

AL AND CRITICAL • JAMES BEATTIE

DISSERTATIONS MORAL AND CRITICAL.
MORAL AND CRITICAL.
ON MEMORY AND IMAGINATION.
ON DREAMING.
THE THEORY OF LANGUAGE.
ON FABLE AND ROMANCE.
ON THE ATTACHMENTS OF KINDRED.
ILLUSTRATIONS ON SUBLIMITY.
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M DCC L XXXII I.

TO THE MOST NOBLE GEORGE
Marquis and Earl of Huntly, &c. MY
LORD, THE Duchess Of Gordon having
condescended to read the greater part (/
these papers; and to fay, that they may
be useful to Young Persons, and that
some things ist them are not unworthy
of Your attention; I am encouraged to
make them publick, and have taken the
liberty to inscribe them to Your Lord-
ship.

To

To regulate the principles, and form
the taste, of Young Men, has been my
employment, and favourite study, for
many years. I cannot affirm, that my
success has been equal to my wishes;
for then it would have been great in-
deed; but I have the satisfaction to
know, that my labour has not been vain.
Let me, therefore, indulge the pleasing
hope, that Your Lordship, when a little
further advanced in life, will one day do
me the honour to declare, that the fol-
lowing Discourses have afforded You
some amusement, and that You approve
of the sentiments conveyed in them.
And, from that quickness of parts, gen-
tleness of manners, and generosity of
mind, which You inherit from Your

Noble Parents, may I nt presume, that
the day is not far distant?

Of Your Noble Parents, My Lord, it
is not easy for me o speak, without the
warmest expressions of admiration and
gratitude. But their virtues, and the
obligations I am under to them, are sub-
jects, whereon They do not permit me
to expatiate. If They did, Truth would
oblige me to declare what might
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tery, and cer " ".
tainly would of ostentation. Continue,
My Lord, to be like Them: and You can-
not fail to be a blessing to Your coun-
try, an ornament to Your high rank, and
the delight of all who approach You; the
friend of the poor, the comforter of the
afflicted, and the patron of honest in-
dustry.

I have the honour to be, with sincere
affection My LORD,

Your Lordship's most humble
And most faithful Servant,

January I, JAMES BEATTIE, PREFACE.

HAVING, for some years, by circum-
stances of a particular nature, known to
my Friends, but of no importance to the
Publick, been hindered from executing
those more extensive plans of Moral
Speculation, which I once projected;
and being averse and unaccustomed to
idleness j I thought I might amuse my-
self, in a way not wholly unprofitable
to others, by transcribing and correcting
certain papers, written a good while ago
j which several persons, who had read
them, were pleased to approve, and had
advised me to publish. Some of these
are contained in this volume: others
may possibly appear hereafter. They
were at first composed in a different
form: being part of a Course of Prelec-
tions, read to those Young Gentlemen,
whom it is my business to initiate in
the Elements of Moral Science. This, I
hope, will account for the plainness of
the style for the frequent introduction of
practical and serious observations j for
a more general use of the pronouns I
and You than is perhaps quite proper in

t *General remarks on Antient and Oriental Prose Fable. — Modern Prose Fable, divided into, I. The Historical Allegory. Argenis. John Bull. II. The Religious And Moral AlleGory. Pilgrims Progress. Gullivers Travels. Tale of a Tub. III. The Poetical Prose Fable, or Romance. — Character of the nations, who introduced the Feudal Government and Manners. — Crusades. — Chivalry. — Alterations in the Feudal System. — Rise of Modern Literature. — Knight-Errantry proscribed by law; and finally extirpated by the publication of Don Quixote. — Importance of that work. — Death and character of the Old Romance. — The New Romance. — i. Serious, and Historically arranged. Robinson Crusoe. 2. Serious, and Poetically arranged. Sir Charles Grandson. Clarissa. 3. Comick, and Historically arranged. Gil Bias. Roderick Random, &c. 4. Comick, and Poetically arranged. Joseph Andrews. Tom Jones. Amelia. — Conclusion.*

On Fable and Romance.

THE love of Truth is natural to man and adherence to it, his indispensable duty. But to frame a fabulous narrative, for the purpose of instruction or of harmless amusement, is no breach of veracity, unless one were to obtrude it on the world for truth. The fabulist and the novel-writer deceive nobody; because, though they study to make their inventions probable, they do not even pretend that they are true: at least, what they may pretend in this way is considered only as words of course, to which nobody pays any regard. Fabulous narrative has accordingly been common in all ages of the world, and practised by teachers of the most respectable character.

