ac nectere, membra.

Ver. 371. _Looks — through them as alone_.
Through loop-holes,—] In the original, v.
361.
—per eos animum, ut foribus, spectare—
"Loopholes, portals, or windows," and perfectly
consentaneous with the following couplet from the
invocation of Richmond in Richard III.:
To thee I do commend my watchful soul
Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes.

Ver. 380. _Nor be the sacred doctrine here advance'd_ Urg'd by Democritus,—] Democritus, who,
if not the actual founder, was one of the earliest sup-
porters of the atomic system, was born at Abdera,
in Thrace, about five hundred years before the
Christian æra. From the Persians and Chaldeans
he learned astronomy and geometry: and having, by
his extensive travels and observations, acquired a vast
accumulation of general and profound science, he, at
length, determined to fix at Athens. To this city,
therefore, he resorted; and voluntarily surrendered to
the state all the property he was possessed of, during
his life-time, excepting a little garden, which he re-
served for privacy and contemplative walks. He
lived to a very advanced age, and always looked for-
ward to death without terror. Some time prior
to his decease, from a sudden and extreme debility,
his friends apprehended his end was at hand. His
sister was at this period engaged in the festivals of
Ceres, and declared that, if he then died, she should
not be able to perform her vows: in consequence of
which, the philosopher requested her to supply him
with cordials of a particular kind, which prolonged
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To deem the eyes, then, of themselves survey
Nought in existence, while th' interior mind
Looks at all nature through them as alone
Through loop-holes, is to trifle—sight itself
The creed absurd opposing every hour.
For oft the eye-ball dares not meet the day,
The flood of light o'erpow'ring: but were eyes
The mind's mere loop-holes, toil were never theirs.
Then too, each portal the reflected beam
Must more obstruct than usher;—and, remov'd,
Th' exulting mind must drink a double day.

Nor be the sacred doctrine here advanc'd
Urg'd by Democritus, that soul extends
Atom for atom, through the total frame,
With grosser body: for as less of size

his life till her religious rites, which occupied three

days, were completed; when, tired out by the slow
approach of death, and exhausted by the pains he
endured, to adopt an expression of our own poet, v.
108o of the present book,

Quick he uprose, and mid-way met his fate:
thus having recourse to suicide, a custom which,
however repugnant to the laws of nature and revel-
ation, was by no means unfrequent among the most
virtuous of the Greeks and Romans; and which,
even in the present day, is regarded as a kind of reli-
gious duty by some of the Hindu casts; with this
difference, however, that, among the latter, the fa-
tal blow is given, not by the act of the worn-out
patriarch himself, but by the more nervous and
steady hand of one of his own children.

Ver. 381.  —soul extends
Atom for atom, through the total frame,
With grosser body: [From the account here
given us of the hypothesis of Democritus, it is obvi-
ous, that St. Augustin, and even Bayle, who quotes
his words, were both mistaken in conceiving that
this philosopher regarded all primary atoms as equally
animated and intelligent. Democritus, says St. Au-
gustin, "hoc distare in naturalibus questionibus ab
Epicuro dicitur, quod iste sentit inesse concursioni
atomorum vim quandam animalem et spiritualem."
Hence, says Bayle, in support of his own opinion,
St. Augustin "ni nous permet pas de douter que De-
mcritne n'ai cru que tous les atomes etoient animés."
This might have been the opinion of Hobbs, but
could not be so of Democritus; for Lucretius tells
us, in this very passage, that while some atoms were:
Nam, quom multo sunt animai elementa minora,
Quam quibus et corpus nobis, et viscera constant;
Tum numero quoque concedunt, et rara per artus
Dissita sunt; dum taxat ut hoc promittere possis,
Quantula prima queant, nobis injecta, ciere
Corpora sensiferos motus in corpore, tanta
Intervalla tenere exordia prima animai.
Nam neque polveris interdum sensimus adhæsum
Corpore, nec membris incussam sidere cretam;
Nec nebulam noctu, neque aranei tenuia fila
Obvia, sensimus, quando obretimur euntes;
Nec supera caput ejusdem cecidisse viétam
Vestem; nec plumas avium, papposque volanteis,
Quei nimià levitate cadunt plerumque gravatim:
Nec repentis itum quoius vis quomque animantis
Sentimus; nec priva pedum vestigia quæque,
Corpore quæ in nostro culices, et cætera, ponunt.
Usque adeo prius est in nobis multa ciendum,
The soul’s primordial seeds than those that rear
Th’ organic structure, so in number too
Yield they,—less freely through the limbs diffus’d.
Hence mayst thou rather deem the soul’s pure seeds
Plac’d at such intervals as just suffice
To rouse alone when needful, through the frame,
 Percipient motions. For full oft the dust
Blown by the breeze,—or fine fugacious chalk
Lights on the limbs unheeded: so, at eve,
The dews we feel not, nor the silky threads
By dextrous spider spun from spray to spray
That twine around us,—nor the tatter’d web
From some old roof that on the hair descends,
Nor the soft down of feathers, nor the goss
 Sportive and light, that scarcely falls at last.
Nor live we conscious, frequent, of the tread
Of animalcules, or the secret path,
O’er all our frame, the busy gnat pursues.
For many a primal seed, that rears at large

Yet some there were thus gifted o’er the rest
As held Democritus, a prouder tribe,
A race of minds, with tyrant rod that rul’d
The vulgar rabble born but to submit
To serve and suffer, while themselves look’d on
Of nobler birth, in rank and power supreme.

Ver. 390. — For full oft the dust
Blown by the breeze,—or fine fugacious chalk

Lights on the limbs unheeded: thus, at eve, &c.
The whole of this passage is translated with much precision and felicity by Marchetti:
Poichè talvolta non sentiam la polve
Ne la creta aderente al nostro corpo
Ne la nebbia notturna ne le tele
De’ ragni allor che nel gir loro incontro.
Vi restiamo irretiti, &c.
DE RERUM NATURA.

Quam primordia sentiscant concussa animae,
Semina, corporibus nostris inmixta per artus;
Et quam, intervallis tantis tunditantia, possint
Concursare, coire, et dissultare vicissim.

Et magis est animus vita claustra coercens,
Et dominantior ad vitam, quam vis animae.
Nam sine mente, animoque, nequit residere per artus
Temporis exiguam putit animae;
Sed comes insequitur facultatem, et discedit in auras,
Et gelidos artus in leti frigore linquit.
At manet in vita, quoi mens, animisque, remansit,
Quam vis est, curtum cæsus, lacera undique membris:
Truncus, adempta anima, circum, membrisque remotus,
Vivit, et ætherias vitæ subscipit auras;
Si non omnimodis, ut magnæ parte, animae

Ver. 405. — through every sev'ring space
   Blending, rebounding, and reblending still.—]
Our poet alludes to the hypothesis that universally prevailed respecting the flow of the blood, prior to the discovery of its circulation, and which taught that the blood, when ejected from the heart, was first conveyed by an infinitude of radiating vessels to the different organs of the body, and then meandered through them in distinct particles, affording nutriment by their perpetual motion; a motion which was continued by the re-action of particle against particle, and occasionally by their mutual attraction; in the language of our poet, by their "blending, rebounding, and reblending still." According to the Epicurean philosophy, the supply of sensation was conducted in the same manner: and hence the corpuscles of the percipient principle were separately diffused through every organ of the body, in proportion to the quantity it required for the discharge of its peculiar function; the praecordia being the fountain whence such corpuscles issued, and consequently endowed in a pre-eminent degree with animation and intelligence.

Ver. 413. — the ice of death:] In the original:
Et gelidos artus in leti frigore linquit.

In like manner, Mason, in his English Garden:
— the frore severity of death.

So, in an ancient poem by Shirley, noticed in Percy's Reliques:
Death lays his icy hands on kings.
Each member, must be stimulated first
Ere the keen atoms of the soul, hence rous’d,
Engender sense, through every sev’ring space
Blending, rebounding, and reblending still.

But ’tis the mind guards chief the gates of life,
And than the soul with ampler vigour sways.
For, without mind or spirit, soul itself
In no one portion through the man can live
E’en for a moment: as companion fond
With speed it follows, dissipated wide,
And leaves the limbs beneath the ice of death:
While he whose mind, whose spirit safe subsists,
Still holds existence, though th’ exterior form
Throughout be mangled; e’en though much of soul,
Though every limb be lost, he still survives

Ver. 416. ——e’en though much of soul
Though every limb be lost, he still survives

Deep in the remnant trunk,—] The perfection
which the art of surgery has acquired in modern
days, renders this description a fact, by no means
unfrequent: but Lucretius particularly adverts to the
dreadful spectacles which were often exhibited by the
Roman gladiators; the whole, or nearly the whole,
of whose limbs were at times lopped off during
the obstinacy of their inhuman games, and who, nev-
evertheless, frequently survived for a considerable time.
Nardius relates, that the plundering Arabs in the
vicinity of Grand Cairo, when taken prisoners, and
sentenced to the dreadful punishment of being cut
through the middle, lived for some hours afterwards
in the superior portion of the body, by being put
upon a heap of unslaked lime, which proved a pow-
ful styptic to a great number of the divided vessels;
and that, in this deplorable state, they occasionally
even entered into conversation with the spectators.
Virgil appears to have had this passage of Lucre-
tius in view, in his description of the wounds and
losses of limb sustained by Deiphobus, although he does
not represent this hero as surviving the bloody combat:

Atque hic Priamidem, laniatum corpore toto,
Deiphobum vidit, lacerum crudeliter ora;
Ora, manuasque ambas, populataque tempora nuptis
Auribus, et truncas in hinculo vulnere nares.

AEneid, vi. 494.

Here Priam’s son, Deiphobus he found,
Whose face and limbs were one continued wound;
Dishonest, with lopp’d arms, the youth appears,
Spoil’d of his nose, and shorten’d of his ears.

Dryden.
Privatus, tamen in vita contatur, et haeret.
Ut, lacerato oculo circum, si pupula mansit
Incolomis, stat cernundi vivata potestas;
Dum modo ne totum conrumpas luminis orbem,
Et circumcaedas aciem, solamque relinquas;
Id quoque enim sine pernicie non fiet eorum:
At, si tantula pars oculi media illa peresa est,
Obcidit ex templo lumen, tenebrae sequuntur;
Incolomis quam vis alloquin splendidus orbis.
Hoc anima atque animus juncteii sunt foedere semper.

Nunc age, nativos animantibus et mortaleis
Esse animos, animasque niveis, ut noscere possis;
Conquisita diu, dulciqque reperta labeore,
Digna tua pergam disponere carmina vita.
Tu face utrumque uno subjungas nomine eorum;
Atque animam, verbi causse, quom dicere pergam,

Ver. 419. —the vital air
Still breathe,—[Vital is an epithet frequently, and most appropriately applied by Lucretius to the respirable air of the atmosphere: upon the constituent parts of which I have already remarked in the note on v. 239, of the present book. Virgil and Juvenecus have both copied the expression in the following lines:

—haud (credo) invisus caelestibus auras
Vitalis carpis. [ÆNEID, i. 391.]
Not spurn’d by heaven, thou draw’st the vital air.
Et regina noti vitales surget in auras.
HIST. EVANG. ii. 715.

And through the vital ether shall ascend
The southern princess.

Ver. 428. Now mark profound: to teach thee how
this soul,
This subtle spirit, with th’ external frame
Begot, ‘alike must perish—next the muse, &c.’
Having established the materiality of the human soul, our poet now proceeds to prove its consequent mortality, and incapability of surviving the ruins of the body: nor do I remember an individual argument adduced by the materialists of any modern school, which is not here brought forwards, and
Deep in the remnant trunk; the vital air
Still breathes, and lingers out his joyless hours.
Thus, though the visual orb be wounded, still,
If safe the central pupil, sight remains:
Where’er descends the blow, should this alone
Elude its vengeance, ruin ne’er ensues.
But, if of this the least existent point
Once suffer, though the total else escape,
Light fails immediate, and dread darkness reigns.
Such the connexion ’twixt the soul and mind.

Now mark profound: to teach thee how this soul,
This subtle spirit, with th’ external frame
Begot, alike must perish,—next the muse
Shall pour forth numbers thine illustrious birth
Well-worthy, and with sweetest labour cul’d.
This chief observe, that either phrase assumes
Here a like import; and that when we urge

marshalled in its proper post. The force and pre-
cision of the poet’s reasoning is incontrovertible; but the believer in the Christian scriptures may still contemplate it without dismay: for though all the phenomena of nature point to the disconsolate conclusion that the soul must perish with the body, the uniform tenor of revelation demonstrates the contrary, and declares the soul to be immortal from its birth.

Ver. 432. —with sweetest labour cul’d.] Thus
Virgil, to the same effect:
Cantantes licet usque, minus via hedet, enamus.
Ecl. ix. 66.

Our songs shall smoothe the tiresome road we tread.

And Horace, with more resemblance still:
Molliter austerum studio fallente laborem.
Sat. ii. 2. 12.

Smoothing the toil severe by magic skill.
Marchetti has well translated the passage:

Versi——da me cerchi
Lungo spazio di tempo e ritrovati
Con soave fatica.
Mortalem esse docens, animum quoque dicere credas; 425
Quà tenus est unum inter se, conjunctaque res est.
Principio, quoniam tenuem constare minutis
Corporibus docui, multoque minoribus esse
Principiis factam, quam liquidus humor aqua'i,
Aut nebulæ, aut fumus: nam longe mobilitate
Præstat, et a tenui causâ magis, icta, movetur;
(Quippe ubi imaginibus fumi, nebulæque, moventur)
Quod genus, in somnis sopitei, ubi cernimus alta
Exhalare vapore altaria, ferreque fumum:
Nam procul hæc dubio nobis simulacra genuntur:
Nunc igitur, quoniam, quassatis undique vasis,
Diffuère humorem, et laticem discèdere, cernis;
Et nebulæ, ac fumus, quoniam discèdit in auras;
Crede animam quoque diffundi, multoque perire
Ocyus, ac citius dissolvi in corpora prima,
Quom semel ex hominis membris, ablata, recessit.
Quippe et enim, corpus, quod vas quasi constituìt ejus,
Book III. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

The soul is mortal, this the mind includes:
Such their joint bond, their close connexion such.
First, having prov'd, then, this attenuate power
From subtlest atoms rear'd, minuter far
Than those of water, smoke, or buoyant mist,
Since much in speed it conquers, and, by force
Far less, is rous'd to action—for full oft
E'en the faint phantasms of such forms alone
The soul excites, as when, in deep repose,
The fragrant altar smokes, and vapours rich
Rise to the view—a sense, no doubt, induc'd
From the light phantasms of substantial forms
Floating around us—this already prov'd,
Judge next, since lymph when bursts th' inclosing vase,
Flows at each fracture, since fugacious smoke,
Since vapours vanish into viewless air,
Judge how the soul must dissipate amain,
How sooner perish, and its primal seeds
Speedier dissolve, when once the flesh they quit.
For since this flesh, the vase the soul that bounds,

"dem est quasi vas, aut aliquod animi receptaculum." —body and soul must part.
"Study then thy mind, for the body is but, as it were, a vessel, or receptacle of the mind." Blair, in his "Grave," a poem that, amidst much low and coarse imagery, as well as much negligence of style, is frequently invigorated with bold, and enlivened by novel conceptions, has a passage to the same effect:

Fond couple! link'd more close than wedded pair.
This wings its way to its almighty source,
The witness of its actions, now its judge:
That drops into the dark, and noisome grave,
Like a disabled pitcher of no use.
Quam cohibere nequit, conquassatum ex aliquâ re,
Ac rarefactum, detracto sanguine venis,
Aëre quâ credis posse hanc cohiberier ullo?
Corpore quâ nostro rarus magis incohibessit?

Præterea, gigni pariter cum corpore, ut unà
Crescere sentimus, pariterque senescere, mentem.
Nam, velut infirmo puerei, tenero, vagantur
Corpore, sic animi sequitur sententia tenuis:
Inde, ubi robustis adolevit viribus ãetas,

Yet how much more elegant the sweet lyrist of
Shiraz, in one of his most sublime and admirable
gazels, which thus opens:

Mysterious SOUL! this veil of clay
Hides thee from my keen survey:
When the moment shall I see
That tears the veil, and sets thee free?
Earth’s gross cage should ne’er confine
A frame so musical as thine;
Like the nightingale, that sighs
To sing amid his native skies.

Ver. 459. The mind, moreover, as every hour con-
mits,
Springs with the body, with the body grows,
And yields alike to years. The tottering babe, &c.

This passage, and the six following verses, are imi-
tated, and varied with much elegance by Pruden-
tius:

By tardy steps, and many a thrifty year,
Augments the life of mortals. Nature thus
Leads the fair round, the varying order leads.
First crawls the baby: next, with tottering foot,
And mind as tottering, moves the puny boy:
Then youth advances with o’erboiling blood
Robust and sanguine: manhood now succeeds
Firm and mature; and last, experienc’d age,
Feeble in frame, but deep with wisdom fraught.

With this, the reader may compare the progress of
life, as drawn by our own immortal Shakspeare.
THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Bounds it no more when bruised by foreign force,
Or of its life-blood robb’d,—how canst thou deem
Th’ unsolid ether, or that aught more rare
Than flesh itself, the soul can e’er confine?

The mind, moreo’er, as every hour confirms,
Springs with the body, with the body grows,
And yields alike to years. The tott’ring babe,
Weakly of limb, betrays a mind as weak:
But, as his strength matures, his vigorous soul

The description is in every one’s recollection, and is far more detailed than either that of Lucretius, or his imitator:

At first the infant
Mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms.
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel,
And shining morning-face, creeping like snail,
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover, &c.

—Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness, and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.

Polignac, in copying and enlarging upon Lucretius, has given us this last age of Shakspeare as correctly as though he had had it in his recollection at the time:

Densior it sanguis, concrecit vapidus humor,
Durescunt fibres, flaccescunt denique nervi,
Cor titubat, nee jam radiat vitalibus auris
Thesaurus capiti concreditus ; ossa rigescunt,
Fit pedibus manibusque tremor, grave pectus anhelat,
Caligant oculi, sonitus male suscipit auris,
Deficient vires, vox aegre faucibus exit,
Albescuit crines, ruganit marcida pellis.
Tunc vitio prime ceu debilitatis hebescit
Machina; fitque senex iterum puér.

Anti-Lucr. v. 944.

Slow flows the blood, more spiritless, and dense;
The fibres harden o’er the flaggy limbs;
Close palpitates the heart; the reservoir,
Rear’d in the brain its vital ether now
Ejects no longer; rigid every bone:
Tremble the feet; the hands, the bosom heaves
Heavy;—to dimness yields the flickering sight:
Strength fails, and ear and voice misgive alike,
And the hair whitens, and the pale skin shrinks;
Till the machine sinks gradual, and the man
Relapses into childhood.

The reader, I am sure, will excuse me for adding to these parallel passages of different poets, the following, that yields in merit to none of them, from the elegant and classical Mason:

Pride of the year, purpureal spring! attend,
And, in the cheek of these sweet innocents,
Behold thy beauties pictur’d. As the cloud
That weeps its moment from thy sapphire heaven,
They frown with causeless sorrow; as the beam
Gilding that cloud, with causeless mirth they

Stay, pitying Time! prolong their vernal bliss.—
Alas! ere we can note it in our song
Comes manhood’s feverish summer, chill’d full soon
By cold autumnal care, till wintry age
Sink in the frore severity of death.

Engl. Garden, ii. 448.
Consilium quoque majus, et auctior est animi vis:
Post, ubi jam validis quassatum est viribus ævi
Corpus, et obtusis ceciderunt viribus artus;
Claudicat ingenium, delirat linguaque, mensque:
Omnia deficiunt, atque uno tempore desunt.
Ergo dissolvi quoque convenit omnem animæ
Naturam, ceu fumus in altas æris auras:
Quandoquidem gigni pariter, pariterque videmus
Crescere; et, ut docui, simul, ævo fessa, fatisci.
Huc adcedit, utei videamus, corpus ut ipsum
Subscipere inmaneis morbos, durumque laborem;
Sic animum curas acreis, luctumque, metumque:
Quâ re participem leti quoque convenit esse.
Quin etiam, morbis in corporis avius errat
Sæpe animus; dementit enim, deliraque fatur:
Interdumque gravi lethargo fertur in altum
Æternumque soporem, oculis, nutuque cadenti:
Unde neque exaudit voces, nec noscere voltus

Ver. 470. Must all dissolve, as smoke in ambient air,]
Thus Virgil, describing the retrocession of Eurydice:
Dixit, et ex oculis subito, ceu fumus in auras
Commixtus tenues, fugit diversa.
GEORG. iv. 499.
And in the same manner, Homer, delineating the flight of the ghost of Patroclus from his friend Achilles, with whom he had just had an interview:
νομισάω ἔχως ἡμῖν καὶ ἅμισς
ὁμητο τετριγυμια.
IL. v. 103.
Like a thin smoke he sees the spirit fly,
And hears a feeble, lamentable cry.
In like manner, the royal Hebrew lyrist:
Let but God arise, dispersed are his enemies,
And they who hate him flee before his face:
Like a drift of smoke are they driven away.
PSALM lxviii. 1.
The original is peculiarly forcible:
 pomoc αἰωνίων πότερ
αιμίρινος μεσσάρι φυίοι;
βανναρχι τυχα τουρνα.
Ripens in reason, 'till in equal hour,
As age o'ercomes, and every organ fails,
Fail too his mental powers: then raves the tongue,
The judgment raves, the total man declines,
And, in a moment, all alike expires.
Hence the whole nature of this reasoning frame
Must all dissolve, as smoke in ambient air,
Hence since, as urg'd above, all springs alike,
All ripens gradual, and together droops.

As, too, the body feels full off the force
Of bitter pains, and many a huge disease—
So strives the mind with grief, and cruel care,
Hence prov'd partaker of one common fate.

In many an ill, moreo'er, the flesh sustains,
The judgment suffers: the distracted wretch
Now raving wild, and sinking, now profound
In stupid slumber; his fixt eye-balls stare,
His head hangs heavy, sound no more is heard,

Marchetti has well translated this passage:

Sommerso in alto e grave sonno eterno
Cade il volto su'l petto; e fisi in terra
Stan gli occhj, onde' egli o le parole udire
O conoscere' i volti omai non puote
Di chi standogli' intorno e procurando
Di richiamarlo in vita, aflitto e mesto
Bagna d'amare Iagrime le gote.

To the same effect, a poet of our own country:

Ver. 480. ——his fixt eye-balls stare,
His head hangs heavy, sound no more is heard,]

A sleep dull as the last——
On all the magazines of life did seize,
No more the blood its circling course did run;
But, in the veins, like icicles it hung.
No more the heart, now void of quick'ning heat,
The tuneful march of vital motion beat;
Stiffness did into all the sinews climb,
And a short death crept cold through every limb.

Ver. 481. ——sound no more is heard,
Nor the fond visage notiz'd e'en of those,—] The
Illorum potis est, ad vitam quei revocantes
Circumstant, lacrumis orantes ora, genasque. 470
Qua re animum quoque dissolvi fateare, necesse est;
Quandoquidem penetrant in eum contagia morbi.
Nam, dolor ac morbus, leti fabricator uterque est:
Multorum exitio perdoectei quod sumus ante.

Denique, cor hominum quam vini vis penetravit 475
Acris, et in venas discessit diditus ardor;
Consequitur gravitas membrorum, præpediuntur
Crura vacillanti, tardescit lingua, madet mens,
Nant oculei; clamor, singultus, jurgia, gliscunt;
Et jam cætera de genere hæc, quæquomque sequuntur: 480
Quar ea sunt, nisi quod vehemens violentia viri
Conturbare animam consuevit corpore in ipso?
At, quæquomque queunt conturbari, inque pediri,
Nor the fond visage notic'd e'en of those,
Who yet, yet calling back to life, bedew
With many a tear his mouth and cheeks suffus'd.
Hence must the mind too, with the body cease,
Since by diseases thus alike transfixed:
For grief, for sickness, equal, the dread work
Of death accomplish, as each hour confirms.

Why, too, when once the pungent power of wine
Flies through the system, and the blood inflames,
Why torpid grows each organ? reels each limb?
Faulters the tongue? rebels the madd'ning mind?
Why swim the eyes? and hiccough, noise and strife,
And each consociate ill their force combine?
Why but that deep the frantic bowl disturbs,
Ev'n in the body, the secluded mind?
But what can once be thus disturb'd—what once

from nature, and from his author. The drunken stupor alluded to in the first verse, is well delineated by Ovid, in the following:

Et stupeant multo corda sepulta mero.

Dead grows the bosom buried deep in wine.

