

INTRODUCTION.

George, Lord Lyttelton, was born in 1709, at Hagley, in Worcestershire. He was educated at Eton and at Christchurch, Oxford, entered Parliament, became a Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. In 1757 he withdrew from politics, was raised to the peerage, and spent the last eighteen years of his life in lettered ease. In 1760 Lord Lyttelton first published these "Dialogues of the Dead," which were revised for a fourth edition in 1765, and in 1767 he published in four volumes a "History of the Life of King Henry the Second and of the Age in which he Lived," a work upon which he had been busy for thirty years. He began it not long after he had published, at the age of twenty-six, his "Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Ispahan." If we go farther back we find George Lyttelton, aged twenty-three, beginning his life in literature as a poet, with four eclogues on "The Progress of Love."

To the last Lord Lyttelton was poet enough to feel true fellowship with poets of his day. He p. 6loved good literature, and his own works show that he knew it. He counted Henry Fielding among his friends; he was a friend and helper to James Thomson, the author of "The Seasons;" and when acting as secretary to the king's son, Frederick, Prince of Wales (who held a little court of his own, in which there was much said about liberty), his friendship brought Thomson and Mallet together in work on a masque for the Prince and Princess, which included the song of "Rule Britannia."

Before Lord Lyttelton followed their example, "Dialogues of the Dead" had been written by Lucian, and by Fenelon, and by Fontenelle; and in our time they have been written by Walter Savage Landor. This half-dramatic plan of presenting a man's own thoughts upon the life of man and characters of men, and on the issues of men's characters in shaping life, is a way of essay writing pleasant alike to the writer and the reader. Lord Lyttelton was at his best in it. The form of writing obliged him to work with a lighter touch than he used when he sought to maintain the dignity of history by the style of his "History of Henry II." His calm liberality of mind enters into the discussion of many p. 7topics. His truths are old, but there are no real truths of human life and conduct, worth anything

at all, that are of yesterday. Human love itself is called "the old, old story;" but do we therefore cease from loving, or from finding such ways as we can of saying that we love. Dr. Johnson was not at his wisest when he found fault with Lord Lyttelton because, in his "Dialogues of the Dead," "that man sat down to write a book, to tell the world what the world had all his life been telling him." This was exactly what he wished to do. In the Preface to his revised edition Lord Lyttelton said, "Sometimes a new dress may render an old truth more pleasing to those whom the mere love of novelty betrays into error, as it frequently does not only the wits, but the sages of these days. Indeed, one of the best services that could now be done to mankind by any good writer would be the bringing them back to common sense, from which the desire of shining by extraordinary notions has seduced great numbers, to the no small detriment of morality and of all real knowledge."

At any rate, we now find it worth while to know what the world had been telling all his life to an enlightened, highly-educated man, who was an active politician in the days of Walpole and of p. 8the elder Pitt, who was a friend of Pope's and of the best writers of the day, and who in his occasional verse added at least one line to the household words of English literature when in his warm-hearted Prologue to Thomson's play of *Coriolanus*, produced after its writer's death, he said of that poet what we may say of Lord Lyttelton himself, that he gave to the world

"Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
One line which, dying, he could wish to blot."

H. M.

DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD.

DIALOGUE I.

Lord Falkland—Mr. Hampden.

Lord Falkland.—Are not you surprised to see me in Elysium, Mr. Hampden?

Mr. Hampden.—I was going to put the same question to your lordship, for doubtless you thought me a rebel.

Lord Falkland.—And certainly you thought me an apostate from the Commonwealth, and a supporter of tyranny.

Mr. Hampden.—I own I did, and I don't wonder at the severity of your thoughts about me. The heat of the times deprived us both of our natural candour. Yet I will confess to you here, that, before I died, I began to see in our party enough to justify your apprehensions that the civil war, which we had entered into from generous motives, from a laudable desire to preserve our free constitution, would end very unhappily, and perhaps, in the issue, destroy that constitution, even by the arms of those who pretended to be most zealous for it.

