II. REMARKS on some Passages of the sixth Book of the *ENEID*.
By JAMES BEATTIE, LL. D. F. R. S. EDIN. and Professor of Logic and Moral Philosophy in the Marischal College, Aberdeen.

[Read by Mr DALZEL, Secretary, March 19. 1787.]

THE poetical beauties of VIRGIL's sixth book are great and many; and a most agreeable task it would be to point them out: but that is not my present purpose. Nor do I intend to draw a comparison of the sentiments of our poet with those of HOMER, concerning a future state. From HOMER, no doubt, VIRGIL received the first hint of this episode; but the evocation of the ghosts, in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, is not in any degree so striking, or so poetical, as ENEAS's descent into the world of spirits. Nor does the former exhibit any distinct idea of retribution. In it all is dark and uncomfortable. "I would rather, says the ghost of ACHILLES, be the slave of a poor peasant among the living, than reign sole monarch of the dead:" a passage blamed, not without reason, by PLATO, as unfriendly to virtue, and tending to debase the soul by an unmanly fear of death.

My design is, to give as plain an account as I can of the *theology* (if I may be allowed to call it so) of this part of VIRGIL's poem. And I shall make the poet his own interpreter, without trusting to commentators, or seeking unnecessary illustrations from PLATO, to whom VIRGIL, though he differs from him in many particulars, was indebted for the outlines of

the system, and who probably owed them to philosophers of the Pythagorean school.

THE learned Bishop WARBURTON has commented on this part of the *Eneid*. Many of his observations are pertinent, but some are fanciful; and in more places than one he seems to have misunderstood the author. His general position is, That what the poet says of Elysium and the infernal regions, we are to understand as nothing more than a figurative account of the mysteries exhibited in the temple of CERES at Eleusis; and that the poet meant in this way to tell us, that ENEAS had, like some other heroes and lawgivers of old, been initiated into those mysteries. This theory he supports very ingeniously, but not, I believe, to the satisfaction of many readers. I admit there are allegories in the book, as I shall have occasion to show; but that the whole is an allegory, or rather an allegorical representation of the Eleusinian allegories, I can no more suppose, than that the arrival at Carthage is an allegory, or the visit to EVANDER, or the combat with TURNUS, or any other of our hero's achievements. I consider this episode as truly epic, and as a part, though not a necessary part, of the poet's fable; and that he contrived it, first, that he might embellish his work with a poetical account of a future state, and secondly, and chiefly, that he might thence take an opportunity to introduce a compliment to his country, by celebrating the virtues of some of the great men it had produced. As these great men did not flourish till after the death of ENEAS, there were but two ways in which the poet could make him acquainted with them. One was, by causing some priest or soothsayer to prophecy concerning them; and the other, by so availing himself of the doctrines of pre-existence and transmigration, then taught in some of the schools; as to exhibit in their pre-existent state, such of the hero's posterity as there might be occasion for. He chose the latter method; and has so managed it, that we must acknowledge the choice to have been judicious.

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As the chief thing I have in view is, to illustrate the moral and theological sentiments of my author, I need not take up much time, either in vindicating, or in apologizing for, his general fiction; I mean, his laying the scenery of a future state in the subterranean regions. That on the coast of Italy, in the neighbourhood of Cumæ, there should be a passage underground, leading to the rivers Acheron, Cocytus and Styx, and thence to Tartarus on the left hand, and Elysium on the right; that in this Elysium, though thus situated, there should be a sun and stars, and grassy plains, and delightful groves and rivers, and two gates, the one of ivory, the other of horn, opening into the upper world, at no great distance from the Cumæ above mentioned; and that in the subterranean spaces thus bounded, there should be different sorts of accommodation for all the shades or souls of the dead:—these, I say, are fables, which, as they cannot, according to our way of judging, be reconciled to probability, or even to possibility, we must endeavour to acquiesce in the best way we can. So, in reading OVID's story of Phaeton, if we would enter into the poet's views, and be suitably affected with his narrative, we must suppose, what we know to be absolutely impossible, that the sun is driven about the world in a chariot, which, though made of gold and silver, and dragged by real horses, and supported by nothing but air, yet passes along in a beaten highway, where the marks of the wheels are clearly discernible. Fables of this sort, however inconsistent with the laws of nature, when rendered by the art of the poet consistent with themselves, it is not our interest to criticize too minutely; especially if, like that now under consideration, they abound in sublime description and instructive lessons of morality. The fable then let us acquiesce in for a moment. Our dreams, while they last, we believe without inconvenience; and the scenery of this fable will not be more lasting than that of a dream.

