

Cheap Repository,

The History of

MR. FANTOM,

THE

NEW-FASHIONED PHILOSOPHER,

and

HIS MAN WILLIAM.



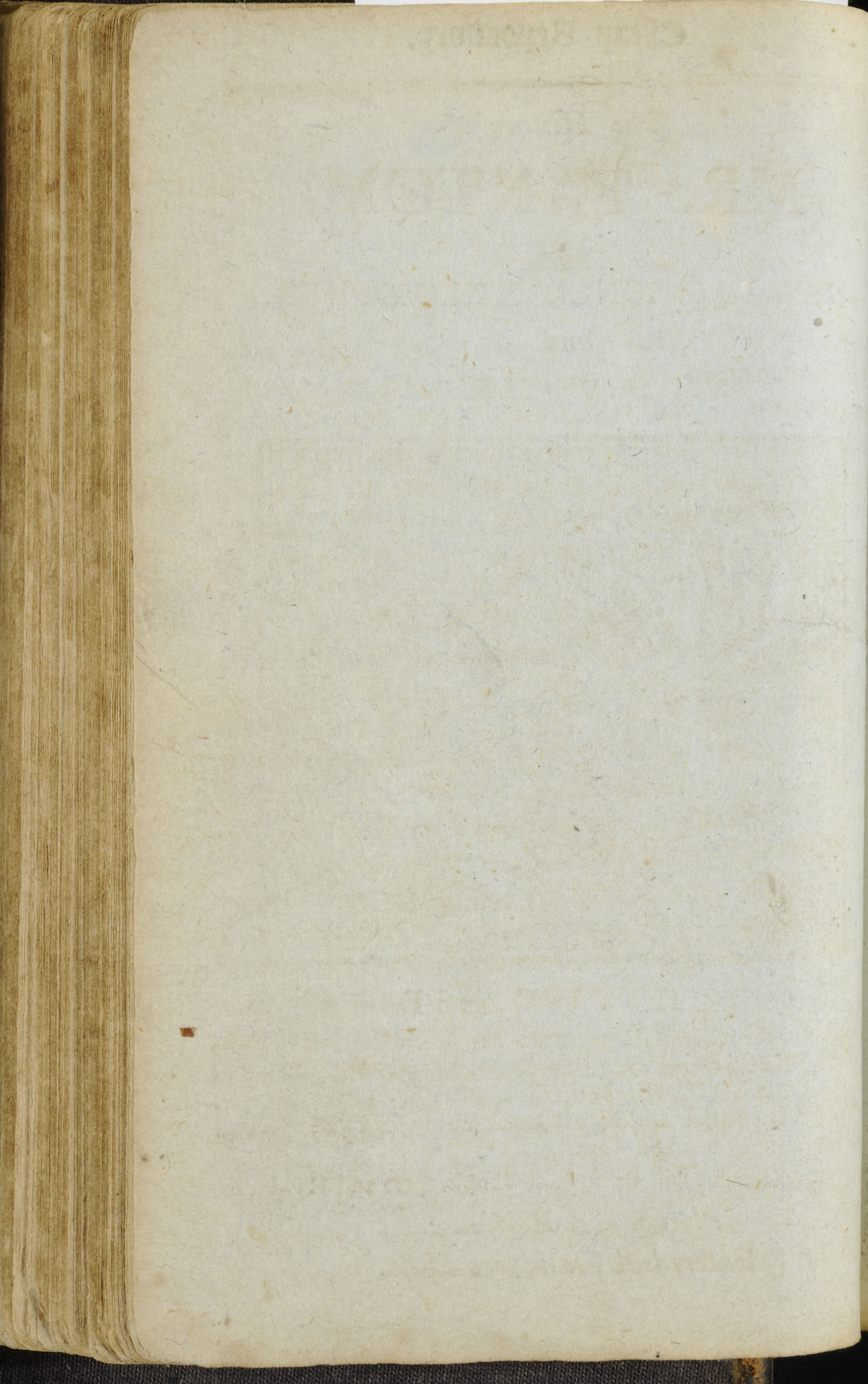
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THE HISTORY, &c.