It is owing, no doubt, to the weakness of human nature, that fable mould ever have been found a necessary, or a convenient, vehicle for truth. But we must take human nature as it is: and, if a rude multitude cannot readily comprehend a moral or political doctrine, which they need to be instructed, in, it may be as allowable, to illustrate that doctrine by a fable, in order to make them attend, and understand it, as it is for a physician to

strengthen a weak stomach with cordials, in order to prepare it for the business of digestion. Such was the design of Jotham's parable of the trees chusing a king, in the ninth chapter of the book of Judges: and such that famous apologue, of a contention between the parts of the human body, by which Menenius Agrippa satisfied the people of Rome, that the welfare of the state depended on the union and good agreement of the several members of it. In fact, the common people are not well qualified for argument. A short and pithy proverb, which is easily remembered; or little tales, that appeal as it were to their senses, weigh more with them than demonstration.

We need not wonder, then, to find, that, in antient times, moral precepts were often delivered in the way of proverb or aphorism, and enforced and exemplified by fictitious narrative. Of those fables that are ascribed to Esop, some are no doubt modern, but others bear the stamp of antiquity. And: nothing can be better contrived, than many of them are, for the purpose of impressing moral truth upon the memory, as well as the understanding. The disappointment, that frequently attends an excessive desire of accumulation, is finely exemplified in the fable of the dog and his shadow and the ruinous and ridiculous nature of ambition is with equal energy illustrated in that of the frog and the ox. These little allegories we are apt to undervalue, because we learned them at school; but they are not for that reason the less valuable. We ought to prize them as monuments of antient wisdom, which have long contributed to the amusement and instruction of mankind, and are entitled to applause, on account of the propriety of the invention.

The Greek apologues ascribed to Esop, and the Latin ones of Phedrus, are masterpieces in this way of writing and have hardly been equalled by the best of our modern fabulists. They are (at least many of them are, for some are trifling) remarkable for the simplicity of the style; and for the attention, which their authors have generally giv-

en, to the nature of the animals, and other things, that are introduced as agents and speakers. For in most of the modern fables, invented by Gay, La Fontaine, L'Estrange, Poggio, and others, the contrivance is less natural; and the language, though simple, is quaint, and full of witticism. That a dog should snap at the shadow of a dog, and by so doing lose the piece of flesh that was in his own mouth, is suitable to the character of the animal, and is indeed a very probable story: but that an elephant should converse with a bookseller about Greek authors, or a hare in treat a calf to carry her off on his hack, and save her from the hounds, is a fiction wherein no regard is had to the nature of things. In this, as in the higher, farts of fable, it is right to adhere, as much as may be, to probability. Brute animals, and vegetables too, may be allowed to speak and think: this indulgence is granted, from the necessity of the case; for, without it, their adventures could neither improve nor entertain us: but, with this exception, nature should not be violated; nor the properties of one animal or vegetable ascribed to a different one. Frogs have been seen inflated with air, at least, if not with pride; dogs may swim rivers; a man might take a frozen viper into his bosom, and be bit to death for his imprudence; a fox might play with a tragedian's headpiece; a lamb and a wolf might drink of the fame brook, and the former lose his life on the occasion: but who ever heard of an elephant reading Greek, or a hare riding on the back of a calf?

The wisdom of antiquity was not satisfied with conveying short lessons of morality in these apologues, or little tales. The poets entered upon a more extensive field of fable; in order to convey a more refined species of instruction, and to please by a more exquisite invention, and a higher probability. But I confine myself at present to prose fable.

One of the first specimens of Fabulous History, that appeared in these western parts of the world, is the *Cyropedia* of Xenophon. This work, however, we are not to consider as of the na-

ture of Romance; for the outlines of the story are true. But the author takes the liberty to feign many incidents; that he may set in a variety of lights the character of Cyrus, whom he meant to exhibit as the model of a great and good prince. The work is very elegant and entertaining, and abounds in moral, political, and military knowledge. It is, nevertheless, to be regretted, that we have no certain rule for distinguishing what is historical in it, from what is fabulous. The history of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian empire, who has the honour to be mentioned by name in the Old Testament, is surely worth knowing. Yet we are much in the dark in regard to it. The account given of him by Herodotus differs greatly from Xenophon's; and in many instances we know not which to prefer. It is observable however, that Xenophon's description of the manner in which Cyrus took Babylon, by turning aside the course of the Euphrates, and entering, through the empty channel, under the walls of the city, agrees very well with several intimations of that event, which we find in the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel.