Lord Falkland.—And I will as frankly own to you that I saw, in the court and camp of the king, so much to alarm me for the liberty of my country, if our arms were successful, that I dreaded a victory little less than I did a defeat, and had nothing in my mouth but the word peace, which I constantly repeated with passionate fondness, in every council at which I was called to assist.

Mr. Hampden.—I wished for peace too, as ardently as your lordship, but I saw no hopes of it. The insincerity of the king and the influence of the queen made it impossible to trust to his promises and declarations. Nay, what reliance could we reasonably have upon laws designed to limit and restrain the power of the Crown, after he had violated the Bill of Rights, obtained with such difficulty, and containing so clear an assertion of the privileges which had been in dispute? If his conscience would allow him to break an Act of Parliament, made to determine the bounds of the royal prerogative, because he thought that the royal prerogative could have no

bounds, what legal ties could bind a conscience so prejudiced? or what effectual security could his people obtain against the obstinate malignity of such an opinion, but entirely taking from him the power of the sword, and enabling themselves to defend the laws he had passed?

Lord Falkland.—There is evidently too much truth in what you have said. But by taking from the king the power of the sword, you in reality took all power. It was converting the government into a democracy; and if he had submitted to it, he would only have preserved the name of a king. The sceptre would have been held by those who had the sword; or we must have lived in a state of perpetual anarchy, without any force or balance in the government; a state which could not have lasted long, but would have ended in a republic or in absolute dominion.

Mr. Hampden.—Your reasoning seems unanswerable. But what could we do? Let Dr. Laud and those other court divines, who directed the king's conscience, and fixed in it such principles as made him unfit to govern a limited monarchy—though with many good qualities, and some great ones—let them, I say, answer for all the mischiefs they brought upon him and the nation.

Lord Falkland.—They were indeed much to blame; but those principles had gained ground before their times, and seemed the principles of our Church, in opposition to the Jesuits, who had certainly gone too far in the other extreme.

p. 11*Mr. Hampden.*—It is a disgrace to our Church to have taken up such opinions; and I will venture to prophesy that our clergy in future times must renounce them, or they will be turned against them by those who mean their destruction. Suppose a Popish king on the throne, will the clergy adhere to passive obedience and non-resistance? If they do, they deliver up their religion to Rome; if they do not, their practice will confute their own doctrines.

Lord Falkland.—Nature, sir, will in the end be sure to set right whatever opinion contradicts her great laws, let who will be the teacher. But, indeed, the more I reflect on those miserable times in which we both lived, the more I esteem it a favour of Providence to us that we were cut off so soon. The most grievous misfortune that can befall a virtuous man is to be in such a state that he can hardly

so act as to approve his own conduct. In such a state we both were. We could not easily make a step, either forward or backward, without great hazard of guilt, or at least of dishonour. We were unhappily entangled in connections with men who did not mean so well as ourselves, or did not judge so rightly. If we endeavoured to stop them, they thought us false to the cause; if we went on with them, we ran directly upon rocks, which we saw, but could not avoid. Nor could we take shelter in a philosophical retreat from business. Inaction would in us have been cowardice and desertion. To complete the public calamities, a religious fury, on both sides, mingled itself with the rage of our civil dissensions, more frantic than that, more implacable, more averse to all healing measures. The most intemperate counsels were thought the most pious, and a regard to the laws, if they opposed the suggestions of these fiery zealots, was accounted irreligion. This added new difficulties to what was before but too difficult in itself, the settling of a nation which no longer could put any confidence in its sovereign, nor lay more restraints on the royal authority without destroying the balance of the whole constitution. p. 12 In those circumstances, the balls that pierced our hearts were directed thither by the hands of our guardian angels, to deliver us from horrors we could not support, and perhaps from a guilt our souls abhorred.

Mr. Hampden.—Indeed, things were brought to so deplorable a state, that if either of us had seen his party triumphant, he must have lamented that triumph as the ruin of his country. Were I to return into life, the experience I have had would make me very cautious how I kindled the sparks of civil war in England; for I have seen that, when once that devouring fire is lighted, it is not in the power of the head of a party to say to the conflagration, "Thus far shalt thou go, and here shall thy violence stop."

