

A L C I A T U S . *

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ROMAN EMPEROR HADRIAN AND EPICETUS, THE PHILOSOPHER, ABOUT A.D. 110.

TRANSLATED BY HENRY MEIGS.

Hadrian. Let us loose our girdles ! examine our bodies naked, and see what we can gain ?

Epictetus. It is a mere note.

Hadrian. What sort of a note ?

Epictetus. It is a silent messenger.

Hadrian. What is a picture ?

Epictetus. A false truth.

Hadrian. Why do you say that ?

Epictetus. Because we see pictures of apples, flowers, animals done in gold and silver — but these are not true.

Hadrian. What is gold ?

Epictetus. A servant of death.

Hadrian. What is silver ?

Epictetus. The seat of envy.

Hadrian. What is iron ?

Epictetus. The instrument of all arts.

Hadrian. What is a sword ?

Epictetus. The law of camps.

Hadrian. What is a gladiator ?

Epictetus. A lawful homicide.

Hadrian. What people in good health are yet sick ?

Epictetus. Those who meddle with other people's business.

Hadrian. What is a man never tired of ?

Epictetus. Of making money.

Hadrian. What is friendship ?

Epictetus. Concord — agreement.

Hadrian. What is the longest thing ?

Epictetus. Hope.

Hadrian. What is hope ?

Epictetus. A waking dream ! The expectation of a doubtful event.

Hadrian. What is that which a man cannot see ?

Epictetus. Another man's thoughts.

Hadrian. What is the sin of men ?

Epictetus. Covetousness.

Hadrian. What is liberty ?

Epictetus. Innocence !

Hadrian. What is common to all kings and miserable men ?

* NOTES on the Provinces of Rome, in Latin, by ANDREW ALCIATUS, printed at Basle in Switzerland, by FROBEN, in 1552, with the privilege of copy-right for five years. It has numerous coarse wood engravings. It finishes with an argument between the Emperor HADRIAN and the Philosopher EPICETUS, whose figures are drawn with the beards of 1687, in A.D. 100. We translate it from the Latin.

Epictetus. To be born and to die.

Hadrian. What is best and worst ?

Epictetus. Words.

Hadrian. What is that which pleases some and displeases others ?

Epictetus. Life.

Hadrian. Which is the best life ?

Epictetus. The shortest.

Hadrian. Which is the most certain thing ?

Epictetus. Death.

Hadrian. What is death ?

Epictetus. Perpetual security.

Hadrian, (again.) What is death ?

Epictetus. A condition to be feared by no wise man ; the enemy of all life ; deity of the living ; boundary of all relation ; plunderer of children ; an agreeable last will and testament ; a funeral sermon ; the last tears ; oblivion of the dead ; a burthen for the monument ; and the end of all evils.

Hadrian. Why do we crown the dead ?

Epictetus. As the symbol of his transit from life to death.

Hadrian. Why are the thumbs of the dead together ?

Epictetus. That we may, after his apparent death, know that he is really dead.

Hadrian. What is a corpse-bearer ?

Epictetus. A man whom many avoid and whom none can fly from.

Hadrian. What is a funeral-pile ?

Epictetus. The final payment of debt.

Hadrian. What is a trumpet ?

Epictetus. An incitement to battle ; a camp signal ; a call to the arena, to the theatre and circus ; a mournful note for the funeral.

Hadrian. What is a monument ?

Epictetus. A stigmatized stone ; a speculation for an idle fellow.

Hadrian. Who is a poor man ?

Epictetus. He is like a dry deserted well which every body runs.

Hadrian. What is man ?

Epictetus. He is like a bath : first a warm one ; then oil for him as infant ; then a sweater when he is a boy ; a dry heat when he is a young man ; then a cold bath in old age.

Hadrian. What is man ?

Epictetus. He is like an apple ! which hangs on the tree until it is ripe ; just our bodies fall when mature ! more often while green !

Hadrian. What is man ?

Epictetus. He is like a lamp or candle set in the wind !

Hadrian. What is man ?

Epictetus. He is a guest ; a lawful dream ; a calamity-tale ; Death's real estate ; Life's delay ; a thing which Fortune makes jokes of !

Hadrian. What is Fortune ?

Epictetus. A noble matron, who whips her slaves !

Hadrian. What is Fortune ?