Allegorical Fables were not unknown in the days of Xenophon. The *Table*, or *Picture*, of Cebes the Theban was written about this time; as well as the *Story* of Hercules conversing with *Virtue* and *Vice*, and preferring the honours promised by the former to the pleasures offered by the latter. Cebes's *Picture* of human life excels in accuracy of description, justness of allegory, and a sweet simplicity of style. The fable of Hercules, as originally written by Prodicus, is lost, and seems not to have been extant in the time of Cicero; but Xenophon gives a full and elegant abstract of it, in the beginning of his second book of *Memorabilia*.

Excepting some Allegorical fables scattered up and down in Plato, I do not recollect, among the *Classick* productions of Greece and Rome, any other remarkable specimen of prose fable: for the heathen mythology, though full of allegories, I am not to touch upon in this place, on account of its connection with

poetry; and because my chief purpose is, to inquire into the origin and nature of the Modern Romance.

But, first, it may be proper to observe, that the Oriental nations have long been famous for fabulous narrative. The indolence peculiar to the genial climates of Asia, and the luxurious life which Cicero de Officiis. Lib. i. cap. 32.

the the kings and other great men, of those countries, lead in their seraglios, have made them seek for this sort of amusement, and set a high value upon it. When an Eastern prince happens to be idle, as he commonly is, and at a loss for expedients to kill the time, he commands his Grand Visir, or his favourite, to tell him stories. Being ignorant, and consequently credulous; having no passion for moral improvement, and little knowledge of nature; he does not desire, that they should be probable, or of an instructive tendency: it is enough if they be astonishing. And hence it is, no doubt, that those oriental tales are so extravagant. Every thing is carried on by enchantment and prodigy; by fairies, genii, and demons, and wooden horses, which, on turning a peg, fly through the air with inconceivable swiftness.

Another thing remarkable in these eastern tales, is, that their authors expatiate, with peculiar delight, in the description of magnificence; rich robes, gaudy furniture, sumptuous entertainments, and palaces shining in gold, or sparkling with diamonds. This too is conformable to the character and circumstances of the people. Their great men, whose taste has never been improved by studying the *simplicity* of nature and art, pique themselves chiefly on the *splendour* of their equipage, and the vast quantities of gold, jewels, and curious things, which they can heap together in their repositories.

The greatest, indeed the only, collection, that I am acquainted with, of Oriental fables, is the *Thousand and one tales*, commonly called *The Arabian Nights Entertainment*. This book, as we have it, is the work of Monf. Galland of the French Academy, who is said to have translated it from the Arabick original.

But whether the tales be really Arabick, or invented by Monf. Galland, I have never been able to learn with certainty. If they be Oriental, they are translated with unwarrantable latitude; for the whole tenor of the style is in the French mode: and the Caliph of Bagdat, and the Emperor of China, are addressed in the same terms of ceremony, which are usual at the court of France. But this, though ill my opinion it takes away from the value of the book, because I wish to see Eastern manners in an Eastern tale, is no proof, that the whole work is by M. Galland: for the French are so devoted to their own ceremonies, that they cannot endure any other and seldom fail to season their translations, even of the gravest and most antient authors, with the fashionable forms of Parisian civility.

As the Arabian Nights Entertainment is a book which most young people in this country are acquainted with, I need not draw any character of it, or remark that it exactly answers the account-already given of Oriental fable. There is in it great luxury of description, without any elegance and great variety of invention, but nothing that elevates the mind, or touches the heart. All is wonderful and incredible; and the astonishment of the reader is more aimed at, than his improvement either in morality, or in the knowledge of nature. Two things, however, there are, which deserve commendation, and may entitle it to one perusal. It conveys a pretty just idea of the government, and of some of the customs, of those eastern nations; and there is somewhere in it a story of a barber and his six brothers, that contains many good strokes of satire and comick description. I may add, that the character of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid is well drawn; and that the story of forty thieves destroyed by a slave is interesting, and artfully conducted. The voyages of Sindbad claim attention: they were certainly attended to, by the author of Gulliver's Travels.