MR. FANTOM was a retail trader in the city of London. As he had no turn to any expensive vices, he was reckoned a sober decent man, but he was covetous and proud, selfish, and conceited. As soon as he got forward in the world, his vanity began to display itself, but not in the ordinary method of making a figure and living away; but still he was tormented with a longing desire to draw public notice, and to distinguish himself. He felt a general sense of discontent at what he was, with a general ambition to be something which he was not; but this desire had not yet turned itself to any particular object. It was not by his money he could hope to be distinguished, for half his acquaintance had more, and a man must be rich indeed, to be noted for his riches in London. Mr. Fantom's mind was a prey to vain imaginations.— He despised all those little acts of kindness and charity which every man is called to perform every day, and while he was contriving grand schemes which lay quite out of his reach, he neglected the ordinary duties of life, which lay directly before him.

About this time he got hold of a famous little book, written by the new philosopher, whose pestilent doctrines found a ready entrance into Mr. Fantom's mind; a mind at once shallow and inquisitive, speculative, and vain, ambitious and dis-

satisfied. As almost every book was new to him, he fell into the common error of those who begin to read late in life, that of thinking that what he did not know himself was equally new to others; and he was apt to fancy that he and the author he was reading were the only two people in the world who knew any thing. This book led to the grand discovery; he had now found what his heart had panted after, a way to *distinguish himself*. To start out a full grown philosopher at once, to be wise without education, to dispute without learning, and to make proselytes without argument, was a short cut to fame, which well suited his vanity and his ignorance. He rejoiced that he had been so clever as to examine for himself, pitied his friends who took things upon trust, and was resolved to assert the freedom of his own mind. To a man fond of bold novelties and daring paradoxes, solid argument would be flat and truth would be dull, merely because it is new. Mr. Fantom, believed not in proportion to the strength of the evidence, but to the impudence of the assertion. The trampling on holy ground with dirty shoes, the smearing the sanctuary with filth and mire, the calling prophets and apostles the most scurrilous names was new, and dashingly and dazzling. Mr. Fantom now being set free from the chains of slavery and superstition, was resolved to show his zeal in the usual way, by trying to convince others, but it would have hurt his vanity had he known that he was the convert of a man who had written only for the vulgar, who had *invented* nothing; no, not even one idea of original wickedness, but who had stooped to rake up out of the kennel of infidellity, all the loathsome dregs and dirt, which politer unbelievers had thrown away.

as too gross and offensive for their better-bread readers.

Mr. Fantom, who considered that a philosopher must set up with a little sort of a stock in trade, now picked up all the common-place notions against Christianity, which have been answered a hundred times over; these he kept by him ready cut and dried, and brought out in all companies, with a zeal which would have done honour to a better cause, but which the friends to a better cause are not so apt to discover. He soon got all the cant of the new school. He talked of 'narrowness,' and 'ignorance,' and 'bigotry,' and 'prejudice,' and 'priestcraft,' on the one hand; and on the other of 'public good,' the 'love of mankind,' and 'liberality,' and 'candour,' and 'toleration,' and above all, 'benevolence'. Benevolence, he said, made up the whole of religion, and all the other parts of it were nothing but cant and jargon, and hypocrisy. Finding, however, that he made little impression on his old club, at the Cat and Bagpipes, he grew tired of their company, yet there was one member whose society he could not resolve to give up, though they seldom agreed, as indeed no two men in the same class and habits of life could less resemble each other. Mr. Trueman was an honest, plain, and simple-hearted tradesman, of the good old cut, who feared God and followed his business, he went to church twice on Sundays, and minded his shop all the week, spent frugally, gave liberally, and saved moderately.