The phrase "swimming eyes" is immediately imported into our own language from the Latin, and happily describes that undulatory motion which every one is sensible of in the commencement of fainting, or wherever there is an abrupt cessation, or even irregular influx of nervous power from the brain throughout the system. Thus Virgil, in painting the death of Eurydice:

Fata vocant, conditque natantia lumina somnus.

Georg. iv. 496.

Fate calls, and sleep o'erpowers her swimming eyes.

In like manner, Homer:

To θ' ελπις ἐφης, κατα θ' αφελμανε κιχταινε χλος.

Il. E. 696.

The fainting soul stood ready wing'd for flight,
And o'er his eye-balls swam the shades of night.
Thus Pope, in the dying Christian's hymn to his soul:

What is this absorbs me quite?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be Death?
Significant, paullo si durior insinuarit
Caussa, fore ut pereant, ævo privata futuro.
Quin etiam, subito, vi morbi sæpe coactus,
Ante oculos aliquis nostros, ut fulminis ictu,
Concidit, et spumas agit; ingemit, et tremit artus;
Desipit, extentat nervos, torquetur, anhelat
Inconstantier, et in jactando membra fatigat.
Nimirum, quà vis morbi, distraeta per artus,
Turba agens animam, spumantis in æquore salso
Ventorum validis fervescunt viribus undæ.
Exprimitur porro gemitus, quia membra dolore
Adficiuntur; et omnino quod semina vocis
Eliiuntur, et ore foras glomerata feruntur,
Quà quasi consuerunt, et sunt munita viaï.
Desipientia fit, quà vis animi, atque animai,
Conturbatur, et, ut docui, divisa, seorsum
Disjectatur, eodem illo distracta veneno.
Inde, ubi jam morbi reflexit caussa, reditque
In latebras acer conrupti corporis humor;
Tum, quasi vacillans, primum consurgit, et omnis

Ver. 515. —— the morbid cause declines,
And the fermenting humours from the heart
Flow back——] Till the late introduction
into medicæa of the theories of vascular spasm, athenia and asthenia, and spirit of animation, the two grand hypotheses into which the medical world was divided, were the solid and humoral pathologies: the former referring all diseases to some defect in the solids, or vascular parts of the machine, whence the fluids become only secondarily affected; and the latter regarding a vitiation of the fluids themselves as the original source of disorder; and conversely contending, that whatever injury the vascular part of the system might sustain, it was a consequential or proegumenal, and not a procatartic affection.
The act of secretion, under the latter system, was
Impeded—should the hostile power augment,
Must perish, doubtless, void of future days.

Oft, too, some wretch, before our startled sight,
Struck, as with lightning, by some keen disease,
Drops sudden:—by the dread attack o’erpower’d,
He foams, he groans, he trembles, and he faints;
Now rigid, now convuls’d, his labouring lungs
Heave quick, and quivers each exhausted limb.
Spread through the frame, so deep the dire disease
Perturbs his spirit; as the briny main
Foams through each wave beneath the tempest’s ire.
He groans since every member smarts with pain,
And from his inmost breast, with wontless toil,
Confus’d, and harsh, articulation springs.
He raves, since soul and spirit are alike
Disturb’d throughout, and sever’d each from each,
As urg’d above, distracted by the bane.
But when, at length, the morbid cause declines,
And the fermenting humours from the heart
Flow back—with stagg’ring foot the man first treads,
Paullatim redit in sensus, animamque receptat.

Hæc igitur tantis ubi morbis corpore in ipso
Jactentur, miserisque modis, distracta, laborent;
Quur eadem credis, sine corpore, in ære aperto,
Cum validis ventis ætatem degere posse?

Et, quoniam mentem sanari, corpus ut ægrum,
Cernimus, et flecti, medicinâ posse videmus;
Id quoque præsagit mortalem vivere mentem.
Addere enim parteis, aut ordine trajicere, æquum est,
Aut aliquid prorsum de summâ detrahere hilum,
Conmutare animum quiquomque adoritur, et inifit;
Aut aliam quam vis naturam flectere quærît.
At neque transferri sibi parteis, nec tribui, volt,
Inmortale quod est, quidquam; neque defluere hilum.
Nam, quodquomque suis mutatum finibus exit,
Continuo hoc mors est illius, quod fuit ante.

Ergo animus, sive ægrescit, mortalia signa
Mittit, ut edocui; seu flectitur a medicinâ:
Usque adeo falsæ rationis vera videtur
Res obcurrere, et ecfugium præcludere eunti;

---

the eruptive or exanthematous class, as small-pox, cow-pox, cancer, and siphylis, notwithstanding all the systems that have since been started, of different, and even contradictory tendencies, there are few which will be found to account for them more satisfactorily than the theory of fermentation.

Ver. 532. For what once changes, by the change alone
Subverts immediate its anterior life.] This is a position of which Lucretius makes a liberal and a happy use. It occurs twice in the first book, to wit, at verses 738, and 875, and once in book the
Led gradual on to intellect and strength.

Since, then, the soul such various ills endures,
E'en in this solid frame,—such various modes
Feels of severe distraction—canst thou deem,
In the wide air unshelter'd and forlorn,
Mid boistrous winds, it ever could exist?

And as the mind, like body, when diseas'd
Heals oft, and owns the genial pow'r of drugs,
Hence springs a proof that mind is mortal too.
For he the secret soul, or aught besides,
Who fain would change, must lessen or augment
Its primal atoms, or combine anew:
But things immortal ne'er can be transpos'd,
Ne'er take addition, or encounter loss.
For what once changes, by the change alone
Subverts immediate its anterior life.

Sick'ning, or heal'd, then, by balsamic herbs,
The seeds of death alike the soul betrays.
So triumph facts o'er all the sophist's art

second, at verse 761. It is a principle whose truth
can never be disputed; and was hence advanced by
our poet, with as much success against Plato and
Pythagoras, who contended for the animation of the
world at large, as it has been, in later times, by
Bayle, and other philosophers, to disprove the si-
milar doctrines of Spinoza and Hobbs. The perpe-
tual decomposition, and recombination of all things
through the whole universe of matter, are sufficient
testimonials against its immutability, immortality,
or eternal intelligence.
Ancipitique refutatu convincere falsum.

Denique, sæpe hominem paulatim cernimus ire,
Et membratim vitalem deperdere sensum.
In pedibus primum digitos livescere, et ungueis;
Inde pedes, et crura, mori: post inde per artus
Ire alios tractim gelidi vestigia leti.
Scinditur atque animo haec quoniam natura, nec uno
Tempore sincera existit, mortalis habenda est.
Quod, si forte putas ipsam se posse per artus
Introrsum trahere, et parteis conducere in unum,
Atque ideo cunctis sensum deducere membris;
At locus ille tamen, quo copia tanta animāī
Cogitur, in sensu debet majore videri:
Qui quoniam nusquam est, nimirum, ut diximus ante,
Dilaniata, foras dispargitur. Interit ergo.
Quin etiam, si jam lubeat concedere falsum,
Et dare, posse animam glomerari in corpore eorum,
Lumina quei linquant moribundei particulatim;
Mortalem tamen esse animam fateare, necesse est;
Nec refert, utrum pereat dispersa per auras,
An, contracta suis e partibus, obbrutescat;
Quando hominem totum magis, ac magis, undique sensus
Deficit; et vitæ minus, et minus, undique restat.
Et, quoniam mens est hominis pars una locoque
Fixa manet certo; velut aures atque oculei sunt,
Precluding answer, doubly silenc’d here.

Oft man, moreo’er, by slow degrees, we mark,
Limb after limb consume: first the pale toes,
The nails grow livid; in succession next
The feet, and legs; till gradual, o’er the frame,
Creeps the chill track of death.—Since, then, the soul
Thus suffers, nor one moment can resist
Sound, and entire, its make must mortal prove.
But shouldst thou deem, when thus assail’d, it shrinks
Back through each member, to one point condens’d—
Then must that point, tow’rds which the soul retreats,
Throng with increas’d sensation: but as this
Time ne’er evinces, it must still disperse
Like tatter’d shreds by every wind destroy’d.

Yet grant the converse, and the soul allow
In those concentrates, gradual who decline;—
Say what imports it whether wide it waste
From limb to limb, or perish from one point?
Still more and more sensation fails, and life
Less and still less its dwindled power sustains.

Since, too, the mind forms part of man, and dwells
In one fixt spot, as dwells the eye or ear,
Atque alie sensus, quei vitam quomque gubernant:
Et, velutei manus, atque oculus, naresve, seorsum,
Secreta ab nobis, nequeunt sentire, neque esse:
Secta etenim in parvo liquuntur tempore tabi:
Sic animus per se non quit sine corpore, et ipso
Esse homine, illius quasi quod vas esse videtur,
Sive aliud quid vis potius connexius ei
Fingere; quandoquidem connexu corpus adhæret.

Denique, corporis, atque animi, vivata potestas,
Inter se conjuncta, valent, vitâque fruuntur:
Nec sine corpore enim vitaleis edere motus
Sola potest animi per se natura; nec autem,
Cassum animâ, corpus durare, et sensibus uti.
Scilicet, avolsus radicibus ut nequit ullam
Dispicere ipse oculus rem seorsum corpore toto;
Sic anima, atque animus, per se nihil posse videtur:
Nimirum, quia per venas et viscera mixtim,
Per nervos atque ossa, tenentur corpore ab omni:
Nec magnis intervallis primordia possunt
Libera dissultare; ideo conclusa moventur
Or aught besides of sense that governs life;
And since, moreo’er, the sight, the hand, the nose,
Once sever’d from us feel not, nor exist,
Dissolving instant—so the mind alike
Lives not alone without th’ exterior frame,
Which like a vessel holds it, or aught else,
If aught there be, of bond compacter still.
So to the body cleaves th’ adhesive mind.

The vital pow’r, moreo’er, of each subsists
Alone conjoint, for mutual is their life.
Nor without body can the soul fulfil
Its destin’d functions, nor the body live
Of soul devoid, participant of sense.
As the bare eye, when rooted from its orb,
Sees nought around it, spirit thus and soul
Nought can accomplish singly;—hence diffus’d
Through every vessel, organ, bone, and nerve,
Of all that breathes. Nor part their primal seeds
With long interstice, fatal to the pow’r
Of resiliation; rather so confin’d,

Ver. 576. ———Nor part their primal seeds
     With long interstice, fatal to the pow’r
     Of resiliation;—] To the doctrine main-
     tained, relative to the flow of the blood through the

system, prior to the discovery of its circulation, I
have already briefly adverted in the note on ver.
406, of the present book. At the error of the
Greek physicians and philosophers, upon this subject,
we cannot be much surprised, when we regard the im-
pediments that they had to encounter, in the study and
pursuit of anatomy, upon which the whole depended.
Alexander, indeed, at Alexandria, at his own ex-
Sensiferos motus; quos, extra corpus, in auras
Aëris, haud possunt post mortem, ejecta, movere:
Propterea, quia non simili ratione tenentur.
Corpus enim atque animam serit aër, si cohibere
Sese anima, atque in eos poterit concludere motus,
Quos ante in nervis, et in ipso corpore, agebat.
Quâ re, etiam atque etiam, resoluto corporis omni
Tegmine, et ejectis extra vitalibus auris,
Dissolvi sensus animi fateare, necesse est,
Atque animam; quoniam conjuncta est caussa duobus.

Denique, quom corpus nequeat perferre animâ
Discidium, quin in tetro tabescat odore;
Quid dubitas, quin, ex imo penitusque coorta,
Emanarit, utei fumus, diffusa animæ vis?
Atque ideo tantâ mutatum putre ruinâ
Conciderit corpus penitus, quia mota loco sunt
Fundamenta; foras animâ emanante per artus,
Perque viarum omnis flexus, in corpore qui sunt,
Atque foramina? multimodis ut noscere possis
Dispartitam animæ naturam exisse per artus;

pence, accommodated Aristotle with dead subjects
for private experiments, and enforced the exhibition
of human skeletons in the public schools of the same city;
yet dissection was still generally conducted by stealth:
the simple touch of a dead body among the Greeks,
as among all other ancient nations, was regarded as a
defilement, and their cemeteries were always on the
outside of their city walls. The boldest artists and
experimentalists, and almost the only ones entitled
to notice at the period I am now speaking of, were
Hermophilus and Erasistratus, physicians who, upon
the death of Alexander, were warmly patronised by
Seleucus Nicanor. These iron-nerved anatomists,
indeed, were not contented with the contemplation of
the dry and imperfect study of a corpse: and hence,
with a curiosity that has been condemned as barba-
As sensile motions fits them best t' excite:
Such as, at death, when mixt with vacant air,
'Twere vain t' expect, of all restraint devoid.
For air itself must body first become
Compact and vital, ere the secret soul
Its pores can tenant, or those motions urge,
Urg'd, during life, through all the sentient frame.
Hence doubly flows it why the soul and mind,
One in themselves, of body when disrob'd,
And scatter'd boundless, instant should dissolve.
Since, too, the body the departed soul
Endures not, but with putrid smell decays,
Canst thou, then, doubt the soul, when thus effus'd,
Like smoke flies total, every seed disperst?
And that th' external frame thus sinks defil'd
In putrid death, since from their wonted posts
Urg'd off, through every passage, every pore,
Press the percipient seeds, from every limb,
From every membrane o'er the system spread?
And seest thou not, from many a fact hence prov'd,

rous by many physicians, from their own æra to the
days of Hoffman, and which acquired them the name
of butchers from Tertullian, they dissected the living
bodies of a variety of malefactors, presented to them
for this purpose by Seleucus himself; imagining
that the changes introduced by the very act of dying
were so numerous and considerable, as to render it
impossible to obtain a complete knowledge of the
human structure by the most accurate dissections af-
ter death. The number thus dissected by Erasistra-
tus, I know not; but Tertullian enumerates not less
than six hundred, who perished in the same manner,
piece-meal, beneath the bloody knife of his friend
Hermophilus. De An. c. x.
Et prius esse sibi distractam corpore in ipso,
Quam, prolabsa foras, enaret in aëris auras?

Quin etiam, fineis dum vitae vortitur intra,
Sæpe aliquâ tamen e caussâ labefacta videtur
Ire anima, ac toto membratim corpore solvi;
Et quasi supremo languescere tempore voltus,
Molliaque exsangui cadere omnia corpore membra.

Quod genus est, animo male factum quam perhibetur,
Aut animam liquisse; ubi jam trepidatur, et omnes
Extremum cupiunt vitæ reprehendere vinclum.

Conquassatur enim tum mens, animæque potestas
Omnis; et hæc ipso cum corpore conlabefiunt:
Ut gravior paullo possit dissolvere caussa.

Quid dubitas tandem, quin, extra prodita corpus,
Inbecilla, foras, in aperto, tegmine dempto,
Non modo non omnem possit durare per ævom,
Sed minumum quod vis nequeat consistere tempus?

Nec sibi enim quisquam moriens sentire videtur
Ire foras animam incolomem de corpore toto;
Nec prius ad jugulum, et superas subcedere fauces;
Verum deficere in certâ regiæ locatam,
Ut sensus alios in parti quemque suâ scit

Dissolvi: quod, si inmortalis nostra foret mens,
BOOK III.  THE NATURE OF THINGS.

That through the total body lives the soul, 
And e’en in body severs, seed from seed, 
Ere thence expell’d, and scatter’d into air?

E’en during life the fractur’d soul seems oft
From force abrupt half-hurried from her home;
Each vital function failing, and the face,
As though in death, all pallid, chang’d, and wan.
Such the deep swoon evinces, when within
Sinks the faint spirit, and each prostrate power
Pants for its final doom. Such then the force
That mind and body oft alike unnerves
That, but the least augmented, death ensues.

Can, then, the soul, thus impotent of frame,
When once disrob’d, abandon’d, and expos’d,
Through the wide air, to every boist’rous breeze,
Can it then triumph, dost thou firmly deem,
Not o’er all time, but e’en one moment live?

Nor do the dying e’er the soul perceive
Rush out entire, when exil’d from the heart,
The bronchial tube first filling, then the throat,
And mouth successive; but at once it fails
In its own region, as each sense alike
Fails in its destin’d theatre of power.
Non tam se moriens dissolvi conquereretur;
Sed magis ire foras, vestemque relinquere, ut anguis
[Gauderet, prælonga senex aut cornua cervus.]

Denique, quor animi numquam mens, consiliumque,
Gignitur in capite, aut pedibus, manibusve; sed unis
Sedibus, ac certis regionibus, omnibus hæret;

Ver. 624. Charm'd to throw off his vesture, like the
snake.] This phenomenon of the exfoliation
of the squammæ, or external cuticle of the snake, on
the return of Spring, is noticed by most natural his-
torians. Virgil alludes to it in the following lines:
Qualis ubi in lucem coluber, mala gramina pastus,
Frigida sub terrâ tumidum quem bruma tegebat;
Nunc positis novus exuviis, nitidusque juventâ,
Lubrica convolvit sublato pectore terga
Arduus ad solem, et linguæ micat ore trisulcis.

ÆNEID ii. 471.

So shines, renew'd in youth, the crested snake,
Who slept the winter in a thorny brake;
And casting off his slough, when spring returns,
Now looks aloft, and with new glory burns.
Restor'd with poisonous herba, his ardent sides
Reflect the sun, and rais'd on spires he rides:
High o'er the grass he hissing rolls along,
And brandishes, by fits, his fork-tongue.

DRYDEN.

With this the reader may compare the description
of Avitus, which, if I be not much mistaken, is pos-
sessed of equal beauty:
Qualis vere novo, primis cum mensibus æstas
Præmittit letos post frigora pigra tepores,
Evadens veterem reparatis motibus annum,
Et sicum nitido discingens corpore tegmen,
Procedit coluber; terrarumque abdita linguæ
Præfert terribilis metuendum formæ decorum—

As when, in spring, returning heat prevails,
And leads o'er brumal snows, the tepid gales,
Fostering the face of Nature;—from the brake
When, with new vigour, bursts the polish'd
snake,
Clear'd of his spoils, and eager to display
His fearful beauties in the eye of day—

Pliny seems to have conceived, that this exfolia-
tion of the exuviae, or squammose tunic of the snake
did not occur annually, but only upon the advance
of age; and that the serpent hereby, as though dis-
encumbered of a burden, acquired, even then, a con-
siderable re-possession of alacrity and vigour. Hist.
Nat. cap. viii. But later naturalists have noticed the
same fact as regularly recurring every spring, and in
some species of the coluber or viper, every spring
and autumn; and so complete is the cuticle exfoli-
ated, that even the external tunic of the eye is thrown
off at the same time. Snakes, however, are not the
only animals that suffer an annual loss and renovation
of some part of their organic structure. Our poet
alludes, in the adjoining verse, to the yearly exfoli-
ation and renewal of the antlers of the stag; and it
is now well known, that the lobster, and indeed, al-
most all the cancer genus, as well as the common
spider, and many other insects of the Linnean class,
Aptera, part with their external crustaceous coat-
ing every year, generally between the months of May
and August; and are capable of regenerating a limb
or claw with great ease, upon losing it by acci-
dent.
Book III. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Were, too, its date immortal, man no more,
At his last hour, would mourn the sev'ring blow:
Charm'd to throw off his vesture, like the snake,
Or, like the stag his antlers, and be free.

Why, too, are wisdom, and the mind restrain'd
To one sole organ, while the feet, the hands,
These never gender? why but that each spot

This crustaceous coating is decided by Mr. Hatchett, to consist of a strong cartilage, hardened by a mixture of carbonat, and phosphat of lime, in consequence of which, it occupies a middle place between shell and bone, although principally inclining to the nature of shell; the distinguishing chemical character of which is carbonat of lime; while that of bone, as well as of the enamel of the teeth, is phosphat of lime. Philos. Trans. for 1800. See note on Book VI. 1101; as also, note on v. 668 of the present book.

Ver. 625. Or, like the stag his antlers,—] Pliny confirms this phenomenon of our poet, by observing, that “the males have horns, and are the only animals that lose them every year, at a certain period of the spring.” Hist. Nat. cap. xxxii. And our own poet Waller alludes to the same fact, in the following verses:

So we some antique hero's strength
Learn by his lance's weight, and length;
As these vast beams express the beast
Whose shady brows alive they dress'd.
O fertile head! which, ev'ry year,
Could such a crop of wonders bear!
Which, might it never have been cast,
Each year's growth added to the last,
These lofty branches had supplied
The earth's bold sons' prodigious pride:
Heav'n with these engines had been scal'd
When mountains heap'd on mountains fail'd.

Ver. 626. Why, too, are wisdom, and the mind restrain'd
To one sole organ, while the feet, the hands
These never gender?—] The commentator upon Creech's translation, affirms the argument hence deduced, to be both false and irrelevant. The soul, contends Lucretius, is produced in one individual organ, and is never found in any other situation. "But birds," says the commentator, "are hatched in a nest, and yet live out of the nest; and a nut is produced upon a tree, and a grain of corn in the ear, and yet they are kept in granaries." Yet what is there in all this to falsify our poet's position? Is it hence demonstrated, that "the mind is generated in the hands or the feet," or that, in opposition to what our poet urges in the succeeding verse, "each spot does not exist for some fixt purpose?" The whole that the commentator has advanced, can only be advanced by way of analogy,—and the most distant analogy too; for the resemblance, if minutely entered into, would fail in a variety of important particulars. "But the poet," adjoins he, "contradicts his own doctrine:" and, for the proof of this contradiction, we are referred to Book II. v. 1058 of this translation, where he asserts,

Thus all things rise, thus all again return,
Earth takes what earth bestow'd, and, back to heav'n,
Remount th' ethereal dews from heav'n that fell.

By some inexplicable error, this annotator appears to conceive, that Lucretius, in the last verse, refers to the mind or spirit, and that this would be
Si non certa loca ad nascundum reddita quoique
Sunt, et ubei quidquid possit durare creatum;
Atque ita, multimodiis, pro totis artibus, esse;
Membrorum ut nusquam existat praeposterus ordo?
Usque adeo sequitur res rem, neque flamma creari
Fluminibus solita est, neque in igni gignier algor.

Præterea, si inmortalis natura anima est,
Et sentire poteat, secreta a corpore nostro;
Quinque, ut opinor, eam faciundum est sensibus auctam:
Nec ratione aliæ nosmet proponere nobis
Possimus infernas animas Acherunte vagare.
Pictores itaque, et scriptorum secla priora,
Sic animas introduxerunt sensibus auctas.

a more proper term than deus or auras. I will quote,
then, the original to prove there is nothing to justify
such an idea:

Cedit item retro de terrâ, quod fuit ante,
In terras; et quod missum est ex ætheris oris,
Id rursum caeli relatum templo receptant.

He first mistakes the meaning of Lucretius by
pretending, that he asserts souls or spirits, instead
of dews or gasses, to be transmitted from heaven,
and afterwards returned there; and having com-
mited this blunder, he next avers that our poet
contradicts himself upon this doctrine, by contend-
ing, that the soul is created in the bosom, and
cannot exist elsewhere. But he brings Lactantius to
corroborate this supposed contradiction, who, it
must be confessed, has been unaccountably seduced
into the same mistake, and by whose authority, it
is probable, that the commentator was himself de-
ceived. Veritate, says Lactantius, victus est, et
imprudenti ratio vera surrepit. Lact. l. vii. c. xii.
de Div. Præm. "Lucretius is convicted by the
truth itself, which has escaped from him unawares."
But Bayle has justly observed upon the very verses
in question, that, ceux qui pretendent qu'il n'a pu
parler de la sorte sans se contredire, n'avoient gueres
compris ses sentimens. Art. Lucrece: "those who
assert that he could not speak in this manner with-
out contradicting himself, have never understood his
opinions."

Lactantius, however, has not been followed by
the commentator upon Creech alone, but by a vari-
cy of other men of letters who have chosen, as im-
plicitly, to depend upon his interpretation. Thus,
in a letter from a celebrated Dominican friar to the
president of the company of Jesuits, written ex-
pressly on the subject of Chinese Idolatry, we find the
following observation: "C'est ne seroit pas une chose
surprenante que les Chinois se contredissent eux-
memes, puisque Lucreze, l'un des plus sçavans phi-
losophes de la secte des Épicuriens, qui osa combattre
BOOK III.  

THE NATURE OF THINGS.

 Exists for some fixt function,—nor can e'er
Pervert its destin'd view? while, through the whole,
Nice order reigns by nought preposterous marr'd.
So flows the tide of things, nor water fire,
Through time, creates, nor fire the sparry frost.