Tales in imitation of the Oriental have oft been attempted by English, and other European, authors: who, together with the figurative style, and wild in-

vention of the Asiaticks, (which, being extravagant, are easily imitated) endeavour also to paint the customs and manners of that people. They give us good store of gold and jewels and eunuchs, slaves, and necromancers in abundance: their personages personages are all Mahometan, or Pagan, and subject to the despotick government of Caliphs, Visirs, Bashaws, and Emperors; they drink sherbet, rest on sophas, and ride on dromedaries. We have Chinese Tales, Tartarian Tales, Persian Tales, and Mogul Tales not to mention the Tales of the Fairies and Genii; some of which I read in my younger days: but, as they have left no trace in the memory, I cannot now give any account of them.

In the *Spectator*, *Rambler*, and *Adventurer*, there are many fables in the eastern manner and most of them very pleasing, and of a moral tendency. *Rajselas*, by Johnson, and *Almorán and Harriet*, by Hawkesworth, are celebrated performances in this way. The former is admirable in description, and in that exquisite strain of sublime morality by which the writings of this great and good man are so eminently distinguished:—of the latter, the style is rhetorical and solemn, and the sentiments are in general good, but the plan is obscure, and so contrived as to infuse perplexing notions of the Divine Providence a subject, which the elegant writer seems to have considered very superficially, and very confusedly.—Addison excels in this sort of fable. His vision of Mirzah, in the second volume of the *Spectator*, is the finest piece of the kind I have ever seen; uniting the utmost propriety of invention with a simplicity, and melody of language, that melts the heart, while it charms and soothes the imagination.

Modern Prose Fable (if we omit those sorts of it that have been already hinted at) may be divided into two kinds; which, for the sake of distinction, I shall call the Allegorical and the Poetical. The Allegorical part of modern prose fable may be subdivided into two species, the *Historical*, and the *Moral* and the Poetical part I shall also subdivide into two sorts, the *Serious*, and:

the *Comtek*. Thus the Prose Fable of the moderns may be distributed into four species; whereof I shall speak in their order: See the Presace to his *Voyages*.

i. The Historical Allegory j 2. The Moral Allegory: 3. The Poetical and Serious Fable; 4. The Poetical and Comick Fable. These two last I comprehend under the general term Romance.

I. The Fabulous Historical Allegory exhibits real history disguised by feigned names, and embellished with fictitious adventures. This sort of fable may also be subdivided into the *Serious* and the *Comick*. 1. Of the former, the best specimen I know is the *Argents*; written in Latin, about the beginning of the last century, by John Barclay a Scotchman: and supposed to contain an allegorical account of the Civil wars of France during the reign of Henry the third. I have read only part of the work: and what I read I never took the trouble to decypher, by means of the key which in some editions is subjoined to it, or to compare the fictitious adventures of Meleander and Lycogenes with the real adventures that are alluded to. I therefore am not qualified to criticize the performance: but can freely recommend it, as in some places very entertaining, as abounding in lively description, and remarkable for the most part, though not uniformly, for the elegance of the language.

2. We have a *Comick* specimen of the Historical Allegory, in the *History of John Bull*; a pamphlet written by the learned and witty Dr. Arbuthnot, and commonly printed among the works of Swift. It was published in Queen Anne's time; and intended as a satire 'on the Duke of Marlborough, and the rest of the whig ministry, who were averse to the treaty of peace that was soon after concluded at Utrecht. The war, which the Queen carried on against the French and Spaniards, is described under the form of a law-suit, that John Bull, or England, is said to have been engaged in with some litigious neighbours. A candid account of facts is not to be expected in an allegorical tale, written with the express design to make a party ridiculous. The work, however,