Mr. Fantom resolved to retire for a while into the country, and devote his time to his new plans, schemes, theories, and projects for the public good. A life of talking, and reading, and writing, and disputing, and teaching, and proselyting, now struck

him as the only life, so he soon set out for the country with his family, to which was now added his new footman, William Wilson, whom he had taken, with a good character, out of a sober family. He was no sooner settled, than he wrote to invite Mr. Trueman to come and pay him a visit, for he would have burst, if he could not have got some one to whom he might display his new knowledge; he knew that if on the one hand Trueman was no scholar, yet on the other he was no fool, and though he despised his 'prejudices' yet he thought he might be made a good decoy duck, for; if he could once bring Trueman over, the whole club, at the Cat and Bagpipes might be brought to follow his example, and thus he might see himself at the head of a society of his own proselytes, the supreme object of a philosopher's ambition. Trueman came accordingly. He soon found that however he might be shocked at the impious doctrines his friend maintained, yet than at important lessons might be learnt even from the worst of enemies of truth; namely, an ever-wakeful attention to their grand object. If they set out with talking of trade or politicks, of private news or public affairs, still Mr. Fantom was ever on the watch to itch in his darling doctrines; whatever he began with, he was sure to end with a pert squib at the Bible, a vapourish jest on clergy, the miseries of superstition, and the blessings of philosophy. "Oh"! said Trueman to himself, "when shall I see Christians half so much in earnest? Why is it that almost all zeal is on the wrong side?"

"Well, Mr. Fantom," said Trueman next day at breakfast, "I am afraid you are leading but a idle sort of life here,"—"Sir," said Fantom,

now begin to live to some purpose; I have indeed lost too much time, and wasted my talents on a little retail trade, in which one is of no note; one can't distinguish one's self."—"So much the better," said Trueman, "I had rather not distinguish myself, unless it was to lead a better life than my neighbours. There is nothing I should dread more than being talked about. I dare say now heaven is in a good measure filled with people whose names was never heard out of their own street or village. So I beg leave *not* to distinguish myself."—"Yes, but one may if it is only by signing one's name to an essay or a paragraph in a newspaper," said Fantom. "Heaven keep John Trueman's name out of a newspaper," interrupted he in a fright, "for it must either be found in the Old Bailey or the Bankrupt List, unless indeed I were to remove shop, or sell off my old stock."—"But in your present confined situation you can't be of no use," said Fantom. "That I deny", interrupted the other. "I have filled all the parish offices with some credit. I never took a bribe at an election, no, not so much as a treat—I take care of my apprentices, and don't set them a bad example, by running to plays and Sadler's Wells in the week, or jaunting about in a gig all day on Sundays; for I look upon it that the country jaunt of the master on Sundays, exposes his servants to more danger than their whole week's temptations in trade put together."

Fantom. I once had the same vulgar prejudices about the Church and the Sabbath, and all that antiquated stuff. But even on your own narrow principles, how can a thinking being spend his Sunday better (if he must lose one day in seven by having

any Sunday at all) than by going into the country to admire the works of nature.

TRUEMAN.—I suppose you mean the works of God—for I never read in the Bible that nature made any thing. I should rather think that she herself was made by him who made all things—by him who, when he said ‘thou shalt not murder,’ said also, ‘thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day.’ But coaches, chariots, chaises, vis-a-vis, booby-hutches, sulkies, sociables, phaetons, gigs, curricles, cabrioles, chairs, stages, pleasure-carts and horses, which crowd our roads—all those country houses within reach, to which the London friends pour in to the gorgeous Sunday feast, which the servants are kept from church to dress—all those public houses under the sign of which you read these alluring words—“An Ordinary on Sundays”—I say, do you believe, that all those houses and carriages are crammed with philosophers, who go on Sundays into the country to admire the works of nature, as you call it?—indeed, from the reeling gait of some of them, when they go back at night, one might take them for a certain set called the “tipping philosophers.” Then in answer to your charge that a little tradesman can do no good, I must tell you, that I belong to the society for relieving prisoners for small debts, and to the sick man’s friends, and to———

FANTOM. Oh, enough—all these are petty occupations.

TRUEMAN. Then they are better suited to petty men of petty fortune. I had rather have an ounce of real good done with my own hands, and see

with my own eyes, than speculate about doing a ton in a wild way, which I know can never be brought about.

