APULEIUS.*[1]

St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo,[2] one of the most illustrious fathers of the Church, in his celebrated book "of the Citie of God," which was "Englished by J. H. in 1610,"[3] has these words:—

"When I was in Italy, I heard such a report there, how certaine women of one place there, would but give one a little drug in cheese, and presently hee became an asse, and so they made him carry their necessaries whither they would, and having done, they reformed his figure againe: yet had he his humane reason still, as Apuleius had in his asse-ship, as himselfe writeth in his booke of the Golden Asse,[4] be it a lie or a truth that hee writeth."[5]

"Nam et nos cum essemus in Italia, audiebamus talia de quadam regione illarum partium ubi stabularias mulieres imbutas his malis artibus, in caseo dare solere, dicebant, quibus vellent seu possent viatoribus, unde in jumenta illico verterentur, et necessaria quæque portarent, postque perfuncta opera iterum ad se redirent: nec tamen in eis mentem fieri bestialem, sed rationalem humanamque servari, sicut Apuleius in libris quos Asini Aurei titulo inscripsit, sibi ipsi accidisse, ut accepto veneno, humano animo permanente, asinus fieret, aut indicavit aut finxit."

Upon which passage a learned Spaniard, named Ludovicus Vives,[6] who, through the munificence of Cardinal Wol-

* Author: Thomas Jefferson Hogg / Transcribed and annotated by Giacomo Ferrari.

sey,[7] was Professor of Rhetoric in the University of Oxford, has written a comment in Latin, which has been rendered by the same J. H. thus:—

"Apuleius was a magician doubtlesse: but never turned into an asse. But Lucian[8] before him wrote how hee, being in Thessaly[9] to learne some magike, was turned into an asse instead of a bird: not that this was true: but that Lucian delighted neither in truths, nor truths' likelihoods. This worke did Apuleius make whole in Latine, adding diverse things to garnish it with more delight, to such as love Milesian tales,[10] and heere and there sprinckling it with his antiquaries' phrases, and his new compositions, with great liberty, yet somewhat suppressing the absurdity of the theame. But wee love now to read him, because he hath said some things there in that new dexterity, which others seeking to imitate, have committed grosse errors: for I thinke that grace of his in that worke is inimitable. But Apuleius was no asse, only he delights men's eares with such a story; as man's affection is wholly transported with a strange story."[11]

Such uncommon praises extorted from one, who, as the admiring commentator on a Father of the Church, cannot be supposed to have entertained very friendly feelings towards the writings of a Pagan Philosopher, afford a valuable testimony in favour of Apuleius, and are alone sufficient to awaken some curiosity to be acquainted with a work, which we must love to read, and of which the grace is declared to be inimitable.

With respect to the passage cited from St. Augustine, the miscreancy of that reverend person is most striking; for, whatever allowances we may be disposed to make for the habits of credulity, or of bad faith, in which he may have

lived, it is extraordinary that the Bishop should have had the folly to believe, or the audacity to affect to believe, that Apuleius had really been changed into an ass.

As to the note, the appetite with which it is written is remarkable: the world has lost it's appetite, and it is with difficulty that we can now be stimulated even to pick a bit of any wholesome work.

The masses of volumes that we are daily devouring are unhappily no proofs of a healthy desire for food. We cannot conscientiously call that man a glutton, who, a stranger to the baker and the milkman, and having long abjured animal food, has renounced also the bloodless diet that depends upon fruit, vegetables, and puddings, because he can shew on his inhospitable table piles of pill-boxes, heaps of gally-pots,[12] and stacks of empty phials. We can never allow a reputation for voracity to be authenticated by such documents as these. Let any honest man, who has ever read half a page of a good book, or eaten half a plate of good roast beef, decide, whether the literature, with which we are now drugged, most resembles nauseous Galenicals,[13] or savoury kitchen physic.

We may perhaps be permitted, in the short vacation between the last exorbitant attack upon our patience and our pockets, and the next accruing imposition, to enquire a little into the history of Apuleius, and the nature of the Metamorphosis.[14]

Lucius Apuleius lived in the second century of the Christian æra, under the Antonines:[15] he was born of a good family at Madaura,[16] a Roman colony in Africa; his father being one of the principal Magistrates of that city, and his mother, Salvia, a descendant of Plutarch of Charonea.[17]

Having been educated from his earliest youth at Athens, the Greek was his native language; and coming afterwards to

reside in Rome, he there learnt the Latin (which was little known at Madaura) with painful labour, and without the assistance of a master; "*arumnabili labore*, *nullo magistro pra eunte:*" the Metamorphoses therefore commence with an apology, in case the rude use of any exotic or forensic expression should give offence.

He followed for some time at Rome the profession of an advocate; and for a person, who, amongst his numerous attainments, appears to have been a considerable Dandy,[18] was remarkably successful.