Were, too, the soul immortal, and possest
Of sentient powers when sever'd from the flesh,
Then with new organs must it, or we err,
Be instant re-endow'd; for thus alone
Th' infernal shades can tread the shores of hell.
Thus painters feign them, and the bards renown'd
Of ancient times—thoughtless that eyes, and nose,

ouvertement la doctrine de l'immortalité de l'âme,
confessa, neanmoins, que si elle se dissipait après la
morte, c'est, que ce qu'elle avait de grossier, se
perdait dans la terre, et, que ce qu'elle avait de plus
subtil et de celeste, remontait dans la troisième re-
gion de l'air ou dans le ciel. Le sentiment des sau-
vans de la Chine sur ce point, ressemble tout-à-fait à
celui de Lucrece : ils s’expliquent à peu pres comme
lui.

Ver. 632. So flows the tide of things, nor water
fire.] It is on this, and several following
verses, that Polignac observes with exultation :
Ergo particular panis, quem forte voratum,
Digestumque suo suscepit sanguis in alveo,
Si pedibus cessere tuis, ratione carebunt ;
Pectoris et mediam regionem si tetigere,
Quis nostrum placuit tibi mentis templa locari,
Tunc disceptabant de mundo et origine rerum,
Ac de sorte sua: sint corpora dedita leto,
Necne; quid ad vitam possit conferre beatam :

Jus populis dicent, ornabunt legibus orbem :
Invidia quam natura negat, positura dabit vim.
Res peregre adveniens id, quo caret ipsa, pro-
pinquae
Tradet; et accipiet quod non habet ille, vicissim
Pro pudor! haec tandem est doctae sapientia sectae.
ANTI-LUCR. v. 544.

Ver. 634. Were, too, the soul immortal, and pos-
sest, &c. This passage is consonant with
the following of equal beauty in Catullus :
Sed quid ego ignaris nequidquam conqueror auris
Externata malo? quae, nullis sensibus auctae,
Nec missas audire queunt, nec reddere voce.

Ver. 639. Thus painters feign them, and the bards
renown'd
Of ancient times——] And what was thus the
opinion and usage of bards and painters of ancient
At neque seorsum oculi, neque nare, nec manus ipsa
Esse potest animâ, neque seorsum lingua; neque aures
Auditum per se possunt sentire, neque esse.
Et, quoniam toto sentimus corpore inesse
Vitalem sensum, et totum esse animale videmus;
Si subito medium celeri præciderit ictu
Vis aliqua, ut seorsum partem secernat utramque,
Dispartita procul dubio quoque vis animaî,
Et discissa simul cum corpore, disicietur.
At, quod scinditur, et parteis discidit in uellas,
Scilicet æternam sibi naturam abnuit esse.
Falciferous memorant currus abscedere membra
Sæpe ita de subito, permixta cæde calenteis,

---

times, is the same with many of those of the present day. So, Milton, respecting the angelic essences:

—and food alike those pure
Intelligentia substances require
As doth your rational; and both contain
Within them every lower faculty
Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,
Tasting, concoct, digest, assimilate,
And incorporeal to corporeal turn.

It was on this account, Mr. Locke conceived, as I have already observed in the note on ver. 100 of the present book, that even angels, as well as bea-
tified spirits, were compounded of matter: and Des Cartes, the most strict and rational immaterialist of his age, supposed the disembodied spirit to be sur-
rounded with a light attenuate vehicle. So, Ges-
ers, in his representation of the ascension of Abel, after the fratricide of Cain: Der Todesangef rief
itz Abels seele aus ihren blutenden hülle. Him-
mlisch lächelnd trat sie hervor, die geistigten theile des
cörpers flossen ihr nach; und mit balsamischen düften
vermischt, &c. "The angel of death called forth the soul of Abel from its veil of blood. Smiling, it advanced. The more spiritual parts of the body flew with it, and, mixing with the balsamic exhalations, which the gentle winds wafted from the flow-
ers which blossomed within the circle of glory that streamed around the angel, environed the rising spi-
rit, and wove for it an ethereal body." In a man-
er, perfectly similar, Klopstock delineates the appear-
ance of the angel Gabriel himself, when descend-
ing to the altar of the earth:

—-ein schwebender leib, aus heitse gebildet,
Hündte den seligen geist in eine verklärtere woh-
nung.

A fluent frame of clear, transparent light.
Veil'd the saint spirit in his radiant flight.

But all such kind of necessary material investiture proves the soul itself to be material, or, at least, in-
competent to subsist without matter, and, of course, as Lucretius justly observes, to be of the same sub-
And hands, and mouth, to the divided soul
Can ne’er pertain, nor e’en the sense of sound.

And since the total system soul pervades,
And vital action—when some blow severe
Midway divides it, part from part, abrupt,
Then must the soul alike be cleft in twain,
Driv’n with the mangled body. But what thus
Admits partition, and to foreign force
Yields e’en but once, immortal ne’er can be.

Oft, arm’d with scythes, the warlike car, we read,
Hot with repeated slaughters, so abrupt
Ut tremere in terrâ videatur ab artubus id quod
Decidit abscisum; quom mens tamen, atque hominis vis, 645
Mobilitate mali non quit sentire dolorem: 650
Et, simul in pugnae studio qui dedita mens est,
Corpore cum reliquo pugnam, caedeisque, petessit:
Nec tenet, amissam lævam cum tegmine sepe
Inter equos abstraxe rotas, falcesque rapaceis:
Nec cecidisse alius dextram, quom scandit, et instat:
Inde alius conatur adempto surgere crure,
Quom digitos agitat propter moribundus humi pes:

enemies, but more particularly the Canaanites, the
same sort of warlike car was continually made use of:
and Cowley has given us no inaccurate description of
it in his Davideis:

Here, with worse noise, three thousand chariots
pass,
With plates of iron bound, or louder brass.
About it axes, forks, and scythes and spears,
Whole magazines of death, each chariot bears.
Where it breaks in, there a whole troop it mows,
And with leapt-panting limbs the field bestrews.
Alike the valiant, and the coward die:
Nor that can e'er resist, nor this can fly. B. iv.

It is said, however, that Cowley is, in this passage,
guilty of an anachronism; and the paragraph I have
now quoted from Xenophon, is appealed to as a proof
that Cyrus was the inventor of falcated chariots: yet
it is difficult to understand in any other sense the
"flaming" or "glittering war-chariots," so often made mention of, and so confidently relied
upon in the books of Joshua and Judges; and which,
although commonly translated by the doubtful phrase,
"chariots of iron," are rendered by the vulgar
"currus falcatus," "chariots falcated," or "armed with
scythes." The war-chariots employed in the time of
Nahum, at which period it is certain that the Jews
were acquainted with the use of scythe-chariots, are
described by the same sublime figure of flaming or
radiant: thus, Neh. ii. 3.

"His chariots are flaming scythes in the day of his
preparation."

Ver. 657. Whirl'd in the strife of courser, and of
cars.] This dreadful confusion of combats,
horses, and chariots, is well represented by
Virgil:

Turn véro et gemitus morientum, et sanguine in alto
Armaque, corporaque, et permísti cæde virorum
Seminímes volvuntur equí: pugna aspera surgit.
Æn. iI. 633.

Now dying groans are heard; the fields are strew'd
With falling horses, and are drunk with blood:
Arms, horses, men, on heaps together lie;
Confus'd the sight, but more confus'd the cry.

Dryden.

It is still more powerfully delineated by the He
brew prophet, Nahum:
The clamour of the rattling wheels,
And of the prancing horses,
And of the rebounding chariots!—
His bright sword, and his radiant spear
Severs a limb, that o'er the field it lies
With life long quiv'ring, while the hero still
Fights on of pain unconscious: his high soul
Absorb'd so total, he nor heeds the loss
Of his broad shield, or shield-supporting hand,
Whirl'd in the strife of coursers, and of cars.
From this the sword-arm drops, while still the rock
He climbs impetuous; that, perchance, to earth
Fell'd, on one leg yet vainly strives to rise;
While, at his side, his amputated foot

The horseman lifteth up alike.
Numerous the slain! innumerable the dead bodies!
Yea, no end of the carcases!
Over their carcases they stumble.

Ver. 658. From this the sword-arm drops.—]

Thus, Homer:

Των μισ ς Ευρυπίλου, Ευκαμονος άγλαος ίνος,
Προτήν ίδυ Φυγοντα, μετατριμμα ιδαος άμος,
Φασαν είξεις: από δ' ε'ξεις χειρα βαμιαν.
Αμαπτοσσα δι χειρ τιδιν πισι—

On him, amidst the flying numbers found,
Eurypilus inflicts a deadly wound;
On his broad shoulder fell the forceful brand,
Thence, glancing downward, lopp'd his holy hand,
Which stain'd with sacred blood the blushing sand.

And thus Virgil, in a passage which Lambinus
asserts he composed with this of our poet in his re-
collection:

Τε δείσα συνν, Λαρίδε, δεξτερα θαυμάζει:
Σεμιαμίμενος μιαντ δίγην, ferrumque retractant
---Laris' hand,
Dismember'd, sought its owner on the strand:

The trembling fingers yet the faulchion strain,
And threaten still th' intended stroke in vain.

In the following passage of Ereilla, which describes the wretched remains of the Spanish army on entering the city of Conception, after its total defeat and rout by the brave Lautaro, there is a force and spirit which will amply justify its insertion:

Puedes imaginar qual llegarán
Del trabajo y heridas maltatados,
Algunos casi rostros no traían,
Otros los traen de golpes levantados.
Del infierno parece que salían,
No hablan, ni responden elevados,
A todos con los ojos rodeavan,
Y mas callando el dano declaravan.

Araucan. Cant. vii.

Their entrance in these walls let fancy paint,
O'erwhelm'd with anguish, and with labour faint:
Those, gash'd with ghastly wounds, those, writh'd with pain,
And some their human semblance scarce retain;
They seem'd unhappy spirits 'scap'd from hell,
Yet wanting voice their misery to tell.
Their pangs, to all, their rolling eyes express,
And silence most declares their deep distress.

Hayley.
Et caput, abscisum calido viventeque truncno,
Servat humi voltum vitalem, oculosque patenteis;
Donec reliquias animai reddidit omneis.

Quin etiam, tibi si, liguâ vibrante, minanti
Serpentis caudâ, et procero corpore, utrumque
Sit lubitum in multas parteis discidere ferro;
Omnia jam seorsum cernes, amcisa recenti
Volnere, tortari, et terram conspargere tabo;
Ipsam seque retro partem petere ore priorem,
Volneris ardentii, ut morsu premat, icta dolore.

Omnibus esse igitur totas dicemus in illis
Particulis animas? at eâ ratione sequetur
Unam animantem animas habuisse in corpore multas.
Ergo divisa est ea, quae fuit una simul cum

Ver. 662. —Thus, too, the head,

Whene'er severed from the vital trunk,
Still keeps its look of life, with open eye

Still stirs, ——] Mr. Wakefield, and not without reason, thinks he again beholds Virgil turning his eye towards this passage of Lucretius, in the following verses:

Tum caput orantis nequiquam, et multa parantis
Dicere, deturbat terrae: \textit{Æn.} x. 554.

The trunkless head he hurl'd along the shore,
Beseeching still, and still prepar'd to implore.

Whether Virgil, however, copied from Lucretius, or not, there can be no doubt that Camoens did so in the following passage:

Cabeças pello campo vam saltando
Brâços, pernas, sem dono, e sem sentido,
BOOK III.  
THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Its trembling toes still moves. Thus, too, the head,  
Whene'er disserver'd from the vital trunk,  
Still keeps its look of life, with open eye  
Still stares, till all the gradual soul expire.  

So should thy blade some serpent's length of tail  
Divide, quick-brandishing its furious tongue,  
The sever'd parts writhe, agoniz'd, and broad  
Scatter the purple fluid; while himself  
Looks round revengeful, and, from pain severe,  
Gnashes the segments of his mangled frame.

Shall we then say that each divided part  
A perfect soul contains? then with such souls  
The total form, ere injur'd, must have throng'd.  
Hence severs, then, the soul, though close combin'd,  

Ver. 666. So should thy blade some serpent's length of tail  
Divide, quick-brandishing its furious tongue.  
The sever'd parts writhe, agoniz'd,—] Our poet's description of the wounded snake, as of every other natural fact, is accurate and unimpeachable, for he at all times draws from Nature herself. The pertinacious adherence of life to many animals, is truly wonderful. I have already observed, that in worms, polypi, and several other reptiles of the same simplicity of frame, a division of the body, instead of destroying life, augments it, as every section becomes a distinct and perfect animal. Lobsters, crabs, spiders, and various others, again, although not capable of propagating life by sections, have an astonishing power of reproducing their mangled or amputated members. I have noticed, in a former place, that the land-tortoise will live six months after being deprived of its brain; and Redi informs us, that in several instances he has known it survive for three or four and twenty days after the separation of its head from its body. The pertinacity to life in the snake is not equal to this, but it approximates it by the length of time every segment will retain, not merely irritability, but animation. There is a kind of fury and vivacity which naturalists have noticed in every fragment of this reptile, that is scarcely paralleled by any other animal. Its heart will continue to beat for thirty hours after its death.
Corpore: quapropter mortale utrumque putandum est;
In multas quoniam parteis disciditur æque.

Præterea, si inmortalis natura animæ
Constat, et in corpus nascentibus insinuatur;
Quur super ante actam ætatem meminisse nequimus,
Nec vestigia gestarum rerum ulla tenemus?
Nam, si tanto opere est animi mutata potestas,
Omnium ut actarum exciderit retinentia rerum;
Non, ut opinor, id ab leto jam longiter errat.
Quapropter fateare necesse est, quæ fuit ante,
Interiisse; et, quæ nunc est, nunc esse creatam.

Ver. 679. Grant, too, the soul immortal, and infused,
At earliest birth, within us,—whence, resolves,
This full oblivion of all past events,—]
Our poet now proceeds, with much dexterity, to attack the opinions of all those philosophers, who contended either for a state of pre-existence, or a metempsychosis; doctrines which were peculiarly espoused by Pythagoras and Plato, who conceived that human souls, which consisted of a divine idea, united to a portion of the soul of the world, were created long anterior to the generation of the corporeal frame, and, residing in some other sphere than the earth, stood prepared to enter, at a moment's warning, into the microscopic body of the human embryo, at the first instant of conception. The difficulty of admitting the immediate presence of the Creator, in every act of copulation, however unhallowed and impure, for the purpose of providing an immaterial spirit for the occasion, has driven many immaterialists of modern times into a similar belief. But if the soul, the thinking principle, did pre-exist, how then, as Lucretius justly inquires, can it have lost its total knowledge of all prior transactions? and how again, if it have done so, can it be otherwise than a new, and altogether different being in the body, from what it was in its state of anterior existence? since consciousness is the sole foundation of all personal identity. From the perplexity introduced by these queries among ancient philosophers, there was but one mode of dear escape; and that was by cutting the Gordian knot that entangled them, and boldly contending, that all consciousness of such pre-existence was not lost; and that many of the transactions which had occurred in it, may be recalled to recollection by any man who will enter deeply into the study of the whole of his anterior being. This was denominated by Plato the doctrine of reminiscence, and was one of the most important tenets of the Academic philosophy. Empedocles and Pythagoras advanced still farther; and hardly declared, not only that they had existed antecedently, and had a general idea of such existence, and the facts with which it was accompanied, but that they recollected, most perfectly, the very names of the persons whose bodies they had at distinct periods inhabited. The former, indeed, for every purpose of general information, had been particularly fortunate;
Anterior, with the body; and hence, too,
Both must alike be mortal, since alike
To parts divisible with equal ease.

Grant, too, the soul immortal, and infus’d,
At earliest birth, within us—whence, resolve,
This full oblivion of all past events,
All former life?—for if the soul so change,
That nought remains of mem’ry in its make,
A change so total differs scarce from death.
Thus, what before existed, must have ceas’d,
And on its ruins sprung what now exists.

for he had been in both sexes of the human race, as
well as in the bodies of birds and fishes. While the
latter maintained, that he had been present at, and
had partaken in the toils of the Trojan war, occupying
at that period the body of Euphorbus, who was
slain by Menelaus; that he was afterwards infused
into the body of another hero, of the name of Ætha-
lides: that he then possessed the corporeal tabernacle
of a fisherman; that he afterwards resided, for more
than two centuries, in the lower regions without any
body at all; and that, at the expiration of this pe-
riod, he was transmitted to the body of Pythagoras
himself. Ridiculous as such a belief may appear at
the present day, the metempsychosis was a doctrine
accredited very generally in earlier periods: it was a
tenet in the creed of the aborigines of our own coun-
try, and still continues to form a part of the belief
of the worshippers, both of Brahma and Buddha;
and, of course, to form an article of the established
religions of Hindu, Thibet, Ava, and Ceylon.

In the second volume of Dalrymple’s Oriental
Repertory, is a most curious and entertaining paper
on “Transmigration and Final Beatitude,” as taught
by the Bramins. This paper composes a part of
the Institutes of Menu, which were translated from
the Sanskrit by Sir William Jones, and printed at
Bengal, at the East-India Company’s expence. It
is a compendium of the different states and bodies
mankind are to occupy hereafter, agreeably to a re-
gulation dependent upon the moral conduct they
exhibit in the present life. “For sinful acts,” says
Bhrigu, whose heart was the pure essence of virtue,
“for sinful acts, that are mostly corporeal, a man
shall assume, after death, a vegetable or mineral
form: for such acts, mostly verbal, the form of a
bird or a beast; and for sinful acts, mostly mental,
the lowest of human conditions,” &c.

Ver. 684. A change so total differs scarce from death.
Thus, what before existed, must have ceas’d,
And on its ruins sprung what now exists.—]
A similar position is advanced in ver. 534, of the
present book; to the notes on which I refer the
reader.
Præterea, si, jam perfecto corpore, nobis
Inferri solita est animi vivata potestas,
Tum, quom gignimur, et vitae quom limen inimus;
Haud ita conveniebat, utei cum corpore, et unâ
Cum membris, videatur in ipso sanguine cresse:
Sed, velut in caveâ, per se sibi vivere solam
Convenit, ut sensu corpus tamen adfluat omne.
Quæ re, etiam atque etiam neque originis esse putandum est
Experteis animas, nec leti lege solutas:
Nam neque tanto opere adnecti potuisse putandum est
Corporibus nostris, extrinsecus insinuatas;
(Quod fieri totum contra manifesta docet res:
Namque ita connexa est per venas, viscera, nervos,
Ossaque, utei dentes quoque sensu participentur;
Morbus ut indicat, et gelidaë stringor aquaë,
Et lapis obpressus subitis e frugibus asper)
Nec, tam contextæ quom sint, exire videntur
Incolomes posse, et salvas exsolvere sese
Omnibus e nervis, atque ossibus, articulisque.

Quod, si forte putas, extrinsecus insinuaton,

Ver. 692. Grow with each growing member :—]
The original is highly forcible and expressive:
—utei cum corpore, et unâ

Cum membris, videatur in ipso sanguine cresse.
And it is not improbable, that Pope hence derived
the following verses:
If the light soul, moreo’er, then only join
The full-form’d body, when that body first
Springs into birth, and treads the porch of life,
Ne’er can it then, as though diffus’d at large,
E’en with the vital blood, through all the frame,
Grow with each growing member: but confin’d,
As in a den, in solitude must dwell,
From the first hour exciting equal sense.
Hence doubly flows it, souls can ne’er exist
Of birth devoid, nor free from final fate.
Nor could they, as each daily fact confirms,
If from without infus’d, the total frame
Fit with such nice precision: for so close
Blend they with every organ, bone, and nerve,
That e’en th’ enamel’d tooth sensation shares;
As oft its ache evinces, or th’ approach
Of ice abrupt; or when, beneath its gripe,
Grates some harsh pebble mid the subject food.
Nor thus connected could they e’er retreat
Safe, and uninjur’d through the sinuous paths
Of organs, membranes, vessels, bones, and nerves.

But, from without, th’ insinuating soul,

The young disease, that must subdue at length,
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength;
So cast, and mingled with his very frame
The mind’s disease, its ruling passion came.

E S S A Y O N M A N , E p . i i .
Permanere animam nobis per membra solere:
Tanto quoique magis, cum corpore fusa, peribit.
Quod permanat enim, dissolvitur: interit ergo.
Dispartita ergo per caulas corporis omnes,
(Ut cibus, in membra atque artus quam ducitur omnes,
Disperit, atque aliam naturam subficit ex se)
Sic anima atque animus, quam vis integra recens in
Corpus eunt, tamen in manando dissolvuntur,
Dum, quasi per caulas, omnes diduntur in artus
Particulæ, quibus hæc animi natura creator:
Quæ nunc in nostro dominatur corpore, nata
Ex illâ, quæ tunc peritât, partita per artus.

Quapropter, neque natali privata videtur
Esse die natura animæ, nec funeris expers.
Semina præterea linquuntur, necne, animai
Corpore in exanimo? Quod, si linquuntur, et insunt,
THE NATURE OF THINGS.

If still thou deem through all this frame diffus’d, 710
Then, since diffus’d, much surer must it fail;
For what thus flows diffusive, must dissolve,
And perish, doubtless, forc’d through every pore.
As vanish foods, through every mazy gland,
Through every limb when urg’d, to different forms
Converting gradual, so the mind, the soul
Howe’er entire, when first the flesh it meets
Dissolves by junction; for through every sluice,
Through every organ intricate and fine,
Must percolate its atoms, sever’d hence,
And decompos’d,—and hence the base alone
Of that which after sways th’ external frame.

Thus must the soul a natal day possess,
And final grave, an origin and end.

Fly, too, at death, the soul’s pure seeds entire,
Or with the body are there still that rest?

——abditaque intus
Spiramenta animae lethali vulnere rupt.
Æn. ix. 579.
The forceful spear with mortal wound sinks deep,
And drives the soul through all its latent pores.

Ver. 724. Fly, too, at death, the soul’s pure seeds entire,
Or with the body are there still that rest?

Doctor Priestley, and some other materialists, seem to have conceived, in order to account the better for personal identity and responsibility, in a future state, that the few elementary atoms that compose the embryo and incipient frame of every man, adhere to him through life, continue undisssipated in his grave, and will again constitute an essential part of him at the resurrection. This idea, however, is so repugnant to all the known and admitted laws of animal being, that it cannot be supported for a moment. It is allowed by all physiologists, that every atom of the human body is perpetually, though imperceptibly, wearing away, and its place supplied by fresh atoms introduced in the form of food; and that, hence, in process of time, every man is, as to his physical frame, a being altogether different from what he was formerly, having no one corpuscle
Haud erit, ut merito inmortalis possit haberi:
Partibus amissis quoniam libata recessit.
Sin ita, sinceris membris ablata, profugit,
Et nullas parteis in corpore liquerit ex se;
Unde cadavera rancenti jam viscere vermeis
Exspirant? atque unde animantum copia tanta,
Exos et exsanguis, tumidos perfluctuat artus?
Quod, si forte animas extrinsecus insinuari
Vermibus, et privo si corpore posse venire,
Credis; nec reputas, quur milia multa animarum
Convenient, unde una recesserit: hoc tamen est, ut

of his past self remaining in his present. To conceive then that, amidst this general waste and repair, there are some few atoms so specially endowed as to resist every change whatsoever, and competent to retain their posts unshaken and unaffected by all that occurs on every side; and more especially, to conceive that, after death, they shall remain connected, while all is dispersed around them, is to indulge a latitude of fancy, highly incongruous with the rigid rules of philosophizing, and altogether unwarranted by facts, or analogy. Nor does the conception remove any difficulty whatever. For, even admitting that there are such atoms provided by nature, atoms that change not during life, and that sleep unaltered in the grave, the personal identity that hence ensues can only be partial; and the great mass of extrinsic atoms which must unite to complete the re-surring body, can still have no physical connexion with the moral conduct of which these original atoms partook in their anterior state of existence, and, consequently, can possess no physical accountability whatsoever; nor be entitled to the common punishment or reward which the re-organized substance is about to receive. The same difficulty, however, attaches to immaterialists as well, and in nearly an equal degree. For, admitting the essence of the soul, or thinking principle, to be precisely the same at the day of resurrection as it existed on earth, and that personal identity and accountability are hence preserved entire; yet, upon its junction with a corporeal body, if the entire particles of this body be not precisely the same as those which constituted the material machine at the hour of death,—it can still be but entitled in part, and not universally, to the retribution that awaits it; for, whatever portions of it are new, and for the first time admitted into the general organization, must be totally devoid of all prior merit or demerit.