FANTOM. I despise a narrow field. O for the reign of universal benevolence! I want to make all mankind good and happy.

TRUEMAN. Dear me! sure that must be a wholesale sort of a job; had not you better try your hand at a town or a parish first?

FANTOM. Sir, I have a plan in my head for relieving the miseries of the whole world. Every thing is bad as it now stands. I would alter all the laws, and do away all the religions, and put an end to all the wars in the world. I would every where redress the injustice of fortune, or what the vulgar call providence. I would put an end to all punishments, I would not leave a single prisoner on the face of the globe. This is what I call doing things on a grand scale. "A scale with a vengeance," said Trueman. "As to releasing the prisoners, however, I don't so much like that, as it would be pleasing a few rogues at the expence of all honest men; but as to the rest of your plan, if all "Christian countries would be so good as turn Christians," it might be helped on a good deal. There would be still misery enough left indeed, because God intended this world should be earth and not heaven. But still, banishing irreligion from the world would be like striking off all the pounds from an overcharged bill; and all the troubles which would be left, would be reduced to mere shillings, pence, and farthings, as one may say."

FANTOM. Your project would rivet the chains which mine is designed to break.

TRUEMAN. Sir, I have no projects. Projects are

in general the offspring of restlessness, vanity, and idleness. I am too busy for projects, too contented for theories, and, I hope, have too much humility for a philosopher. The utmost extent of my ambition at present is, to redress the wrongs of a parish 'prentice, who has been cruelly used by his master; indeed I have another little scheme, which is to prosecute a fellow in our street who has let a poor wretch in a work-house, of which he had the care, perish through neglect, and you must assist me.

Fantom. The parish must do that, as to me I own that the wrongs of the Poles and South Americans so fill my mind, as to leave me no time to attend the petty sorrows of work-houses and parish 'prentices. It is provinces, empires, continents, that the benevolence of the philosopher embraces; every one can do a little paltry good to his next neighbour.

Trueman. Every man can, but I don't see every man does. If they would, indeed, your business would be ready done to your hands, and your grand ocean of benevolence would be filled with the drops which private charity would throw into it. I am glad, however, you are such a friend to the prisoners, because I am just now getting a little subscription from our club, to set free your poor old friend Tom Saunders, a very honest brother-tradesman, who got first into debt, and then into gaol, through no fault of his own, but merely through the pressure of the times. We have each of us allowed a trifle every week towards maintaining Tom's young family since he has been in prison, but we think we shall do much more service to Saunders, and indeed in the end lighten our own expence, by paying down at once a little sum to re-

store to him the comforts of life, and put him in a way of maintaining his family again. We have made up the money all except five guineas, I am already promised four, and you have nothing to do but to give me the fifth. And so for a single guinea, without any of the trouble, the meetings, and the looking into his affairs, which we have had, you will at once have the pleasure (and it is no small one) of helping to save a worthy family from starving, of redeeming an old friend from gaol, and of putting a little of your boasted benevolence into action. Realize! Master Fantom, there is nothing like realizing," "Why, harkee, Mr. Trueman" said Fantom, stammering, and looking very black, "don't think I value a guinea; no, sir, I despise money, 'tis trash, 'tis dirt, and beneath the regard of a wise man. 'Tis one of the unfeeling inventions of artificial society. Sir, I could talk to you for half a day on the abuse of riches, and on my own contempt of money."

Trueman. O pray don't give yourself the trouble, it will be a easier way by half of proving both, just to put your hand in your pocket and giving me the guinea, without saying a word about it; and then to you who value time so much and money so little, it will cut the matter short. But come now, (for I see you will give nothing) I should be mighty glad to know what is the sort of good you do yourselves, since you always object to what is done by others. "Sir," said Mr. Fantom, "the object of a true philosopher is to diffuse light and knowledge. I wish to see the whole world enlightened."

Trueman. Amen! if you mean with the light of the Gospel. But if you mean that one religion is as

good as another, and that no religion is the best of all; in short, if you want to make the whole world philosophers, why they had better stay as they are. But as to the true light, I wish it to reach the very lowest, and I therefore bless God for Charity Schools, as instruments of diffusing it.

