

## BOOK XIV.

### THE JOURNEY AND THE PAMPHLET.

#### I.

All profound things, and emotions of things are preceded and attended by Silence. What a silence is that with which the pale bride precedes the responsive I will, to the priest's solemn question, Wilt thou have this man for thy husband? In silence, too, the wedded hands are clasped. Yea, in silence the child Christ was born into the world. Silence is the general consecration of the universe. Silence is the invisible laying on of the Divine Pontiff's hands upon the world. Silence is at once the most harmless and the most awful thing in all nature. It speaks of the Reserved Forces of Fate. Silence is the only Voice of our God.

Nor is this so august Silence confined to things simply touching or grand. Like the air, Silence permeates all things, and produces its magical power, as well during that peculiar mood which prevails at a solitary traveler's first setting forth on a journey, as at the unimaginable time when before the world was, Silence brooded on the face of the waters.

No word was spoken by its inmates, as the coach bearing our young

Enthusiast, Pierre, and his mournful party, sped forth through the dim dawn into the deep midnight, which still occupied, unrepulsed, the hearts of the old woods through which the road wound, very shortly after quitting the village.

When first entering the coach, Pierre had pressed his hand upon the cushioned seat to steady his way, some crumpled leaves of paper had met his fingers. He had instinctively clutched them; and the same strange clutching mood of his soul which had prompted that instinctive act, did also prevail in causing him now to retain the crumpled paper in his hand for an hour or more of that wonderful intense silence, which the rapid coach bore through the heart of the general stirless morning silence of the fields and the woods.

His thoughts were very dark and wild; for a space there was rebellion and horrid anarchy and infidelity in his soul. This temporary mood may best be likened to that, which--according to a singular story once told in the pulpit by a reverend man of God--invaded the heart of an excellent priest. In the midst of a solemn cathedral, upon a cloudy Sunday afternoon, this priest was in the act of publicly administering the bread at the Holy Sacrament of the Supper, when the Evil One suddenly propounded to him the possibility of the mere moonshine of the Christian Religion. Just such now was the mood of Pierre; to him the Evil One propounded the possibility of the mere moonshine of all his self-renouncing Enthusiasm. The Evil One hooted at him, and called him a fool. But by instant and earnest prayer--closing his two eyes, with his

two hands still holding the sacramental bread--the devout priest had vanquished the impious Devil. Not so with Pierre. The imperishable monument of his holy Catholic Church; the imperishable record of his Holy Bible; the imperishable intuition of the innate truth of Christianity;--these were the indestructible anchors which still held the priest to his firm Faith's rock, when the sudden storm raised by the Evil One assailed him. But Pierre--where could he find the Church, the monument, the Bible, which unequivocally said to him--"Go on; thou art in the Right; I endorse thee all over; go on."--So the difference between the Priest and Pierre was herein:--with the priest it was a matter, whether certain bodiless thoughts of his were true or not true; but with Pierre it was a question whether certain vital acts of his were right or wrong. In this little nut lie germ-like the possible solution of some puzzling problems; and also the discovery of additional, and still more profound problems ensuing upon the solution of the former. For so true is this last, that some men refuse to solve any present problem, for fear of making still more work for themselves in that way.

Now, Pierre thought of the magical, mournful letter of Isabel, he recalled the divine inspiration of that hour when the heroic words burst from his heart--"Comfort thee, and stand by thee, and fight for thee, will thy leapingly-acknowledging brother!" These remembrances unfurled themselves in proud exultations in his soul; and from before such glorious banners of Virtue, the club-footed Evil One limped away in dismay. But now the dread, fateful parting look of his mother came over him; anew he heard the heart-proscribing words--"Beneath my roof and at

my table, he who was once Pierre Glendinning no more puts himself; "--swooning in her snow-white bed, the lifeless Lucy lay before him, wrapt as in the reverberating echoings of her own agonizing shriek: "My heart! my heart!" Then how swift the recurrence to Isabel, and the nameless awfulness of his still imperfectly conscious, incipient, new-mingled emotion toward this mysterious being. "Lo! I leave corpses wherever I go!" groaned Pierre to himself--"Can then my conduct be right? Lo! by my conduct I seem threatened by the possibility of a sin anomalous and accursed, so anomalous, it may well be the one for which Scripture says, there is never forgiveness. Corpses behind me, and the last sin before, how then can my conduct be right?"

