

CHAPTER VIII

The adventures which the author met on his first entrance into Elysium.

We pursued our way through a delicious grove of orange-trees, where I saw infinite numbers of spirits, every one of whom I knew, and was known by them (for spirits here know one another by intuition). I presently met a little daughter whom I had lost several years before. Good gods! what words can describe the raptures, the melting passionate tenderness, with which we kissed each other, continuing in our embrace, with the most ecstatic joy, a space which, if time had been measured here as on earth, could not be less than half a year.

The first spirit with whom I entered into discourse was the famous Leonidas of Sparta. I acquainted him with the honours which had been done him by a celebrated poet of our nation; to which he answered he was very much obliged to him. We were presently afterwards entertained with the most delicious voice I had ever heard, accompanied by a violin, equal to Signor Piantinida. I presently discovered the musician and songster to be Orpheus and Sappho.

Old Homer was present at this concert (if I may so call it), and Madam Dacier sat in his lap. He asked much after Mr. Pope, and said he was very desirous of seeing him; for that he had read his Iliad in his translation with almost as much delight as he believed he had given others in the original. I had the curiosity to inquire whether he had really writ that poem in detached pieces, and sung it about as ballads all over Greece, according to the report which went of him. He smiled at my question, and asked me whether there appeared any connection in the poem; for if there did he thought I might answer myself. I then importuned him to acquaint me in which of the cities which contended for the honour of his birth he was really born? To which he answered, "Upon my soul I can't tell."

Virgil then came up to me, with Mr. Addison under his arm. "Well, sir," said he, "how many translations have these few last years produced of my Aeneid?" I told him I believed several, but I could not possibly remember; for that I had never read any but Dr. Trapp's. "Ay," said he, "that is a curious piece indeed!"

I then acquainted him with the discovery made by Mr. Warburton of the Elusinian Mysteries couched in his sixth book. "What mysteries?" said Mr. Addison.

"The Elusinian," answered Virgil, "which I have disclosed in my sixth book." "How!" replied Addison. "You never mentioned a word of any such mysteries to me in all our acquaintance."

"I thought it was unnecessary," cried the other, "to a man of your infinite learning: besides, you always told me you perfectly understood my meaning."

Upon this I thought the critic looked a little out of countenance, and turned aside to a very merry spirit, one Dick Steele, who embraced him, and told him

he had been the greatest man upon earth; that he readily resigned up all the merit of his own works to him. Upon which Addison gave him a gracious smile, and, clapping him on the back with much solemnity, cried out, "Well said, Dick!"

I then observed Shakespeare standing between Betterton and Booth, and deciding a difference between those two great actors concerning the placing an accent in one of his lines: this was disputed on both sides with a warmth which surprised me in Elysium, till I discovered by intuition that every soul retained its principal characteristic, being, indeed, its very essence. The line was that celebrated one in Othello —

PUT OUT THE LIGHT, AND THEN PUT OUT THE LIGHT — according to Betterton.

Mr. Booth contended to have it thus: — Put out the light, and then put out THE light.

I could not help offering my conjecture on this occasion, and suggested it might perhaps be — Put out the light, and then put out THY light.

Another hinted a reading very sophisticated in my opinion — Put out the light, and then put out THEE, light —making light to be the vocative case.

Another would have altered the last word, and read — PUT OUT THY LIGHT, AND THEN PUT OUT THY SIGHT.

But Betterton said, if the text was to be disturbed, he saw no reason why a word might not be changed as well as a letter, and, instead of "put out thy light," you may read "put out thy eyes."

At last it was agreed on all sides to refer the matter to the decision of Shakespeare himself, who delivered his sentiments as follows: "Faith, gentlemen, it is so long since I wrote the line, I have forgot my meaning. This I know, could I have dreamed so much nonsense would have been talked and writ about it, I would have blotted it out of my works; for I am sure, if any of these be my meaning, it doth me very little honour."

He was then interrogated concerning some other ambiguous passages in his works; but he declined any satisfactory answer; saying, if Mr. Theobald had not writ about it sufficiently, there were three or four more new editions of his plays coming out, which he hoped would satisfy everyone: concluding, "I marvel nothing so much as that men will gird themselves at discovering obscure beauties in an author. Certes the greatest and most pregnant beauties are ever the plainest and most evidently striking; and when two meanings of a passage can in the least balance our judgments which to prefer, I hold it matter of unquestionable certainty that neither of them is worth a farthing."