Fantom, who had no reason to suspect that his friend was going to call upon him for a subscription on this account, ventured to praise them. Saying, "I am no enemy to these institutions. I would, indeed, change the object of instruction, but I would have all the whole world instructed."

Here Mrs. Fantom, who with her daughter had quietly sat by at their work, ventured to put in a word, a liberty she seldom took with her husband, who in his zeal to make the whole world free and happy, was too prudent to include his wife. "Then, my dear," said she, "I wonder you don't let your own servants be taught a little. The maids can scarcely tell a letter or say the Lord's Prayer, and you know you won't allow them time to learn. William too has never been to church since we came out of town. He was at first very orderly and obedient, but now he is seldom sober of an evening, and in the morning, when he should be rubbing the tables in the parlour, he is generally lolling upon them, and reading your little manual of the new philosophy." "Mrs. Fantom," said her husband, angrily, "you know that my labors for the public good, leave me little time to think of my own family. I must have a great field, I like to do good to hundreds at once."

"I am very glad of that, papa," said Miss Polly, "for then I hope you won't refuse to subscribe to all those pretty children at the Sunday School, as

you did yesterday, when the gentleman came a begging, because that is the very thing you was wishing for—there is two or three hundred to be done good to at once.”

TRUEMAN. Well, Mr. Fantom, you are a wonderful man to keep up such a stock of benevolence at so small an expence. To love mankind so dearly, and yet avoid all opportunities of doing them good; to have such a noble zeal for the millions, and to feel so little compassion for the units; surely none but a philosopher could indulge so much philanthropy, and so much frugality at the same time.

FANTOM. I despise the man whose benevolence is swallowed up in the narrow concerns of his own family, or parish, or country.

TRUEMAN. Well, now I have a notion that 'tis as well to do one's own duty as that of another man, and to do good at home as well as abroad, and I had as lieve help Tom Saunders to freedom, as a Pole or a South American, though I should be very glad to help them too, but one must begin to love somewhere, and to do good somewhere; and I think 'tis as natural to love one's own family, and to do good in one's neighbourhood, as to any body else. And if every man in every family, parish, and county, did the same, why all the schemes would meet, and the end of one parish where I was doing good, would be the beginning of another where somebody else was doing good, so my schemes would jut into my neighbours, and all would fit with a kind of dove-tail exactness.”

Here they were told dinner was on the table.—
“Don't think,” said Fantom, “that you have the best of the argument, because you happen to have

the last word. We will finish our talk some other time." So saying they went up to dinner.

When they sat down, Mr. Fantom was not a little out of humour, to see his table in some disorder. William was also rather more negligent than usual. If the company called for bread he gave them beer, and he took away the clean plates, and gave them dirty ones. Mr. Fantom soon discovered that his servant was very drunk; he flew into a violent passion, and ordered him out of the room, charging that he should not appear in his presence in that condition. William obeyed; but having slept an hour or two, and got about half sober, he again made his appearance. His master gave him a most severe reprimand, and called him an idle, drunken, vicious fellow. "Sir," said William, very pertly, "if I do get drunk now and then, I only do it for the good of my country, and in obedience to your wishes."

Mr. Fantom, truly provoked, now began to scold him in words not fit to be repeated, and asked him what the meant. "Why, sir," said William, "you are a philosopher you know, and I have often overheard you say to your company, that private vices are public benefits, and so I thought that getting drunk was as pleasant a way of doing good to the public as any, especially when I could oblige my master at the same time."

"Get out of my house," said Mr. Fantom, in a great rage,—"I do not desire to stay a moment longer, so pay me my wages,"—"Not I, indeed," replied the master, "nor will I give you a character, so never let me see your face again." William took his master at his word, and not only got out of the house, but out of the country too as fast as possible. When they found he was really gone, they made a

hue-and-cry, in order to detain him till they had examined if he had left every thing in the house as he had found it. But William had got out of reach, knowing he could not stand such a scrutiny. On examination, Mr. Fantom found that all his port was gone, and Mrs. Fantom missed three of her best new spoons. William was pursued, but without success, and Mr. Fantom was so much discomposed, that he could not for the rest of the day talk on any subject but his wine and his spoons, nor harangue on any project but that of recovering both by bringing William to justice.