As a sort of apology for the wildness of some parts of this fable, it may be remarked, that formerly at Cumæ, near which the Trojan fleet was now stationed, there lived a prophetess called the Cumean Sybil; that in her neighbourhood, encompassed with thick woods, there was a lake called Avernus, which emitted pestilential steams; that in the same parts of Italy there are many dreadful caverns, one of which is to this day called the Sybil's Grotto; and that for those who knew nothing of the real size of the earth, or the final destination of man, it was not altogether absurd to imagine, as all dead bodies return to the earth, that the subterranean regions might be the mansions of the ghosts or shades of human beings departed.

THE necessary sacrifices being performed, and ENEAS having found in the woods that golden bough which, being intended as a present to PROSERPINE, was to serve him as a passport through her dominions; the Sybil or priestess plunged into the cavern, calling to him to follow her, with his sword drawn in his hand. They went a great way through a lonely region, where there was no more light than one travelling in a wood receives in a cloudy night from the moon. At length they arrived at the entrance of the infernal world, where a number of terrible beings resided; Disease, Old Age, Fear, Famine, Poverty, and Death, and Labour, and War, and Discord; and such monstrous things as centaurs, gorgons, harpies and giants, one with three heads, and another with a hundred hands, and the chimera breathing fire, and the many-headed serpent of Lerna roaring hideously. By placing these at the entrance, the poet perhaps intended to signify, in the way of allegory, the horrors that accompany the near approach of death; or perhaps those many evils, real and imaginary, which we must all pass through in our way to the other world.

FROM this place to the river Styx was a region, in which the ghosts of those, whose bodies had not been honoured with the rites

rites of sepulture, were obliged to wander in a melancholy condition for the space of an hundred years, before they could be permitted to pass the river, or appear before any of the infernal judges. Here ENEAS met with his old pilot PALINURUS, who, in their last voyage, having fallen overboard in the night, and swam to the main land of Italy, was there murdered by the natives, who did not give themselves the trouble to bury him, but threw his body into the sea. He begged ENEAS to take him under his protection, and procure him a passage over the Styx. “It cannot be, said the Sybil; you must have patience. In the place where you were murdered, there will soon be prodigies, which will induce the natives to perform your funeral rites, and call a promontory after your name; and then you may pass the river, but not before.” PALINURUS acquiesced; well pleased to hear that such honours awaited him.

To inculcate this doctrine, that the soul would suffer for some time in another world, if the body were not decently buried in this, and that the neglect of the funeral ceremonies is offensive to superior beings, was a very warrantable fraud in the lawgivers of Greece and Egypt; as it would no doubt make the people attentive to a duty, whereof we find that savage nations are too apt to be forgetful.

OUR two adventurers were now approaching the river, when Charon the ferryman, alarmed at the sight of a living man in complete armour, called to the Trojan to stop, and give an account of himself. The Sybil pacified Charon, by declaring the name and quality of her fellow-traveller, and showing the golden bough. They were then ferried over; and the three-headed dog Cerberus, preparing to attack them, was quieted with a cake which the priests had got ready for him, and which he had no sooner swallowed than he fell fast asleep.

WHAT could have given rise to this fable of Charon and his boat, it is not very material to enquire. Mythological writers have

have said, That the Greeks learned it from the Egyptians, which is indeed probable enough; that the Egyptians framed both this, and some other fables relating to the dead, from certain customs peculiar to their country; that in particular there was, not far from Memphis, a famous burying-place, to which the dead bodies were conveyed in a boat across the lake Acherusia; and that Charon was a boatman who had long officiated in that service. The learned Dr BLACKWELL says, in his life of HOMER, that, in the old Egyptian language, *Charoni* signified ferryman.

THE travellers had now before them a region which the poet calls *lugentes campi*, extending from the other side of the Styx to the road that leads to Elysium on the right hand, and that which terminates in Tartarus on the left. These melancholy plains must not be confounded with Tartarus. The latter is a place of eternal torment, prepared for those who, in this world, had been guilty of great crimes; for there, says the poet, “*Set, æternumque fedebit infelix Theseus.*” The former, though an uncomfortable region, is not a place of endless punishment, but a sort of purgatory, in which all those souls that are not consigned to Tartarus, are doomed to undergo certain purifying pains, to prepare them for Elysium. These pains are more or less severe, and of longer or shorter duration, according to the degree of guilt committed in the upper world. The souls, on passing the Styx, appear before the judge Minos, who summons a council, either of ghosts or of infernal deities, but whether as a jury, or as witnesses, we know not; and having informed himself of the lives and characters of those who are brought before him, allots to each a suitable mansion in this purgatory.