From his works our conversation turned on his monument; upon which, Shakespeare, shaking his sides, and addressing himself to Milton, cried out, “On my word, brother Milton, they have brought a noble set of poets together; they would have been hanged erst have [ere they had] convened such a company at their tables when alive.”

“True, brother,” answered Milton, “unless we had been as incapable of eating then as we are now.”

CHAPTER IX

More adventures in Elysium.

A crowd of spirits now joined us, whom I soon perceived to be the heroes, who here frequently pay their respects to the several bards the recorders of their actions. I now saw Achilles and Ulysses addressing themselves to Homer, and Aeneas and Julius Caesar to Virgil: Adam went up to Milton, upon which I whispered Mr. Dryden that I thought the devil should have paid his compliments there, according to his opinion. Dryden only answered, "I believe the devil was in me when I said so." Several applied themselves to Shakespeare, amongst whom Henry V made a very distinguishing appearance. While my eyes were fixed on that monarch a very small spirit came up to me, shook me heartily by the hand, and told me his name was THOMAS THUMB. I expressed great satisfaction in seeing him, nor could I help speaking my resentment against the historian, who had done such injustice to the stature of this great little man, which he represented to be no bigger than a span, whereas I plainly perceived at first sight he was full a foot and a half (and the 37th part of an inch more, as he himself informed me), being indeed little shorter than some considerable beaux of the present age. I asked this little hero concerning the truth of those stories related of him, viz., of the pudding, and the cow's belly. As to the former, he said it was a ridiculous legend, worthy to be laughed at; but as to the latter, he could not help owning there was some truth in it: nor had he any reason to be ashamed of it, as he was swallowed by surprise; adding, with great fierceness, that if he had had any weapon in his hand the cow should have as soon swallowed the devil.

He spoke the last word with so much fury, and seemed so confounded, that, perceiving the effect it had on him, I immediately waived the story, and, passing to other matters, we had much conversation touching giants. He said, so far from killing any, he had never seen one alive; that he believed those actions were by mistake recorded of him, instead of Jack the giant killer, whom he knew very well, and who had, he fancied, extirpated the race. I assured him to the contrary, and told him I had myself seen a huge tame giant, who very complacently stayed in London a whole winter, at the special request of several gentlemen and ladies; though the affairs of his family called him home to Sweden.

I now beheld a stern looking spirit leaning on the shoulder of another spirit, and presently discerned the former to be Oliver Cromwell, and the latter Charles Martel. I own I was a little surprised at seeing Cromwell here, for I had been taught by my grandmother that he was carried away by the devil himself in a tempest; but he assured me, on his honour, there was not the least truth in that story. However, he confessed he had narrowly escaped the bottomless pit; and, if the former part of his conduct had not been more to his honour than the latter, he had been certainly soused into it. He was, nevertheless, sent back to the upper world with this lot: — ARMY, CAVALIER, DISTRESS.

He was born, for the second time, the day of Charles II's restoration, into a family which had lost a very considerable fortune in the service of that prince and his father, for which they received the reward very often conferred by princes on real merit, viz. —000. At 16 his father bought a small commission for him in the army, in which he served without any promotion all the reigns of Charles II and of his brother. At the Revolution he quitted his regiment, and followed the fortunes of his former master, and was in his service dangerously wounded at the famous battle of the Boyne, where he fought in the capacity of a private soldier. He recovered of this wound, and retired after the unfortunate king to Paris, where he was reduced to support a wife and seven children (for his lot had horns in it) by cleaning shoes and snuffing candles at the opera. In which situation, after he had spent a few miserable years, he died half-starved and broken-hearted. He then revisited Minos, who, compassionating his sufferings by means of that family, to whom he had been in his former capacity so bitter an enemy, suffered him to enter here.

My curiosity would not refrain asking him one question, i.e., whether in reality he had any desire to obtain the crown? He smiled, and said, "No more than an ecclesiastic hath to the mitre, when he cries *Nolo episcopari*." Indeed, he seemed to express some contempt at the question, and presently turned away.