Lord Falkland.—The conversation we have had, as well as the reflections of my own mind on past events, would, if I were condemned to my body again, teach me great moderation in my judgments of persons who might happen to differ from me in difficult scenes of public action; they would entirely cure me of the spirit of party, and make me think that as in the Church, so also in the State, no evil is more to be feared than a rancorous and enthusiastical zeal.

DIALOGUE II.

Louis le Grand—Peter the Great.

Louis.—Who, sir, could have thought, when you were learning the trade of a shipwright in the dockyards of England and Holland, that you would ever acquire, as I had done, the surname of “Great.”

Peter.—Which of us best deserved that title posterity will decide. But my greatness appeared sufficiently in that very act which seemed to you a debasement.

Louis.—The dignity of a king does not stoop to such mean employments. For my own part, I was careful never to appear to the eyes of my subjects or foreigners but in all the splendour and majesty of royal power.

Peter.—Had I remained on the throne of Russia, as my ancestors did, environed with all the pomp of barbarous greatness, I should have been idolised by my people—as much, at least, as you ever were by the French. My despotism was more absolute, their servitude was more humble. But then I could not have reformed their evil customs; have taught them arts, civility, navigation, and war; have exalted them from brutes in human shapes into men. In this was seen the extraordinary force of my genius beyond any comparison with all other kings, that I thought it no degradation or diminution of my greatness to descend from my throne, and go and work in the dockyards of a foreign republic; to serve as a private sailor in my own fleets, and as a common soldier in my own army, till I had raised myself by my merit in all the several steps and degrees of promotion up to the highest command, and had thus induced my nobility to submit to a regular subordination in the sea and land service by a lesson hard to their pride, and which they would not have learnt from any other master or by any other method of instruction.

Louis.—I am forced to acknowledge that it was a great act. When I thought it a mean one, my judgment was perverted by the prejudices arising from my own education and the ridicule thrown upon it by some of my courtiers, whose minds were too narrow to be able to comprehend the greatness of yours in that situation.

Peter.—It was an act of more heroism than any ever done by Alexander or Cfsar. Nor would I consent to exchange my glory with theirs. They both did great things; but they were at the head of great nations, far superior in valour and military skill to those with whom they contended. I was the king of an ignorant, undisciplined, barbarous people. My enemies were at first so superior to my subjects that ten thousand of them could beat a p. 14hundred thousand Russians. They had formidable navies; I had not a ship. The King of Sweden was a prince of the most intrepid courage, assisted by generals of consummate knowledge in war, and served by soldiers so disciplined that they were become the admiration and terror of Europe. Yet I vanquished these soldiers; I drove that prince to take refuge in Turkey; I won battles at sea as well as land; I new-created my people; I gave them arts, science, policy; I enabled them to keep all the powers of the North in awe and dependence, to give kings to Poland, to check and intimidate the Ottoman emperors, to mix with great weight in the affairs of all Europe. What other man has ever done such wonders as these? Read all the records of ancient and modern times, and find, if you can, one fit to be put in comparison with me!

Louis.—Your glory would indeed have been supreme and unequalled if, in civilising your subjects, you had reformed the brutality of your own manners and the barbarous vices of your nature. But, alas! the legislator and reformer of the Muscovites was drunken and cruel.

Peter.—My drunkenness I confess; nor will I plead, to excuse it, the example of Alexander. It inflamed the tempers of both, which were by nature too fiery, into furious passions of anger, and produced actions of which our reason, when sober, was ashamed. But the cruelty you upbraid me with may in some degree be excused, as necessary to the work I had to perform. Fear of punishment was in the hearts of my barbarous subjects the only principle of obedience. To make them respect the royal authority I was obliged to arm it with all the terrors of rage. You had a more pliant people to govern—a people whose minds could be ruled, like a fine-managed horse, with an easy and gentle rein. The fear of shame did more with them than the fear of the knout could do with the Russians. The humanity of your character and the ferocity of mine were

equally suitable to the nations over which we reigned. p. 15But what excuse can you find for the cruel violence you employed against your Protestant subjects? They desired nothing but to live under the protection of laws you yourself had confirmed; and they repaid that protection by the most hearty zeal for your service. Yet these did you force, by the most inhuman severities, either to quit the religion in which they were bred, and which their consciences still retained, or to leave their native land, and endure all the woes of a perpetual exile. If the rules of policy could not hinder you from thus depopulating your kingdom, and transferring to foreign countries its manufactures and commerce, I am surprised that your heart itself did not stop you. It makes one shudder to think that such orders should be sent from the most polished court in Europe, as the most savage Tartars could hardly have executed without remorse and compassion.