Personal identity and responsibility must, therefore, result from another cause; from the simple possession of consciousness, a property which may be communicated by the Deity to any system of matter he pleases. And as it would never be admitted as a plea in diminution of guilt at the bar of human justice, that the crime, of which the prisoner stands charged, was committed ten or fifteen years ago; and that hence, in consequence of the physical changes which have taken place in his system, he is not the identical culprit that committed the crime alleged and proved against him; so, neither
If aught remain, then idly must thou deem
The soul immortal, since diminish'd thus,
And shorn of substance; but if all escape,
If not an atom loiter—whence, I ask,
Rears the putrescent carcase, in its womb,
The race of worms? or sport o'er every limb
The boneless, bloodless crowds of things unnam'd?
If from without thou deem their souls they draw,
To each a soul entire, unheeding here
What throngs must flock where dwelt but one before,
Quærundum videatur, et in discrimen agundum;
Utrum tandem animae venentur semina quæque
Vermiculorum, ipsæque sibi fabricentur, ubei sunt:
An quasi corporibus perfectis insinuentur.
At neque, quur faciant ipsæ, quâ reve laborent,
Dicere subpeditat; neque enim, sine corpore quom sunt,
Solicitæ volitant morbis, alguque, fameque:
Corpus enim magis hius viitis, et fine, laborat;
Et mala cuncta animus contagi fungitur ejus.
Sed tamen hii esto quam vis facere utile corpus,
Quod subeant; at, quâ possint, via nulla videtur:
Haud igitur faciunt animæ sibi corpora, et artus.
Nec tamen est, quî cum perfectis insinuentur
Corporibus: neque enim poterunt subtiliter esse
Connexæ; neque consensus contagia fient.

Denique, quur acris violentia triste leonum
Seminium sequitur, volpeis dolus; et fuga cervis
A patribus datur, et patrius pavor incitat artus?
Et jam cætera de genere hoc, quur omnia membris
Ex ineunte ævo generascunt, ingenioque;
Si non, certa suo quia semine, seminioque,
Vis animi pariter crescit cum corpore quoque?
Quod, si immortalis foret, et mutare soleret
Pause yet one moment ere thou thus resolve:
Such souls must, then, the vermin seeds themselves
Have wise-selected, and their fabrics rear'd,
Or into bodies enter'd ready form'd.
But nor can reason, if themselves have rais'd
The wretched buildings, for the toil account,
Nor tell why thus for hunger, and disease,
And shivering cold they thirst, or aught besides
Of ill the body to the soul supplies.
Yet grant them anxious for such vile abodes,
Still must the structure far exceed their powers,
Hence rear'd not by themselves. Nor from without
Could they insinuate into bodies form'd;
Since nor adapted to their sinuous pores,
Nor fram'd for intercourse, and mutual act.

Whence springs the fury that pervades throughout
The ruthless breed of lions? whence the craft
The fox evinces, or the stag's wild fear,
From sire to son through every race propell'd?
Whence these and equal passions trac'd at large,
From life's first dawn, generic, through each class?
Whence but that some fixt power of mind descends,
E'en with the lineal seed, through all begot,
Evolving gradual with the gradual growth?
For were the soul immortal, changing oft
Corpora, permixtis animantes moribus essent:
Ecfugeret canis Hyrcano de semine sæpe
Cornigeri incursum cervi; tremeretque, per auras
Aëris, adicipiter, fugiens, veniente columbâ:
Desiperent homines, saperent fera secla ferarum.
   Illud enim falsâ fertur ratione, quod aiunt
Inmortalem animam mutato corpore flecti;
Quod mutatur enim, dissolvitur: interit ergo:
Trajiciuntur enim partes, atque ordine migrant;
Quâ re dissolvi quoque debent posse per artus,
Denique ut intereant, unâ cum corpore, cunctæ.
   Sin animas hominum dicent in corpora semper
Ire humana, tamen quæram, quur e sapienti
Stulta queat fieri, nec prudens sit puer ullus;
Nec tam doctus equæ pullus, quam fortis equi vis?
Si non, certa suo quia semine, seminioque,
Vis animi pariter crescit cum corpore quoque.
   Scilicet in tenero tenerascere corpore mentem

Ver. 751. Whence springs the fury that pervades throughout
   The ruthless breed of lions?— This, also, is an argument, and by no means an unsuccessful one, advanced against the disciples of Pythagoras, Empedocles, and Plato. See, on this subject, the note on verse 681 of the present book.

Ver. 762. — the Hyrcanian dog
Hyrcania is a country in Asia on the borders of the Caspian sea. It is covered, in many places, with immense and untravelled woods, which are filled with tigers, and other beasts of prey. Gratus (Cyneg. 161) reports, that the domestic bitch of the country often copulates with the
To different bodies, different tempers, then,
Must mark each order: the Hyrcanian dog
Oft, then, must dread the high-horn'd stag's approach;
Hawks fly from doves, e'en man himself turn brute,
And the brute tribes, preposterous, rule the world.

Nor heed the sophistry which here contends
That souls oft change the body's change to meet:
For that which changes must dissolve, and die,
Sever'd its parts, its order all destroy'd.
Hence souls must, too, dissolve through every limb,
And with the body share one common fate.

But shouldst thou urge that human souls their flight
To human forms restrain—then, since once wise,
To folly why relapse? why spring not boys
Replete with wisdom? nor displays the colt
The skilful paces of the steed mature?
Why but that some fixt power of mind descends
E'en with the lineal seed through all begot,
Evolving gradual with the gradual growth?
Nor think the soul, too, weakens in a weak,

male tiger, and that the breed is peculiarly ferocious. Pliny and Cicero both make mention of this Hyrcanian dog, and speak of it as a most noble animal. Nat. Hist. viii. 61. Tusc. Quest. i. 46.

To the tiger of the same country, Shakspeare also refers in that well-known address of Macbeth to the ghost of Banquo:

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or Hyrcanian tyger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves Shall never tremble.
Confugient: quod si jam fit, fatiare necesse est
Mortalem esse animam; quoniam, mutata per artus
Tanto opere, amittit vitam, sensumque priorem.

Quove modo poterit, pariter cum corpore quoque
Confirmata, cupitum ætatis tangere florem
Vis animi, nisi erit consors in origine primâ?
Quidve foras sibi volt membris exire senectis?
An metuit conclusa manere in corpore putri?
An, domus ætatis spatio ne fessa vetusto
Obruat? at non sunt jam inmortali ulla pericla.

Denique, connubia ad Veneris, partusque ferarum,
Esse animas præsto, deridicum esse videtur;
Exspectare inmortaleis mortalia membra
Innumero numero, certareque præproperanter
Inter se, quæ prima, potissimaque, insinuetur:
Si non forte ita sunt animarum foedera pacta,
Ut, quæ prima volans advenerit, insinuetur
Prima, neque inter se contendant viribus hilum.

Denique, in æthere non arbor, non æquore in alto
Nubes esse queunt, nec pisces vivere in arvis,

Ver. 792. What, too, so idle, as that souls should
throng
Round each vile intercourse, or beast that bears:
I have already glanced at this argument in the note
on ver. 681, of the present book; and observed that
the soul, if immaterial, must either pre-exist in some
other state than the present world, in some maga-
zine prepared for the purpose, ready to take its
flight, and unite itself with the incipient body at a
moment’s warning, which was the opinion of Py-
thagoras and Plato; or, that the Creator must be es-
sentially present and occupied during every intercourse
And puny system, since most surely then
Doom'd to destruction; by the change sustain'd
Shorn of its vigour, and interior sense.

Why, if endear'd not by one common birth,
Thus should it pant in equal hour to reach
Perfection with the body? or, revers'd,
Why long for freedom when the frame decays?
Fears, then, the soul confinement after death
Mid the foul members? or the dang'rous fall
Of its own tott'ring mansion? But, reflect,
What lives immortal, danger ne'er can know.

What, too, so idle, as that souls should throng
Round each vile intercourse, or beast that bears:
Immortal souls! contesting who shall first
Enter the feeble fetus; if, perchance,
This not decides them, and all strife precludes,
That who first gains it, claims a prior right.

Trees not in ether, not in ocean clouds,
Nor in the fields can fishes e'er exist;

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of the sexes, of whatever kind it may be, in forming a soul for the occasion. The commentator upon Creech's translation, finding himself driven to the dilemma of assenting to the one or the other of these hypotheses, has chosen the latter. Upon a proposal of the same argument by Dr. Priestley to Dr. Price, in their printed discussion of this subject, Price preferred to evade the question altogether. In the case of the souls of brutes, however, the commentator upon Creech contends for their being immaterial, but not immortal. See note in Creech's translation, Book III. ver. 797.
Nec cruor in lignis, neque saxis sucus, inesse:
Certum ac dispositum est, ubi quidquid crescat, et insit:
Sic animi natura nequit sine corpore oriri
Sola, neque a nervis et sanguine longius esse.
Quod si posset enim, multo prius ipsa animi vis
In capite, aut humeris, aut imis calcibus, esse
Posset, et innasci quâ vis in parte soleret;
Quamde in eodem homine atque in eodem vase manere.
Quod quoniam nostro quoque constat corpore certum;
Dispositumque videtur, ubi esse, et crescere, possit
Seorsum anima, atque animus; tanto magis insciandum
Totum posse extra corpus durare, genique.
Quâ re corpus ubi interiit, periisse, necesse est,
Confiteare animam, distractam in corpore toto.
Quippe et enim mortalem æterno jungere, et unâ
Consentire putare, et fungi mutua, posse,
Desipere est: quid enim diversius esse putandum est,
Aut magis inter se disjunctum, discreptansque,
Quam, mortale quod est, inmortali atque perenni
Junctum, in concilio sævas tolerare procellas?

Præterea, quæquomque manent æterna, necesse est,
Aut, quia sunt solido cum corpore, respuer e ictus,
Nec penetrare pati sibi quidquam quod queat artas
Dissociare intus parteis; ut materiaï
Nor blood in planks, nor vital juice in stones:
But all springs definite in scenes defin'd.
So in the bosom lives, and there alone,
Mixt with its blood, and nerves, the secret mind:
There only lives,—for could it roam at all,
Then rather should we through the body's self,
The heel, or shoulder, or where else it chose,
Oft trace it wand'ring, than forlorn abroad.
Since e'en in body, then, the soul and mind
Are fixt thus definite—we amply prove
That out of body these can ne'er exist:
That when the flesh its certain doom sustains,
The soul must, too, through ev'ry limb dissolve.

To deem, moreo'er, that mortal can combine
With aught immortal,—can together live
Concordant, and in mutual duties blend,
Is full delirium. Can there be conceiv'd
Aught more unmeet, incongruous, or absurd,
Than with a mortal that a frame should mix
Immortal, doom'd to all its weight of woe?
What lives immortal, too, must so exist,
Or from its own solidity, empower'd
Each blow to conquer, undivided still,
As primal atoms, long anterior sung:
Corpora sunt, quorum naturam obtendimus ante;
Aut ideo durare ætatem posse per omnem,
Plagarum quia sunt expertia, sic ut inane est;
Quod manet intactum, neque ab ictu fungitur hilum:
Aut etiam quia nulla loci sit copia circum,
Quo quasi res possint discedere, dissoluique;
Sic uti summarum summa est æterna, neque extra
Quis locus est, quo diffugiant; neque corpora sunt, quæ
Possint incidere, et validâ dissolvere plagâ:
At neque, utei docui, solido cum corpore mentis
Natura est, quoniam admixtum est in rebus inane:
Nec tamen est ut inane; neque autem corpora desunt,
Ex infinito quæ possint forte coorta
Proruere hanc mentis violento turbine molem,
Aut aliam quam vis cladem inportare pericli:
Nec porro natura loci, spatiumque profundi,
Deficit, exspargi quo possit vis animaï,
Aut alià quà vis possit vi pulsa perire:
Haud igitur let! præclusa est janua menti.
Quod, si forte ideo magis inmortalis habenda est,
Quod vitalibus ab rebus, munita, tenetur;

Ver. 802. So in the bosom lives, and there alone,]
Mist with its blood, and nerves, the secret
mind:— For the motives which induced Epig
eurus and Lucretius to place the existence of the
mind in the bosom, see note on verse 100 of this book.

Ver. 840. — gates of death.] Our poet is much
attached to this figure, which is strictly of Hebrew
origin, and to which the Hebrew bards are as much
attached as himself. I have given one instance of
this parallelism from Job, in closing the notes.
Or since, like vacuum, of all friction void,
Free from all touch, by impulse unimpar’d;
Or from the want of circling space, in which
The sev’ring atoms may dissolve and fall;
Such want the boundless whole of nature proves,
And hence eternal—for no place beyond
Spreads, where its seeds could waste; nor, from without,
Can foreign force e’er enter to destroy.
But nor, as urg’d above, exists the mind
All solid, since in all things void combines,
Nor yet all vacuum; nor, from the profound,
Are wanting powers adverse that, into act
Once rous’d tempestuous, the whole mind derange,
Or sever total;—nor deficient space
Spread widely round, through which, in countless modes,
The mental frame may crumble, and dissolve;
Hence not precluded from the gates of death.

But shouldst thou still the soul immortal deem,
Since guarded deep from many a mortal wound,
Aut quia non veniunt omnino aliena salutis;  
Aut quia, quæ veniunt, aliquà ratione recedunt  
Pulsa prius, quam, quid noceant, sentire queamus;  
[Scilicet a vera longe ratione remotum est.]  
Præter enim, quam quod morbis tum corporis ægrit,  
Advenit id, quod eam de rebus sæpe futuris  
Maceret, inque metu male habet, curisque fatigat;  
Præteritisque male admitteris peccata remordent,  
Adde furorem animi proprium, atque oblivia rerum;  
Adde quod in nigras lethargi mergitur undas.

Vour of the materiality, and consequent mortality of the soul: its affection by external circumstances, and its possession of even a larger share of evils than those to which the body itself is exposed.

Ver. 854. Creeps the dull pool of lethargy profound.]
From this verse, in all probability, Martial:

Pigra per hunc fugies ingratæ sàmine Lethes.

X. ii. 7.
Hence the dull pool of Lethe shalt thou fly.

With this argument, our poet, as just observed, concludes his observations in favour of the materiality of the soul, or sentient principle; and it may now, perhaps, be expected that, in the present commentary, I should briefly enumerate the chief arguments which have been urged on the opposite side of the question, by different philosophers of different ages. This, however, is a task altogether inadmissible: yet, as the counter-positions advanced by the Cardinal Polignac are more immediately directed against the poem before us, and to a certainty, constitute the most concentrated and the most popular system of opposition of any which has hitherto been urged; and as nothing of material moment has been advanced since its publication, I cannot avoid offering a brief statement of their contents. They are to be found in the fifth and sixth books of the Anti-Lucretius.

In the note on ver. 101 of the book before us, I have given the opinion of our own countryman, Mr. Locke, respecting the capability of matter to exhibit the phenomenon of intelligence, together with the severe attack of the Cardinal upon him for such a creed. It is in conjoint repugnance to this celebrated philosopher, as well as to our own poet, that the Cardinal commences his attack, by contending that the human soul cannot be material from the very nature of matter itself; since there is nothing in any of the modifications of matter, as the position, magnitude, figure or motion of its particles, whence intelligence can result; modifications which are mere alternating forms of material things, and can press to nothing beyond. He next attempts to demonstrate, that spirit has nothing in common with matter; that it must have existed antecedently to it, and have first of all stimulated it into motion. In reply to the objection, that the soul is, and must be acted upon by matter, and
Safe from full many an insult that assails
The health exterior, and since many a blow,
Aim'd at its powers, discomfited recoils
Ere scarce ourselves the dread approach perceive,
Still far thou wand'rest; for the common woes
Excluding that from body draw their birth,
Yet pines she anxious for to-morrow's fate,
Yet shakes with dread, with carking care consumes,
Or smarts from conscience of committed crimes.
Add, too, that madness is her own—that oft
All mem'ry fails, and o'er each torpid pow'r
Creeps the dull pool of lethargy profound.

this from immediate contact, he admits that there is
the closest conjunction between them, but continues
to maintain, that their essences are not the same,
which he endeavours by various analogies to illus-
trate, but more particularly by the union subsisting
between the musician and his instrument. From the
unity and simplicity of the intelligent principle, he
deduces its immortality; and finally contends, that
every other system is incompatible with the idea of
moral liberty. These arguments, and their illustra-
tions, form the basis of the fifth book of the Anti-
Lucretius. But the author still perceived that much
remained to be accomplished; for his opponent had
observed, that sensation was not the property of
man alone, but of every class of the brute creation as
well: that these, therefore, were also possessed of
souls, or a sentient principle; and that, as with re-
spect to such souls, there could be no doubt of their
materiality, it should seem to follow, that the soul
of man is also material, and, consequently, mortal.
The whole of the sixth book is hence devoted to the
investigation of this latter doctrine of the Epicurean
system: and here it is that the Cardinal, although
he spares no pains, and arms himself with all the pa-
noply of the Cartesian school, appears least redoubt-
able and argumentative.

He first observes, ver. 344, that the vulgar belief
of the existence of a soul in brutes, is extremely
doubtful. "Perhaps," says he, "it is true: I will
not deny it; for reason forbids me to deny whatever
is not obviously false. Yet, perhaps, it is not so. I
see certain actions performed, but I do not see the
cause of those actions. To trace this cause, is the
office of reason, and not of the sight; for the sight,
in a thousand instances, deceives us; and reason
ought, hence, to be the judge, and not the slave of
our senses. You conjecture," continues he, ver.
380, "that brutes possess the passions of desire and
fear, because they evince the signs of those passions:
but man, when actuated by desire or fear, not only
exhibits their external signs, which are often falla-
cious, but you are conscious that these passions are
actually existing within him."

In reply to this, however, it is obvious that no
man can be logically conscious of any thing that oc-
curs exterior to himself. It is from external signs,
Nihil igitur mors est, ad nos neque pertinet hilum,  
 Quandoquidem natura animi mortalis habetur.

alone that he supposes the multitude by whom he is surrounded to be his fellows, and possessed of sensations and passions like his own: and whenever he beholds such signs of passion or sensation exhibited by a brute, he has the same reason for supposing him the subject of such emotions, as for supposing the same of any of his own species. And if a strict and perfect consciousness of the internal emotions of other men be necessary to constitute the belief, that they are possessed of an intelligent principle as well as ourselves: if a doubt be, in this manner, to be perpetually thrown upon the evidence of the external senses,—no man can be conscious of the existence of any intelligent being, excepting his own individual person: and the scepticism of Pyrrho, or the idealism of Berkley or Hume, is immediately introduced, which is the very reverse of what Polignac designed.

The Cardinal, secondly, proceeds to assert, that we have as much reason for absurdly admitting the existence of a percipient soul in vegetables and minerals, as in brutes, since many classes of both these kingdoms give evident external signs of internal passion or commotion; and particularly the mimosa (herba manum fugiens, a sensu nomen adeps) and the magnet. But this is evidently affirming too much for his own purpose. For we have no more reason to conclude, a priori, that matter in any state of combination could exhibit the properties of the magnet, the mimosa, or the brute creation, than that it could produce the phenomena of intelligence. And it is principally from careful and repeated observation of the former, that Lucretius, Locke, and every modern materialist, deduces his belief of the possibility of the latter. In reply to the question, therefore, which seems naturally to ensue, why may not the substance that is capable of producing fossil attraction, vegetable irritability, and brutal instinct and sensation, be competent to the production of human intelligence? The Cardinal,

Thirdly, advances a step farther, and hardly asserts, ver. 608, that there is no such thing as attraction, irritability, instinct, or sensation, in any combination of matter whatsoever: and that brutes, plants, and fossils, are all equally automatons, beings alike devoid of voluntary action, and alone impelled by foreign stimulus. And that, as the arrow which flies from the bow does not quit it from a sense of hatred or fear, nor strike and wound the object, against which it is directed, from the possession of anger: so, without any passion of his own, the dog pursues the wolf, or engages in the act of concupiscence. As to the doctrine of physical attraction, Descartes imagined he avoided its necessity, by embracing that of an absolute plenum; upon which I have already observed, in various notes on book the first of this poem. As to sensation, he contended that it could only be the property of an intelligent being; while, with regard to instinct, the Cardinal, pursuing the dictates of his master, observes, ver. 1145, that the ocean, which renewes its tide at definite and alternate periods, has just as much of it as any brute whatever. "What," inquires he, "is meant by this vulgar and empty term instinct? Is it mind, or is it not? If not, then is there nothing existing but a mere machine? If it be mind, is it a mind residing within the body of the brute, or exterior to it? If the latter, it is the universal Mind, or great First Cause of all things, acting by impulse, and the brute is a mere machine still: if the former, yet must this instinctive principle differ widely from the principle of human intelligence, since it endows its possessor with a fixed degree of instantaneous knowledge, neither capable of increase, nor acquired by a long course of habit and education. To support such a theory," he tells us, "is not to establish the creed of material intelligence, but to recall to our aid the metempsychosis of Pythagoras and the Gymnosophists, and to believe that every existent brute is inhabited by a genius or spirit, immortal in its nature, and which is perpetually transmigrating from body to body. A belief," continues the Cardinal, ver. 1214—1254, "which, however extraordinary and unauthorized, is certainly much more consistent and tolerable than the creed, which maintains the production of percep-
Hence, death is nought, and justly claims our scorn, since with the body thus the soul decays.

The nature of things, from any modification of pure unconscious matter. I am thus,” concludes he, “doubly armed against the difficulty which is started by the materialist: for if I be not altogether satisfied with the doctrine, that brutes are mere machines, which I think highly plausible, to say the least of it, I may still shelter myself under the theory of transmigration, and maintain that they are not mere matter.”

This double armour, however, with which the Cardinal thus encumbers himself, proves, obviously, that he places no great degree of confidence in either. As to the Cartesian doctrine, which levels every class and order of the brute creation to mere passive machines, intrinsically as inert as so many blocks of wood, or clods of earth, it is in itself so outrageous to the common appearances of nature, that few immaterialists are disposed to give it countenance at the present moment, whatever be the new difficulties into which they plunge, by disavowing it. And with respect to the doctrine of an instinctive principle, no reason can be adduced why matter may not be endowed with this, as well as with any other power which it daily evinces, regarded as a separate and specific faculty; no argument can demonstrate why the Creator might not, by a general law, determine that, in a certain state of modification, matter should be specially gifted with a determinate portion of absolute knowledge, pointing out to its possessor, almost, or altogether from its birth, what to avoid and what to pursue; in the same manner as he has ordained by another general law, and under another modification, that no material being should be able to acquire knowledge otherwise than by habit, education, and industry, while, at the same time, the knowledge thus obtained should be progressive and unlimited. But it is by no means absolutely certain, that all the various orders of animal life do not submit to as regular a system of education in the attainment of knowledge, as man himself. Lord Monboddo, Dr. Darwin, and many other physiologists, have advanced various plausible facts and experiments, in order to prove that every animal is as much indebted for the information of which he is possesst, to habit, imitation, and industry, as any one of the human race. The knowledge of brutes does not, indeed, appear to be very progressive; but their powers of acquiring improvement are infinitely small in comparison with those of mankind: and even these latter, in a state of pure, uncivilized nature, exhibit few superior proofs of progression beyond the brute creation itself. The Kamshadale, the Eschimaux, and the Caffre, are at this moment exactly the same as they were on their first discovery; and the bulfinch, who is deprived of the common materials with which she constructs her nest, would probably, with more ease, select a new assortment, than any one of these savages provide himself with a hovel, if deprived of the mud and weeds of which he ordinarily builds it.

As to the doctrine of transmigration, to which the Cardinal flies, as his second resort, its absurdity renders it as little a subject of belief in the present day, as that of the mere mechanism of brutes; nor would it, by any means, answer his purpose, if embraced. For what, it might be inquired, are to become of these genii or spirits that inhabit the bodies of brutes, and are immortal in their own nature, at the destruction of the world? Matter, again, being in every state of organization, according to his own system, equally passive and inert; and vegetables, and even minerals, being in every instance actuated in the faculties they evince, by the same stimulus as brutes, it follows that the same kind of genius or spirit that inhabits the body of a dog, must without the possession of which, neither of them could manifest their respective and peculiar properties. So that, upon this latter hypothesis, every brute, every vegetable, and every mineral, nay, every fragment of every mineral, and every particle of matter at large, must necessarily prove the mansion of an immortal and immaterial spirit; without the energy
DE RERUM NATURA.

Lib. III.

Et, velut ante acto nihil tempore sensimus ægri,
Ad confligundum venientibus undique Poenis;
Omnia quom, belli trepido concussa tumultu,
Horrida, contremuere sub altis ætheris auris;
In dubioque fuere, utrorum ad regna cadundum
Omnibus humanis esset, terraque, marique:

and volition of whom neither gravitation, magnetism,
irritability, muscular motion, sensation, could display
itself, or even exist.