In this mood, the silence accompanied him, and the first visible rays of the morning sun in this same mood found him and saluted him. The excitement and the sleepless night just passed, and the strange narcotic of a quiet, steady anguish, and the sweet quiescence of the air, and the monotonous cradle-like motion of the coach over a road made firm and smooth by a refreshing shower over night; these had wrought their wonted effect upon Isabel and Delly; with hidden faces they leaned fast asleep in Pierre's sight. Fast asleep--thus unconscious, oh sweet Isabel, oh forlorn Delly, your swift destinies I bear in my own!

Suddenly, as his sad eye fell lower and lower from scanning their magically quiescent persons, his glance lit upon his own clutched hand, which rested on his knee. Some paper protruded from that clutch. He knew not how it had got there, or whence it had come, though himself had

closed his own gripe upon it. He lifted his hand and slowly unfingered and unbolted the paper, and unrolled it, and carefully smoothed it, to see what it might be.

It was a thin, tattered, dried-fish-like thing; printed with blurred ink upon mean, sleazy paper. It seemed the opening pages of some ruinous old pamphlet--a pamphlet containing a chapter or so of some very voluminous disquisition. The conclusion was gone. It must have been accidentally left there by some previous traveler, who perhaps in drawing out his handkerchief, had ignorantly extracted his waste paper.

There is a singular infatuation in most men, which leads them in odd moments, intermitting between their regular occupations, and when they find themselves all alone in some quiet corner or nook, to fasten with unaccountable fondness upon the merest rag of old printed paper--some shred of a long-exploded advertisement perhaps--and read it, and study it, and reread it, and pore over it, and fairly agonize themselves over this miserable, sleazy paper-rag, which at any other time, or in any other place, they would hardly touch with St. Dunstan's long tongs. So now, in a degree, with Pierre. But notwithstanding that he, with most other human beings, shared in the strange hallucination above mentioned, yet the first glimpse of the title of the dried-fish-like, pamphlet-shaped rag, did almost tempt him to pitch it out of the window. For, be a man's mood what it may, what sensible and ordinary mortal could have patience for any considerable period, to knowingly hold in his conscious hand a printed document (and that too a very blurred one

as to ink, and a very sleazy one as to paper), so metaphysically and insufferably entitled as this:--"Chronometricals & Horologicals?"

Doubtless, it was something vastly profound; but it is to be observed, that when a man is in a really profound mood, then all merely verbal or written profundities are unspeakably repulsive, and seem downright childish to him. Nevertheless, the silence still continued; the road ran through an almost unplowed and uninhabited region; the slumberers still slumbered before him; the evil mood was becoming well nigh insupportable to him; so, more to force his mind away from the dark realities of things than from any other motive, Pierre finally tried his best to plunge himself into the pamphlet.

## II.

Sooner or later in this life, the earnest, or enthusiastic youth comes to know, and more or less appreciate this startling solecism:--That while, as the grand condition of acceptance to God, Christianity calls upon all men to renounce this world; yet by all odds the most Mammonish part of this world--Europe and America--are owned by none but professed Christian nations, who glory in the owning, and seem to have some reason therefor.

This solecism once vividly and practically apparent; then comes the earnest reperusal of the Gospels: the intense self-absorption into that