Louis.—It was not my heart, but my religion, that dictated these severities. My confessor told me they alone would atone for all my sins.

Peter.—Had I believed in my patriarch as you believed in your priest, I should not have been the great monarch that I was. But I mean not to detract from the merit of a prince whose memory is dear to his subjects. They are proud of having obeyed you, which is certainly the highest praise to a king. My people also date their glory from the era of my reign. But there is this capital distinction between us. The pomp and pageantry of state were necessary to your greatness; I was great in myself, great in the energy and powers of my mind, great in the superiority and sovereignty of my soul over all other men.

DIALOGUE III.

Plato—Fenelon.

Plato.—Welcome to Elysium, O thou, the most pure, the most gentle, the most refined disciple of philosophy that the world in modern times has produced! Sage Fenelon, welcome!—I need not name myself to you. Our souls by sympathy must know one another.

Fenelon.—I know you to be Plato, the most amiable of all the disciples of Socrates, and the philosopher of all antiquity whom I most desired to resemble.

Plato.—Homer and Orpheus are impatient to see you in that region of these happy fields which their shades inhabit. They both acknowledge you to be a great poet, though you have written no verses. And they are now busy in composing for you unfading wreaths of all the finest and sweetest Elysian flowers. But I will lead you from them to the sacred grove of philosophy, on the highest hill of Elysium, where the air is most pure and most serene. I will conduct you to the fountain of wisdom, in which you will see, as in your own writings, the fair image of virtue perpetually reflected. It will raise in you more love than was felt by Narcissus, when he contemplated the beauty of his own face in the unruffled spring. But you shall not pine, as he did, for a shadow. The goddess herself will affectionately meet your embraces and mingle with your soul.

Fenelon.—I find you retain the allegorical and poetical style, of which you were so fond in many of your writings. Mine also run sometimes into poetry, particularly in my “*Telemachus*,” which I meant to make a kind of epic composition. But I dare not rank myself among the great poets, nor pretend to any equality in oratory with you, the most eloquent of philosophers, on whose lips the Attic bees distilled all their honey.

Plato.—The French language is not so harmonious as the p. 17Greek, yet you have given a sweetness to it which equally charms the ear and heart. When one reads your compositions, one thinks that one hears Apollo’s lyre, strung by the hands of the Graces, and tuned by the Muses. The idea of a perfect king, which you have exhibited in your “*Telemachus*,” far excels, in my own judgment, my imaginary “*Republic*.” Your “*Dialogues*” breathe the pure spirit of virtue, of unaffected good sense, of just criticism, of fine taste. They are in general as superior to your countryman Fontenelle’s as reason is to false wit, or truth to affectation. The greatest fault of them, I think, is, that some are too short.

Fenelon.—It has been objected to them—and I am sensible of it myself—that most of them are too full of commonplace morals. But I wrote them for the instruction of a young prince, and one cannot

too forcibly imprint on the minds of those who are born to empire the most simple truths; because, as they grow up, the flattery of a court will try to disguise and conceal from them those truths, and to eradicate from their hearts the love of their duty, if it has not taken there a very deep root.

Plato. — It is, indeed, the peculiar misfortune of princes, that they are often instructed with great care in the refinements of policy, and not taught the first principles of moral obligations, or taught so superficially that the virtuous man is soon lost in the corrupt politician. But the lessons of virtue you gave your royal pupil are so graced by the charms of your eloquence that the oldest and wisest men may attend to them with pleasure. All your writings are embellished with a sublime and agreeable imagination, which gives elegance to simplicity, and dignity to the most vulgar and obvious truths. I have heard, indeed, that your countrymen are less sensible of the beauty of your genius and style than any of their neighbours. What has so much depraved their taste?