Ver. 855. Hence, death is nought, and justly claims
our scorn.

Since with the body thus the soul decays.] The
poet having established, as far as he was able, the
mortality of the human soul, proceeds, by a variety
of forcible and well-selected arguments, to destroy
that unreasonable dread of death which, in his own
age more especially, was perpetually hurrying man-
kind into a commission of the most flagrant crimes,
of which he has already enumerated many in the
opening of the present book. The dread he here
refers to, still attaches to multitudes in our own age;
and to multitudes, moreover, who, by the rectitude
of their lives, and the superior knowledge imparted
to them by the glorious dispensation of the gospel,
should be released from its influence. Among Chris-
tians of this character, the terror which so perpetu-
ally haunts them, proceeds, as it did amongst the
greater part of the philosophers of our poet's own
age, from an oscillation or equal balance of hope and
fear: not, indeed, with respect to the existence of a
future state, but as to their own condition when
they have entered upon it. Upon both these sub-
jects, the heathen world, from the moment they ad-
mitted the possibility of a posterior being, could not
be otherwise than a prey to anxiety. The admission
of the possibility did not prove the fact: they were
doubtful as to the existence of such a state; and
they were equally doubtful as to their own felicity or
misery, whenever the subjects of it: upon neither point,
after all their researches, were they capable of obtain-
ing any satisfactory or certain information. They be-
lieved, and they disbelieved; they hoped, and they
feared; and the arguments on each side appeared
equally indecisive. Grotius has a passage to the same
effect: Apud Græcos, observes he, ad quos eruditio us-
que a Chaldæis et Ægyptis perlata est, qui de vita
post hujus conspicue vitæ interitum spem habebant
aliquam, valde de ea re hesitanter loquebantur, &c.

"The Greek philosophers, who derived their learn-
ing from the Chaldeans and Egyptians, though they
had some idea of a future life, spoke with extreme
hesitation concerning it; as is evident from the dia-
logues of Socrates, the writings of Cicero, Seneca,
and others: and though they searched diligently for
arguments in proof of what they desired, they could

It was on this account that Socrates, in his de-
fence before the Athenians, observed: "No man
knows what death is, or whether it may not be the
greatest felicity which can arrive to us; yet every
one fears, and flies from it, as though it were sure to
prove his greatest misfortune." Plut. in Phed. But
this, as I have formerly noticed, was not all: for
anxious, even to the abjuration of every temporal
pleasure, to obtain the favour of the mysterious divi-
nity in a future state, if such were to be their por-
tion, and unacquainted with the precise means of ac-
quiring it, the trembling philosopher united in the
popular superstitions of the day; paid the homage
of adoration to the unworthy deities of the multi-
And as we now, through long anterior time,
Look back indifferent on the Punic hosts
That threaten’d Rome, when, with the din of war,
All shook tremendous heaven’s high cope beneath,
And doubtful hung the scale which pow’r should rule
Earth, main, and mortals, with unrivall’d sway;

tude, and were punctilious in attending at their temples. The source of these superstitious practices could not escape the eye of the founder of the Epicurean system. He had persuaded himself, that death is the final close of the soul as well as of the body; that, hereafter, there is nothing to be either hoped for or apprehended: and that the present life is a blessing which, terminate whenever it may, is entitled to an habitual thanksgiving and gratitude. Hence, all that remained to be done, the whole duty of man, consisted in using life so as not to abuse it; in devoting it to the attainment of the greatest portion of real and rational enjoyment; and in contemplating death as the quiet and peaceful mansion of everlasting repose.

Exchange the word everlasting for temporary, and the Christian may go hand in hand with him. And hence the reflections and observations which follow, though founded upon an erroneous creed, so far as relates to the immortality of the soul, and a future existence, are, in other respects, of universal application, and may be made subservient to universal benefit, as well as universal entertainment.”

The passage of Lucretius, which has drawn forth these observations, is deduced from a similar one in Epicurus. Laertius has inserted it in his tenth book:

Ver. 859. —with the din of war,
All shook tremendous heaven’s high cope beneath,
Mr. Wakefield conjectures that the verse, of which this passage is a translation, has some reference to the following line of Ennius preserved by Cicero, de Orat. iii. 42.

Africa terribili tremuit horrida terra tumultu.
With the tremendous tumult shook the shores Of shuddering Afrie.

Ver. 861. And doubtful hung the scale which pow’r should rule] Thus, Milton:
Th’ Eternal to prevent such horrid fray,
Hung forth in heav’n his golden scales, yet seenBetwixt Astraea and the Scorpion sign,Wherein all things created first he weigh’d,The pendulous round earth with balance’d airIn counterpoise, now ponders all events,Battles and realms.

Par. Lost, iv. 996.
Sic, ubi non erimus, quom corporis atque animae Discidium fuerit, quibus e sumus uniter aptei; Scilicet haud nobis quidquam, quei non erimus tum, Adcidere omnino poterit, sensumque movere: Non, si terra mari miscibitur, et mare coelo.

Et, si jam nostro sentit de corpore, post quam Detracta est animi natura, animaeque potestas; Nihil tamen est ad nos, qui comptu conjugioque Corporis atque animae consistimus uniter aptei. Nec, si materiam nostram conlegerit ætas Post obitum, rursumque redegerit, ut sita nunc est; Atque iterum nobis fuerint data lumina vitae; Pertineat quidquam tamen ad nos id quoque factum, Interrupta semel quom sit repetentia nostris; Et nunc nihil ad nos de nobis adtinet, ante Quoi fuimus: nec jam de illis non adficit, angor, Quos de materia nostra nova proferet ætas.

Nam, quom respicias inmensi temporis omne

Ver. 867. Though earth with main, or main commix with skies.] With this powerful verse may be compared the following couplet of Virgil, comprising the same imagery:

Jam calum terramque, meo sine numine, Venti, Miscere, et tantas audetis tollere moles? ÄEn. i. 137.

Dare ye, ye Winds! without my mandate given, Such tempests raise, and mingle earth with heav’n?

Ver. 868. E’en could the soul, the spirit still survive The wreck corporeal, and perception boast, &c.]

The whole of this passage is well translated by Dryden, excepting, indeed, that it has too much paraphrase:

Nay, e’en suppose, when we have suffer’d fate, The soul could feel in her divided state; What’s that to us? for we are only we While soul and body in one frame agree.

Nay, though our atoms should revolve by chance, And matter leap into the former dance;
So when we cease, and soul and body once
Meet their joint doom whose union form'd our lives,
No ill shall then molest us,—nought alarm
Our scatter'd senses, and dis sewer'd frame
Though earth with main, or main commix with skies.
E'en could the soul, the spirit still survive
The wreck corporeal, and perception boast,
To us what boots it, who exist alone
The joint result of soul and body mixt?
To us what boots it, should some future time
Collect our atoms, the dismantled frame
Restore entire, and e'en with life relume,
When once the mem'ry of ourselves is fled?
We heed not now what erst, in time elaps'd,
We have been, nor with anxious heart explore
What from our dust hereafter may arise:
For if thou weigh th' eternal tract of time
Evolv'd already, and the countless modes

Though time our life and motion could restore,
And make our bodies what they were before,—
What gain to us would all this bustle bring?
The new-made man would be another thing.
When once an interrupting pause is made,
That individual being is decay'd;
We who are dead and gone shall bear no part
In all the pleasures, nor shall feel the smart
Which to that other mortal shall accrue,
Whom, of our matter, time would mould anew.
For backward if you look on that long space
Of ages past, and view the changing face

Of matter toss'd, and variously combin'd
In sundry shapes; 'tis easy for the mind
From hence t' infer that seeds of things have been
In the same order as they now are seen;
Which yet our dark remembrance cannot trace;
Because a pause of life, a gaping space
Has come betwixt, where memory lies dead,
And all the wand'ring motions from the sense are fled.
Præteritum spatium; tum motus materiae
Multimodei quam sint; facile hocc' adcredere possis,
Semina sæpe in eodem, ut nunc sunt, ordine posta:
Nec memori tamen id quimus reprehendere mente;
Inter enim jacta est vitæ pausa, vagueque
Deerrarunt passim motus ab sensibus omnes.
Debet enim, misere est quoi forte ægreque futurum,
Ipse quoque esse in eo tum tempore, quoi male possit
Adcidere: id quoniam mors eximit, esseque prohibet
Illum, quoi possint inconmoda conciliari
Hæc eadem, quibus e nunc nos sumus, ante fuisse;
Scire licet nobis nihil esse in morte timendum:
Nic miserum fieri, qui non est, posse; neque hilum
Differre, a nullo fuerit jam tempore natus;
Mortalem vitam mors quom inmortalis ademit.

Ver. 894. — the man
To be who ceases, ceases from all woe;]
To
the same effect, Solomon, who, as I have already
had occasion to observe, was a Sadducean He-
brew, and, consequently, a disbeliever in the im-
mortality of the soul. "The living know that
they shall die; but the dead know not any thing;
neither have they any more reward, for even the
memory of them is forgotten. Their love, too,
and their hatred, and their envy, are, at this time,
perished; neither have they any more, for ever, a
portion in any thing that is done under the sun."
Ecl. ix. 5, 6.

Ver. 896. Nor aught imports it that he e'er was
born,
When death immortal claims his mortal life.] If
the soul perish with the body, the man who is dead
has no more connection with any kind of feeling or
animation, than if he had never been born. The
original text is as true to this interpretation as words
can be:
neque hilum
Differre, a nullo fuerit jam tempore natus;
Mortalem vitam mors quom inmortalis ademit;
and yet, neither Dryden, Marchetti, nor Guernier,
appears to have had any clear conception of the poet's
In which all matter moves, thou canst not doubt
That oft its atoms have the form assum'd
We bear ourselves this moment—though the mind
Recals not now those scenes of being past;
For many a pause the discontinuous chain
Of life has sever'd, and full many a mode
Of motion sprung to every sense adverse.
He to whom pain hereafter is decreed
Must then exist whene'er that pain arrives.
But as the man, whose atoms erst have liv'd,
Lives now unconscious of ills then sustain'd,
By death since decompos'd, and ev'ry pow'r
Of sense and mem'ry scatter'd—hence we prove
Death holds no sting t' alarm us; that the man
To be who ceases, ceases from all woe;
Nor aught imports it that he e'er was born,
When death immortal claims his mortal life.

And Stobæus has retained the ensuing distich in
a fragment of Linus:
'Ωδ' γερ αθάνατος θανάτος τιν παντα καλύπτων,
Ωντος τω' και παν θεωρει φθάνον'
Thus, death immortal, mortal things subverts,
For all is finite, and as finite fails.

In the same manner, Milton:
—and breath'd immortal love
To mortal men. Par. Lost, iii. 267.
Nor has Marchetti been inattentive to the same
figure:
—a cui tolta
Fu da morte immortal vita mortale.
Proinde, ubi se videas hominem indignarier ipsum, Post mortem fore, ut aut putescat corpore posto, Aut flammis interfiat, malisve ferarum; Scire licet, non sincerum sonere, atque subesse Cæcum aliquem cœrdi stimulum; quam vis neget ipse Credere se quemquam sibi sensum in morte futurum. Non, ut opinor, enim dat, quod promittit et unde, Nee radicitus e vita se tollit, et eicit; Sed facit esse sui quiddam super inscius ipse. Unus enim sibi quom proponit quisque, futurum Corpus utei volucres lacerent in morte, ferseque; Ipse sui miseret: neque enim se dividit hilum,

Ver. 898. Should' st thou, then, mark some fool, indignant, burn] The common editions of the original uniformly offer the following verse:
Proinde, ubi se videas hominem miserarier ipsum, which Mr. Wakefield, with commendable sagacity, has thus corrected from better authorities:
Proinde, ubi se videas hominem indignarier ipsum.
Democritus, though he denied the existence of an immaterial soul, yet as a great part of the human system is composed of intelligent atoms according to his hypothesis, was doubtful whether these atoms might not retain some feeling after death. The Pythagorean disciple, however, appears, from the following lines of Ovid, spoken in the character of Pythagoras himself, to have been as frequently subject to the same cowardly apprehensions as the disciples of Democritus:
O genus attonitum gelidæ formidine mortis. Quid Styga, quid tenebras, quid nomina vana timetis,

Materiem vatum, falsique pisaeula mundi?
Corpora sive rogus flammis, seu tabe vetustas
Abstulerit, mala posse pati non ulla putetis.
Morte carent anumæ; semperque, priore relicta
Sede, novis domibus habitant, vivuntque receptæ.

L. xv. 153.
O race, that start at Death's funereal gloom!
Why fear ye Styx, or stories of the tomb?
The vain conceits by priests, and poets told,
Lies that the world in pious bondage hold?
No pain ye feel, dissever bow ye may,
By blazing pyres, or Time's remote decay.
Souls never die; one mansion left behind,
They seek another, and another find.

It is astonishing to remark the dread that prevailed amongst the multitude of former times, and even as just noticed, the followers of many ancient philosophers, lest the corpse itself should continue to suffer during its consumption. Our poet expressly adverts to the alarm so generally excited by the mere idea of being devoured, after death, by a beast or
Book III. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Should'st thou, then, mark some fool indignant burn
At this alone, that, when existence fails,
His corse may moulder, or in flames consume,
Or sate, perchance, the jaws of savage beasts,—
Believe him not:—some secret dread still lurks
Of future pain, though e'en his lips deny
That sense, or thought can after death exist.
Thus, if I err not, he conceals his creed,
Believes not life all-ceases, but that still
Some future self his present will survive.
For he who, living, shudders at the thought
That birds or beasts his frame may soon devour,
That frame divides not, but his self confounds

It is to this passage, and this common feeling of the

bird of prey; and intimates, that something of the
same terror was attached to the contemplation of
every mode in which the deceased body could be dis-posed of. Of these different modes, the two most
common, as I have already observed, were those of
burying and burning, by which the corpse becomes a
prey to the worm, or to the flame; and it is to these
two general modes of bestowing the body after death,
and the torment attached to them by the multitude,
that Isaiah refers, in the following declaration of Jeho-

vah, ch. lvvi. 24:

And they shall go forth, and behold the carcases
Of the men who transgressed against me:
For their worm shall not die,
Neither shall their fire be quenched:
And they shall be an abhorrence unto all flesh.

Ver. 910. That frame divides not,—] There
is an obscurity in the original, which appears to
have arisen from a loss of the true reading of this
verse. In the common editions, we meet with it
thus:

Ipse sui miseret; neque enim se vincat hilum;

In Mr. Wakefield's impression, corrected from a
careful comparison of the best copies:

Ipse sui miseret, neque enim se dividit hilum:

but, still dissatisfied with the verse, he proposes the
following reading of his own:
Nec removet satis, a projecto corpore; et illud
Se fingit, sensuque suo contaminat adstans.
Hinc indignatur se mortalem esse creatum;
Nec videt, in verâ nullum fore morte alium se,
Qui possit vivus sibi se lugere peremptum,
Stansque jacentem se lacerari, urive, dolere.
Nam, si in morte malum est, malis morsuque ferarum
Tractari; non invenio, qui non sit acerbum,
Ignibus positum, calidis torrecere flammis;
Aut in melle situm subfocari, atque rigere
Frigore, quom summo gelidi cubat æquore saxi;

Ipse sui miseret; neque enim se dividit ipsum,
Nec removet, satis a projecto corpore; at illum
Se fingit.—

The meaning of our poet, however, is obvious, and
the translators do not differ greatly in their interpreta-
tions. The man, who trembles at the thought that his
body may be hereafter exposed to the ravages of birds
or beasts, or to any other similar destruction of its
component parts, does not divide or distinguish be-
tween the dead and the living machine; but secretly
apprehends, that the same consciousness and percep-
tion must appertain to each of them. Socrates, in
his conversation with Crito, after having drank the
fatal cup, is well known to have made a similar ob-
servation: “I can never,” said he, “persuade Crito,
that that alone is Socrates, which has the power of
arranging his arguments, and of conversing with
you; for he perpetually conceives, that what he
will presently behold dead is myself. He confounds
me with my carcass.” Plut. in Phæd.

Ver. 917. *If, too, the tiger’s tusk, the vulture’s
beak
Be deem’d an ill—what minor ill results
From the red fury, &c.—* The poet al-
ludes to the different modes of sepulture adopted by
ancient nations. The poorer classes were interred in
public cemeteries beyond the walls, or immediate
boundary of the town in which they died, in a sunk,
unnoticeable grave, without the more modern ap-
pendage of hillocks or tomb-stones. Of the richer
classes, the bodies of great numbers were burnt to ashes
on a magnificent pyre, and the ashes carefully collect-
ed, and deposited in an ornamented urn; while others
were embalmed after the Egyptian manner, with an
anti-putrescent preparation composed of honey and
spices, and then removed to some stone or marble
tomb provided for the express purpose. Heraclides
of Pontus advised the former mode of sepulture; De-
mocritus, the latter; Lucretius attacks them both
with much severity for expressing any anxiety upon
the subject.

That honey was the principal ingredient in the
preparation of the embalmer, we learn from the fol-
lowing statement of Xenophon, which relates to the
body of Agesipolis king of Sparta, lib. v. 3, 19,
Helen. Υελών ἡ Ἐστία τοῦ Ἡρακλείου Ἰππείου ταύτα, "Upon his death, his
corse was immersed in honey, and being thus con-
vveyed home, was interred in the royal sepulchre."
With his own future corse, whose dread decay
This self, he deems, must witness and partake.
Hence heaves his heart indignant at the doom
Of mortal man: heedless that, after death,
No other self shall then himself bemoan,
Nor feel the tooth that tears his mangled limbs.
If too, the tiger's tusk, the vulture's beak,
Be deem'd an ill—what lighter ill results
From the red fury of the fun'r'al pyre?
The fulsome tide of honey, o'er the frame
Pour'd, cold and stiff'ning in the marble tomb?

The body of Alexander the Great is well known to have been preserved in the same manner: and it is unquestionable, that the following couplet of Statius refers to this circumstance:

Duc et ad Æmathios manes, ubi belliger urbis
Conditor, Hyblaeo perfusus nectare, durat.

SILV. III. ii. 117.

Go, search the tombs; th'Æmathian victor's there,
Steep'd in the nectar Hyblâ's blossoms bear.

It is a curious coincidence of circumstances, that, while the British conquests in Asia are rapidly approaching on the west, or rather perhaps have already reached the limits of the conquests of this bold and successful warrior, the costly tomb to which his remains were committed, and to which our poet, in all probability, alludes, should be at this moment in the possession of the same country. For that the large and beautiful sarcophagus, surrendered, among many other curious antiquities, by Gen. Menou to Lord Hutchinson, upon the capture of Alexandria, and now in the British Museum, was the identical tomb in which the corse of Alexander was deposited after his death and embalming, has been of late incontrovertibly proved by the co-joint and very erudite, as well as entertaining, researches of Dr. Clarke, and my learned friend the Rev. S. Henley.

The custom of embalming is supposed to have originated in Egypt: whence the Hebrews, and especially after the residence of Joseph in that country, introduced it very generally among themselves. The body of Jacob was therefore prepared in this manner, the process occupying forty days before its completion; some time after which, it was conveyed, with much funeral pomp, to the sepulchre he had excavated in Canaan. See Gen. cap. I. 2, 3. The body of our Saviour was intended, by Joseph of Arimathea, to whom Pilate had granted it, to have been preserved in the same way: it was accordingly enveloped in clean linen, and deposited in its appropriate tomb; and the materials were actually prepared, when, by his resurrection, he rendered the friendly interposition of Joseph and his female disciples unnecessary. Luke, ch. xxiii. v. 50—56. xxiv. 1—3.

Artemisia, on the contrary, so widely celebrated for her conjugal affection and grief, preferred, as we learn from Gellius, the funeral pyre for the dead body of Mausolus, to the antiputrescent preparation of the embalmer. She erected a magnificent monument to his memory, on which his virtues were recorded in a prize epitaph. But, instead of committing the ashes of the corse to an urn, and enclosing this urn in the
Urguerive, superne obtritum, pondere terræ.

"Nam jam non domus adcipiet te læta, neque uxor
Optuma, nec dulces obcurrent oscula natei
Præripere, et tacitâ pectus dulcedine tangent.

monument consistently with general practice, the violence of her affliction induced her to swallow some portion of the ashes every day with her common beverage, till she had consumed the whole, and had thus constituted, of her own person, the tomb of her beloved husband. For a farther account of the ceremony of Grecian sepulture, see note on Book VI. v. 1330.

Ver. 918. ———

What lighter ill results
From the red fury of the fun'ral pyre?
The fulsome tide of honey o'er the frame
Pour'd, cold and stiff'ning in the marble tomb?
Or the sunk grave, by earth's vast pressure crush'd?

This passage is obviously imitated, in the following verses of Dr. Glynn's "Day of Judgment;"

What, though the great,
With costly pomp and aromatic sweets,
Embalm'd his poor remains; or through the dome
A thousand tapers shed their gloomy light,
While solemn organs to his parting soul Chaunted slow orisons?—Say, by what mark
Dost thou discern him from that lowly swain
Whose mouldering bones, beneath the thorn-bound turf
Long lay neglected?

Ver. 923. "But thy dear home shall never greet thee more!" This address is inimitably beautiful, and requires no critical finger to point out, either the delicacy of its pathos, or the strength of its argument. It is a perfect copy of the Athenian dirge; in the composition of which, the poet appears to have had a reference to that part of Plato's "Axiochus" which commences, Πατέρας τοῦ Προδίκου Ἀριστοκράτους, &c. The passage is too long for transcription: the learned reader may consult it at his leisure.

The Athenians were peculiarly celebrated for their dirges, or funeral orations; and Nardius, in an elaborate dissertation on this subject, has judiciously in-
Or the sunk grave, by earth's vast pressure crush'd?

"But thy dear home shall never greet thee more!

"No more the best of wives!—thy babes belov'd,

"Whose haste half-met thee, emulous to snatch

the funeral dirge which was composed on the occasion. The rowers had been previously instructed to perform a part in the solemn service, and they responded to the elegy with mournful ejaculations, while their oars struck in pathetic cadence to the measure of the sacred music. The history is related at large in Plutarch's life of this prince.

From the universality of this custom of funeral dirges in all ages, but particularly in the earlier, Gessner has, with great propriety, introduced it into the burial service of Abel—the first mortal who ever felt the stroke of death. The address, on this occasion, is as beautiful as it is pathetic; and I eagerly insert it in the present place, with a view of proving how superior are the consolations of revealed religion to the most forcible supports of ancient philosophy:

O wie erbärmlich liegt seine hülle da!—Du unser trost, du unser entzücken, Abel! ach du hast uns verlassen; und unser sißes geschäfte wird seyn, um dich zu weinen, bis in die stunde unseres todes um dich zu weinen. Ja, du bist hinübergegangen in die seligkeit, deren erwartung dir so manche heilige thran'entlockt; deren erwartung mir so manche thran' entlockt. O wir weinen dir nach, aus diesem schatten des todes dir nach! du hast uns verlassen, und unser sißes geschäfte wird seyn, bis in die gewünschte stunde des todes um dich zu weinen. Death of Abel, Book V. "O how woeful is the sight of his extended corse! thou, our consolation, thou, our delight! Abel! ah, thou hast left us, and our sweetest employment shall be to weep over thee; to the hour of death to weep over thee. Yes, thou art now in possession of that felicity, the contemplation of which has drawn from thee so many holy tears; the contemplation of which has drawn so many tears from myself. But O! we still weep for thee—still weep for thee in these shadows of death! Thou hast left us, and, till the wished-for hour of death, we will weep over thee."

With these two elegant specimens of funeral oration, the reader may compare that inimitable dirge, the first of which we have any account, contained in the lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan.

2 Sam. i. 19. The whole compass of Grecian poetry has nothing equal to it:

O roe of Israel! slain art thou in thine own fastnesses!

How are the mighty fallen!—

Speak not in Gath; keep silence in the streets of Askalon:

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

Mountains of Gilboa! and ye lofty fields!

Let neither dew nor rain fall upon you:

For there the useless shield of the mighty was thrown away;

The shield of Saul no longer anointed with unction;

From the blood of the brave, from the strength of the valiant,

The bow of Jonathan recoiled not,

Nor the sword of Saul returned empty.

Worthy of love were Saul and Jonathan,

Dear to each other in their lives,

And in their deaths not divided.

More swift were they than eagles,

More courageous than lions.

Lament, ye daughters of Israel! over Saul,

Who clothed you in delightful scarlet;

Who adorned your apparel with golden trinkets.

How are the mighty fallen

In the midst of the battle!