A venerable spirit appeared next, whom I found to be the great historian Livy. Alexander the Great, who was just arrived from the palace of death, passed by him with a frown. The historian, observing it, said, "Ay, you may frown; but those troops which conquered the base Asiatic slaves would have made no figure against the Romans." We then privately lamented the loss of the most valuable part of his history; after which he took occasion to commend the judicious collection made by Mr. Hook, which, he said, was infinitely preferable to all others; and at my mentioning Echard's he gave a bounce, not unlike the going off of a squib, and was departing from me, when I begged him to satisfy my curiosity in one point — whether he was really superstitious or no? For I had always believed he was till Mr. Leibnitz had assured me to the contrary. He answered sullenly, "Doth Mr. Leibnitz know my mind better than myself?" and then walked away.

CHAPTER X

The author is surprised at meeting Julian the apostate in Elysium; but is satisfied by him by what means he procured his entrance there. Julian relates his adventures in the character of a slave.

As he was departing I heard him salute a spirit by the name of Mr. Julian the apostate. This exceedingly amazed me; for I had concluded that no man ever had a better title to the bottomless pit than he. But I soon found that this same Julian the apostate was also the very individual archbishop Latimer. He told me that several lies had been raised on him in his former capacity, nor was he so bad a man as he had been represented. However, he had been denied admittance, and forced to undergo several subsequent pilgrimages on earth, and to act in the different characters of a slave, a Jew, a general, an heir, a carpenter, a beau, a monk, a fiddler, a wise man, a king, a fool, a beggar, a prince, a statesman, a soldier, a tailor, an alderman, a poet, a knight, a dancing master, and three times a bishop, before his martyrdom, which, together with his other behaviour in this last character, satisfied the judge, and procured him a passage to the blessed regions.

I told him such various characters must have produced incidents extremely entertaining; and if he remembered all, as I supposed he did, and had leisure, I should be obliged to him for the recital. He answered he perfectly recollected every circumstance; and as to leisure, the only business of that happy place was to contribute to the happiness of each other. He therefore thanked me for adding to his, in proposing to him a method of increasing mine. I then took my little darling in one hand, and my favourite fellow traveller in the other, and, going with him to a sunny bank of flowers, we all sat down, and he began as follows:—

“I suppose you are sufficiently acquainted with my story during the time I acted the part of the emperor Julian, though I assure you all which hath been related of me is not true, particularly with regard to the many prodigies forerunning my death. However, they are now very little worth disputing; and if they can serve any purpose of the historian they are extremely at his service. My next entrance into the world was at Laodicea, in Syria, in a Roman family of no great note; and, being of a roving disposition, I came at the age of seventeen to Constantinople, where, after about a year’s stay, I set out for Thrace, at the time when the emperor Valens admitted the Goths into that country. I was there so captivated with the beauty of a Gothic lady, the wife of one Roderic, a captain, whose name, out of the most delicate tenderness for her lovely sex, I shall even at this distance conceal; since her behaviour to me was more consistent with good nature than with that virtue which women are obliged to preserve against every assailant. In order to procure an intimacy with this woman I sold myself a slave to her husband, who, being of a nation not over inclined to jealousy, presented me to his wife, for those very reasons which would have induced one of a jealous complexion to have withheld me from her, namely, for that I was young and handsome.

“Matters succeeded so far according to my wish, and the sequel answered those hopes which this beginning had raised. I soon perceived my service was very acceptable to her; I often met her eyes, nor did she withdraw them without a confusion which is scarce consistent with entire purity of heart. Indeed, she gave me every day fresh encouragement; but the unhappy distance which circumstances had placed between us deterred me long from making any direct attack; and she was too strict an observer of decorum to violate the severe rules of modesty by advancing first; but passion at last got the better of my respect, and I resolved to make one bold attempt, whatever was the consequence. Accordingly, laying hold of the first kind opportunity, when she was alone and my master abroad, I stoutly assailed the citadel and carried it by storm. Well may I say by storm; for the resistance I met was extremely resolute, and indeed as much as the most perfect decency would require. She swore often she would cry out for help; but I answered it was in vain, seeing there was no person near to assist her; and probably she believed me, for she did not once actually cry out, which if she had, I might very likely have been prevented.