has been much read, and and frequently imitated. It is full of low humour, which in this piece the author affected; but which he could have avoided if he had thought proper; as he undoubtedly possessed more wit and learning, as well as virtue, than any other writer of his time, Addison excepted. In John Bull, great things are represented as mean; the style is consequently burlesque, and the phraseology, and most of the allusions, are taken from low life. There is a key printed, in the late editions, at the foot of each page, to mark the coincidence of the fable with the history of that period. II. The second species of modern fabulous prose I distinguished by the name of the *Moral Allegory*. Moral and Religious Allegories were frequent in Europe about two hundred and fifty years ago. Almost all the Dramatic exhibitions of that time were of this character. In them, not only human virtues and vices personified, but also angels both good and evil, and beings more exalted than angels, were introduced, acting and speaking, as persons of the drama. Those plays, however, notwithstanding their incongruity, were written for the most part with the laudable design of exemplifying religious or moral truth; and hence were called *Moralities*. The publick exhibition of them in England ceased about the time of Shakspeare, or in the end of the sixteenth century: but several of the English *Moralities* are extant, and may be seen in some late collections of Old Plays. In Spain and Italy they continued longer in fashion. When Milton was on his travels, he happened to witness a representation of this kind, written by one Andrieno, and called *Original Sin*; from which, rude as it was, he is said to have formed the first draught of the plan of *Paradise Lost*.

Those were poetical allegories: but I confine myself to such as are in prose, and assume something of the historical form.—John Bunyan, an unlettered, but ingenious man, of the last century, was much given to this way of writing. His chief work is the *3 X1 Pilgrim's Pilgrims Progress*; wherein the commencement, procedure, and completion of the Chris-

tian life, are represented allegorically, under the similitude of a journey. Few books have gone through so many editions, in so short a time, as the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It has been read by people of all ranks and capacities. The learned have not thought it below their notice: and among the vulgar it is an universal favourite. I grant, the style is rude, and even indelicate sometimes; that the invention is frequently extravagant; and that in more than one place it tends to convey erroneous notions in theology. But the tale is amusing, though the dialogue be often low: and some of the allegories are well contrived, and prove the author to have possessed powers of invention, which, if they had been refined by learning, might have produced something very noble. This work has been imitated, but with little success. The learned Bishop Patrick wrote the *Parable of the Pilgrim* but I am not satisfied, that he borrowed the hint, as it is generally thought he did, from John Bunyan. There is no resemblance in the plan; nor does the Bishop speak a word of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which I think he would have done, if he had seen it. Besides, Bunyan's fable is full of incident: Patrick's is dry, didactic, verbose, and exceedingly barren in the invention.

Gulliver's Travels are a sort of allegory; but rather Satirical and Political, than Moral. The work is in every body's hands; and has been criticised by many eminent writers. As far as the satire is levelled at human pride and folly; at the abuses of human learning; at the absurdity of speculative projectors; at those criminal or blundering expedients in policy, which we are apt to overlook, or even to applaud, because custom has made them familiar; so far the author deserves our warmest approbation, and his satire will *The Imprimatur* prefixed to Patrick's *Pilgrim* is dated April n, 166j. Bunyan's *Progress* was written, while he was in Bedford prison, where he lay twelve years, from 1650 to 1672; but I cannot find in what year it was first printed.

be be allowed to be perfectly just, as well as exquisitely severe. His fable is

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well conducted, and, for the most part, consistent with itself, and connected with probable circumstances. He personates a sea-faring man; and with wonderful propriety supports the plainness and simplicity of the character. And this gives to the whole narrative an air of truth; which forms an entertaining contrast, when we compare it with the wildness of the fiction. The style too deserves particular notice. It is not free from inaccuracy: but, as a model of easy and graceful simplicity, it has not been exceeded by any thing in our language; and well deserves to be studied by every person, who wishes to write pure English.—These, I think, are the chief merits of this celebrated work; which has been more read, than any other publication of the present century. Gulliver has something in him to hit every taste. The statesman, the philosopher, and the critic, will admire his keenness of satire, energy of description, and vivacity of language: the vulgar, and even children, who cannot enter into these refinements, will find their account in the story, and be highly amused with it.

But I must not be understood to praise the whole indiscriminately. The last of the four voyages, though the author has exerted himself in it to the utmost, is an absurd, and an abominable fiction. It is absurd: because, in presenting us with rational beasts, and irrational men, it proceeds upon a direct contradiction to the most obvious laws of nature, without deriving any support from either the dreams of the credulous, or the prejudices of the ignorant. And it is abominable: because it abounds in filthy and indecent images; because the general tenor of the satire is exaggerated into absolute falsehood; and because there must be something as an irreligious tendency in a work, which, like this, ascribes the perfection of reason, and of happiness, to a race of beings, who are said to be destitute of every religious idea.—But, what is yet worse, if any thing can be worse, this tale represents human nature itself as the object of contempt and abhorrence. Let the ridicule of wit be pointed at the follies, and let the scourge of satire be

brandished at the crimes, of mankind: all this is both pardonable, and praiseworthy; because it may be done with a good intention, and produce good effects. But when a writer endeavours to make us dislike and despise, every one his neighbour, and be dissatisfied with that Providence, who has made us what we are, and whose dispensations towards the human race are so peculiarly, and so divinely beneficent; such a writer, in so doing, proves himself the enemy, not of man only, but of goodness itself; and his work can never be allowed to be innocent, till impiety, malevolence, and misery, cease to be evils.