Fenelon. — That which depraved the taste of the Romans p. 18 after the ago of Augustus — an immoderate love of wit, of paradox, of refinement. The works of their writers, like the faces of their women, must be painted and adorned with artificial embellishments to attract their regards. And thus the natural beauty of both is lost. But it is no wonder if few of them esteem my “*Telemachus*,” as the maxims I have principally inculcated there are thought by many inconsistent with the grandeur of their monarchy, and with the splendour of a refined and opulent nation. They seem generally to be falling into opinions that the chief end of society is to procure the pleasures of luxury; that a nice and elegant taste of voluptuous enjoyments is the perfection of merit; and that a king, who is gallant, magnificent, liberal, who builds a fine palace, who furnishes it well with good statues and pictures, who encourages the fine arts, and makes them subservient to every modish vice, who has a restless ambition, a perfidious policy, and a spirit of conquest, is better for them than a Numa or a Marcus Aurelius. Whereas to check the excesses of luxury — those excesses, I mean, which enfeeble the spirit of a nation — to ease the people, as much as is possible, of the burden of taxes; to give them the blessings of peace and tranquillity, when they can be obtained without injury or dishonour; to make them frugal, and

hardy, and masculine in the temper of their bodies and minds, that they may be the fitter for war whenever it does come upon them; but, above all, to watch diligently over their morals, and discourage whatever may defile or corrupt them—is the great business of government, and ought to be in all circumstances the principal object of a wise legislature. Unquestionably that is the happiest country which has most virtue in it; and to the eye of sober reason the poorest Swiss canton is a much nobler state than the kingdom of France, if it has more liberty, better morals, a more settled tranquillity, more moderation in prosperity, and more firmness in danger.

Plato.—Your notions are just, and if your country rejects p. 19 them she will not long hold the rank of the first nation in Europe. Her declension is begun, her ruin approaches; for, omitting all other arguments, can a state be well served when the raising of an opulent fortune in its service, and making a splendid use of that fortune, is a distinction more envied than any which arises from integrity in office or public spirit in government? Can that spirit, which is the parent of national greatness, continue vigorous and diffusive where the desire of wealth, for the sake of a luxury which wealth alone can support, and an ambition aspiring, not to glory, but to profit, are the predominant passions? If it exists in a king or a minister of state, how will either of them find among a people so disposed the necessary instruments to execute his great designs; or, rather, what obstruction will he not find from the continual opposition of private interest to public? But if, on the contrary, a court inclines to tyranny, what a facility will be given by these dispositions to that evil purpose? How will men with minds relaxed by the enervating ease and softness of luxury have vigour to oppose it? Will not most of them lean to servitude, as their natural state, as that in which the extravagant and insatiable cravings of their artificial wants may best be gratified at the charge of a bountiful master or by the spoils of an enslaved and ruined people? When all sense of public virtue is thus destroyed, will not fraud, corruption, and avarice, or the opposite workings of court factions to bring disgrace on each other, ruin armies and fleets without the help of an enemy, and give up the independence of the nation to foreigners, after having betrayed its liberties to a king? All these mischiefs you saw attendant on that luxury, which some modern philosophers account (as I am

informed) the highest good to a state! Time will show that their doctrines are pernicious to society, pernicious to government; and that yours, tempered and moderated so as to render them more practicable in the present circumstances of your country, are wise, salutary, and deserving p. 20of the general thanks of mankind. But lest you should think, from the praise I have given you, that flattery can find a place in Elysium, allow me to lament, with the tender sorrow of a friend, that a man so superior to all other follies could give into the reveries of a Madame Guyon, a distracted enthusiast. How strange was it to see the two great lights of France, you and the Bishop of Meaux, engaged in a controversy whether a mad-woman was a heretic or a saint!

Fenelon.—I confess my own weakness, and the ridiculousness of the dispute; but did not your warm imagination carry you also into some reveries about divine love, in which you talked unintelligibly, even to yourself?

Plato.—I felt something more than I was able to express.