Some days passed away, in which Mr. Fantom having had time to cool, began to be ashamed that he had been betrayed into such ungoverned passion. He made the best excuse he could, said no man was perfect, and though he owned he had been too violent, yet he still hoped William would be brought to the punishment he deserved. "In the mean time," said Mr. Trueman, "seeing how ill philosophy has agreed with your man, suppose you were to set about teaching your maids a little religion?" Mr. Fantom coolly replied, "that the impertinent retort of a drunken footman could not spoil a system. "Your system, however, and your own behaviour," said Trueman, "have made that footman a scoundrel: and you are answerable for his offences." "Not I, truly," said Fantom, "he has seen me do no harm; he has neither seen me cheat, gamble, nor get drunk; and I defy you to say I corrupt my servants, I am a moral man, sir,"—"Mr. Fantom," said Trueman, "if you were to get drunk every day, and game every night, you would indeed endanger your own soul, and give a dreadful example to

your family; but great as those sins are, and God forbid that I should attempt to lessen them, still they are not worse, nay, they are not so bad as the pestilent doctrines with which you infect your house and your neighbourhood. A bad action is like a single murder, but a wicked principle is throwing lighted gunpowder into a town, it is poisoning a river; there are no bounds, no certainty, no end to its mischief. The ill effects of the worst action may cease in time, and the consequences of your example may end with your life, but souls may be brought to perdition by a wicked principle, after the author of it has been dead for ages.

FANTOM. You talk like an ignoramus, who has never read the new philosophy. All this nonsense of future punishment is now done away. It is our benevolence which makes us reject our creed; we can no more believe in a Deity who permits so much evil in the present world, than one who threatens eternal punishment in the next.

TRUEMAN. What, shall mortal be more merciful than God? Do you pretend to be more compassionate than that gracious Father, who sent his Son into the world to die for sinners?

FANTOM. You talk of your notions of the Deity from the vulgar views your Bible gives you of him." "To be sure I do," said Trueman, "can you tell me any way of getting a better notion of him? I don't want any of your farthing-candle philosophy, in the broad sun-shine of the Gospel, Mr. Fantom. My Bible tells me, that "God is love," not merely loving, but LOVE. Now do you think a Being whose very essence is love, would permit any misery among his children here, if it was not to be,

some way or other, or some where or other, for their good? You forget too that in a world where there is sin there must be misery. Then too I suppose, God permits misery partly to exercise the sufferings, and partly to try the prosperous; for by trouble God corrects some and tries others. Suppose now, Tom Saunders had not been put in prison, you and I—no, I beg your pardon, *you* saved your guinea; well then, our club and I could not have shown our kindness by getting him out, nor would poor Saunders himself have had an opportunity of exercising his own patience under want and imprisonment. So you see one reason why God permits misery is, that good men may have an opportunity of lessening it.” Mr. Fantom replied, “There is no object which I have more at heart; I have, as I told you, a plan in my head of such universal benevolence, as to include the happiness of all mankind.” “Mr. Fantom,” said Trueman, “I feel that I have a general good-will towards all my brethern of mankind; and if I had as much money in my purse as I have love in my heart, I trust I should prove it; all I say is, that in a station of life where I can’t do much, I am more called upon to procure the happiness of a poor neighbour, who has no one else to look to, than to form wild plans for the good of mankind, too extensive to be accomplished, and too chimerical to be put in practice. I can’t free whole countries, nor reform the evils of society at large, but I *can* free an aggrieved wretch in a workhouse, and I can reform myself and my own family.