O Jonathan! slain hast thou been upon thine own fastnesses!

Agonized am I for thee, my brother Jonathan!

Delicious hast thou been unto me;

Wonderful was thy love for me, beyond the love of women.
DE RERUM NATURA.

How are the mighty fallen!
And the weapons of war perished!

Ver. 924. — "Thy babes beloved,
Whose haste half met thee, emulous to snatch
The duteous kiss — ] I must not here forbear to quote a beautiful passage of Homer, towards which, as Lambinus has justly observed, Lucretius appears to have thrown his eye in this exquisite delineation, and whence, perhaps, he drew the rudiments of one of his most pathetic traits:

Oti mal' ev deinaos, os adyavanou makoito,
Oud' evi mid piaiies roi mououa pontaixo
Eldont' ev polimew, kai aìnes dýnontos I. E. 407.

Know thou, who'er with heavenly power contends,
Short is his date, and soon his glory ends.

From fields of death, who late he shall retire,
No infant on his knees shall call him sire.

But though Lucretius may, perhaps, with respect to one idea, be a copyist of Homer, Virgil is a far closer copyist of Lucretius. Yet he has written, as Dr. Warton judiciously asserts, with less tenderness and effect:

Interea dutes pendent circum oscula nati:
Casta pudicitiam servat domus. Georcii. ii. 523.

He feels the father's and the husband's bliss,
His infants climb, and struggle for a kiss;
His modest house strict chastity maintains.

Warton.

Our own language boasts of a variety of imitations of this elegiac and exquisite passage: of which several are possessed of great feeling and simplicity. The following is from the pathetic muse of Gray:

For them, no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run, to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees, the envied kiss to share.

The two last lines are, very nearly, a verbal translation. The next imitation to which I shall refer, is by Thomson: it is freer than that of Gray; but executed with equal felicity. It occurs in his Winter, to which season it particularly advert:

In vain for him th' officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment warm:
In vain, his little children, peeping out
Into the mingled storm, demand their sire
With tears of artless innocence. Alas!
Nor wife nor children more shall he behold,
Nor friends, nor sacred home.

It is not unlikely that Thomson, rather than Lucretius, has been copied in this delineation by Klopstock, in the following verses, which comprise a part of the meditations of the repentant Abadonna:

Soll ich gehen und schaun den mann, der dort mit dem tode,
Und mit gedanken von jenem gericht in schreckender angst ringt?
Soll ich sehen das blut des erschlagenen? Vielleicht, das er ruhig.
In den schatten der nacht fortelte, stammelnde kinder
"The dulcet kiss that rous'd thy secret soul,
"Again shall never hasten!—nor thine arm,
"With deed heroic, guard thy country's weal!—
"O mournful, mournful fate!" thy friends exclaim,
"One envious hour of these invalued joys
"Robst thee for ever!"—But they add not here,
"It robs thee, too, of all desire of joy :"
A truth, once utter'd, that the mind would free

An dem halse der mutter mit waterfreudun zu grüssen ;
Da erschlug ihn ein launenderfeind, ein morden im dunkeln !
Come, let me see the man that yonder lies
Dying, and wrung with anguish as he dies ;
And mark his gory wounds. In dead of night
Haply he hasted, with a sire's delight,
To clasp his babes, that round their mother's knee,
Lisp'd his dear name. These never shall he see !
By ruthless ruffians murder'd !—

Equally in point, with both these citations, is the following, by Collins; affording a picture which yields to neither of them in tenderness or beauty. It comprises a part of his well-known description of the Kelpie, or water-fiend:

For him, in vain, his anxious wife shall wait,
Or wander forth to meet him on his way ;
For him, in vain, at to-fall of the day,
His babes shall linger at th' unclosing gate.—
Ah ! ne'er shall he return !—

I add the following from Dyer, because, though it offers a parallel, if not a copied image, it directs it to a happier purpose. The poet is representing the agricultural providence of a worthy cottager with whom he was acquainted, and who never suffered the growth of useless trees about the few acres he occupied:

Only a slender tuft of useful ash,
And mingled beech, and elm, securely tall,
The little smiling cottage warm embower'd :
Dissolvant animi magno se angore, metuque.
Tu quidem, ut es, lecto sopitus, sic eris, ævi
Quod super est, cunctis privatus doloribus Ægris:
At nos horrifisco cinefactum de prope busto
Insatiabiliter deflebimus; æternunqne
Nulla dies nobis mœorem e pectore demet.

loved me. As I return from the field or the flock,
joyfully ye throng together, and call to me from
the sill of the door; and, clunging round my knees,
receive, with childish rapture, the little presents I
bring you—O how does your pure and innocent happi
ness transport me !

Ver. 934. — “ Thou art safe !
“ The sleep of death protects thee ! and secures
“ From all th' unnumber'd woes of mortal life !]
If our poet had his eye directed towards Homer
in the former part of this pathetic dirge, it is at least
equally probable that, in composing the verses,
of which these now cited are a translation, he was not
without recollecting the following lines from the same
exquisite muse:

Σίνερα μη τιθημητο χορτο κατα γαια καλουτοι,
Πρα γ' ιμι της τη γαρ τη υλικημα τυθηκα.
Il. Z. 463.
May I lie cold before that dreadful day,
Prest with a load of monumental clay.
Thy Hector, wrapt in everlasting sleep,
Shall neither hear thee sigh, nor see thee weep.

POPE.

There is also a passage in Virgil, so perfectly simi
lar, that it is highly probable either Homer or Lucre
tius furnished him with the first conception of it:

Tum me confectum curis, sonnoque gravatum
Infelix habuit thalamus ; pressitque jacentem
Dulcis et alta quies, placidaque simillima morti.
Æn. vi. 520.

Then, freed from cares, the funeral couch pos
sess'd
My weary limbs, and lull'd to quiet rest;

To sweet, unbroken slumber, sound as death
When, in soft whispers, he demands the breath.

In the following exquisite and pathetic verses from
the well-known epitaph on Bion by Moschus, the
same metaphor of sleep, eternal sleep, is admirably
introduced. The translation, which I shall subfix,
is highly spirited, and entitled to much praise;
though, in some measure, too araphrastic:

Ας αι ται μαλαις μην επι κατα κατο ολωται,
Τη τη χλωρα στιλπνη, το τε ευθαλης αολο ααιδην,
Υστερον αν έγνωσι, και εις τον αλλο φωσι
Αμμες ε' ς αμαγοι και κερας τη σοφης αηδης,
Οπτοτε πρωτο δανυμη εικανοι εχ ξον καλα
Εωτης τι ρακα ται αερισα συγνωτον υπον.

The meanest herb we trample in the field,
Or in the garden nurture, when its leaf
At winter's touch is blasted, and its place
Forgotten, soon its vernal buds renews,
And, from short slumber, awakes to life again.
Man wakes no more ! Man valiant, glorious, wise,
When death once chills him, sinks in sleep profound,
A long, unconscious, never-ending sleep.

GISBORNE.

Spencer has betrayed an obvious imitation of this
beautiful address of Lucretius, in the following
verses. But this is by no means wonderful: for we
have often already detected him exploring our sub
lime Bard for elegant description, and pathetic sim
plicity:

He there dots now enjoy eternal rest,
And happy ease, which thou dost want, and crave,
And further from it daily wanderest:
What, if some little pain the passage have,
That makes frail flesh to fear the bitter wave?
From every dread, and trouble. "Thou art safe! The sleep of death protects thee! and secures From all th' unnumber'd woes of mortal life! While we, alas! the sacred urn around That holds thine ashes, shall insatiate weep, "Nor time destroy th' eternal grief we feel!"

Is not short pain well borne, that brings long ease, And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave? Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas, Ease after war, death after life, does greatly please.

FAIRY QUEEN.

Shakespeare has caught the spirit of the same metaphor, in the beginning of Hamlet's soliloquy: To be, or not to be?—that is the question— Whether 'tis nobler, in the mind, to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And, by opposing, end them?—to die—to sleep— No more! and, by a sleep, to say we end The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks That flesh is heir to:

Ver. 939. "Nor time destroy th' eternal grief we feel.
Thus Virgil, and in almost the same words:
Nulla dies unquam memor ori vos eximor aequo.

No time your mem'ry ever shall destroy.
Illud ab hoc igitur quærundum est, quid sit amari
Tanto opere, ad somnum si res rēdit, atque quietem,
Quīr quisquam æternō possit tabescere luctu?
Hocc’ etiam faciunt, ubi discubuerē tenentque
Pocula sēpe homines, et inumbrant ora cororiis;

And thus Ercilla, probably with an eye equally
directed to the whole of this address of our own
poet:

Que y á el dolor me ha puesto en tal estremo
Que mas la vida que la muerte temo.
Que no se mal que y á dañar me pueda
Ni ay bien mayor que no le aver tenido,
Accabese y fenezca lo que queda
Puesque mi dolce amigo ha fenecido.

Fly then! ye hours, that keep me from the dead;
For he, the spirit of my life, is fled.

Ver. 940. What then has death, if death be mere
repose,
And quiet only in a peaceful grave,
What has it thus to mar this life of man?
Ovid has thus imitated this passage with much spirit
and felicity:
Stulte, quid est somnus, gelide nisi mortis imago?
Longa quiescendi tempora fata dabunt.

Hayley.

Ver. 941. — E'en o'er the festive board,
The glass while grasping, and with garlands
crown'd.] Dryden has well paraphrased
the whole of this passage, as he has, indeed, all the
remaining verses of this book:
What then has death, if death be mere repose,
And quiet only in a peaceful grave,
What has it thus to mar this life of man?
 Yet mar it does. E'en o'er the festive board,
The glass while grasping, and, with garlands crown'd,

When healths go round, and kindly brimmers flow,
Till the fresh garlands on their foreheads glow,
They whine and cry, "Let us make haste to live;
Short are the joys that human life can give!"
Eternal preachers! who corrupt the draught,
And pall the god, who never thinks, with thought:
Idiots! with all that thought, to whom the worst
Of death, is want of drink, and endless thirst.

Nothing was so common, amidst the festivals of
all ancient nations, as the introduction of wreaths or
garlands of flowers. In the nuptial ceremonies of the
Hebrews, the bridegroom was always encircled with
a costly ornament of this kind, which is the decora-
tion referred to by Isaiah in cap. lixi. 10. and in some
readings, is literally so rendered. It is also more
clearly designated in various places of the Psalms,
and especially in the Song of Songs. But, at other
feasts, as well as at the bridal banquet, a similar
chaplet was introduced: thus, in Lamentations,
cap. v. 15.

The joy of our heart is ceased!
Our dance is turned into mourning!
The crown is fallen from our heads!

Anacreon is perpetually alluding to the same cus-
tom; and hence the following verses of Sophocles:

Κείθει, οὕτω στείρον,
Οὔτι ζώον κακῆς,
Νυμφίας ἡμος τίρων ἰμών
Οὔτι γάλακτος αὐλις στειρο.

By war disturb'd, the genial board
No longer will its sweets afford;
Their fragrant odours round my head
The verdant wreaths no longer spread;
Nor music's charms my soul delight.

Mr. Cumberland has hence, with much pro-
piety, decorated Belial with a similar chaplet, whom
Milton had before celebrated as the daemon of wine
and concupiscence:

—around his temples twine'd
A wreath of roses; and, where'er he pass'd,
His garments fan'd a breeze of rich perfume.

Among the Greeks and Romans, however, not
only the visitors themselves were encircled with gar-
lands of flowers, but even the servants, and the gob-
lets as well. Thus, Homer:

Κρυστάλλοις επητείαν οὐτοί ποτίνα:
Their flowing bowls they crown'd.

And Virgil:

Τυμ Πατερ Ανχίσεως μεγανόν κρατέρα
Induit, implevitque mero.

Then round the bowl a roseat crown profuse
Anchises strew'd, and fill'd with sparkling juice.

At times, indeed, the floor itself of the room in
which the festive train assembled, was completely
strewed with roses and other odorous flowers; and
Pliny expressly tells us, that this voluptuous cere-
mony was adopted to dispel, by the fragrancy of
the perfume, that heaviness and stupefaction which
too frequently succeed excessive drinking. Hist.
Nat. xxi. 19. It is a custom still prevalent in Per-
sia and Arabia, and is alluded to in the following
stanza of Rakeck, one of the improvisatori minstrels
of the latter country, who existed during the most
flourishing period of the Caliphate. The translation is
by Mr. Carlyle, and occurs in his specimens of Ara-
bian poetry:

Though the peevish tongues upbraid,
Though the brows of wisdom scowl,
Ex animo ut dicant, "Brevis hic' est fructus homullis:
"Jam fuerit; neque post umquam revocare licebit!"
Tamquam in morte mali cum primis hoc sit eorum,
Quod sitis exurat miseros atque arida torreat,
Aut aliae quibus desiderium insideat rei.
Nec sibi enim quisquam tum se vitamque requiret,
Quom pariter mens et corpus, sopita, quiescunt;
Nam licet æternum per nos sic esse soporem:

---

Fair ones! here on roses laid,
Careless will we quaff the bowl.

There is a custom of high antiquity still retained
in Wales, which is not very different from this of
Greece and Arabia; but which, in point of innocence
and picturesque effect, is far more commendable: I mean that of collecting and strewing roses,
and other odoriferous flowers, at the annual village
wake of sheep-shearing, antecedently to the banquet
which is afterwards liberally provided for the artless
and honest swains. These fragrant flowers, however,
are not strewed in the open shade, under the coolness
of which the feast is celebrated; but, with a
kind of religious rite, borrowed, perhaps, many an
age ago, from the borderers upon the Ganges,
sprinkled over the river, in whose purifying stream
the ceremony of sheep-shearing has just been completed,
and whose limpid fulness affords them the
fairest promise of plenty for the ensuing year. Dyer,
in his Fleece, has not neglected to avail himself of
this picturesque custom; and he thus notices it with
ture poetic skill:

——with light fantastic toe the nymphs
Thither assembled, thither every swain:
And o'er the dimpled stream a thousand flowers,
Pale lilies, roses, violets, and pinks,
Mixt with the greens of burnet, mint, and thyme,
And trefoil, sprinkled with their sportive arms.—
Such custom holds along th' irriguous vales,

From Wreakin's brow to rocky Dolvoryn,
Sabrina's early haunt, ere yet she fled
The search of Guendolen, her step-dame proud,
With envious hate enraged. The jolly cheer
Spread on a mossy bank, untouch'd abides
Till cease the rites; and now the mossy bank
Is gaily circled, and the jolly cheer
Dispers'd in copious measures. Book I.

Ver. 948. As if, in death, the worst such wretches fear'd
Were thirst unquenched, parching ev'ry nerve,

It is probable, our poetic moralist alludes, in this
place, to the following of that hoary but musical
drunken, Anacreon:

οίλιοι στίφοις καραίς,
Δοξ ὕδωρ, βαλ' οὖν ὑπὸ τοις,
Τὸν ψυγό μοι καρποσίν.
Ερικυ χιλ ζώντα καλαπτής,
Ο Σαμού σαντιπάμι.

Thus elegantly, but diffusively translated by Mr.
Moore:

Age begins to blanch my brow,
I've time for nought but pleasure now.
Fly—and cool my goblet's glow
At yonder fountain's gelid flow;
I'll quaff, my boy, and calmly sink
This soul to slumber as I drink.
Soon, too soon, my jocund slave,
You'll deck your master's grassy grave;
The thoughtless maniacs oft indignant roar,
"How short the joys of wine!—e'en while we drink
Life ceases, and to-morrow ne'er returns!"
As if, in death, the worst such wretches fear'd
Were thirst unquenched, parching ev'ry nerve,
Or deem'd their passions would pursue them still.
Not anxious, thus, mankind the world resign
At evening hour when soul and body rest;

And there's an end; for ah! you know
They drink but little wine below.
The Arabian poet Tarafa, however, surpasses
Anacreon infinitely in his devotion to the pleasures
of drinking; and, in the language of our poet, seems
literally afraid of unquenchable thirst after death.
It is thus he expresses himself in his Albecriyyo,
one of the seven poems that, on account of their
merit, were transcribed in letters of gold, and sus-
pended, where indeed we should scarcely have ex-
pected to find a poem of this description, in the
temple at Mecca:

Fadhernei arawe hâmete hâ Hayahâhâ
Mcâhâshah shirbin' fei álhhayâhi mosâarredi
Care'mon' yorawwei nafsâhu fei hhayâtâhi
Setâmâmì in mutnâ gadân' âyyonâ âlsâdei

"Suffer me, whilst I live, to drench my head
with wine, lest, having drunk too little in my life-
time, I should be thirsty in another state.
A man of my generous spirit drinks his full
draught to-day; and to-morrow, when we are dead,
it will be known which of us has not quenched his
thirst." Sir W. Jones.

Ver. 946. ———"e'en while we drink
"Life ceases,—" Juvenal has elegantly imi-
tated this querulous and impertinent observation of
the drinking debauchee in the following verses:

Nunc mihi quid suades post damnum temporis, et

Deceptas? Festinat enim decurre, velox
Flosculus, angustae, miseræque brevissima vitae
Portio: dum bibimus, dum serta, unguenta puellas,
Poscimus, obriet non intellecta senectus.

SAT. ix. 125.

Now what's thy antidote for hopes destroy'd?
Time basely murder'd? pleasures unenjoy'd?
Lo! the brief blossom hastens to decay
That, mid its sufferings, soothes life's little day.
E'en while we drink, while girls and garlands
cheer,
And flowing ointments—idiot age is here.

Ver. 949.—thirst unquenched, parching every
nerve,] This metaphorical mode of express-
ing the effect of extreme thirst is by no means un-
common, either in ancient or modern times. Thus,
Ovid:

Copia nulla famem relevit: sitiis arida guttur
Urb.——

MET. xi. 129.

No store contents him; thirst unquenched still
Burns all his throat.
And Mr. Cumberland, in his Calvary, describing
the punishment of Satan:
Panting he roll'd in streams of scalding sweat,
Parch'd with intolerable thirst; one drop
Of water then to cool his raging tongue
Had been a boon worth all his golden shrines.
Nec desiderium nostri nos adgitit ullum:
Et tamen haud quaquam nostros tun c illa per artus
Longe ab sensiferis primordia motibus errant;
Quom conrectus homo ex somno se conligit ipse.
Multo igitur mortem minus ad nos esse putandum est:
Si minus esse potest, quam quod nihil esse videmus.
Major enim turbæ disjectus materiai
Consequitur leto; nec quisquam expergitus exstat,
Frigida quem semel est vita’i pausa sequuta.

Denique, si vocem rerum Natura repente
Mittat, et hocc’ aliquoi nostrùm sic increpet ipsa:
“ Quid tibi tanto opere est, Mortalis, quod nimis ægris
“ Luctibus indulges? Quid mortem congregis, ac fles?
“ Nam, gratum fuerit tibi vita ante acta, priorque,
“ Et non omnia, pertusum congeta quasi in vas,
“ Conmoda perfluxere, atque ingrata interiere;
“ Quur non, ut, plenus vitae, conviva, recedis,
“ ΑÆquo animoque capis securam, stulte, quietem?

Ver. 972. “ Why quift thou not, thou fool! the feast of life
“ Fulld,Horace has an imitation of this passage, in the following verses:
Unde sit ut raro, qui se vivisse beatum

Dicat, et exacto contentus tempore vita
Cedat, ut conviva satus, reperire queamus. SAT. i. 1.
Whence thus unfrequent see we that the man,
Who, blest through life, has reach’d its utmost span,
Nor would they though that rest were ne’er to end:
Nor thus the day’s desire pursues their dreams;
Though then the seeds of sense not wander far
From sensile movements, scarcely, oft, allay’d,
And quick resum’d when starts the soul at morn.
Of much less moment, then, should death be held
Than sleep, if aught can less than that which ne’er
Moment excites whatever; for the crowd
Of sensile seeds are wider here disperst;
Nor wakes he e’er to action, and the day,
Whose frame once feels the chilling pause of life.

Were then the Nature of Created Things
To rise abrupt, and thus repining man
Address—"O mortal! whence these useless fears?
"This weak, superfluous sorrow? why th’ approach
"Dread’st thou of death? For if the time elaps’d
"Have smil’d propitious, and not all its gifts,
"As though adventur’d in a leaky vase,
"Been idly wasted, profitless, and vain—
"Why quit’st thou not, thou fool! the feast of life
"Fill’d,—and with mind all panting for repose?

Should, like the guest, contented with his fare,
Rise from the feast, nor ask an ampler share.
Thus, too, Cicero, de Senectute, ad fin. Ex vita ita discedo, tanquam ex hospitio, non tamen ex domo: commorandi enim natura diversorium nobis, non habitandi dedit, "I depart from life as from a caravansary, and not from a home; for nature has given to us a house of entertainment rather than a mansion."
"Sin ea, quae fructus quomque es, periere profusa;
"Vitaque in obfenso est; quur amplius addere quæris,
"Rursum quod pereat, mali, et ingratum obcidat omne? 955
"Non potius vitae finem jacis, atque laboris?
"Nam, tibi præterea quod machiner inveniamque,
"Quod placeat, nihil est: eadem sunt omnia semper.
"Si tibi nonannis corpus jam marcat, et artus
"Confectei languent; eadem tamen omnia restant,
"Omnia si perges vivendo vincere secla;
"Atque etiam potius, si numquam sis moriturus:"—
Quid respondemus, nisi justam intendere litem
Naturam, et veram verbis exponere caussam?

At, qui obitum lamentetur miser amplius æquo,
Non merito inclamat magis, et voce increpet acri?
"Aufer, ab hinc, lacrumas, Barathre, et conpesce querelas."
Grandior heic vero si jam, seniorque, queratur:
"Omnia perfunctus vitae præmia, marces;
"Sed, quia semper aves, quod abest, præsentia temnis,
"But if thyself have squander'd every boon,
And of the past grown weary—why demand
More' days to kill, more blessings to pervert,
Nor rather headlong hasten to thine end?
For nothing further can my powers devise
To please thee;—things for ever things succeed
Unchang'd,—and would do, though revolving years
Should spare thy vigour, and thy brittle frame
Live o'er all time: e'en amplier would'st thou then
Mark how unvaried all creation moves.”
Were Nature thus t' address us, could we fail
To feel the justice of her keen rebuke?
So true the picture, the advice so sage
But to the wretch who moans th' approach of death
With grief unmeasur'd, louder might she raise
Her voice severe—“Vile coward! dry thine eyes—
Hence with thy sniv'ling sorrows, and depart!”
Should he, moreo'er, have past man's mid-day hour—
"What! thou lament? already who hast reap’d

were necessary in this place, Terence would readily supply the office, by the following apt parallelism:
—Nihil pol jam isthaec mihi res voluptatis ferunt :
Dum ætatis tempus tulit, perfuncta satis sum :
sativas jam tenet
Studiorum istorum: haec mihi nunc cura est
Longinquitas ætatis obstet; mortemve expectet
mean.

Heic video me esse invisam inmerito: tempus-est
concedere.
HEAUT. IV. iii. 17.
For joys like these I care not, at this hour;
I've had my portion, and still own their pow'r.
Now all I ask for is, that I may ne'er
Rob, by long life, another of his share;
Tempt him my death to long for, as too slow,
And hate my sight;—I feel 'tis time to go.
"Inperfecta tibi elabsa est, ingrataque, vita; "Et nec opinanti mors ad caput adstitit ante,
"Quam satur, ac plenus, possis discedere, rerum.
"Nunc aliena tua tamen ætate omnia mitte,
"Æquo animoque, age dum, magnis concede; necesse est:" 975
Jure, ut opinor, agat; jure increpet, inciletque.
Cedit enim, rerum novitate extrusa, vetustas
Semper, et ex aliis aliud reparare necesse est:
Nec quisquam in barathrum, nec Tartara deditur atra.
Materies opus est, ut crescant postera secla:
Quæ tamen omnia te, vitâ perfuncta, sequentur:
Nec minus ergo ante hæc, quam tu, cecidere cadentque.
Sic alid ex alio numquam desistet oriri:
Vitaque mancipio nulli datur, omnibus usu.

Ver. 993. —-" by desiring thus
"The past once more, the present thou abhor'rest,"] Our poet refers to the following passage of Democritus: Λοιπων των αυτοις εργοται τα δε παραστα, και παραχθειν ειρηκαλωτε ευτα, αμαλναιουσιν. The text itself renders an express version superfluous.

Ver. 998. " Leave, then, to others bliss thy years should shun;
"Come, cheerful leave it, since still leave thou must."] Thus, Horace, to the same effect; and, as Lambinus has observed, with an eye directed to this passage of our own poet:
Vivere si recte nescis, decede peritis.