Fenelon.—I had my feelings too, as fine and as lively as yours; but we should both have done better to have avoided those subjects in which sentiment took the place of reason.

DIALOGUE IV.

Mr. Addison—Dr. Swift.

Dr. Swift.—Surely, Addison, Fortune was exceedingly inclined to play the fool (a humour her ladyship, as well as most other ladies of very great quality, is frequently in) when she made you a minister of state and me a divine!

Addison.—I must confess we were both of us out of our elements; but you don't mean to insinuate that all would have been right if our destinies had been reversed?

Swift.—Yes, I do. You would have made an excellent bishop, and I should have governed Great Britain, as I did Ireland, with an absolute sway, while I talked of nothing but liberty, property, and so forth.

Addison.—You governed the mob of Ireland; but I never understood that you governed the kingdom. A nation and a mob are very different things.

p. 21*Swift.*—Ay, so you fellows that have no genius for politics may suppose; but there are times when, by seasonably putting himself at the head of the mob, an able man may get to the head of the nation. Nay, there are times when the nation itself is a mob, and ought to be treated as such by a skilful observer.

Addison.—I don't deny the truth of your proposition; but is there no danger that, from the natural vicissitudes of human affairs, the favourite of the mob should be mobbed in his turn?

Swift.—Sometimes there may, but I risked it, and it answered my purpose. Ask the lord-lieutenants, who were forced to pay court to me instead of my courting them, whether they did not feel my superiority. And if I could make myself so considerable when I was only a dirty Dean of St. Patrick's, without a seat in either House of Parliament, what should I have done if Fortune had placed me in England, unencumbered with a gown, and in a situation that would have enabled me to make myself heard in the House of Lords or of Commons?

Addison.—You would undoubtedly have done very marvellous acts! Perhaps you might then have been as zealous a Whig as my Lord Wharton himself; or, if the Whigs had unhappily offended the statesman as they did the doctor, who knows whether you might not have brought in the Pretender? Pray let me ask you one question between you and me: If your great talents had raised you to the office of first minister under that prince, would you have tolerated the Protestant religion or not?

Swift.—Ha! Mr. Secretary, are you witty upon me? Do you think, because Sunderland took a fancy to make you a great man in the state, that he, or his master, could make you as great in wit as Nature made me? No, no; wit is like grace, it must be given from above. You can no more get that from the king than my lords the bishops can the other. And, though I will own you had some, yet believe p. 22me, my good friend, it was no match for mine. I think you have not vanity enough in your nature to pretend to a competition in that point with me.

Addison.—I have been told by my friends that I was rather too modest, so I will not determine this dispute for myself, but refer it to Mercury, the god of wit, who fortunately happens to be coming this way with a soul he has brought to the Shades.

Hail, divine Hermes! A question of precedence in the class of wit and humour, over which you preside, having arisen between me and my countryman, Dr. Swift, we beg leave—

Mercury.—Dr. Swift, I rejoice to see you. How does my old lad? How does honest Lemuel Gulliver? Have you been in Lilliput lately, or in the Flying Island, or with your good nurse Glumdalclitch? Pray when did you eat a crust with Lord Peter? Is Jack as mad still as ever? I hear that since you published the history of his case the poor fellow, by more gentle usage, is almost got well. If he had but more food he would be as much in his senses as Brother Martin himself; but Martin, they tell me, has lately spawned a strange brood of Methodists, Moravians, Hutchinsonians, who are madder than ever Jack was in his worst days. It is a great pity you are not alive again to make a new edition of your “Tale of the Tub” for the use of these fellows. Mr. Addison, I beg your pardon; I should have spoken to you sooner, but I was so struck with the sight of my old friend the doctor, that I forgot for a time the respects due to you.

Swift.—Addison, I think our dispute is decided before the judge has heard the cause.