greatest real miracle of all religions, the Sermon on the Mount. From that divine mount, to all earnest loving youths, flows an inexhaustible soul-melting stream of tenderness and loving-kindness; and they leap exulting to their feet, to think that the founder of their holy religion gave utterance to sentences so infinitely sweet and soothing as these sentences which embody all the love of the Past, and all the love which can be imagined in any conceivable Future. Such emotions as that Sermon raises in the enthusiastic heart; such emotions all youthful hearts refuse to ascribe to humanity as their origin. This is of God! cries the heart, and in that cry ceases all inquisition. Now, with this fresh-read sermon in his soul, the youth again gazes abroad upon the world. Instantly, in aggravation of the former solecism, an overpowering sense of the world's downright positive falsity comes over him; the world seems to lie saturated and soaking with lies. The sense of this thing is so overpowering, that at first the youth is apt to refuse the evidence of his own senses; even as he does that same evidence in the matter of the movement of the visible sun in the heavens, which with his own eyes he plainly sees to go round the world, but nevertheless on the authority of other persons,--the Copernican astronomers, whom he never saw--he believes it not to go round the world, but the world round it. Just so, too, he hears good and wise people sincerely say: This world only seems to be saturated and soaking with lies; but in reality it does not so lie soaking and saturate; along with some lies, there is much truth in this world. But again he refers to his Bible, and there he reads most explicitly, that this world is unconditionally depraved and accursed; and that at all hazards men must come out of it. But why come

out of it, if it be a True World and not a Lying World? Assuredly, then, this world is a lie.

Hereupon then in the soul of the enthusiast youth two armies come to the shock; and unless he prove recreant, or unless he prove gullible, or unless he can find the talismanic secret, to reconcile this world with his own soul, then there is no peace for him, no slightest truce for him in this life. Now without doubt this Talismanic Secret has never yet been found; and in the nature of human things it seems as though it never can be. Certain philosophers have time and again pretended to have found it; but if they do not in the end discover their own delusion, other people soon discover it for themselves, and so those philosophers and their vain philosophy are let glide away into practical oblivion. Plato, and Spinoza, and Goethe, and many more belong to this guild of self-impostors, with a preposterous rabble of Muggletonian Scots and Yankees, whose vile brogue still the more bestreaks the stripedness of their Greek or German Neoplatonical originals. That profound Silence, that only Voice of our God, which I before spoke of; from that divine thing without a name, those impostor philosophers pretend somehow to have got an answer; which is as absurd, as though they should say they had got water out of stone; for how can a man get a Voice out of Silence?

Certainly, all must admit, that if for any one this problem of the possible reconcilment of this world with our own souls possessed a peculiar and potential interest, that one was Pierre Glendinning at the



period we now write of. For in obedience to the loftiest behest of his soul, he had done certain vital acts, which had already lost him his worldly felicity, and which he felt must in the end indirectly work him some still additional and not-to-be-thought-of woe.

Soon then, as after his first distaste at the mystical title, and after his then reading on, merely to drown himself, Pierre at last began to obtain a glimmering into the profound intent of the writer of the sleazy rag pamphlet, he felt a great interest awakened in him. The more he read and re-read, the more this interest deepened, but still the more likewise did his failure to comprehend the writer increase. He seemed somehow to derive some general vague inkling concerning it, but the central conceit refused to become clear to him. The reason whereof is not so easy to be laid down; seeing that the reason-originating heart and mind of man, these organic things themselves are not so easily to be expounded. Something, however, more or less to the point, may be adventured here.

If a man be in any vague latent doubt about the intrinsic correctness and excellence of his general life-theory and practical course of life; then, if that man chance to light on any other man, or any little treatise, or sermon, which unintendingly, as it were, yet very palpably illustrates to him the intrinsic incorrectness and non-excellence of both the theory and the practice of his life; then that man will--more or less unconsciously--try hard to hold himself back from the self-admitted comprehension of a matter which thus condemns him. For in

this case, to comprehend, is himself to condemn himself, which is always highly inconvenient and uncomfortable to a man. Again. If a man be told a thing wholly new, then--during the time of its first announcement to him--it is entirely impossible for him to comprehend it. For--absurd as it may seem--men are only made to comprehend things which they comprehended before (though but in the embryo, as it were). Things new it is impossible to make them comprehend, by merely talking to them about it. True, sometimes they pretend to comprehend; in their own hearts they really believe they do comprehend; outwardly look as though they did comprehend; wag their bushy tails comprehendingly; but for all that, they do not comprehend. Possibly, they may afterward come, of themselves, to inhale this new idea from the circumambient air, and so come to comprehend it; but not otherwise at all. It will be observed, that, neither points of the above speculations do we, in set terms, attribute to Pierre in connection with the rag pamphlet. Possibly both might be applicable; possibly neither. Certain it is, however, that at the time, in his own heart, he seemed to think that he did not fully comprehend the strange writer's conceit in all its bearings. Yet was this conceit apparently one of the plainest in the world; so natural, a child might almost have originated it. Nevertheless, again so profound, that scarce Juggularius himself could be the author; and still again so exceedingly trivial, that Juggularius' smallest child might well have been ashamed of it.