Lusisti satis, edisti satis, atque bibisti;
Tempus abire tibi est. Ep. ii. 2.
Life now grown tasteless, from its banquet rise,
And leave to others who may better prize.
Deep hast thou drench'd its sports, its feats, its wine,—
To others leave them, to depart is thine.
To the same effect is the following passage of Persius, deriving an equal benefit from the labours of our poet:
Indulge genio ; carptamus dulcia; nostrum est
Quod vivis : cinis, et manes, et fabula fies.
Vive memori lethi: fugit hora. Sat. v. 151.
"An ample harvest? by desiring thus
"The past once more, the present thou abhor'st,
"And life flies on imperfect, unenjoy'd,
"And death untimely meets thee, ere thy soul,
"Cloy'd with the banquet, is prepar'd to rise.
"Leave, then, to others bliss thy years should shun;
"Come cheerful leave it, since still leave thou must."

Justly I deem might Nature thus reprove:
For, through creation, old to young resigns,
And this from that matures; nor aught descends
To the dread gulphs, the fancied shades of hell.
The mass material must survive entire
To feed succeeding ages, which, in turn,
Like thee shall flourish, and like thee shall die;
Nor more the present ruins than the past.
Thus things from things ascend; and life exists
To none a freehold, but a use to all.

Ah! think, vain schemer! how the moments fly;
The instant now observ'd, is time gone by:
Seize, then, the hour; thy way with roses strew,
Thy days make happy, for they must be few:
Enjoy the world, ere yet oblivion be,
And dust and ashes all that rest of thee.

Drummond.

Ver. 1005. ——succeeding ages, which, in turn,
Like thee shall flourish, and like thee shall die;]

Ver. 1008. ——life exists

There is an apposite and admirable description of the
same kind in the Berrathon of Ossian, Vol. II. p. 105: "The chiefs of other times are departed; the
sons of future years shall pass away; another race
shall arrive. The people are like the waves of
ocean; like the leaves of woody Morven, they pass
away in the rustling blast, and other leaves lift their
green heads on high." In like manner, Dyer, with
a parallel idea, in his Ruins of Rome:

—so revolves the scene;
So time ordains, who rolls the things of pride
From dust again to dust.

Ver. 1008. ——life exists

To none a freehold, but a use to all.] This ele-
gant apopthegm, so forcibly expressed by our poet,
comprises the sum and substance of every moral
virtue. It is well translated by Marchetti:
Respice item, quam nihil ad nos ante acta vetustas
Temporis æterni fuerit, quam nascimur, ante.
Hocc’ igitur speculum nobis Natura futuri
Temporis exponit post mortem denique nostram.
Num quid ibi horribile adparet ? Num triste videtur
Quidquam ? Non omni somno securius exstat ?

Atqui animarum etiam, quæquamque Acherunte profundo
Prodita sunt esse, in vitâ sunt omnia nobis:

E fu dalla natura il viver dato
A nessun in mancipio, a tutti in uso.
Euripides had long before observed :

———ov ti yap nuktymia
‘Μετατεθέντος αὐτοῦ πλατώσατο γενοσ. Suppl. 535.
For not our own the life we hold, nor thus
Should man compute it.
And Bentley has quoted a passage upon the present
occasion, from pedo Albinovanus, strongly expressive
of the same idea :

Vita data est utenda; data est sine faenorc nobis
Mutus, nec certa persoluenra die.
Cowper appears to have had our poet in his recol
lection, in the following sentence :
———human life
Is but a loan, to be repaid with use. Task iii.

Ver. 1016. The tales of hell exist not———] So, Ju
venal :

Esse aliquos Manes, et subterranea regna
Et contum, et Styglo ranas in gurgite nigros,
Atque unâ transire vadum tot millia cymbâ,
Nec puero credunt, nisi qui nondum ere lavantur.

II. 149.

That angry Justice form’d a dreadful hell,
That ghosts in subterranean regions dwell,
That hateful Styx his muddy current rolls,
And Charon ferries o’er unbodied souls,
Are now as tales, or idle fables priz’d,
By children question’d, and by men despis’d.

Giffard.

Ver. 1016. The tales of hell exist not in the grave,
But here, and curse us living.———] The poet
proceeds to assert, and illustrate, that all the fables
of the popular mythology, respecting future punish
ments, are merely allegorical representations of the ef
fects of vice, and illicit passions, in the present world ;
Reflect, moreo'er, how less than nought to us
Weighs the long portion of eternal time
Fled ere our birth: so, too, the future weighs
When death dissolves us. What of horror, then,
Dwells there in death? what gloomy, what austere?
Can there be elsewhere slumber half so sound?

The tales of hell exist not in the grave,
But here, and curse us living. **Tantalus,**

and selects, for this purpose, the well-known instances of Tantalus, Tityus, Sisyphus, and the daughters of Danaus. In this explanation, he has been copied by the Abbé Pellegrin, in the prologue to whose drama of *Le Nouveau Monde,* Mercury thus addresses Astrea:

De plus affreux transports, des plus noirs fureurs
J'ai trouvé la terre agitée;
Elle est fertile en successeurs
De Titye et de Prometheé,
Les Tantales, les Ixions
Ont inondé votre patrie;
Et l'empire de flots a bien moins de furie
Que le regne des passions.

Of hideous joys, and furies fell,
Mankind I found the constant sport;
Prometheus, Tityus, seem'd from hell
Their fiercest toils and pangs t'import.
There, many a Tantalus, in vain,
Strivess—while new wheels th'Ixions scourge.
Upbraid, no more, the stormy main—
A direr storm the passions urge.

Ver. 1017. — **Tantalus,**

With broad, rough rock impending o'er his head,
According to the mythology of the Greeks, Tantalus was a son of Jupiter, by the nymph Plote; he was also king of Phrygia, and grandfather of Agamemnon and Menelaus. It is fabulously reported of him, that, on some signal occasion, he invited the gods to an entertainment; and, to prove their pretensions to divinity, had his own son Pelops sacrificed, and served up in a dish at the table. We are told, also, that all the deities, excepting Ceres, were conscious of the barbarity committed, and immediately sentenced him to everlasting punishment in hell. The nature of this punishment is differently related: the more general fable asserts, that he was placed in the river Eridanus, with his head alone raised above the water, and perpetually tormented with hunger and thirst; both which appetites he was precluded from gratifying, notwithstanding that the tip of his tongue was suffered to touch the water in which he was immersed, and that a large quantity of tempting apples were hung immediately around his head. It is to this fable Horace refers, in the following lines:

Tantalus a labris sitiens fugientia captat
Flumina. Quid rides? mutato nomine, de te
Fabula narratur. Congestis undique saccis
Indormis inhians, et tanquam parcere sacris
Cogeris, aut pictis tanquam gaudere tabellis.

In a full flood stands Tantalus,—his skin
Wash'd o'er in vain; for ever dry within:
He catches at the stream with greedy lips;
From his touch'd mouth the wanton torrent slips.
You laugh? yet, change the name, the fable is thy story;
Thou in a flood of useless wealth dost glory;
Nec miser inpendens magnum timet, aëre, saxum
Tantalus, ut fama est, cassa formidine torpens;
Sed magis in vitâ divôm metus urguet inanis
Mortaleis; casumque timent, quem quoique ferat fors.

Nec Tityon volucres ineunt, Acherunte jacentem;
Nec, quid sub magno scrutentur pectore, quidquam
Perpetuam æatem possunt reperire profecto,
Quam lubet inmani project corporis extet:
Qui non sola novem dispersis jugera membris
Obtineat, sed qui terraï totius orbem,
Non tamen æternum poterit perferre dolorem;
Nec præbere cibum proprio de corpore semper.
Sed Tityos nobis hicc’ est, in amore jacentem
Quem volucres lacerant, atque exest anxius angor:

Which thou canst only touch, but never taste.
The abundance still, and still the want does last.

But Lucretius supposes a different punishment,
and deduces, in some degree, a different moral: he
represents him as placed in the infernal regions with
a large rock impending over his head, the dread of
whose fall for ever terrifies him. In this delineation
he is supported by many of the Greek poets, parti-
cularly Euripides, in his Orestes, and Pindar, in the
following passage:

This for ever seem’d to fall,
And fill’d his joyless heart with dread.

Ver. 1022. Nor Titvus there exists, the prey of birds.]
Tityus was, likewise, according to the popular
mythology, a son of Jupiter by Elara, daughter of
Orchomenus. He attempted to force Latona, the
mother of Apollo by Jupiter, to his libidinous de-
sires: for which he was sentenced to the punishment
our poet adverts to in this passage, and which Ho-
mer has given more fully in the following:

A ponderous stone the sire of all
Hung, toting’ring, o’er the caitiff’s head;

There, Tityus, large and long, in fetters bound,
O’er-spreads nine acres of infernal ground;
Two ravenous vultures, furious for their food,
Scream o’er the fiend, and riot in his blood,
With broad, rough rock impending o'er his head,
And craz'd with terror, there is never seen:
But terror dwells with mortals—fate they fear,
And fortune, and a host of fancied gods.

Nor Tityus there exists, the prey of birds.
Nor, though he did, could these the victim's breast
Consume for ever; e'en though his wide bulk,
Not thrice three acres merely might extend,
But cover the vast globe; nor could he bear
Eternal pain, nor yield perpetual food.
But he is Tityus, and by vultures torn,
Whose anxious breast the rage of love devours;
Aut alia quâ vis scindunt turpedine curæ.

Sisyphus in vitâ quoque nobis ante oculos est,
Qui petere a populo fasces, sævasque secures,
Inhibit; et semper victus, tristisque, recedit.

Nam petere inperium, quod inane est, nec datur umquam;
Atque in eo semper durum subferre laborem;
Hocc' est, advarso nixantem trudere monte
Saxum: quod tamen a summo jam vortice rursum
Volvitur, et plani raptim petit æquora campi.

Deinde, animi ingratam naturam pascere semper,
Atque explere bonis rebus, satiareque, numquam;
Quod faciunt nobis annorum tempora, circum
Quom redeunt, fetusque ferunt, variosque lepores;
Nec tamen explemur vital fructibus umquam:
Hocc', ut opinor, id est, ævo florente puellas,
Book III. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

Or aught of passion equal in its force.

Here, too, is Sisyphus—the man who pants
For public honours, and the giddy crowd
Caresses ever, ever but in vain.
For thus to toil for power, itself at best
A bubble, and that bubble ne’er to boast,
Yet still toil on—is doubtless to roll back,
Up the high hill, the huge, stern, struggling stone;
That which, the steep peak once urg’d up, rebounds
Rapid, resistless, all over the plain.

Then, too, to feed th’ ungrateful mind, and fill
With every good, while still it craves for more,
(As feed mankind the seasons in their turn,
With fruits, and endless beauties, while themselves
Still riot on, and never have enough,)
This, or I err, the fable well unfolds,

The rapidity of the last line in Homer scarcely
surpasses that of Lucretius, and the difficulty of the
toil expressed in the antecedent verse, not much.
Lucretius has adopted precisely the sudden pause of
Homer, prior to the change of the numbers. As to
the translation of Pope, I by no means aspire to
equal it: it becomes me, however, to insert it, al-
though, undoubtedly, to my own disadvantage:

I turn’d my eye, and, as I turn’d, survey’d
A mournful vision! the Sisyphian shade;
With many a weary step, and many a groan,
Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone;
The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the
ground.

Quod memorant, laticem pertusum congerere in vas;
Quod tamen explerī nullā ratione potestur.

Ver. 1045. *This, or I err, the fable well unfolds,*  
*Feign'd of the damsels,* &c.—*] It is reported, in fabulous history, that Danaus, king of  
the Argives, had fifty daughters, who were married to the fifty sons of Ægysthus, the brother of Danaius; and that forty-nine out of these fifty sisters,  
for Hypermnestra could not be prevailed upon to unite in the plot, acceded to the barbarous proposal of their father, and massacred their husbands on the bridal night. Popular mythology represents them as sentenced, in consequence of so inhuman a crime, to the dreadful abodes of hell; and condemned to toil for ever, in filling a leaky vessel with water, which escaped as fast as it could be poured in.

This fable is stated, by the Bryantine hypothesis, to be of Chaldean or Egyptian origin; and to refer to the arkite worship propagated over Greece by some of the wandering Cushite colonies, after their desertion of the plain of Shinar, or the valley of Goshen. I have formerly observed, see note on Book II. v. 1167, that Mr. Bryant conjectured Danaus, literally, Da-Naus, "the ark or ship," to have been the same person with Noah,—the machine he had constructed, being called, as is customary even in modern days, after his own name. In consequence of which, from Noah or Naus, which is the same word with a Greek termination, is derived an appellation for every similar vessel in most of the languages of Europe. Thus, in Greek, Naos; Latin, Navis; French, Navire; Spanish and Portuguese, Navião; Italian, Navigio.

But Danaus, it seems, was the brother of Ægysthus, which, upon the same system, is Ai-C-Es-Théns, and, with the common Ionic contraction, Ai-C-Es-Théns, "the place of the temple of the glorious Theus." Theus, or Thoth, however, as I have already observed in the above note, was an appellation, among the Chaldeans, for the Creator, or deity supremely adored; and when the idolatrous descendants of Ham first transferred the worship of the true God to the Sun, the Serpent, the Ark, and the builder of the Ark, Noah was also denominated Theuth, Xuth, or Zuth, whence both Zvov and Ïeòv; whence, also, Δω and Deus, and many other parallel terms both in ancient and modern languages. See note as above on Book II. v. 1167.

The affinity here specified, therefore, as subsisting between Danaus and Ægysthus, and fabulously denounced a brotherhood, is easily accounted for, by conceiving the two terms to refer to an hypothesis of Noah, and the Temple or hierarchy instituted to his honour. If this be admitted, it is easy to conceive, that the fifty sons and the fifty daughters were so many priests and priestesses employed in the idolatrous worship. And the marriage and barbarous plot here stated to have ensued, may refer to some fresh vow, mutually entered into, of additional superstition, together with the sudden breach of that vow, on the part of many of the votaries, as soon as it had been consummated, and their desertion to the worship of the Sun, the Serpent, or some other deity. The name of Hypermnestra, the only female who refused to comply with the dishonest proposal of the sisterhood is almost literally, Hyp-Ur-Menes-Tar-A, and, with a Doric contraction, Hyp-Ur-M'nes-T'r-A: once more signifying, as though conferred distinctively upon herself, in consequence of her peculiar fidelity, "the place of the ark of the profound and illustrious Noah." On the the word Hyp, (e> j^ among the Egyptians,) I have already commented in note on Book II. v. 1167, and have there shown, that it was the express and direct term for a boat, barge, or ship; and the word by which the ark of Noah, or Thoth, was described when these names were not figuratively selected for the purpose. And it is curious to observe, that almost every European language, which has not derived its appellation for a water-carriage from the Chaldean term Noah, has been indebted to this additional radical. Hence the Greek Τυτω; applied, first of all, to ships and water-carriages, which were beautifully and poetically denominated horses of Neptune, and afterwards transferred to horses of...
Feign'd of the damsels doom'd, in flow'r of youth,
To fill for ever the still leaking urn.

every species: hence the Saxon, frciph; the German, Schiff; the Dutch, schippen; and our own English term ship, differing from the Egyptian alone by the prefix of a single letter. Hence too, at the present day, the Coptics apply the same word 211 to the Ibis, which is an aquatic fowl of the crane kind: and hence, probably, the Ethiopic ʃʃ; (Hybo) "copious dew;"—water, the immediate element of the Hyp, Ship, or Ibis.

The next term, of which the name Hypermnestra, Hyp-Ur-M'ns-T'r-A, is compounded, is Ur. But Ur or Or, upon the theory now referred to, is the Sun, or God of fire;—it forms the radical of the Egyptian Orus, and constitutes a part of the Greek nouns, Hercules and Phrygia. The proposed etymology of the word Menes, I have already remarked upon in the note above referred to, Book II. v. 1167; and observed that, from various traditions and authors, it is conceived to be only an additional name for Noah, or whatever other deity was worshiped as the First Parent of all things; whence, obviously, Menes, Minos, Meon, Menu, Moon, Mv, Mahēnā, (the same as Mw and Moon,) in the Friendly Isles of the Pacific Ocean, which, both from language and religious rites, are plausibly supposed, by modern authors, to have been peopled by the descendants of Chus.

The term Tar, implies dark, deep, or mysterious. Hence Tartarus, which is only a reduplication of the same word, so as to bestow on it a superlative signification, and imply something extremely dark, extremely deep, or mysterious: and hence again ἄγραντος (tarsus) "the foot," being the deepest, or lowest part of the body. Thus also, the Hebrew דְּשֵׁרנ ("Targum," "interpretation," rendered conversely, and of course the opposite to mystery. The word a with which this compound terminates, is of similar import with the in the foregoing Ai- C'-Es-Theus (ட்டோஸ்தேஸ்ஸுஸ்) and refers to place, or situation.

The punishment to which these faithless damsels were doomed, is supposed to prove that the entire fable, is of Arkite and Egyptian origin. In commemoration of the deliverance of the great father of the human race from the flood, (whether under the name of Thoth, Danaíus, Menes, or Osiris, which last was another appellation bestowed upon him,) the Egyptians are known to have instituted a peculiar religious rite, which consisted in the procession of a consecrated ark or vessel, carried in triumph through the streets, as a token of the safe debarkation of the patriarch. Upon this ceremony, Plutarch expressly informs us, de Isid. et Osyrid. that, "on the nineteenth of the month Choiac (corresponding with the sixteenth of our December), they descend into the sea, and the keepers of the robes, together with the priests, take out the consecrated chest, which contains within itself a little ark of gold, χρυσός Κύθων, into which they pour clean water, and proclaim by a shout, from all the multitude present, that Osiris is safe." The filling the ark with water was designed, most probably, to designate that it was sound, and free from leaking; and the punishment fabulously bestowed upon these unfaithful priestesses, to typify, in the first place, the breaches they had committed upon it, and, secondly, to bestow upon them a reward due to their infidelity. It is obvious, from this sketch, that most of the preceding fables are, in like manner, referable to a Babylonian or Egyptian origin. But it would protract the present commentary to an insufferable length, and be wandering too far from its main design, to pursue this subject any further.

Ver. 1046. —the damsels doom'd, in flow'r of youth," ΙΕυβο διοταί ρούς. This elegant metaphor of Lucretius has been so often copied into every language as to become completely nationalized in all. Virgil himself has not been inattentive to it: Ante urbem pueri et primo flori juventus
Exercentur equis. 

The panting youth, in all their vernal flower, Essayed their coursers.

Ennius, however, precedes Lucretius in a verse to the same effect, which has been highly extolled by Cicero: It relates to Cethegus:

Ver. 1046. —the damsels doom'd, in flow'r of youth,"
Cerberus, et Furiae, jam vero, et lucis egestas, Tartarus, horriferos eructans faucibus aestus;
Quae neque sunt usquam, nec possunt esse, profecto:
Sed metus in vita poenarum pro male factis
Est insignibus insignis; scelerisque luella
Carcer, et horribilis de saxo jactus eorum,
Verbera, carnufices, robur, pix, lamina, tædae:
Quæ tamen et si absunt, at mens, sibi conscia factis,
Præmetuens, adhibet stimulos, torretque flagellis:
Nec videt interea, qui terminus esse malorum
Possit, quive siet poenarum denique finis:
Atque eadem metuit magis, hæc ne in morte gravescant.

Flores inferiorum populi, suadæque medulla
The people’s choicest flower, persuasion’s pith.
So Dryden, in our own language, in his Alexander’s Feast:
Lovely Thais, at his side,
Sat like a blooming eastern bride
In flower of youth, and beauty’s pride.

Buchanan has culled, and introduced the same metaphor into his Jephthas. It forms a part of his description of Iphis, the Iphigenia of the sacred writings:
Florem juventæ deflet ille, et siderum
Similes ocellos.—
These, her sweet flower of youth deplor’d, her eyes Radiant, as stars.

With this explanation, the following passage in Nahum will receive additional beauty, and prove, at the same time, that the poetry of the Hebrews was not insensible to the value of this metaphor: ch. 1. 4.
He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry;
And drieth up all the rivers.

Bashan languisheth, and Carmel:
Yea—the flower of Lebanon languisheth.

Ver. 1048. The Furies, Cerberus, and Hell itself
Of light devoid, and belching from its jaws
Tremendous fires, live not, nor can they live:]
There is more unnecessary paraphrase in the corresponding passage in Marchetti, than I have observed in any other part of his version:
Cerbero, fera orribile e diversa
Che latra con tre gola, e il cielo Tartaro
Che fumo crutta e spaventosi incendj,
E le furie erinite di serpenti,
Ed Eaco e Minosse, e Radamanto
Non sono in alcun luogo, &c.
There is not a syllable in the original to warrant the introduction of any part of the above passage marked in Italics.

Ver. 1048. ——Hell itself
Of light devoid, and belching from its jaws
Tremendous fires,—] Thus Milton, evidently derived from Lucretius:
The Furies, Cerberus, and Hell itself
Of light devoid, and belching from its jaws
Tremendous fires, live not, nor can they live:
But well they paint the dread of justice here
For crimes atrocious, the reward of guilt,
The scourge, the wheel, the block, the dungeon deep,
The base-born hangman, the Tarpeian cliff;
Which, though the villain 'scape, his conscious soul
Still fears perpetual, tort'ring all his days,
And still foreboding heavier pangs at death.

The seat of Desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful.

Par. Lost, i. 181.

The following description of Gesner will not appear contemptible, and it may be amusing to have an opportunity of comparing it: "Der furchterliche wiederschein, den jenseit der gebirge emporwallende flammen in die wolken hinstreuten, guss braune dammring auf das schwarze dunkel." "The fearful reflection which the flickering flames on the opposite side of the hill scattered through the clouds, gave a dull twilight to the black darkness."

DEATH of ABEL, Book III.

Ver. 1051. — his conscious soul
Still fears perpetual, tort'ring all his days,
And still foreboding heavier pangs at death.

The serene and quiet of the sleep of death, which
Hinc Acherusia fit stultorum denique vita.

Hocc' etiam tibi tute interdum dicere possis:
"Lumina sis oculis etiam bonus Ancus reliquit;"
Qui melior multis, quam tu, fuit, inproba! rebus.

our poet has painted with a masterly hand, in ver. 937, he now contrasts with the tumultuous and af-frighted life, the horrid and fearful decease of the wicked. Dr. Glynn, to whose poem on the Day of Judgment I have referred once or twice before, as comprising passages that have a strong analogy to the style of Lucretius, and have much intrinsic evidence of being hence deduced, has also conveyed this contrasted idea in very appropriate language, in the following lines:

---horror gnaws the guilty soul
Of dying sinners, while the good man sleeps
Peaceful and calm, and with a smile expires.

Ver. 1058. Hence earth itself to fools becomes a hell.). Thus Gesner, in the soliloquy of Cain, after awaking from his dream: zieht er den vorhang weg, und lass mich in die hölle der zukunft hinaus-schn. "He draws aside the veil, and unfolds to me the bell of posterity." Death of Abel, Book IV. The Germans are particularly attached to this bold imagery: but there is a striking and tremendous passage in the Robbers of Schiller, so illustrative of this, and the three or four preceding verses, that I cannot avoid adding it. It is a sudden exclamation of Moor, the hero of the drama, in a dialogue between himself and Rasman: "My innocence! O my innocence!—See how all Nature expands at the sweet breath of spring.—O God! that this paradise—this heaven—should be a hell to me!—When all is happiness—all in the sweet spirit of peace—the world pae family—and its father there above, who is not my father.—I alone the outcast—the prodigal son!—Of all the children of his mercy, I alone rejected! the companion of murderers—of viperous fiends—bound down, enchained to guilt and horror."—So the sublime epic poet of our own nation:

---which way shall I fly

Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?

Which way I fly is hell—myself am hell.

Par. Lost, iv. 73.

Not less terribly descriptive, and equally bold in expression, is the following passage from the book of Job, ch. xviii. 5–17: in the version of which I have endeavoured to preserve the different personifications of the original:

5 Fail shall the light that guides the sinner’s way,
The vital flame that cheers him shall decay.

11 Roam where he may wild Terrors shall attend,
And haunt his steps, where'er those steps may bend.

12 At him shall Anguish, gaunt with hunger, rush,
Distress, with ponderous gripe, his ribs shall crush:

13 Death's first-born plague shall gnaw him deep within,
Gnaw to the gloss, the summit of his skin.

14 His home Suspicion shall beset: Dismay,
Arm'd like a king, lead on the dread affray.
Hence earth itself to fools becomes a hell.