The Tale of a Tub, at least the narrative part of it, is another Allegorical fable, by the same masterly hand, and, like the former, supplies no little matter, both of admiration, and of blame. As a piece of humorous writing, it is unequalled. It was the author's first performance, and is, in the opinion of many, his best. The style may be less correct, than that of some of his latter works; but in no other part of his writings has he displayed so rich a fund of wit, humour, and ironical satire, as in the Tale of a Tub. The subject is Religion: but the allegory, under which he typifies the Reformation, is too mean for an argument of so great dignity; and tends to produce, in the mind of the reader, some very disagreeable associations, of the most solemn truths with ludicrous ideas. Professed wits may say what they please; and the fashion, as well as the laugh, may be for a time on their side: but it is a dangerous thing, and the sign of an intemperate mind, to acquire a habit of making every thing matter of merriment and sarcasm. We dare not take such liberty with our neighbour, as to represent whatever he does or says in a ridiculous light; and yet some men (I wish I could not say, clergymen) think themselves privileged to take liberties of this sort with the most awful, and most benign dispensations of Providence. That this author has repeatedly done so, in the work before us, and elsewhere, is too plain to require proof. The compliments he pays the Church of

England I allow to be very well founded, as well as part of the satire, which he levels at the Church of Rome; though I wish he had expressed both the one and the other with a little more decency of language. But, as to his abuse of the Presbyterians, whom he represents as more absurd and frantick, than perhaps any rational beings ever were since the world began, every person of sense and candour, whether Presbyterian or not, will acknowledge it, if he know any thing of their history, to be founded in gross misrepresentation. There are other faults in this work, besides those already specified; many vile images, I know not whether this author is not the only human being, who ever presumed to speak in ludicrous terms of the Last Judgment. His prosane verses on that tremendous subject were not published, so far as I know, till after his death: for Chesterfield's Letter to Voltaire, in which they are inserted, and spoken of with approbation (which is no more than one would expect from such a critic), and said to be copied from the original in Swift's hand-writing, is dated in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-two. But this is no excuse for the Author. We may guess at what was in his mind, when he wrote them; and at what remained in his mind, while he could have destroyed them, and would not. Nor is it any excuse to say, that he makes Jupiter the agent: a Christian, granting the utmost possible favour to Poet's licence, cannot conceive a heathen idol to do that, of which the only information we have is from the word of God, and in regard to which we certainly know, that it will be done by the Deity himself. That humorous and instructive allegory of Addison, (*Spectator*, 558, 559) in which Jupiter is supposed to put it in every person's power to choose his own condition, is not only conformable to ancient philosophy, but is actually sounded on a passage of Horace.

I mean not to insinuate, that Swift was savourable to infidelity. There is good reason to believe he was not; and that, though too many of his levities are inexcusable, he could occasionally be

both serious and pious. In fact, an infidel clergyman would be such a compound of execrable impiety and contemptible meanness, that I am unwilling to suppose there can be such a monster. The prosaneness of this author I impute to his passion for ridicule, and rage of witticism; which, when they settle into a habit, and venture on liberties with what is sacred, never fail to pervert the mind, and harden the heart.

and obscene allusions; such as no well-bred man could read, or endure to hear read, in polite company. III. I come now to the second species of modern prose fable, to which I gave the appellation of *Poetical*, to distinguish it from the former *Allegorical ibexes*. In reading the *Allegorical Prose Fable*, we attend not only to the fictitious events that occur in the narrative, but also to those real events that are typified by the allegory; whereas in the *poetical prose fable* we attend only to the events that are before us. Thus, in the Tale of a Tub, I not only mind what is related of three brothers, Peter, Martin, and Jack, but also keep it constantly in view, that those three brothers are by the author meant to be the representatives of the Romish, English, and Presbyterian churches: whereas when I read Robinson Crusoe, or Tom Jones, I attend singly to the narrative; and no *key* is necessary to make me comprehend the author's meaning.