Some weeks after a letter was brought to Mr. Fantom, from his late servant William, who had been turned away for drunkenness, as related in the

former part of this history, and who had also robbed his master of some wine and some spoons. Mr. Fantom glancing his eye over the letter said, "it is dated from Chelmsford jail; that rascal is got into prison. I am glad of it with all my heart, it is the fittest place for such scoundrels. I hope he will be sent to Botany Bay, if not hanged."—"O, ho! my good friend," said Trueman, "then I find that in abolishing all prisons you would just let one stand for the accommodation of those who should happen to rob *you*." Mr. Fantom drily observed, that he was not fond of jokes, and proceeded to read the letter. It expressed an earnest wish that his late master would condescend to pay him one visit in his dark and doleful abode, as he wished to say a few words to him, before the dreadful sentence of the law, which had already been pronounced, should be executed.

"Let us go and see the poor fellow," said Trueman, "it is but a morning's ride. If he is really so near his end, it would be cruel to refuse him." "Not I, truly," said Fantom, "he deserves nothing at my hands, but the halter he is likely to meet with. Such port as is not to be had for money, and the spoons, part of my new dozen."—"As to the wine," said Trueman, "I am afraid you must give that up, but the only way to get any tidings of the spoons, is to go and hear what he has to say; I have no doubt but he will make such a confession as may be very useful to others, which, you know is one grand advantage of punishments; and, besides, we may afford him some little comfort."—"As to comfort he deserves none from me," said Fantom, "and as to his confessions, they can be of no use to me, but as they give me a chance of getting my

spoons, so I don't much care if I do take a ride with you."

When they came to the prison, Mr. Trueman's tender heart sunk within him. He deplored the corrupt nature of man, which makes such rigorous confinement needful, not merely for the punishment of the offender, but for the safety of society. Fantom, from mere trick and habit, was just preparing a speech on general benevolence, and the cruelty of imprisonment, till the recollection of his old port and his new spoons cooled his ardour, and he went on without saying a word. When they reached the cell where the unhappy William was confined, they stopped at the door. The poor wretch had thrown himself on the ground, as well as his chains would give him leave. He groaned piteously, and was so swallowed up with a sense of his own miseries, that he neither heard the door open, nor saw the gentlemen. He was attempting to pray, but in agony, which made his words hardly intelligible. Thus much they could make out: "God be merciful to me a sinner—the chief of sinners!" Then suddenly attempted to start up, but, prevented by his irons he roared out, "O God! thou can'st *not* be merciful to me, for I have denied thee; I have ridiculed my Savior who died for me; I have derided his word I have resisted his spirit. I have laughed at that heaven which is shut against me; I have denied those torments which await me. To-morrow! to-morrow! O for a longer space for repentance, O for a short reprove from hell!"—Mr. Trueman wept so loud, that it drew the attention of the criminal, who now lifted up his eyes, and cast on his late master a look so dreadful, that Fantom wished for a moment that he had given up all hope of the spoons.

rather than have exposed himself to such a scene. At length the poor wretch said, in a voice that would have melted a heart of stone, "Oh, sir, are you there? I did wish to see you before my dreadful sentence is put in execution. Oh, sir! to-morrow, to-morrow! But I have a confession to make to you." This revived Mr. Fantom, who again ventured to glance a hope at the spoons. "Sir," said William "I could not die without making my confession." "Aye, and restitution too, I hope," replied Fantom. "Where are my spoons?"—"Sir, they are gone with the rest of my wretched booty. But oh, sir! these spoons make so petty an article in my black account, that I hardly think of them. Murder, sir, murder is the crime for which I am justly doomed to die. Oh, sir! Who can dwell neverlasting burnings?" As this was a question which even a philosopher could not answer, Mr. Fantom was going to steal off, especially as he now gave up all hope of the spoons; but William called him back.—"Stay, sir, stay, I conjure you, as you will answer it at the bar of God. You are the cause of my being about to suffer a shameful death. Yes, sir, you made me a drunkard, a thief, and a murderer."—"How dare you, William," cried Mr. Fantom, with great emotion, "accuse me with being the cause of such horrid crimes?"—"Sir," answered the criminal, "from you I learnt the principles which lead to those crimes. By the grace of God I should never have fallen into sins deserving of the gallows, if I had not often overheard you say there was no hereafter, no judgment, no future reckoning. Oh, sir! there is a hell, dreadful, inconceivable, eternal!" Here, through the excess of anguish, the poor fellow fainted away. Mr. Fantom, who did not at all relish this scene, said

to his friend, "Well, sir, we will go, if you please, for you see there is nothing to be done."