“When she found her virtue thus subdued against her will she patiently submitted to her fate, and quietly suffered me a long time to enjoy the most delicious fruits of my victory; but envious fortune resolved to make me pay a dear price for my pleasure. One day in the midst of our happiness we were suddenly surprised by the unexpected return of her husband, who, coming directly into his wife’s apartment, just allowed me time to creep under the bed. The disorder in which he found his wife might have surprised a jealous temper; but his was so far otherwise, that possibly no mischief might have happened had he not by a cross accident discovered my legs, which were not well hid. He immediately drew me out by them, and then, turning to his wife with a stern countenance, began to handle a weapon he wore by his side, with which I am persuaded he would have instantly dispatched her, had I not very gallantly, and with many imprecations, asserted her innocence and my own guilt; which, however, I protested had hitherto gone no farther than design. She so well seconded my plea (for she was a woman of wonderful art), that he was at length imposed upon; and now all his rage was directed against me, threatening all manner of tortures, which the poor lady was in too great a fright and confusion to dissuade him from executing; and perhaps, if her concern for me had made her attempt it, it would have raised a jealousy in him not afterwards to be removed.

“After some hesitation Roderic cried out he had luckily hit on the most proper punishment for me in the world, by a method which would at once do severe justice on me for my criminal intention, and at the same time prevent me from any danger of executing my wicked purpose hereafter. This cruel resolution was immediately executed, and I was no longer worthy the name of a man.

“Having thus disqualified me from doing him any future injury, he still retained me in his family; but the lady, very probably repenting of what she had done, and looking on me as the author of her guilt, would never for the future give me either a kind word or look: and shortly after, a great exchange being made between the Romans and the Goths of dogs for men, my lady exchanged

me with a Roman widow for a small lapdog, giving a considerable sum of money to boot.

“In this widow’s service I remained seven years, during all which time I was very barbarously treated. I was worked without the least mercy, and often severely beat by a swinging maidservant, who never called me by any other names than those of the Thing and the Animal. Though I used my utmost industry to please, it never was in my power. Neither the lady nor her woman would eat anything I touched, saying they did not believe me wholesome. It is unnecessary to repeat particulars; in a word, you can imagine no kind of ill-usage which I did not suffer in this family.

“At last a heathen priest, an acquaintance of my lady’s, obtained me of her for a present. The scene was now totally changed, and I had as much reason to be satisfied with my present situation as I had to lament my former. I was so absolutely my master’s favourite, that the rest of the slaves paid me almost as much regard as they showed to him, well knowing that it was entirely in my power to command and treat them as I pleased. I was entrusted with all my master’s secrets, and used to assist him in privately conveying away by night the sacrifices from the altars, which the people believed the deities themselves devoured. Upon these we feasted very elegantly, nor could invention suggest a rarity which we did not pamper ourselves with. Perhaps you may admire at the close union between this priest and his slave, but we lived in an intimacy which the Christians thought criminal; but my master, who knew the will of the gods, with whom he told me he often conversed, assured me it was perfectly innocent.

“This happy life continued about four years, when my master’s death, occasioned by a surfeit got by overfeeding on several exquisite dainties, put an end to it.

“I now fell into the hands of one of a very different disposition, and this was no other than the celebrated St. Chrysostom, who dieted me with sermons instead of sacrifices, and filled my ears with good things, but not my belly. Instead of high food to fatten and pamper my flesh, I had receipts to mortify and reduce it. With these I edified so well, that within a few months I became a skeleton. However, as he had converted me to his faith, I was well enough satisfied with this new manner of living, by which he taught me I might ensure myself an eternal reward in a future state. The saint was a good-natured man, and never gave me an ill word but once, which was occasioned by my neglecting to place Aristophanes, which was his constant bedfellow, on his pillow. He was, indeed, extremely fond of that Greek poet, and frequently made me read his comedies to him. When I came to any of the loose passages he would smile, and say, ‘It was pity his matter was not as pure as his style;’ of which latter he was so immoderately fond that, notwithstanding the detestation he expressed for obscenity, he hath made me repeat those passages ten times over. The character of this good man hath been very unjustly attacked by his heathen contemporaries, particularly with regard to women; but his severe invectives against that sex are his sufficient justification.