Considering this as the chief part of my subject, I dispatched the former parts as briefly as I could, that I might have the more time to employ upon it. The rise and progress of the Modern Romance, or Poetical Prose Fable, is connected with many topics of importance, which would throw (if fully illustrated) great light upon the history and politics, the manners, and the literature, of these latter ages.—Observe, that I call this sort of fable *poetical*, from the nature of the invention; and *prose*, because it is not in verse. Prose and Verse are opposite, but Prose and Poetry may be consistent. To; *Jones*, and *telemachus*, are epick, or narrative poems, though written in prose; the one Comick, the other Serious and Heroick.

The subversion of the Roman Em-

pire, by the Goths, Huns, Vandals, and other northern nations, was followed, or rather accompanied, with an universal neglect of learning, which continued for some centuries. During this long night of intellectual darkness, the classic writers of Greece and Rome were quite forgotten in these western parts of Europe; and many antient authors perished irrecoverably. To read and write was then a rare accomplishment. Even the clergy, who performed the service in Latin, according to the usage of the Church of Rome, seldom understood the words they pronounced. Nay, it was no uncommon thing for persons of rank, when they had occasion to sign papers of business, to employ a notary to subscribe for them, because they themselves had not learned to write. (The very phrase of *signing* a paper came from the practice of putting a mark to it, instead of a name; and this mark was commonly the sign of the Cross. Alfred the Great, king of England, a prince of excellent parts, and who afterwards made considerable attainments in learning, was twelve years old, before a master could be found to teach him the alphabet.—The very implements of writing were so rare in those days, that the monks would often obliterate valuable manuscripts, by erasing the letters that they might have the parchment to write upon. Of this a remarkable evidence appeared a few years ago. A scrap of parchment was found, on which part of the book of Tobit had been written, but which, on being narrowly inspected, seemed to have been originally inscribed with something else; and this was at length discovered to be a fragment of Livy.. The fragment is now published.

Men are generally credulous, in proportion as they are ignorant. But want of books, and of the knowledge of letters, was not the sole cause of the ignorance that prevailed in the period of which I now speak. There was little, or no commerce in Europe; navigation and industry were neglected; and, except on pilgrimage to the shrines of saints, people seldom travelled beyond the bounds of their native country, or

native province. The consequence may easily be guessed at. Not having the means of knowing what had happened in other ages, and being equally uninformed of what was now happening in other countries, they would without scruple give credit to any fabulous reports that might be told them, concerning what was to be seen in foreign parts. Hence arose a thousand wild ideas, of giants, and dwarfs, dragons, and enchantments, of fairies, ghosts, witches, and hobgoblins. And when once people were satisfied, that such things were common in other lands, it was natural for them to believe, that they were not uncommon in their own. And the same extravagance of fancy, and love of superstition, may always be expected in times of ignorance especially in countries, where traditions remain concerning antient history and fable; and where the priests, deluded themselves with visionary legends, not wholly destitute of knowledge, and living retired in gloomy and lonely habitations, find it their interest to deceive, amuse, and terrify the vulgar.

The credulity of mankind in those dark ages is now matter of astonishment. As late as the thirteenth century, when modern literature had made some progress, Dante, a famous Italian poet, published a work in verse, which he called *Inferno*; wherein he gave a description of the infernal regions, which he says, in the poem, that he had passed through, in company with Virgil: and this poem the common people of that time took for a real history, and seriously believed that Dante went down to hell from time to time. Sir John Mandeville, an Englishman of learning, set out on his travels in the year one thousand three hundred and twenty; employed thirty years in visiting foreign countries; and, at his return to Europe, published the history of his adventures in three languages, Latin, English, and Italian. His book, before publication, was presented to the Pope, who, after comparing it with the *Mappa Mundi*, was pleased to give it the sanction of his authority: a proof, that it not only was believed by the author, and by His Ho-

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liness, but was also thought credible enough according to the notions of those times. Yet this book, though Mandeville seems to have been an honest, and by no means an ignorant man, contains the most absurd fables. The author gravely tells us, that he saw the rock to which Andromeda was chained, when they delivered her to the sea-monster, and adds, that Andromeda lived before the flood. With equal gravity he speaks of a Lady, who had been transformed into a serpent, or dragon, by a goddess called Diana, and was then confined in a dungeon, in the island of Cyprus, if I mistake not. He does not say, that he saw this lady; but he mentions it as a fact, which he had heard of, and he seems not to disbelieve it. He speaks too of a nation of men fifty feet high, who inhabited an island in the East Indies, and of another race of mortals, who had their eyes in their shoulders: and all this, and much more, of the same kind, he appears to have credited, merely because he had been so informed. There is reason to think, that