Seeing then that this curious paper rag so puzzled Pierre; foreseeing, too, that Pierre may not in the end be entirely uninfluenced in his

conduct by the torn pamphlet, when afterwards perhaps by other means he shall come to understand it; or, peradventure, come to know that he, in the first place, did--seeing too that the author thereof came to be made known to him by reputation, and though Pierre never spoke to him, yet exerted a surprising sorcery upon his spirit by the mere distant glimpse of his countenance;--all these reasons I account sufficient apology for inserting in the following chapters the initial part of what seems to me a very fanciful and mystical, rather than philosophical Lecture, from which, I confess, that I myself can derive no conclusion which permanently satisfies those peculiar motions in my soul, to which that Lecture seems more particularly addressed. For to me it seems more the excellently illustrated re-statement of a problem, than the solution of the problem itself. But as such mere illustrations are almost universally taken for solutions (and perhaps they are the only possible human solutions), therefore it may help to the temporary quiet of some inquiring mind; and so not be wholly without use. At the worst, each person can now skip, or read and rail for himself.

III.

"EI,"

BY PLOTINUS PLINLIMMON,

(In Three Hundred and Thirty-three Lectures.)

LECTURE FIRST.

CHRONOMETRICALS AND HOROLOGICALS,

(Being not to much the Portal, as part of the temporary Scaffold to the Portal of this new Philosophy.)

"Few of us doubt, gentlemen, that human life on this earth is but a state of probation; which among other things implies, that here below, we mortals have only to do with things provisional. Accordingly, I hold that all our so-called wisdom is likewise but provisional.

"This preamble laid down, I begin.

"It seems to me, in my visions, that there is a certain most rare order of human souls, which if carefully carried in the body will almost always and everywhere give Heaven's own Truth, with some small grains of variance. For peculiarly coming from God, the sole source of that heavenly truth, and the great Greenwich hill and tower from which the universal meridians are far out into infinity reckoned; such souls seem as London sea-chronometers (Greek, time-namers) which as the London ship floats past Greenwich down the Thames, are accurately adjusted by Greenwich time, and if heedfully kept, will still give that same time,

even though carried to the Azores. True, in nearly all cases of long, remote voyages--to China, say--chronometers of the best make, and the most carefully treated, will gradually more or less vary from Greenwich time, without the possibility of the error being corrected by direct comparison with their great standard; but skillful and devout observations of the stars by the sextant will serve materially to lessen such errors. And besides, there is such a thing as rating a chronometer; that is, having ascertained its degree of organic inaccuracy, however small, then in all subsequent chronometrical calculations, that ascertained loss or gain can be readily added or deducted, as the case may be. Then again, on these long voyages, the chronometer may be corrected by comparing it with the chronometer of some other ship at sea, more recently from home.

"Now in an artificial world like ours, the soul of man is further removed from its God and the Heavenly Truth, than the chronometer carried to China, is from Greenwich. And, as that chronometer, if at all accurate, will pronounce it to be 12 o'clock high-noon, when the China local watches say, perhaps, it is 12 o'clock midnight; so the chronometric soul, if in this world true to its great Greenwich in the other, will always, in its so-called intuitions of right and wrong, be contradicting the mere local standards and watch-maker's brains of this earth.

"Bacon's brains were mere watch-maker's brains; but Christ was a chronometer; and the most exquisitely adjusted and exact one, and the

least affected by all terrestrial jarrings, of any that have ever come to us. And the reason why his teachings seemed folly to the Jews, was because he carried that Heaven's time in Jerusalem, while the Jews carried Jerusalem time there. Did he not expressly say--My wisdom (time) is not of this world? But whatever is really peculiar in the wisdom of Christ seems precisely the same folly to-day as it did 1850 years ago. Because, in all that interval his bequeathed chronometer has still preserved its original Heaven's time, and the general Jerusalem of this world has likewise carefully preserved its own.