"Sir," replied Mr. Trueman, mournfully, "you may go, if you please, but I shall stay, for I see there is a great deal to be done."—"What," rejoined the other, "do you think it possible his life can be saved?"—"No, indeed," said Trueman, "but I hope it is possible his soul may be saved,"—"I don't understand these things," said Fantom, making toward the door. "Nor I neither," said Trueman, "but as a fellow-sinner I am bound to do what I can for this poor fellow. Do you go home, Mr. Fantom, and finish your treatise on universal benevolence, and the blessed effects of philosophy; and hark ye, be sure you let the frontispiece of your book represent *William on the gibbet*; that will be what our parson calls a PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION. You know I hate theories; this is *realizing*, this is PHILOSOPHY made easy to the meanest capacity."

Mr. Fantom sneaked off to finish his work at home, and Mr. Trueman staid to finish his in the prison. He passed the night with the wretched convict, he prayed with him and for him, and read to him the penitential psalms, and some portions of the Gospel. But he was too humble and too prudent a man to venture out of his debt by arguments and consolations, which he was not warranted to use, (this he left for the Minister.) But he pressed on William the great duty of making the only amends now in his power to those whom he had led astray. They then drew up the following paper, which Mr. Trueman got printed, and gave away at the place of execution.

THE
LAST WORDS, CONFESSION, AND DYING SPEECH,
OF

WILLIAM WILSON,

Who was executed at Chelmsford for Murder.

I was bred up in the fear of God, and lived with credit in many sober families, in which I was a faithful servant. But being tempted by a little higher wages, I left a good place to go and live with Mr. Fantom, who, however, made good none of his fine promises, but proved a hard master. In his service I was not allowed time to go to church. This troubled me at first, till I overheard my master say, that going to church was a superstitious prejudice, and only meant for the vulgar. Upon this I resolved to go no more; for I thought they could not be two religions, one for the master, and one for the servant. Finding my master never prayed, I too left off praying; this gave Satan great power over me, so that I from that time fell into almost every sin. I was very uneasy at first, and my conscience gave me no rest, but I was soon reconciled, by over-hearing my master and another gentleman say, that death was only a long sleep, and hell and judgment were only an invention of priests to keep the poor in order. I mention this as a warning to all masters and m

stresses to take care what they converse about, while servants are waiting at table. They cannot tell how many souls they have sent to perdition by such loose talk. The crime for which I die is the natural consequence of the principles I learnt of my master. A rich man, indeed, who throws off religion, may escape the gallows, because want does not drive him to commit the crimes which lead to it; but what shall restrain a needy man, who has been taught that there is no dreadful reckoning? Oh, my dear fellow servants! take warning by my sad fate, never be tempted away from a sober service, for the sake of a little more wages. Never venture your immortal souls in houses where God is not feared. And now hear me, O my God, though I have blasphemed thee; forgive me, O my Saviour! though I have denied thee. O Lord most holy, O God most mighty, deliver me from the bitter pains of eternal death! and receive my soul, for his sake who died for sinners.

WILLIAM WILSON.

Mr. Trueman would never leave this poor penitent till he was launched into eternity, but attended him, with the Minister, in the cart. This pious Minister never cared to tell me what he thought of William's state. When I ventured to mention my hope, that though his penitence was late, yet it was sincere, and spoke by the dying thief on the cross, as a ground of encouragement, the Minister, with a very serious look, made me this answer, "Sir, that instance is too often brought forward on occasions to which it does not apply; I do not chuse to say any thing to your application of it in the

present case, but I will answer you in the words of a good man, speaking of the penitent thief. There is *one* such instance given that nobody might despair, and there is *but one*, that no body might presume,

Poor William was turned off just a quarter before eleven, and may the Lord have had mercy on his soul!