THE souls thus disposed of, are—*first*, those of good men, who, after undergoing the necessary pains of purification, pass into Elysium, where they remain in a state of happiness for ever; *2dly*, of those who have been of little or no use to mankind;

kind ; 3dly, of those who have been cut off by an untimely death, so that their real characters could not be exactly ascertained ; 4thly, of those who, though guilty of crimes, had not committed any thing very atrocious ; and, lastly, of those whose crimes, though atrocious, were considered as the effects, rather of an unhappy destiny, than of wilful depravation.

THAT the souls of good men, who were to have an eternal abode in Elysium, were previously obliged to undergo purgation by suffering, is not expressly declared, but may be inferred from what ANCHISES says, “ Quisque suos patimur manes : ” “ every one of *us* undergoes what is inflicted on him by his “ *manes* ; ” that is, by those deities of the nether world who were the dispensers of expiatory punishment. This is the original, or at least the most usual sense of the word *manes*, which, however, sometimes denotes metonymically the infernal regions in general, and sometimes, but more rarely, the souls or shades who inhabited those regions. In Tartarus, it does not appear that the Manes had any thing to do. The dispensers of punishment in that dreadful place were Tisiphone and her sister-furies. The Manes must have been a gentler sort of beings. Some derive the word from *manus* or *manis*, which they say (on what authority I know not) is an old adjective signifying *good*. The invocations of the Manes practised at funerals, the altars that were erected to them, and those monumental inscriptions which began with the words *Dis Manibus*, were all, no doubt, intended as acts of worship, or as compliments, to these deities, and supposed to incline them to mercy in their treatment of the persons deceased, whose souls were now in their hands in purgatory. HORACE tells us, that the Manes, as well as the gods above, might be rendered placable by song—“ Carminē di superi “ placantur, carminē manes.” But the furies were inexorable and merciless—“ Nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda.” And I do not find that worship, or any other honours, were, except by witches *, paid them, though to mother Midnight, whose daughters

* HOR. Sat. I. 8. v. 33.

daughters they were, sacrifice was occasionally performed. OVID says indeed, that they relented on hearing the song of Orpheus, but assures us it was for the first time. VIRGIL, in his account of that affair, says only, that they were astonished.

HERE I cannot but remark how absurd it is for *us* to begin an epitaph with the words *Dis Manibus*, or the letters *D. M.* which oftener than once I have seen on a modern tombstone. Such an exordium may be classical ; but, in a Christian churchyard, an invocation to Proserpine would not be more incongruous. ADDISON did well, when he advised the writers of his time not to sacrifice their catechism to their poetry.

I SAID, that the Manes seem to have had nothing to do in Tartarus. I am not ignorant, however, that RUEUS and the common Dictionaries affirm, that the word sometimes denotes the furies, and quote as an authority, “ Ignoscenda quidem, “ scirent si ignoscere manes.” But this is not sufficient authority. That verse of VIRGIL relates to Orpheus looking behind him, when conducting his wife to the upper world ; a fault, or infatuation, which was to be punished, not by the scourge of the furies, but by calling back Eurydice to the shades below ; and which the Manes, however placable, could not pardon, because it was a direct violation of the treaty with Proserpine.

It is somewhat difficult to understand distinctly what the ancients meant by the words *animæ*, *umbræ*, *simulacra*, which, in this discourse, I call *ghosts*, *shades* or *souls*. We know, that man consists of a body and a soul, a material and an incorporeal part ; the one, like all other bodies, inactive, the other the source of life, motion and intelligence. But, on comparing the general doctrine of this sixth book with a passage in the fourth Georgic, and with the eleventh of the Odyssey, we find, that our poet, following in part the opinions of PYTHAGORAS and PLATO, and partly too the representations of HOMER, supposed man to consist of three substances ; *first*, a vital and ac-
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tive principle, derived either from the Deity himself, or from that universal spirit whom he created in the beginning, who animates all nature, and of whom the vital principle of brutes is also, according to VIRGIL, an emanation; 2dly, a shade or ghost, *umbra*, *anima*, *simulacrum*, or εἶδωλον, as HOMER calls it; and 3dly, a body. At death, the vital principle was re-united to that universal spirit whereof it was originally a part; the body was burned or buried, and returned to the earth whence it came; and the shade or ghost went to the nether world, and appeared before Minos or Rhadamanthus, who assigned it such a mansion of happiness, of torment, or of expiatory suffering, as the person's behaviour on earth had merited, or his circumstances with respect to pollution or purity required. These shades or ghosts were so far corporeal as to be visible, but could not be touched; they retained the same appearance their bodies had before death; they had reason and speech and consciousness, and a remembrance of their past lives; they could be happy or unhappy; retained all the passions and affections of humanity; and were capable (such of them at least as had not been atrocious criminals) of being purified from the pollutions of guilt by the operation of air, fire and water.