"But though the chronometer carried from Greenwich to China, should truly exhibit in China what the time may be at Greenwich at any moment; yet, though thereby it must necessarily contradict China time, it does by no means thence follow, that with respect to China, the China watches are at all out of the way. Precisely the reverse. For the fact of that variance is a presumption that, with respect to China, the Chinese watches must be all right; and consequently as the China watches are right as to China, so the Greenwich chronometers must be wrong as to China. Besides, of what use to the Chinaman would a Greenwich chronometer, keeping Greenwich time, be? Were he thereby to regulate his daily actions, he would be guilty of all manner of absurdities:--going to bed at noon, say, when his neighbors would be sitting down to dinner. And thus, though the earthly wisdom of man be heavenly folly to God; so also, conversely, is the heavenly wisdom of God an earthly folly to man. Literally speaking, this is so. Nor does the God at the heavenly Greenwich expect common men to keep Greenwich wisdom in this remote

Chinese world of ours; because such a thing were unprofitable for them here, and, indeed, a falsification of Himself, inasmuch as in that case, China time would be identical with Greenwich time, which would make Greenwich time wrong.

"But why then does God now and then send a heavenly chronometer (as a meteoric stone) into the world, uselessly as it would seem, to give the lie to all the world's time-keepers? Because he is unwilling to leave man without some occasional testimony to this:--that though man's Chinese notions of things may answer well enough here, they are by no means universally applicable, and that the central Greenwich in which He dwells goes by a somewhat different method from this world. And yet it follows not from this, that God's truth is one thing and man's truth another; but--as above hinted, and as will be further elucidated in subsequent lectures--by their very contradictions they are made to correspond.

"By inference it follows, also, that he who finding in himself a chronometrical soul, seeks practically to force that heavenly time upon the earth; in such an attempt he can never succeed, with an absolute and essential success. And as for himself, if he seek to regulate his own daily conduct by it, he will but array all men's earthly time-keepers against him, and thereby work himself woe and death. Both these things are plainly evinced in the character and fate of Christ, and the past and present condition of the religion he taught. But here one thing is to be especially observed. Though Christ encountered woe in both the

precept and the practice of his chronometricals, yet did he remain throughout entirely without folly or sin. Whereas, almost invariably, with inferior beings, the absolute effort to live in this world according to the strict letter of the chronometricals is, somehow, apt to involve those inferior beings eventually in strange, unique follies and sins, unimagined before. It is the story of the Ephesian matron, allegorized.

"To any earnest man of insight, a faithful contemplation of these ideas concerning Chronometricals and Horologicals, will serve to render provisionally far less dark some few of the otherwise obscurest things which have hitherto tormented the honest-thinking men of all ages. What man who carries a heavenly soul in him, has not groaned to perceive, that unless he committed a sort of suicide as to the practical things of this world, he never can hope to regulate his earthly conduct by that same heavenly soul? And yet by an infallible instinct he knows, that that monitor can not be wrong in itself.

"And where is the earnest and righteous philosopher, gentlemen, who looking right and left, and up and down, through all die ages of the world, the present included; where is there such an one who has not a thousand times been struck with a sort of infidel idea, that whatever other worlds God may be Lord of, he is not the Lord of this; for else this world would seem to give the lie to Him; so utterly repugnant seem its ways to the instinctively known ways of Heaven. But it is not, and can not be so; nor will he who regards this chronometrical conceit



aright, ever more be conscious of that horrible idea. For he will then see, or seem to see, that this world's seeming incompatibility with God, absolutely results from its meridional correspondence with him.