Caxton, one of the first English printers, mistook a French translation of Virgil's *Æneid* for a true history;—if he did not use the word *history* in a sense different from what it now bears. Nay, a Swedish navigator, who lived not two hundred years ago, has affirmed, that, in the islands of Nicobar, in the gulph of Bengal, he discovered a race of men, with long tails, like those of cats. The islands of Nicobar, and their inhabitants, are now well known to Europeans; but the cats tails are no where to be found.

While the ignorance and credulity of this western world were so great, we may well suppose, that, in their histories (if they had any) little regard would be paid to truth; and none at all to probability, or even to possibility, in their fables. In fact, the first productions in the way of romance, that appeared in Europe, were in the highest degree extravagant.

But other causes, besides the credulity and ignorance of the times, conspired to give a peculiar cast of wildness to those performances, and make them totally unlike every thing of the kind,

which had I write from memory; not having the book at hand, nor knowing at present where to find it...

3 X hitherto hitherto occurred to human fancy.—To explain these causes, it will be proper to give a brief account of that form of policy, which was introduced by the northern nations, who over-ran the Roman empire; and which is commonly called the Feudal Government. It has been described at large by many eminent writers. I shall enter into the subject no further, than is necessary to connect and illustrate my reasoning. This government it was, that, among many other strange institutions, gave rise to Chivalry: and it was Chivalry, which gave birth and form to that sort of fabulous writing, which we term *Romance*.

The word is Spanish, and signifies the Spanish Tongue: and the name is suitable enough to the nature of a language, whereof the greater part is derived from the antient Latin or Roman. It seems, the first Spanish books were fabulous: and, being called Romance, on account of the tongue in which they were written, the same name was afterwards given, by the other nations of Europe, not to Spanish books, which is the proper application of the term, but to a certain class of fabulous-writings.

Some have thought, that the nations, who destroyed the Roman empire, were obliged to leave their own country, and establish themselves by force elsewhere; because at home their numbers were so great, that the soil was insufficient to support them. But this, I presume, is a mistake. Those northern regions, where the climate is inhospitable, may produce a hardy race of men, but cannot be supposed to produce them in very great numbers. In fact, the population in such countries has generally been found rather deficient, than excessive. I therefore think, that they left their native land, because it was uncomfortable; and because they had heard, that the conveniencies of life were more easily obtained in the southern parts of the world. Accordingly, there is no evidence, that they sent out colonies, or that one part of the nation went in quest

of settlements, while the other remained at home: it rather appears, that a whole people emigrated at once, men, women, and children; without any purpose to return.

One of their first expeditions, that we read of, happened about the six hundred and fiftieth year of Rome; when the Cimbri and Teutones (who are supposed to have come from Denmark, and the northern parts of Germany) invaded the Roman Province with an army of three hundred thousand men, besides women and children, and were overthrown by Caius Marius, with prodigious slaughter. Their countrymen were more successful in the decline of the empire: and at length they wrested a great part of Europe out of the hands of the Romans; establishing themselves in the conquered provinces; the Franks and Normans in Gaul, the Goths and Vandals in Spain, and the Lombards in Italy.

There are, in the character of this extraordinary people, several particulars that deserve attention. We may call them one people, because a great similarity in manners, opinions, and government, prevailed among them; though they occupied many wide regions in the northern part of the continent of Europe.

First: They were a strong, hardy, and active race of men. This character they must have derived, in a great measure, from their climate and needy circumstances. Want is the parent of industry. To obtain even the necessaries of life, where the climate is cold, and the soil untractable, requires continual exertion; which at once inures the mind to vigilance, and the body to labour. The Germans, in Cesar's time, made it their boast, that they had not been under a roof for fourteen years: which conveyed such an idea of their ferocity and strength to the neighbouring Gauls, that they thought them invincible; and even Cesar found it difficult to persuade his Romans to march against them. Warm and fruitful countries generally produce (unless where a spirit of commerce and manufacture prevails) effeminacy and indolence: for there, neither Cesar. Bell. Gall. i. 36.