“From the service of this saint, from whom I received manumission, I entered into the family of Timasius, a leader of great eminence in the imperial army, into whose favour I so far insinuated myself that he preferred me to a good command, and soon made me partaker of both his company and his secrets. I soon grew intoxicated with this preferment, and the more he loaded me with benefits the more he raised my opinion of my own merit, which, still outstripping the rewards he conferred on me, inspired me rather with dissatisfaction than gratitude. And thus, by preferring me beyond my merit or first expectation, he made me an envious aspiring enemy, whom perhaps a more moderate bounty would have preserved a dutiful servant.

“I fell now acquainted with one Lucilius, a creature of the prime minister Eutropius, who had by his favour been raised to the post of a tribune; a man of low morals, and eminent only in that meanest of qualities, cunning. This gentleman, imagining me a fit tool for the minister’s purpose, having often sounded my principles of honour and honesty, both which he declared to me were words without meaning, and finding my ready concurrence in his sentiments, recommended me to Eutropius as very proper to execute some wicked purposes he had contrived against my friend Timasius. The minister embraced this recommendation, and I was accordingly acquainted by Lucilius (after some previous accounts of the great esteem Eutropius entertained of me, from the testimony he had borne of my parts) that he would introduce me to him; adding that he was a great encourager of merit, and that I might depend upon his favour.

“I was with little difficulty prevailed on to accept of this invitation. A late hour therefore the next evening being appointed, I attended my friend Lucilius to the minister’s house.

“He received me with the utmost civility and cheerfulness, and affected so much regard to me, that I, who knew nothing of these high scenes of life, concluded I had in him a most disinterested friend, owing to the favourable report which Lucilius had made of me. I was however soon cured of this opinion; for immediately after supper our discourse turned on the injustice which the generality of the world were guilty of in their conduct to great men, expecting that they should reward their private merit, without ever endeavouring to apply it to their use. ‘What avail,’ said Eutropius, ‘the learning, wit, courage, or any virtue which a man may be possessed of, to me, unless I receive some benefit from them? Hath he not more merit to me who doth my business and obeys my commands, without any of these qualities?’ I gave such entire satisfaction in my answers on this head, that both the minister and his creature grew bolder, and after some preface began to accuse Timasius. At last, finding I did not attempt to defend him, Lucilius swore a great oath that he was not fit to live, and that he would destroy him. Eutropius answered that it would be too dangerous a task: ‘Indeed,’ says he, ‘his crimes are of so black a dye, and so well known to the emperor, that his death must be a very acceptable service, and could not fail meeting a proper reward: but I question whether you are capable of executing it.’

“ ‘If he is not,’ cried I, ‘I am; and surely no man can have greater motives to destroy him than myself: for, besides his disloyalty to my prince, for whom I have so perfect a duty, I have private disobligations to him. I have had fellows put over my head, to the great scandal of the service in general, and to my own prejudice and disappointment in particular.’ I will not repeat you my whole speech; but, to be as concise as possible, when we parted that evening the minister squeezed me heartily by the hand, and with great commendation of my honesty and assurances of his favour, he appointed me the next evening to come to him alone; when, finding me, after a little more scrutiny, ready for his purpose, he proposed to me to accuse Timasius of high treason, promising me the highest rewards if I would undertake it. The consequence to him, I suppose you know, was ruin; but what was it to me? Why, truly, when I waited on Eutropius for the fulfilling his promises, received me with great distance and coldness; and, on my dropping some hints of my expectations from him, he affected not to understand me; saying he thought impunity was the utmost I could hope for on discovering my accomplice, whose offense was only greater than mine, as he was in a higher station; and telling me he had great difficulty to obtain a pardon for me from the emperor, which he said, he had struggled very hardly for, as he had worked the discovery out of me. He turned away, and addressed himself to another person.

“I was so incensed at this treatment, that I resolved revenge, and should certainly have pursued it, had he not cautiously prevented me by taking effectual means to despatch me soon after out of the world.

“You will, I believe, now think I had a second good chance for the bottomless pit, and indeed Minos seemed inclined to tumble me in, till he was informed of the revenge taken on me by Roderic, and my seven years’ subsequent servitude to the widow; which he thought sufficient to make atonement for all the crimes a single life could admit of, and so sent me back to try my fortune a third time.”