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"This chronometrical conceit does by no means involve the justification of all the acts which wicked men may perform. For in their wickedness downright wicked men sin as much against their own horologes, as against the heavenly chronometer. That this is so, their spontaneous liability to remorse does plainly evince. No, this conceit merely goes to show, that for the mass of men, the highest abstract heavenly righteousness is not only impossible, but would be entirely out of place, and positively wrong in a world like this. To turn the left cheek if the right be smitten, is chronometrical; hence, no average son of man ever did such a thing. To give all that thou hast to the poor, this too is chronometrical; hence no average son of man ever did such a thing. Nevertheless, if a man gives with a certain self-considerate generosity to the poor; abstains from doing downright ill to any man; does his convenient best in a general way to do good to his whole race; takes watchful loving care of his wife and children, relatives, and friends; is perfectly tolerant to all other men's opinions, whatever they may be; is an honest dealer, an honest citizen, and all that; and more especially if he believe that there is a God for infidels, as well as for believers, and acts upon that belief; then, though such a man falls infinitely short of the chronometrical standard, though all his actions

are entirely horologic;--yet such a man need never lastingly despond, because he is sometimes guilty of some minor offense:--hasty words, impulsively returning a blow, fits of domestic petulance, selfish enjoyment of a glass of wine while he knows there are those around him who lack a loaf of bread. I say he need never lastingly despond on account of his perpetual liability to these things; because not to do them, and their like, would be to be an angel, a chronometer; whereas, he is a man and a horologe.

"Yet does the horologe itself teach, that all liabilities to these things should be checked as much as possible, though it is certain they can never be utterly eradicated. They are only to be checked, then, because, if entirely unrestrained, they would finally run into utter selfishness and human demonism, which, as before hinted, are not by any means justified by the horologe.

"In short, this Chronometrical and Horological conceit, in sum, seems to teach this:--That in things terrestrial (horological) a man must not be governed by ideas celestial (chronometrical); that certain minor self-renunciations in this life his own mere instinct for his own every-day general well-being will teach him to make, but he must by no means make a complete unconditional sacrifice of himself in behalf of any other being, or any cause, or any conceit. (For, does aught else completely and unconditionally sacrifice itself for him? God's own sun does not abate one tittle of its heat in July, however you swoon with that heat in the sun. And if it did abate its heat on your behalf,

then the wheat and the rye would not ripen; and so, for the incidental benefit of one, a whole population would suffer.)

"A virtuous expediency, then, seems the highest desirable or attainable earthly excellence for the mass of men, and is the only earthly excellence that their Creator intended for them. When they go to heaven, it will be quite another thing. There, they can freely turn the left cheek, because there the right cheek will never be smitten. There they can freely give all to the poor, for there there will be no poor to give to. A due appreciation of this matter will do good to man. For, hitherto, being authoritatively taught by his dogmatical teachers that he must, while on earth, aim at heaven, and attain it, too, in all his earthly acts, on pain of eternal wrath; and finding by experience that this is utterly impossible; in his despair, he is too apt to run clean away into all manner of moral abandonment, self-deceit, and hypocrisy (cloaked, however, mostly under an aspect of the most respectable devotion); or else he openly runs, like a mad dog, into atheism. Whereas, let men be taught those Chronometricals and Horologicals, and while still retaining every common-sense incentive to whatever of virtue be practicable and desirable, and having these incentives strengthened, too, by the consciousness of powers to attain their mark; then there would be an end to that fatal despair of becoming at all good, which has too often proved the vice-producing result in many minds of the undiluted chronometrical doctrines hitherto taught to mankind. But if any man say, that such a doctrine as this I lay down is false, is impious; I would charitably refer that man to the history of Christendom

for the last 1800 years; and ask him, whether, in spite of all the maxims of Christ, that history is not just as full of blood, violence, wrong, and iniquity of every kind, as any previous portion of the world's story? Therefore, it follows, that so far as practical results are concerned--regarded in a purely earthly light--the only great original moral doctrine of Christianity (i. e. the chronometrical gratuitous return of good for evil, as distinguished from the horological forgiveness of injuries taught by some of the Pagan philosophers), has been found (horologically) a false one; because after 1800 years' inculcation from tens of thousands of pulpits, it has proved entirely impracticable.

"I but lay down, then, what the best mortal men do daily practice; and what all really wicked men are very far removed from. I present consolation to the earnest man, who, among all his human frailties, is still agonizingly conscious of the beauty of chronometrical excellence. I hold up a practicable virtue to the vicious; and interfere not with the eternal truth, that, sooner or later, in all cases, downright vice is downright woe.

"Moreover: if----"

But here the pamphlet was torn, and came to a most untidy termination.