THAT part of the *lugentes campi* which ENEAS first passed through, after crossing the Styx, was peopled by the shades of infants, of persons who had suffered death by a false accusation, and of those who had taken away their own lives. These are all placed in the same neighbourhood, probably because, having been cut off, as we say, before their time, they had not had the means, while on earth, of displaying their character in its full extent. This, however, is but conjecture; for the poet only mentions the circumstance, without assigning a reason. The self-murderers, who occupy this district, are termed *infantes*, innocent or harmless; an epithet which the commentators do not understand, or at least do not see the propriety of in this place. VIRGIL, we are sure, did not mean to insinuate, that

self-destroyers in general are guilty of no fault; for he places even these *infantes*, who in respect of others were comparatively innocent, in an uncomfortable situation, and says, that they would now return to the earth if they could, and willingly submit to poverty, and those other evils, which when alive they thought insupportable. By the word *infantes*, therefore, as here applied, I understand such unhappy persons as had destroyed themselves, without being chargeable with any other great wickedness. Had they been guilty of impiety, injustice, want of natural affection, or any gross immorality, they would, according to our author's plan of retribution, have been consigned to everlasting punishment in Tartarus. But as we find them in a state of expiatory suffering, and characterised by this epithet, we must, I think, suppose, that the poet here speaks of that self-destruction, which, being partly the effect of infirmity, was, in his judgment, the object of pity as well as of disapprobation.

THE Trojan and his guide were now arrived at that part of the melancholy plains, where the country, if I may call it so, seemed to open into a wider extent. Here was a district, where, in a myrtle grove, were wandering the shades of unhappy lovers. Here ENEAS met with DIDO, who had rejoined her husband SICHEUS; and here he saw several others, some of whom, by the by, had led such lives on earth as would seem to deserve a severer doom than that of VIRGIL's purgatory.

ADJOINING to the grove of lovers, and at the furthest extremity of these regions, was a province inhabited by deceased warriors. Here he found several of his old acquaintance, who were glad to see him, and converse and walk with him, and curious to know the occasion of his coming. The Grecian ghosts knew him likewise, and fled from before him, as they had been accustomed to do in the Trojan war. Here he saw the shade of his brother-in law DEIPHOBUS, in the same mangled condition in which his body had been left by the Greeks in the night

night of the burning of Troy. A long conversation ensued between the two friends, which was at last interrupted by the priestess, who told ENEAS that he had no further time to lose. Be not angry, said DEIPHOBUS ; I shall go away, return to my darkness, and there complete my term of penance.

Difcedam, explebo numerum, reddarque tenebris.

The words *explebo numerum* are variously interpreted ; but the sense is probably what is here given. RŒTUS is inclined to explain it thus, “ Be not angry, great priestess, I shall just wind “ up the last period of my discourse, and then return to my “ darkness ;” as if the poor mangled ghost of DEIPHOBUS had been ambitious to distinguish itself at this time as a rhetorician, and well skilled in the art of rounding a period. DRYDEN understands the passage as I do. SERVIUS hints at the same interpretation, but seems to prefer another.

THE two travellers having passed through the melancholy plains, were now come to a place, where one road went off to the left, and another to the right ; the former leading to Tartarus, the latter to Elysium. They were going to Elysium on a visit to ANCHISES : but before they struck off to the right, the priestess took this opportunity to describe Tartarus, the gates of which were in view, but which ENEAS could not enter, as they were never opened but for the reception of those wicked souls, whom the judge Rhadamanthus, after making them confess the crimes they had committed in the upper world, thought proper to condemn to eternal punishment. When this dreadful sentence was passed, they were seized on by Tisiphone and the other furies, the adamantine gates opened with a tremendous sound, and the criminals were thrown into an immense dungeon, stretching downwards twice as far as from hell to heaven.