CHAPTER XI

In which Julian relates his adventures in the character of an avaricious Jew.

“The next character in which I was destined to appear in the flesh was that of an avaricious Jew. I was born in Alexandria in Egypt. My name was Balthazar. Nothing very remarkable happened to me till the year of the memorable tumult in which the Jews of that city are reported in history to have massacred more Christians than at that time dwelt in it. Indeed, the truth is, they did maul the dogs pretty handsomely; but I myself was not present, for as all our people were ordered to be armed, I took that opportunity of selling two swords, which probably I might otherwise never have disposed of, they being extremely old and rusty; so that, having no weapon left, I did not care to venture abroad. Besides, though I really thought it an act meriting salvation to murder the Nazarenes, as the fact was to be committed at midnight, at which time, to avoid suspicion, we were all to sally from our own houses, I could not persuade myself to consume so much oil in sitting up to that hour: for these reasons therefore I remained at home that evening.

“I was at this time greatly enamoured with one Hypatia, the daughter of a philosopher; a young lady of the greatest beauty and merit: indeed, she had every imaginable ornament both of mind and body. She seemed not to dislike my person; but there were two obstructions to our marriage, viz., my religion and her poverty: both which might probably have been got over, had not those dogs the Christians murdered her; and, what is worse, afterwards burned her body: worse, I say, because I lost by that means a jewel of some value, which I had presented to her, designing, if our nuptials did not take place, to demand it of her back again.

“Being thus disappointed in my love, I soon after left Alexandria and went to the imperial city, where I apprehended I should find a good market for jewels on the approaching marriage of the emperor with Athenais. I disguised myself as a beggar on this journey, for these reasons: first, as I imagined I should thus carry my jewels with greater safety; and, secondly, to lessen my expenses; which latter expedient succeeded so well, that I begged two oboli on my way more than my traveling cost me, my diet being chiefly roots, and my drink water.

“But perhaps, it had been better for me if I had been more lavish and more expeditious; for the ceremony was over before I reached Constantinople; so that I lost that glorious opportunity of disposing of my jewels with which many of our people were greatly enriched.

“The life of a miser is very little worth relating, as it is one constant scheme of getting or saving money. I shall therefore repeat to you some few only of my adventures, without regard to any order.

“A Roman Jew, who was a great lover of Falernian wine, and who indulged himself very freely with it, came to dine at my house; when, knowing he should meet with little wine, and that of the cheaper sort, sent me in half-a-dozen jars

of Falernian. Can you believe I would not give this man his own wine? Sir, I adulterated it so that I made six jars, of three, which he and his friend drank; the other three I afterwards sold to the very person who originally sent them me, knowing he would give a better price than any other.

“A noble Roman came one day to my house in the country, which I had purchased, for half the value, of a distressed person. My neighbours paid him the compliment of some music, on which account, when he departed, he left a piece of gold with me to be distributed among them. I pocketed this money, and ordered them a small vessel of sour wine, which I could not have sold for above two drachms, and afterwards made them pay in work three times the value of it.

“As I was not entirely void of religion, though I pretended to infinitely more than I had, so I endeavoured to reconcile my transactions to my conscience as well as possible. Thus I never invited any one to eat with me, but those on whose pockets I had some design. After our collation it was constantly my method to set down in a book I kept for that purpose, what I thought they owed me for their meal. Indeed, this was generally a hundred times as much as they could have dined elsewhere for; but, however, it was quid pro quo, if not ad valorem. Now, whenever the opportunity offered of imposing on them I considered it only as paying myself what they owed me: indeed, I did not always confine myself strictly to what I had set down, however extravagant that was; but I reconciled taking the overplus to myself as usance.

“But I was not only too cunning for others — I sometimes overreached myself. I have contracted distempers for want of food and warmth, which have put me to the expense of a physician; nay, I once very narrowly escaped death by taking bad drugs, only to save one seven eighth per cent in the price.

“By these and such like means, in the midst of poverty and every kind of distress, I saw myself master of an immense fortune, the casting up and ruminating on which was my daily and only pleasure. This was, however, obstructed and embittered by two considerations, which against my will often invaded my thoughts. One, which would have been intolerable (but that indeed seldom troubled me), was, that I must one day leave my darling treasure.