Epictetus. The nearest turning post on the race-ground ; a chance

for another man's goods ; he who has it shows out splendidly ; when it quits him he is left in the dark — no one can see him !

Hadrian. How many sorts of Fortune have we ?

Epictetus. Three : a blind one, hitting none knows how ; a crazy one, which gives and instantly snatches it away again ; third, and last, a deaf one, who can't hear the prayers of poor wretches.

Hadrian. What are the gods ?

Epictetus. Visions ! mental deities ! Are you timid ? then Fear is your god ! Are you able to rule your passions ? then Religion is your god !

Hadrian. What is the sun ?

Epictetus. The splendor of the world ! giving and taking away day ; a clock measuring the hours !

Hadrian. What is the moon ?

Epictetus. A day-helper ; eye of night ; torch of darkness !

Hadrian. What are the heavens ?

Epictetus. An immense dome.

Hadrian. What are the heavens ?

Epictetus. The air of the world.

Hadrian. What are the stars ?

Epictetus. The destinies of men.

Hadrian. What are the stars ?

Epictetus. The boundaries of all government.

Hadrian. What is this earth ?

Epictetus. The barn of Ceres.

Hadrian. What is this earth ?

Epictetus. The storehouse of life.

Hadrian. What is the sea ?

Epictetus. A very uncertain road to travel on.

Hadrian. What is a ship ?

Epictetus. An everywhere hotel.

Hadrian. What is a ship ?

Epictetus. Neptune's church ; an annual packet.

Hadrian. What is a sailor ?

Epictetus. A sea lover ; a land deserter ; a despiser of death and of life too ; a client of the waves.

Hadrian. What is sleep ?

Epictetus. The image of death.

Hadrian. What is night ?

Epictetus. The laborer's rest ; the highwayman's profit.

Hadrian. Why is Venus painted naked ?

Epictetus. All the loves are painted naked as well as Venus, and because naked beauty pleases most ; but it ought not to be done.

Hadrian. Why did Venus marry Vulcan ?

Epictetus. To show how hot love is.

Hadrian. Why was she squint-eyed ?

Epictetus. Because her loves were depraved ones.

Hadrian. What is love ?

Epictetus. The trouble of a peaceful breast ; modesty or shame in a

boy ; blushes in a girl ; a fury in a woman ; ardor in a young man ; a joke in old age ; a crime in a seducer.

Hadrian. What is God ?

Epictetus. He who holds all things in His hands.

Hadrian. What is sacrifice ?

Epictetus. A drink-offering.

Hadrian. What is without society ?

Epictetus. A kingdom.

Hadrian. What is a kingdom ?

Epictetus. A part of the government of gods.

Hadrian. What is Cæsar ?

Epictetus. The head of public light.

Hadrian. What is the Senate ?

Epictetus. The ornament of the city, and the splendor of its citizens.

Hadrian. What is a soldier ?

Epictetus. The wall of the Empire ; the glorious servant and defender of the country ; the index of power.

Hadrian. What is Rome ?

Epictetus. The fountain of the Empire of the world ; mother of nations.

This quaint dialogue is the concluding article in the book. Alciatus had it from an unknown author, hid away for ages. The book is given to the American Institute by Alanson Nash, Esq., of New-York, one of the Members of the Institute, on condition of their publishing, in their Annual Transactions, the account and drawings of the Liburna, and of the ships freighted with wheat from Egypt, and the female tribute-bearers of Africa.

SONG SUNG IN 'GOD'S ACRE,'

ON HEARING A WOOD-THRUSH SINGING THERE.

BY 'THE PLEASANT BARD.'

THE wind blows fresh from out the west,
The leaves are green and wavy,
For June the maples sweet has drest
So bonnily and bravely.
The herds come lowing to the fold,
For day is in the gloaming:
Unloose, O Care! thy canker hold.
And with the airs be roaming!

All Nature smiles: she may rejoice:
O'er me the clouds seem lying;
A sombre sadness breaks my voice
And turns my song to sighing.

Gill, (Mass.), June 14, 1857.

Oh! were I like yon guileless thrush,
Without a theme for sorrow!
Peace comes with evening round his bush,
And gladness with his morrow.

He has, dear bird! no buried past,
Its restless ghosts surviving,
With voices like the desert blast
Around the lost uprising.
With prophet ken he may not view
The Future's page of sorrow;
Peace falls with evening and the dew,
And gladness wakes her morrow.