THE description of Tartarus is wrought up in a style of terrible sublimity, such as never was equalled by any other poet, except by MILTON, in the first and second books of *Paradise Lost*. In the intrinsic grandeur of his images, the English poet may be thought to have excelled the Roman; but in one respect the Roman has the advantage. By means of a more musical language, he has been enabled to embellish his narration with a sonorous magnificence of harmony, whereof the English tongue, even when modulated by MILTON, is not susceptible.

THE mouth of the Tartarean gulf was encircled with three walls so strong, as to be proof against every assault of men or gods; and these walls were surrounded by Phlegethon, a river of tempestuous flame. Sleepless, before the gate, day and night, and full in ENEAS's view, sat the fury Tisiphone in bloody attire. From within issued such an uproar of terrifying noises, that the hero, though at a distance, heard it with horror; the cries of the tormented, the sound of the scourge, the crash of iron-engines, and the clanking of chains dragged along. Tell me, said he, O virgin, what clamours, what punishments, are those; and for what crimes they are inflicted. This gives the priestess occasion to describe what was passing in the regions of torment; with which Hecate had made her acquainted, when she gave her the superintendence of the groves of Avernus. The persons there punished had all perpetrated enormous crimes; among which are reckoned, acts of impiety, want of natural affection, cruel treatment of parents, the defrauding of clients or dependants, and the hoarding up of wealth to the injury of friends and relations. Here too adultery is punished, even though the criminal should have already suffered death for it in the upper world. Other crimes here punished are, rebellion, incest, the various sorts of injustice and treachery, the venality of lawgivers, subversion of the liberties of our country, sacrificing the public good to private interest, and

and many other forms of wickedness, whereof the Sybil declares it was impossible for her to give a particular enumeration.

THE punishments are various. Of one enormous offender, the entrails are continually devoured by a vulture, and continually growing to be again devoured; an apt emblem to express the pangs of a guilty conscience, and which puts one in mind of the never-dying worm mentioned in Scripture. Some are in the eternal apprehension of being crushed by a black rock, which hangs over them, and seems to be every moment beginning to fall. Some are perpetually employed in rolling a huge mass of stone; some are stretched out on a whirling wheel; and some, agonising with eternal hunger, have a sumptuous banquet set before them, which they no sooner attempt to touch, than a gigantic fury starts up, brandishing a torch, and denouncing vengeance in a voice of thunder.

THERE is nothing in VIRGIL more explicit than the account of Tartarus; and I know not why it has been so generally misunderstood. Dr WARBURTON says, in one place, that ENEAS saw the fights of Tartarus at a distance, and, in another, that ENEAS passed through Tartarus. In fact, he did neither. He could not pass through without entering; and this, we are told, was to him impossible: “Nulli fas casto sceleratum infistere limen.” And though he had been permitted to enter, he could not pass through, without first crossing a river of fire, and then descending into an immense gulph, twice as deep beneath the level of the other regions of darkness, as those are remote from heaven. It was equally impossible for him to see from a distance what was doing in such a gulph, even though the gate that led to it had been open, which, however, at this time, happened to be shut. “You see, said the Sybil, what a centinel sits without in the porch, (meaning Tisiphone); another, still more dreadful, has her station within;” which, as he could not see it, she informs him is a huge serpent, or hydra, with fifty heads. An opening of the gate is indeed mentioned,

mentioned, which RUEUS understands to have taken place at the very time when the Trojan and the Sybil were looking at it. But that is a mistake. The Sybil only tells her companion, that, when Rhadamanthus has made the criminals confess their guilt, then at length (*tum demum*) the gate opens for their reception into the place of torment. It is strange that RUEUS and Dr WARBURTON did not see that this is the obvious import of the words of VIRGIL; and that, if we do not understand them in this sense, the passage must appear confused, if not ungrammatical. In a word; of the inside of Tartarus the Trojan hero saw nothing; he saw the outside only, the walls, the gates, the tower of iron, &c. and these he saw at some distance. What was passing within he learns from the Sybil's information.

“AND now, says she, let us be going. Yonder, on the right hand, is the palace of Proserpine, where, in the vaulted porch that fronts us, we are commanded to deposit the golden bough.” This ceremony ENEAS performs, after having sprinkled himself with pure water; which was customary with those who made offerings to the gods.