Thus ponder oft, retir'd: Ancus the good,
E'en he has clos'd his eyes on mortal things;
A man, thou coward! worthier far than thou!

15 His house, his haunts, his transient tent assail,
And round him flakes of fiery sulphur hail.
16 Below, no stream his blasted root shall bathe;
Above, his branches lurid lightnings scathe;
17 Clouds heap'd on clouds his memory shall blot;
His name from earth be banish'd and forgot.

Ver. 1059. — Ancus the good,
E'en he has clos'd his eyes on mortal things;
Festus has observed, that the original of this translated verse is drawn, with a trifling alteration, from the poem of Ennius on the Punic war. In Ennius, we read,
Postquam lumina sis oculis bonus Ancus reliquit.
In Lucretius,
Lumina sis oculis etiam bonus Ancus reliquit.

Ver. 1060. E'en he has clos'd his eyes on mortal things;
A man, thou coward! worthier far than thou!
The whole of this passage is well translated by Dryden:
—When thoughts of death disturb thy head,
Consider Ancus great and good is dead;
Ancus, thy better far, was born to die,
And thou! dost thou bewail mortality?
The Latin of Lucretius is copied from a well-known distich of Homer; and Pope was so delighted with the above lines of Dryden, that he has employed them, with but little variation, in his version of the Greek. In Homer, they occur thus:
Αλλα Φεὸς, τάνι και συ τινα αὐτομοίρας αυτως;
Κατέκει τινα Πατρωκλος, ἢπιν στὶ τολῆς αμφιβολοὺς.

Il. Χ. 106.

In Pope, as follows:
Die then, my friend! what boots it to deplore?
The great, the good Patroclus is no more!

He, for thy better, was foredoom'd to die,
And thou! dost thou bewail mortality?

Ancus Martius was grandson of Numa, and the fourth of the Roman monarchs. His character is thus described by Livy: Avitus glorior memor: medium erat in ingenium, et Numa et Romulus; cui libet superiorum regum belli, pacisque et artibus, et gloria par. "He forgot not the glory of his ancestors; the powers of his mind were of a description between those of Numa and Romulus; and he was equal to any of our former kings in the glory and arts both of war and peace."

The reader will, I am confident, readily excuse my adding in this note, for a comparison with the above passages of Homer and Lucretius, Ercilla's description of the death of Lautaro. Lautaro was the most heroic, as well as most polished, of the Indian chieftains: and the manly generosity of Ercilla always allows him the praise to which he is entitled:

Por el sinistro lado (o dura suerte!)
Rompe la cruda punta, y tan derecho.
Que pasa el corazón, mas bravio y fuerte
Que jamas se encerro en humano pecho.
De tal tiro quedó uñana la muerte,
Viendo de solo un golpe tan gran hecho:
Y usurpando a la gloria al homicida
Se atribuye a la muerte esta herida.

Cant. xiv.

Through his left side,—ye valiant, mourn his lot!
Flew the keen arrow, with such fury shot,
It pierc'd his heart, the bravest and the best
That e'er was lodg'd within a human breast.
Proud of the stroke that laid such valour low,
Death seem'd to glory in the important blow:
And that no mortal might his triumph claim,
In darkness hid the doubtful archer's name.
Inde aliei multei reges, rerumque potentes,
Obciderunt, magnis qui gentibus imperitarunt.

Ille quoque ipse, viam qui quondam per mare magnum
Stravit, iterque dedit legionibus ire per altum,
Ac pedibus salsas docuit superare lacunas,
Et contempsit equis, insultans, murmura ponti;
Lumine adempto, animam moribundo corpore fudit.

Scipiades, belli fulmen, Carthaginis horror,
Ossa dedit terrae, proinde ac famul infimus esset.

Adde repertores doctrinarum, atque leporum:
Adde Heliconiadum comites; quorum unus Homerus,

---geminos, duo fulmina belli,
Sciapiadas, idem Libye. AEs. vi. 842.

See, both the Scipios, thunder-bolts of war,
The double bane of Afric.

Cicero has caught the same metaphor, and has introduced it into his oration for Cornelius Balbus: cum
duo fulmina nostri imperii Cnæus et Publius Scipiones

Ver. 1064. E'en he who wander'd o'er the mighty main,
Led on his legions, and first op'd the way, &c.]
Thousands, moreo'er, like him of crowns possest,
Have fall'n like him, and all their pomp resign'd.

E'en he who wander'd o'er the mighty main,
Led on his legions, and first op'd the way
To tread on foot th' unfathom'd gulphs below,
He who thus brav'd the billows, and the storms,
Has clos'd his eye-lids, and his soul resign'd.—

SCIPIO, the war's dread thunder-bolt, the scourge
Of ransack'd TYRE, sleeps, like the slave, inhum'd.

Add, too, the founders of the graceful arts,
And schools erudite;—add th' immortal bards;
Add HOMER's self the muses' realm who rules;

subito in Hispauia extincti occidissent. "When the
two thunder-bolts of our government, Cn. and P.
Scipio, suddenly died in Spain."

Hence Voltaire, in his description of Henry the
Great, on his abrupt landing in France, after his vi-
Fit to England, by which he fortunately joins his
troops, at the moment of their retreat:
Brillant comme l'éclair au fort de la tempête,
Il vole aux premiers rangs, il s'avance à leur tete;
Il combat, on le suit, il change les destins,
La foudre est dans ses yeux, la mort est dans ses
mains.
HENRIADE, ch. iv.

The reader may accept the following version:
Fierce as the thunder-bolt through tempests speeds,
He flies, he joins them, and the foremost leads;
He fights, inspires, the power of fate commands,
Lightning his eyes, and havoc in his hands.

Mr. Mickle has introduced something of the same
image into his translation of the Lusiad:
Whose spear's dread lightning o'er th' embattled
plain
Has oft o'erwhelm'd the Moors.

The merit of this simile, however, is all his own;
for it does not occur in the Portuguese, which is as
follows:
—qui os Espanhores tanto ajudou
A fazerem nos Mouros bravo estrago.

Ver. 1073: Add Homer's self the muses' realm
who rules;] In the original, "Homerus
sceptra potitus;" which Creech has thus pretended
to translate:
Homer, their prince, that darling of the nine—
What Troy would at a second fall repine
To be thus sung—is nothing now but fame.

Such a paraphrastic rendering can scarcely be
called a version; there is not a syllable of authority
in Lucretius for the conceit expressed in the above
verses in italics; and it would certainly have been
unworthy of his judgment. Manlius has applauded
this first and chief of bards in the opening of his se-
cond book, in a style that Lucretius might not have
disdained; and the translation of this passage, which
I shall subfix, and which is also from Creech, does
credit to his powers of metrical version:
Sceptra potitus, eadem aliis sopitus quiete est.

Denique, Democritum, post quam matura vetustas Admonuit memores motus languescere mentis,
Sponte suâ leto caput obvius obtulit ipse.

Ipse Epicurus obiit, decurso lumine vitae;
Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit, et omnes
Restinxit, stellas exortus uti aërius sol.

Tu vero dubitabis, et indignabere, obire,
Mortua quoi vita est prope jam vivo, atque videnti?

Ver. 1078. E'en be is fall'n, his lamp of life extinct,
Th' illustrious Epicurus,—] Much of the

history of this unrivalled sage will be found in the
life of Lucretius, prefixed to the first volume of this
work; as also in note on Book I. v. 65.

Ver. 1079. ——whose vast mind
Triumphant rose o'er all men, and excell'd
As, in the heavens, the sun excelle the stars.] From this passage, we again trace the brave and
generous Ercilla enriching his Araucana, by infusing
its spirit and simile into his delineation of the heavenly vision that, in a female form, appeared to con-
solate and fortify the affrighted Spaniards after the
Indian daemon Eponamon had vanished away. The
poet tells us that she was

Cubierta de un hermoso y limpio velo,
Con tanto resplendor, que al medio dia
La claridad del sol delante della,
Es la que cerca del tiene una estrella. Cant. ix.

·—Clad in the radiance of so rich a veil,
As made the sun's meridian lustre pale.
For it outshone his golden orb as far
As his full blaze outshines the twinkling star.

Hayley.

Camoens, in a passage of equal beauty, and where
the same simile occurs, has totally reversed the ef-
These all, like meaner mortals, rest in peace.—
When hoary hairs Democritus forewarn’d
His mental powers were hastening to decay,
Quick he uprose, and midway met his fate.—
E’en he is fall’n, his lamp of life extinct,
Th’ illustrious Epicurus, whose vast mind
Triumphant rose o’er all men, and excell’d,
As, in the heavens, the sun excels the stars.
And dost thou murmur, and, indignant, die,
Whose life, while living, scarcely death exceeds?

flect, and the reader may be pleased by an opportu-
nity of comparing the Portuguese bard, both with
the Roman and the Spanish. Venus is advancing
through the cerulean vault of heaven to the throne
of Jupiter:
    E como hia a frontada do caminho,
    Tam fermosa no gesto se mostrava,
    Que as estrelas, o ceo, e o ar vezinho,
    E tudo quanto a via namorava.
    Dos olhos onde faz seu filho o ninho
    Huns espiritos vivos inspirava,
    Com que os polos gelado&acendia,
    E tornava do fogo a esfera fria.
—brighter once amidst the host
Of Angels, than that star (Lucifer) the stars among.
PAR. LOST, vii. 132.
The parallelism of idea in the following verses,
from an ancient song in Percy’s collection, is very
peculiar. It is entitled, from its opening, “You
meanner beauties.”
You meanner beauties of the night
Which poorly satisfy our eyes,
More by your number than your light,
Like common people of the skies—
What are ye when the moon doth rise?
So when my mistris shall be seen
In sweetnesse of her looks and minde;
By vertue first, then choice a queen;
Tell me if she was not designde
Th’ eclipse, and glory
Of her kinde? B. i. 281.
The adoption of the moon for the sun,
The Adoption of the moon for the sun,
in the former
of these stanzas, is synonymous with the same imi-
tation of our poet, as it occurs in Horace:
——Micat inter omnes
Julium sidus, velut inter ignes
Luna minores.
LIB. i. Od. 12.
With night’s least lamps the moon compare:
Such ’mid the stars the Julian star.
Qui somno partem majorem conteris ævi;
Et vigilans stertis, nec somnia cernere cessas,
Solicitamque geris cassâ formidine mentem;
Nec reperire potes, quid sit tibi sæpe mali, quam
Ebrius urgueris multis miser undique curis,
Atque, animo incerto fluitans, errore vagaris?

Si possent homines, proinde ac sentire videntur
Pondus inesse animo, quod se gravitate fatiget,
E quibus id fiat causis quoque noscere, et unde
Tanta mali tamquam moles in pectore constet;
Haud ita vitam agerent, ut nunc plerumque videmus:
Quid sibi quisque velit, nescire, et quærere semper;
Conmutare locum, quasi onus deponere possit.

Exit sœpe foras magnis ex ædibus ille,
Esse domi quem pertæsum est, subitoque reventat;
Quippe foris nihil melius qui sentiat esse.

---


vestra vero quae dicitur vita mors est: "this life of yours, as you call it, is nothing more than death."

Mr. Wakefield has, with his usual acumen, pointed out a parallel passage in the sacred Scriptures, 1 Tim. v. 6. "But she that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth."

It is to such, the honest-hearted, but sarcastic Cowper alludes in the following verses of his Task:

Yet e'en these
Themselves, love life, and cling to it, as he

That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.
They love it, and yet loath it; fear to die,
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.

Book I.

Ver. 1098. *This, from mere listlessness, his mansion flies; Straight he returns; 'tis listless all abroad.*

Thus Ennius, in a fragment of his Iphigenia:

Imus huc, hinc illinc : quum illuc ventum est, ire
illinc Iubet:
Incerte errat animus; præter propter vitam vivit.
Thou! who in sleep devourest half thy days?
And, e’en awake, who snorest, dreaming still,
And tort’ring all thy mind with vain alarms?
Thou! who lamentest, oft, unknowing why,
Urg’d on, with fear intoxicated deep,
And in a maze of mental errors lost?

Did men but think, and oft to think they seem,
That from themselves their heaviest sorrows rise,
And knew they too whence thus themselves create
These bosom suff’rings—seldom should we see
Life spent as now each passing hour pourtrays.
All pant perpetual for they know not what,
Nor learn by searching—changing their abodes,
As though the change would leave their load behind.

This, from mere listlessness, his mansion flies;
Straight he returns;—’tis listless all abroad.
That to his villa posts, with rapid wheels,

---

Here, there, we rush, there, here, with ceaseless strife;
And, fond of living, overshoot all life.
With this, too, may be advantageously compared
the following passage of Euripides:

Διερ γαρ εδώ, παν τοιο το σιν.

Τάχα δ’ άν δωματος; στενυς το παλιον.

Τάχι γαρ φυλάλη, κατέν χωρις.

Ουδέ σ’ αμοικνο το παρον, το δ’ απο

Φαντερον ήκε.

Thy talk
Was all of coming hither; but in haste,
Back to thy chambers, soon wilt thou return;

For thou, each moment altering, tak’st delight
In nothing long; the present quickly grows
Unpleasing, somewhat absent thou esteem’st
More grateful.

In the same manner Plautus, as Lambinus has be-
fore observed:

Sumne ego homo miser, qui nusquam bene queso

quiescere?

Si domi sum, foris est animus; sin foris sum, ani-

mus domi est.

Am not I then that wretch who ne’er can rest?

At home, abroad; abroad, still homewards press’d.
Currit, agens mannos, ad villam precipitans
Auxilium tectis quasi ferre ardentibus instans:
Oscitat ex templo, tetigit quom limina villae;
Aut abit in somnum gravis, atque oblivia quaerit:
Aut etiam properans urblem petit, atque revisit.

Hoc se quisque modo fugit: at, quem scilicet, ut fit,
Ecfugere haud potis est, ingratis hæret, et obit;
Propeterea, morbi quia causam non tenet æger:
Quam bene si videat, jam rebus quisque relictis
Naturam primum studeat cognoscere rerum;
Temporis æterni quoniam, non unius horæ,

Ver. 1100. *That to his villa posts, with rapid wheels,*
*As though the building were in flames, and call’d* His instant aid.—[Creech has totally mista	
*ken the meaning of his author in this passage, and,*
therefore, instead of sending the restless mortal, whom
Lucretius describes, into the country, to extinguish
the flames of his villa on fire, he represents him as
flying away from his father’s house in town, for the
sole reason, that it was on fire: nor does the term fa	
ther occur in the original:

Others, with full as eager haste, retire,
As if their father’s house were all on fire,
To their small farm.

Ver. 1102. ——*No sooner treads his foot* The sounding hall, than, on the sofa thrown,* The luxury of the Romans did not equal, at the time* of Lucretius, that which was evinced a century afterwards; but it may be questioned, whether it did not even then equal that of the present day in any part of modern Europe. With more than Oriental indulgence, they partook of all their principal meals in a recumbent position; and, although the poet has not made mention of the couch, or repos ing seat on which they then lay at ease, the fact of yawning, indulging sleep, and seeking oblivion, obviously proves that he refers to it. And I know of no better word by which to express this luxurious contrivance, than the modern term sofa, which it very much resembled; not immediately, perhaps, in its form, but in its use and powers; for the guest that reclined on a dining couch that admitted but himself alone, lay always at full length, supporting his head or the upper part of his body, with his left hand; and where this couch was large enough to admit of more than one person, an abundance of pillows were supplied to administer to the ease of each. Like the modern sofa, moreover, the dining couch of the Romans was lined and covered with the softest, and most ornamental stuffs or silks. Virgil has given us a rich and appropriate description of this species of furniture of the Roman dining room, in his account of the first feast prepared by Dido for Aeneas and his suite, which he represents after the Roman costume:
Book III. THE NATURE OF THINGS.

As though the building were in flames, and call'd His instant aid.—No sooner treads his foot The sounding hall, than, on the sofa thrown, He yawns disgusted—or indulges sleep, And seeks oblivion; or, perchance, he starts, And tow'rs the town drives back with equal speed. Thus each his self would fly, that self which still Haunts every step, and every pain creates, Heedless of what torments him: which if clear The wand'r'er trac'd, his restless soul, at once The world forsaking, and the world's vain boasts, Would scan the Nature of Created Things. For little weighs the passing hour of time

---auléis jam se regina superbis
Aurē compositus spondā, mediamque locavit.
Jam pater Åneas, et jam Trojana juventus,
Conveniunt, stratoque super discumbitur ostro.
Now, op'd the splendid halls, the queen assumes The couch that decks the midmost of the rooms: Gold was its frame; Åneas and his train,
On couches round, their different posts sustain.
With this characteristic delineation of Lucretius, may be compared the following passage in the Minstrel:

Canst thou forego the pure etherial soul,
In each fine sense so exquisitely keen,
On the dull couch of luxury to loll;
Stung with disease, and stupefied with spleen? &c.

Ver. 1112. Would scan the Nature of Created Things.] Thus Virgil, in terms not very different:
Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.
GEORG. ii. 490.

Happy the man, the causes who discerns Of things created.

That is, as Wakefield justly interprets it, who is versed in natural philosophy: and to this effect, indeed, wrote Epicurus himself, in the following passage preserved by Diogenes Laertius, x. 143. "Oυκ ἂν τὸν θεοῦμαιν λύνῃ ὑπὲρ τοῦ καυματων, μὴ καταδῶτα τις ὁ τούτων κυματων φωνή, ἀλλ' ὕποπτευομενος τι τῶν κατὰ τοὺς μούδας ὡς τε τοι ὢν, ἀνί Φυσιολογικς, οἰκροις τας θέους απολαμβανε τιν. The text renders the version needless.

Ver. 1113. For little weighs the passing hour of time When with eternity compar'd, that state Which, after death, to mortals yet remains.] "Time, how short, eternity, how long!" is an exclamation which may be adopted with equal propriety by the Epicurean and the Christian moralist. The few fleeting hours that comprise the life of man upon earth, must, in the estimation of both, weigh as the small dust of the balance, when compared with that eternity to which we are all hastening. Though,
Ambigitur status, in quo sit mortalibus omnis
Ætas post mortem, quæ restat quomque, manendo.

Denique, tanto opere in dubiis trepidae periclis
Quæ mala nos subigit vitae tanta cupidus ?
Certe equidem finis vitae mortalibus adstat,
Nec devitari letum pote, quin obeamus.

Præterea, vorsamur ibidem, atque insumus, usque;
Nec nova vivendo procuditur ulla voluptas:
Sed, dum abest, quod avemus, id exsuperare videtur
Cætera; post aliud, quom contigit illud, avemus;
Et sitis æqua tenet vitæ, semper hianteis:
Posteraque, in dubio est, fortunam quam vehat ætas;
Quidve ferat nobis casus, quive exitus instet.

Nec prorsum, vitam ducundo, demimus hilum
Tempore de mortis; nec delibrare valemus,
Quo minus esse diu possimus morte peremptei.
Proinde, licet quot vis vivendo condere secla,
Mors æterna tamen nihilo minus illa manebit:

Ver. 1116. Through what vast woes this wild desire
Drives us, afraid! what dangers, and what toils!
Yet death still hastens, nor can mortal man,
With all his efforts, turn th' unerring shaft.]
When with eternity compar'd, that state
Which, after death, to mortals yet remains. 1115

Through what vast woes this wild desire of life
Drives us, afraid! what dangers, and what toils!
Yet death still hastens, nor can mortal man,
With all his efforts, turn th' unerring shaft.

Life, through its circuit too, is still the same,
Nor can it boast one source of new delight.
The bliss we covet seems, at distant view,
To all superior; but, when once possest,
It cloys, we spurn it, and another call.
Yet the same thirst of life corrodes us still,
Though doubtful of to-morrow, and the fate
To-morrow brings—our blessing, or our curse.

E'en could we life elongate, we should ne'er
Subtract one moment from the reign of death;
Nor the deep slumber of the grave curtail.
O'er ages could we triumph—death alike
Remains eternal—nor of shorter date

and sublimity indeed as far excelling it, as the re-
vealed religion of the last exceeds the natural wisdom
of the first.

Ver. 1122. The bliss we covet seems, at distant view,
To all superior; but, when once possest,
It cloys, we spurn it, and another call.] Dr.
Young has copied this passage in his Night Thoughts,
as he has done many others of the last two hundred
verses of the present book: the copy, however, to
which I now refer, is rather a paraphrase than a close
imitation. It has poetic merit and moral excellence;
but is deteriorated by verbal iterations repeated till
they become tedious:
Behold the picture of earth's happiest man!
He calls his wish, it comes, he sends it back,
And says he call'd another—that arrives,
Meets the same welcome, yet he still calls on,
Till one calls him who varies not his call;
But holds him fast in chains of darkness bound
Till nature dies, and judgment sets him free;
A freedom how less welcome than his chains!
Ver. 1133. *To him who yesterday the light forsook,
Than him who died full many a year before.*

In the note on ver. 1076, I have given an instance of Dryden's version of a few lines of Lucretius, which were afterwards adopted by Pope in his translation of the Iliad. I have now to offer another instance of similar fosterage and intertexture. The passage before us is thus rendered by Dryden:

When once the Fates have cut the mortal thread,
The man as much to all intents is dead,
Who dies to-day, and will as long be so,
As he who died a thousand years ago.

In the Essay on Man, they occur thus, in a converse form, obviously introduced from Dryden's paraphrase; for Lucretius says nothing of "a thousand years."

The blest to-day is as completely so
As who began a thousand years ago.

Jortin has some Latin verses of such singular elegance and pathos, and so appropriate with the grand idea conveyed in the last five verses of this book, that I cannot possibly avoid copying and translating them: they are a free imitation of the exquisite epitaph of Moschus upon Bion, which I have already given in the note on v. 937.

*Hei mihi! lege rata sol occidit atque resurgit,
Lunaque mutata reparat dispendia forma:
Sidera, purpurei telis extincta did,
Rureus nocte vigent: humiles telluris alumni,*
*Graminis herba virens, et florum picta propago,*
*Cum Zephyri vox blanda vocat, redivit se-reni*;
*Temperies anni, redivivo e cespite surgunt.*

Nos, Domini rerum! nos, magna et pulchra min-nati!
Cum breve ver vitae, robustaque transit aestas,
Deficimus; neque nos ordo revolubilis auras
Reddit in ethereas, tumuli nec elaustra resolvit.

By punctual laws the sun ascends, and sets;
The waning moon new majesty begets;
Slain by the jav'lin's of the purple day,
The stars revive at midnight: every spray,
Each blade of grass, the pictur'd race of flowers,
That, with fierce phang, the wint'ry wind devours,
When Spring returns, at Zephyr's kindling voice,
Peep from the greensward, and again rejoice.
We, lords of all! we, big with bold emprize!
When once the spring, the flower of manhood flies,
Book III.  THE NATURE OF THINGS.

To him who yesterday the light forsook,
Than him who died full many a year before.

Sink—void of laws to burst the marble tomb,
To other call us, and with life relume.

Beattie has several exquisitely beautiful and plaintive stanzas on the same subject. It would occupy too much space to copy the whole, but I cannot avoid transcribing the following:
'Tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more;
I mourn—but, ye woodlands! I mourn not for you;
For morn is approaching your charms to restore,
Perfum'd with fresh fragrance, and glitt'ring with dew.
Nor yet for the ravage of winter I mourn,—
Kind Nature the embryo blossom will save:
But when shall Spring visit the mouldering urn!
O when shall it dawn on the night of the grave!

It is probable, however, that both Jortin and Beattie have been partly indebted for the ideas conveyed in these passages, to that unrivalled and inexhaustible treasure of sublimity and pathos, the book of Job, which thus offers us a parallel description in Ch. xiv. v. 7—10.

7 When falls the tree, hope still the fall survives;
The fractur'd stock re-pullulates and thrives.
8 Though sunk in years its root, its trunk in death,
9 Once let it scent the fountain’s fragrant breath,
   Its dormant spirit shall renew its power,
   New tresses foliate, and new budlets flower.
10 But man departs—exhausts life’s little span,
   Yields up his quiv’ring breath—and where is man?

Nothing can equal the boldness or the beauty of the phrase in ver. 9, of this exquisite passage:
Cj/D Pin “ the fragrance,” or rather, “ the fragrant exhalation of water.” The Arabians still employ the very same term to express the same idea of breath, fragrance, or exhalation, indiscriminately. Yet, is the phrase neither more bold nor more beautiful than the catachresis, in the latter part of the same verse, of hair or tresses (קציר) for branches or foliage. Our common version interprets this word by the tamer term boughs; but the vulgate preserves the image in its full force: “faciet comam quasi cum primum plantatum est.”

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