“The other haunted me continually, viz., that my riches were no greater. However, I comforted myself against this reflection by an assurance that they would increase daily: on which head my hopes were so extensive that I may say with Virgil —

*‘His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono’.*

Indeed I am convinced that, had I possessed the whole globe of earth, save one single drachma, which I had been certain never to be master of — I am convinced, I say, that single drachma would have given me more uneasiness than all the rest could afford me pleasure.

“To say the truth, between my solicitude in contriving schemes to procure money and my extreme anxiety in preserving it, I never had one moment of ease while awake nor of quiet when in my sleep.

“In all the characters through which I have passed, I have never undergone half the misery I suffered in this; and, indeed, Minos seemed to be of the same opinion; for while I stood trembling and shaking in expectation of my sentence he bid me go back about my business, for that nobody was to be d—n’d in more worlds than one. And, indeed, I have since learned that the devil will not receive a miser.”

CHAPTER XII

What happened to Julian in the characters of a general, an heir, a carpenter, and a beau.

“The next step I took into the world was at Apollonia, in Thrace, where I was born of a beautiful Greek slave, who was the mistress of Eutyches, a great favourite of the emperor Zeno. That prince, at his restoration, gave me the command of a cohort, I being then but fifteen years of age; and a little afterwards, before I had even seen an army, preferred me, over the heads of all the old officers, to be a tribune.

“As I found an easy access to the emperor, by means of my father’s intimacy with him, he being a very good courtier — or, in other words, a most prostitute flatterer — so I soon ingratiated myself with Zeno, and so well imitated my father in flattering him, that he would never part with me from about his person. So that the first armed force I ever beheld was that with which Marcian surrounded the palace, where I was then shut up with the rest of the court.

“I was afterwards put at the head of a legion and ordered to march into Syria with Theodoric the Goth; that is, I mean my legion was so ordered; for, as to myself, I remained at court, with the name and pay of a general, without the labour or the danger.

“As nothing could be more gay, i.e., debauched, than Zeno’s court, so the ladies of gay disposition had great sway in it; particularly one, whose name was Fausta, who, though not extremely handsome, was by her wit and sprightliness very agreeable to the emperor. With her I lived in good correspondence, and we together disposed of all kinds of commissions in the army, not to those who had most merit, but who would purchase at the highest rate. My levee was now prodigiously thronged by officers who returned from the campaigns, who, though they might have been convinced by daily example how ineffectual a recommendation their services were, still continued indefatigable in attendance, and behaved to me with as much observance and respect as I should have been entitled to for making their fortunes, while I suffered them and their families to starve.

“Several poets, likewise, addressed verses to me, in which they celebrated my achievements; and what, perhaps, may seem strange to us at present, I received all this incense with most greedy vanity, without once reflecting that, as I did not deserve these compliments, they should rather put me in mind of my defects.

“My father was now dead, and I became so absolute in the emperor’s grace that one unacquainted with courts would scarce believe the servility with which all kinds of persons who entered the walls of the palace behaved towards me. A bow, a smile, a nod from me, as I passed through cringing crowds, were esteemed as signal favours; but a gracious word made any one happy; and, indeed, had this real benefit attending it, that it drew on the person on whom

it was bestowed a very great degree of respect from all others; for these are of current value in courts, and, like notes in trading communities, are assignable from one to the other. The smile of a court favourite immediately raises the person who receives it, and gives a value to his smile when conferred on an inferior: thus the smile is transferred from one to the other, and the great man at last is the person to discount it. For instance, a very low fellow hath a desire for a place. To whom is he to apply? Not to the great man; for to him he hath no access. He therefore applies to A, who is the creature of B, who is the tool of C, who is the flatterer of D, who is the catamite of E, who is the pimp of F, who is the bully of G, who is the buffoon of I, who is the husband of K, who is the whore of L, who is the bastard of M, who is the instrument of the great man. Thus the smile descending regularly from the great man to A, is discounted back again, and at last paid by the great man.

“It is manifest that a court would subsist as difficultly without this kind of coin as a trading city without paper credit. Indeed, they differ in this, that their value is not quite so certain, and a favourite may protest his smile without the danger of bankruptcy.