THEY then went onward to Elysium, the gay scenery of which, immediately succeeding the gloom of purgatory and the horrors of Tartarus, is so charming, that every reader feels himself refreshed by it. Here were groves, and plains, and meadows, clothed with perpetual verdure, the abodes of tranquillity and joy, and illuminated by a sun and stars of the most refulgent beauty. Here were feasting, and dancing, and music, and poets accompanying their verses with the harmony of the lyre. Here those warlike exercises were renewed, in which the heroes while on earth had so much delighted; and here were horses, and chariots, and arms, and every thing that could gratify an heroic mind. It must be owned, that all this is very inadequate to the desires and the capacity of an immortal soul:

soul: but VIRGIL had heard of nothing better; and it was impossible for him to describe what he could not conceive.

IN this Elysium, which, with all its imperfection, is, as well as the infernal world, founded on the best ideas of retributive justice that could be expected from a pagan, the poet places in a state of endless felicity, “ the shades of the pure and the
“ pious; of heroes who have died in defence of their country;
“ of ingenious men who have employed their talents in adorn-
“ ing human life with elegant arts, or in recommending piety
“ and virtue; and of all who, by acts of beneficence, have
“ merited the love and the gratitude of their fellow-creatures.”

To a company of these happy beings, who had flocked round the two strangers, and especially to the poet MUSEUS, whom she knew, the Sybil addressed herself, desiring to be informed where ANCHISES resided. We have no certain habitations, returned the poet; we wander about, and amuse ourselves, wherever we please; but follow me to yonder rising ground, and I shall put you in a path that will conduct you to him.

SOME writers blame VIRGIL for not making ENEAS find HOMER in this part of Elysium; and insinuate, that the Roman poet must have been both invidious and ungrateful, in neglecting such an opportunity of doing honour to his great master, to whom he owed so much. Those critics do not consider that ENEAS was dead an hundred years before HOMER was born. Our poet has been censured for a *supposed* anachronism, in making ENEAS and DIDO contemporary; and here he is found fault with for having judiciously avoided a *real* anachronism.

IT chanced that ANCHISES was at this time in a remote valley, reviewing, in their state of pre-existence, some of his posterity, who were afterwards to distinguish themselves in the Roman republic. When he saw his son advancing towards him, he held forth both his hands, gave him an affectionate welcome, and wept for joy. The hero would have embraced his father;
ther;

ther; but found that the shade, though visible, eluded the touch.

AFTER a short conversation, ENEAS happening to see, in a grove through which a river was flowing, an innumerable multitude of human beings flying about, asked his father who they were, and what river it was. The river, said he, is Lethe, of which those souls are taking a draught, being about to return to the upper world, in order to animate new bodies. Is it to be imagined, exclaims ENEAS, that souls should ever leave this happy place, and go back to the imprisonment of the body, and all the wretchedness of mortality? I will explain the whole matter to you, replies ANCHISES.

KNOW, then, that all the parts of this visible universe, the heavens, and earth, and sky, the sun, moon, and stars, are, like one vast body, animated by an universal spirit, whereof the souls, or vital principles, of all animals, of men and beasts, of fishes and fowl, are emanations. This vital principle is, in every animal, the source of sensation and motion; but, from the influence that the body has over it, becomes subject to inordinate passions, and forgetful of its heavenly original. The soul of man, in particular, (for nothing further is said of the other animals) contracts, while shut up in the dark prison of the body, a degree of debasement which does not leave it at death, and from which the sufferings of a subsequent state of purification are necessary to purify it. These are of different kinds and degrees, according to the different degrees and kinds of guilt or impurity which the soul has contracted. Some souls are exposed to the beating of winds, some are washed in water, and some purified by fire. Every one of *us* (says ANCHISES, including himself) suffers his own peculiar pains of purification. Then we are sent into this vast Elysium, and a few of us remain in the eternal possession of it*. The rest continue
here,

* I suppose the words *Et pauci leta arva tenemus*, to be a parenthesis; which, in my opinion, clears the text of all obscurity. By the change of the person, in the four last lines

here till, by the air and tranquillity of the place, they have entirely got the better of the impurity contracted in the world, have had every impression of the pains of purgatory worn out, and are restored to their original simplicity of nature. Thus refined, they are, at the end of a thousand years †, summoned by a divine agent, or god, to meet in one great assembly, where they drink of Lethe to wash away remembrance, and then, in compliance with their own inclination, are sent back to the earth to animate new bodies.

HAVING ended this account, ANCHISES, with his son and the Sybil, passes to a rising ground, and points out, in a state of pre-existence, a procession of Roman heroes, who were in due time to descend from him; briefly describing their several characters, in a most sublime strain of poetical prophecy.