Addison.—I own it is in your favour, but—

Mercury.—Don’t be discouraged, friend Addison. Apollo perhaps would have given a different judgment. I am a wit, and a rogue, and a foe to all dignity. Swift and I naturally like one another. He worships me more than p. 23Jupiter, and I honour him more than Homer; but yet, I assure you, I have a great value for you. Sir Roger de Coverley, Will Honeycomb, Will Wimble, the Country Gentleman in the Freeholder, and twenty more characters, drawn with the finest strokes of unaffected wit and humour in your admirable writings, have obtained for you a high place in the class of my authors, though not quite so high a one as the Dean of St. Patrick’s. Perhaps you might have got before him if the decency of your nature and the cautiousness of your judgment would have given you leave. But, allowing that in the force and spirit of his wit he has really the ad-

vantage, how much does he yield to you in all the elegant graces, in the fine touches of delicate sentiment, in developing the secret springs of the soul, in showing the mild lights and shades of a character, in distinctly marking each line, and every soft gradation of tints, which would escape the common eye? Who ever painted like you the beautiful parts of human nature, and brought them out from under the shade even of the greatest simplicity, or the most ridiculous weaknesses; so that we are forced to admire and feel that we venerate, even while we are laughing? Swift was able to do nothing that approaches to this. He could draw an ill face, or caricature a good one, with a masterly hand; but there was all his power, and, if I am to speak as a god, a worthless power it is. Yours is divine. It tends to exalt human nature.

Swift.—Pray, good Mercury (if I may have liberty to say a word for myself) do you think that my talent was not highly beneficial to correct human nature? Is whipping of no use to mend naughty boys?

Mercury.—Men are generally not so patient of whipping as boys, and a rough satirist is seldom known to mend them. Satire, like antimony, if it be used as a medicine, must be rendered less corrosive. Yours is often rank poison. But I will allow that you have done some good in your way, though not half so much as Addison did in his.

p. 24*Addison.*—Mercury, I am satisfied. It matters little what rank you assign me as a wit, if you give me the precedence as a friend and benefactor to mankind.

Mercury.—I pass sentence on the writers, not the men, and my decree is this:—When any hero is brought hither who wants to be humbled, let the talk of lowering his arrogance be assigned to Swift. The same good office may be done to a philosopher vain of his wisdom and virtue, or to a bigot puffed up with spiritual pride. The doctor's discipline will soon convince the first, that with all his boasted morality, he is but a Yahoo; and the latter, that to be holy he must necessarily be humble. I would also have him apply his anti-cosmetic wash to the painted face of female vanity, and his rod, which draws blood at every stroke, to the hard back of insolent folly or petulant wit. But Addison should be employed to comfort those

whose delicate minds are dejected with too painful a sense of some infirmities in their nature. To them he should hold his fair and charitable mirror, which would bring to their sight their hidden excellences, and put them in a temper fit for Elysium. — Adieu. Continue to esteem and love each other, as you did in the other world, though you were of opposite parties, and, what is still more wonderful, rival wits. This alone is sufficient to entitle you both to Elysium.

DIALOGUE V.

Ulysses — Circe. — In Circe's Island.

Circe. — You will go then, Ulysses, but tell me, without reserve, what carries you from me?

Ulysses. — Pardon, goddess, the weakness of human nature. My heart will sigh for my country. It is an attachment which all my admiration of you cannot entirely overcome.

Circe. — This is not all. I perceive you are afraid to declare your whole mind. But what, Ulysses, do you fear? p. 25 My terrors are gone. The proudest goddess on earth, when she has favoured a mortal as I have favoured you, has laid her divinity and power at his feet.

Ulysses. — It may be so while there still remains in her heart the tenderness of love, or in her mind the fear of shame. But you, Circe, are above those vulgar sensations.

Circe. — I understand your caution; it belongs to your character, and therefore, to remove all diffidence from you, I swear by Styx I will do no manner of harm, either to you or your friends, for anything which you say, however offensive it may be to my love or my pride, but will send you away from my island with all marks of my friendship. Tell me now, truly, what pleasures you hope to enjoy in the barren rock of Ithaca, which can compensate for those you leave in this paradise, exempt from all cares and overflowing with all delights?

Ulysses. — The pleasures of virtue; the supreme happiness of doing good. Here I do nothing. My mind is in a palsy; all its faculties are benumbed. I long to return into action, that I may worthily employ those talents which I have cultivated from the earliest days of my