“In the midst of all this glory the emperor died, and Anastasius was preferred to the crown. As it was yet uncertain whether I should not continue in favour, I was received as usual at my entrance into the palace to pay my respects to the new emperor; but I was no sooner rumped by him than I received the same compliment from all the rest; the whole room, like a regiment of soldiers, turning their backs to me all at once: my smile now was become of equal value with the note of a broken banker, and everyone was as cautious not to receive it.

“I made as much haste as possible from the court, and shortly after from the city, retreating to the place of my nativity, where I spent the remainder of my days in a retired life in husbandry, the only amusement for which I was qualified, having neither learning nor virtue.

“When I came to the gate Minos again seemed at first doubtful, but at length dismissed me; saying though I had been guilty of many heinous crimes, in as much as I had, though a general, never been concerned in spilling human blood, I might return again to earth.

“I was now again born in Alexandria, and, by great accident, entering into the womb of my daughter-in-law, came forth my own grandson, inheriting that fortune which I had before amassed.

“Extravagance was now as notoriously my vice as avarice had been formerly; and I spent in a very short life what had cost me the labour of a very long one to rake together. Perhaps you will think my present condition was more to be envied than my former: but upon my word it was very little so; for, by possessing everything almost before I desired it, I could hardly ever say I enjoyed my wish: I scarce ever knew the delight of satisfying a craving appetite. Besides, as I never once thought, my mind was useless to me, and I was an absolute stranger to

all the pleasures arising from it. Nor, indeed, did my education qualify me for any delicacy in other enjoyments; so that in the midst of plenty I loathed everything. Taste for elegance I had none; and the greatest of corporeal blisses I felt no more from than the lowest animal. In a word, as while a miser I had plenty without daring to use it, so now I had it without appetite.

“But if I was not very happy in the height of my enjoyment, so I afterwards became perfectly miserable; being soon overtaken by disease, and reduced to distress, till at length, with a broken constitution and broken heart, I ended my wretched days in a jail: nor can I think the sentence of Minos too mild, who condemned me, after having taken a large dose of avarice, to wander three years on the banks of Cocytus, with the knowledge of having spent the fortune in the person of the grandson which I had raised in that of the grandfather.

“The place of my birth, on my return to the world, was Constantinople, where my father was a carpenter. The first thing I remember was, the triumph of Belisarius, which was, indeed, most noble show; but nothing pleased me so much as the figure of Gelimer, king of the African Vandals, who, being led captive on this occasion, reflecting with disdain on the mutation of his own fortune, and on the ridiculous empty pomp of the conqueror, cried out, VANITY, VANITY, ALL IS MERE VANITY.’

“I was bred up to my father’s trade, and you may easily believe so low a sphere could produce no adventures worth your notice. However, I married a woman I liked, and who proved a very tolerable wife. My days were passed in hard labour, but this procured me health, and I enjoyed a homely supper at night with my wife with more pleasure than I apprehend greater persons find at their luxurious meals. My life had scarce any variety in it, and at my death I advanced to Minos with great confidence of entering the gate: but I was unhappily obliged to discover some frauds I had been guilty of in the measure of my work when I worked by the foot, as well as my laziness when I was employed by the day. On which account, when I attempted to pass, the angry judge laid hold on me by the shoulders, and turned me back so violently, that, had I had a neck of flesh and bone, I believe he would have broke it.”

CHAPTER XIII

Julian passes into a fop.

“My scene of action was Rome. I was born into a noble family, and heir to a considerable fortune. On which my parents, thinking I should not want any talents, resolved very kindly and wisely to throw none away upon me. The only instructors of my youth were therefore one Saltator, who taught me several motions for my legs; and one Ficus, whose business was to show me the cleanest way (as he called it) of cutting off a man’s head. When I was well accomplished in these sciences, I thought nothing more wanting, but what was to be furnished by the several mechanics in Rome, who dealt in dressing and adorning the pope. Being therefore well equipped with all which their art could produce, I became at the age of twenty a complete finished beau. And now during forty-five years I dressed, I sang and danced, and danced and sang, I bowed and ogled, and ogled and bowed, till, in the sixty-sixth year of my age, I got cold by overheating myself with dancing, and died.

“Minos told me, as I was unworthy of Elysium, so I was too insignificant to be damned, and therefore bade me walk back again.”