I SHALL subjoin a few remarks on the concluding scene of this noble episode;—on the gates of horn and ivory. These gates have given no little trouble to critics, both ancient and modern; who, after all, seem to have been not very fortunate in their

VOL. II.

G

conjectures.

lines of the speech,—*Has omnes,—volvère,—incipiant,—revifant*, it appears, that ANCHISES does not include himself among those who were to return to the world; which ascertains sufficiently the import of *tenemus*. The learned RUEUS construes the passage in a way somewhat different; but his general account of the poet's doctrine differs not essentially from mine.

† MORE literally, “When they have rolled the wheel, or circle, for a thousand years;” that is, when the revolution of a thousand years is completed. For this interpretation we are indebted to SERVIVS, who tells us further, that this singular phrase was taken from ENNIUS. Anciently perhaps *rota* might mean a circle, (as well as a wheel,) and poetically a year; so that, in ENNIUS's time, *volvère rotam* might be a figurative phrase of the same import with *annum peragere*, to pass a year. The original meaning of *annus* is a circle, whence the diminutive *annulus*, a ring. The same reference to the circular nature of the year, may be seen in the Greek *ἐναυρος*, which VIRGIL certainly had in his mind when he wrote, “*Atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus.*” When this is attended to, our author's use of the phrase in question will appear not so harsh as it might otherwise be thought to be, and not at all too figurative in this very solemn part of the poem.

conjectures. This is owing, not to obscurity in the poet, but to the refinement of those interpreters, who mistook a plain passage for a profound allegory, and were determined to find a secret meaning in it. The gate of ivory, say they, transmits false dreams, and that of horn true ones; and ENEAS and his companion are dismissed from Elysium, and let into the upper world, through the ivory gate. What can this imply, but that the poet meant to insinuate, that every thing he had said concerning a state of future retribution, was nothing more than a fallacious dream? And, in support of this conjecture, they generally quote from the Georgic three verses to prove, that VIRGIL was in his heart an Epicurean, and consequently disbelieved both a future state and a providence. The verses are—
 “Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas, Atque metus om-
 “nes, et inexorabile fatum, Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque
 “Acherontis avari.”

Now, in the *first* place, it does not appear to me, that these lines can prove their author ever to have been an Epicurean, or that he meant to say more than “Happy is the man whose
 “mind philosophy has raised above the fear of death, as well
 “as above all other fears.” For, in the Georgic, he not only recommends religion and prayer, which Epicureans could not do consistently with their principles, but again and again asserts a providence; and, in terms equally elegant and just, vindicates the Divine wisdom in establishing physical evil as the means of improving and elevating the mind of man. But does he not, in his sixth eclogue, give an account of the formation of the world according to the Epicurean theory? He does; and he makes it part of the song of a drunkard: no proof that he held it in very high esteem.

BUT, *2dly*, Supposing our poet’s admiration of LUCRETIVUS might have made him formerly partial to the tenets of EPICURUS, it does not follow that he continued so to the end of his
 life,

life, or that he was so while employed upon the Eneid. The duties of religion, and the superintending care of providence, are by no other Pagan author so warmly enforced as in this poem; and the energy with which, in the sixth book, and in one passage of the eighth, (v. 666.) he asserts a future retribution, seems to prove, that he was so far in earnest with regard to this matter, as to believe, that it was not, as the Epicureans affirmed, either absurd or improbable.

LET it be remarked, in the *third* place, that no poet ever thought of so preposterous a method of pleasing and instructing his readers, as first to employ all his skill in adorning his fable, and then tell them, that they ought not to believe a word of it. The true poet's aim is very different. He adapts himself to the opinions that prevail among the people for whom he writes, that they may the more easily acquiesce in his narrative; or he is careful, at least, to make his fable consistent with itself, in order to give it as much as possible the *appearance* of seriousness and truth. *We* know, that the scenery of the sixth book is wholly fictitious; but the Romans did not certainly know how far it might be so: founded as it was on ancient tradition, which no history they had could overturn; and on philosophical opinions, which they had never heard confuted, and which, where Revelation was unknown, might seem respectable, on account of the abilities of PYTHAGORAS, PLATO, and other great men who had taught them.

To which I may add, *4thly*, as an argument decisive of the present question, That if VIRGIL wished his countrymen to believe him to have been *not* in earnest in what he had told them of a pre-existent and future state, he must also have wished them to understand, that the compliments he had been paying to the most favourite characters among their ancestors were equally insincere; and that what he had said of the virtues of CAMILLUS, BRUTUS, CATO, SCIPIO, and even AUGUSTUS himself, was altogether visionary, and had as good a right to a passage

through the ivory gate, as any other falsehood. Had OCTAVIA understood this to be the poet's meaning, she would not have rewarded him so liberally for his matchless encomium on the younger MARCELLUS. Had this indeed been his meaning, all the latter part of the sixth book would have been a studied insult on AUGUSTUS, and the other heroes there celebrated, as well as on the whole Roman people. Strange, that the most judicious writer in the world should commit such a blunder in the most elaborate part of a poem which he had consecrated to the honour of his country, and particularly to that of his great patron AUGUSTUS!

WE must therefore admit, either that VIRGIL had lost his senses, or, which is more probable, that, in sending ENEAS and the Sybil through the ivory gate, he intended no sarcastic reflection either on his country or on his poetry. In a word, we must admit, that, in this part of his fable, he was just as much in earnest as in any other; and that there was no more *joke* in ENEAS's *ascent* through the gate of ivory, than in his *descent* through the cave of Avernus. How then are we to understand this adventure of the gate? I answer, By making the poet his own interpreter, and not seeking to find things in his book which we have no good reason to think were ever in his head.

IN the nineteenth book of the *Odyssæy*, Penelope, speaking of dreams, says to her nurse, that there are two gates by which they are transmitted to us; one made of horn, through which the true dreams pass, and the other of ivory, which emits false dreams. This thought HOMER probably derived from some Egyptian custom or tradition, which one might discuss with many quotations and much appearance of learning; and this, no doubt, gave VIRGIL the hint of the passage now before us. But VIRGIL's account differs from HOMER's more than the commentators seem to be aware of. HOMER does not say in what part of the world his gates are; VIRGIL's are in Italy, not far from Cumæ, and are said to be the outlet from
Elysiûm

Elysium into the upper world : a wild fiction no doubt, but not more wild than that of making the cave of Avernus the inlet from the upper world into the nether. HOMER's gates are the gates of dreams ; VIRGIL calls his the gates of sleep. The former are not said to transmit any thing but dreams ; of the latter, one transmits dreams, and the other *real ghosts* or *shades*. For thus, though all the commentators are against me, I must understand the words *umbris veris* ; because in VIRGIL *umbra* often signifies a *ghost*, but never in him, nor in any other good writer, (so far as I know) a *dream*. If it be asked, what ghosts they were that used to pass this way ; the answer is easy : they were those who, after having been a thousand years in Elysium, and taken a draught of Lethe, were sent back to the upper world to animate new bodies. If again it were asked, whether such beings might not be of so subtle a nature as to work their way into the upper world without passing through a gate ; I should answer, that visible substances, which might be purified by fire, or washed in water, and could not get over the river Styx but in a boat, must be so far material at least, as to be capable of confinement, and consequently of being set at liberty.

THE *falsa insomnia* that go out by the ivory gate may mean, either *deceitful dreams*, or *dreams in general*, that is, unsubstantial things, as opposed to realities ; which last I take to be the preferable signification. Be this, however, as it will, ENEAS and the Sybil were neither ghosts nor dreams, but human flesh and blood ; and could no more be supposed to partake of the qualities alluded to in the *name* of the gate by which ANCHISES dismissed them, than a man is supposed to be lame for having passed through Cripplegate, or than the Lord Mayor of London, by entering in procession through *Temple-bar*, is supposed to have become a better churchman than before, or a better lawyer. Through one or other of the gates of sleep the Trojan and his guide must pass, or they never could return to the upper world

world at all : and that gate the poet probably made choice of, which first occurred to him ; and that probably would first occur which sounded best in his verse : or perhaps one might say, in the way of conjecture, that he thought fit to open the ivory gate, because the other, being appropriated to the purified ghosts, might not be so well suited to mere mortals. This is certain, that, though the ablative *eburna* stands very gracefully in the 898th line, the ablative *cornea* could not ; because, being the foot *amphimacer*, it can have no place in a regular hexameter.

As to the analogy that some critics have fancied between horn and truth, and between falsehood and ivory, it is so whimsical, and so absurd, that I need not mention it.

AND now, by removing the mist of allegory from VIRGIL's gates, I flatter myself, that I have made these verses somewhat more intelligible than they have been generally supposed to be ; that I have proved the latter part of this episode to be consistent with the rest of it ; and that I have vindicated a favourite author from the heavy charges of impiety and ill-manners, whereof, however repugnant to his general character, it would not be easy for those to clear him who follow the common, though less obvious, interpretations.