An unusual advancement in the science of jurisprudence, and such a thorough knowledge of the nature of ample redress, and of substantial justice, even when backed by powerful private interest, and of the spirit of the law in general, as could only have been acquired by deep study and respectable practice, are clearly evinced in the narrative of a little adventure, which terminates the first book of the Metamorphoses.

We shall be pleased with it as a specimen of the style of a Dandy Advocate. We shall value it also as being a complete refutation of the absurd opinion, that it is impossible for a sound lawyer to find time for any more elegant or liberal studies: and those who are condemned to devote the principal part of their days to legal pursuits, will have no small consolation in reflecting, that one, who was all-accomplished, had as clear an insight into the fundamental principles of right, as any Jurisconsult ever attained to, who had bestowed on these subjects an exclusive and undivided attention.

The adventure is as follows:—

"Having settled these matters and put away my things in my bed-room, I set out for the bath, and, that I might first provide something to eat, I found out the fish-market, and

saw there a fine piece of fish exposed for sale. I asked the price, and being told that five-and-twenty pieces had been refused, I bought it up for twenty. As I was going gently from the market, Pytheas joined me, my fellow-collegian at Athens: after a short time he recognized me, and came to me; having embraced and saluted me kindly, he said, "It is a long time, my Lucius, since I have seen you; not surely since we left our master. But what is the occasion of this journey?" "You shall know to-morrow," I said, "but what is this? I wish you joy; for I see attendants with wands, and your dress is altogether that of a person in office."

"I preside over the market," he said, "and fill the office of Ædile;[19] if you wish to buy any thing, I will assist you as far as I can." This I declined, as I had already provided a piece of fish quite sufficient for supper. But notwithstanding, Pytheas caught sight of the basket, and shaking up the fish, that he might see better, said, "What did you give for this trash?" "With some difficulty I got the fishmonger to take twenty pieces." Upon hearing which, he instantly seized my hand, and hurrying me back into the fish-market, cried, "And from whom did you purchase this trumpery, here?" I pointed out a little old man sitting in a corner, when Pytheas immediately chiding him in a very severe voice, and with all the dignity of an Ædile, said, "So then you have no mercy at all even upon my friends, or upon foreigners? What do you mean by selling so dear such wretched little fishes, and by thus making the flower of the land of Thessaly seem like a solitary rock in respect of dearness of provisions? But you shall not escape; I will let you know how, under my magistracy, rogues ought to be punished." Then overturning the basket in the midst, he ordered his officer to get upon the fish, and to tread them to pieces with his feet. My friend Pytheas being satisfied

with this noble severity of manners, informed me, that I was at liberty to withdraw. "It is enough for me, my Lucius, to have thus disgraced that old fellow." Astonished and struck dumb at these exploits, I betook myself to the bath, having been deprived both of my money and of my supper by the resolute wisdom of my sensible fellow-collegian."[20]

"His actis et rebus meis in illo cubiculo conditis, pergens ipse ad balneas, ut prius aliquid nobis cibatui prospicerem, forum cupedinis peto: inque eo piscatum opiparem expositum video. Et percontato pretio, quod centum numis indicaret aspernatus, viginti denariis præstinavi. Inde me commodum egredientem continuatur Pytheas, condiscipulus apud Athenas Atticas meus, qui me post aliquam multam temporis amanter agnitum invadit, amplexusque ac comiter deosculatus: "Mi Luci," ait, "sat Pol diu est, quod intervisimus. At, Hercules, exinde cum a magistro digressi sumus. Quæ autem tibi causa peregrinationis hujus?" "Crastino die scies," inquam. "Sed quid istud? Voti gaudeo. Nam et lixas et virgas, et habitum prorsus magistratui congruentem in te video." "Annonam curamus," ait, "et Ædilatum geremus; et, si quid obsonare cupis, utique commodabimus." Abnuebam; quippe qui jam coenæ affatim piscatus prospereramus. Sed enim Pytheas, visa sportula, succussisque in aspectum planiorem piscibus, "At has quisquilias quanti parasti?" "Vix," inquam, "piscatori extorsimus accipere viginti denarios." Quo audito, statim arreptâ dextrâ postliminio me in forum cupedinis reducens, "Et a quo," inquit, "istorum nugamenta hæc comparasti?" Demonstro seniculum in angulo sedentem. Quem confestim pro Ædilitatis imperio voce asperrima increpans, inquit, "Tam jam nec amicis quidem nostris, vel omnino ullis hospitibus parcitis? Quid tam magnis pretiis pisces frivolos vinditatis, et florem Thessaliæ regionis instar solitudinis scopuli edulium cari-

tate ducitis? Sed non impune. Jam enim fano scias, quemadmodum sub nostro magisterio mali debeant coerceri." Et profusa in medium sportula, jubet officialem suum insuper pisces inscendere, ac pedibus suis totos obterere. Qua contentus morum severitudine meus Pytheas, ac mihi, ut abirem, suadens, "Sufficit mihi, O Luci," inquit, "seniculi tanta hæc contumelia." His actis consternatus, ac prorsus obstupidus, ad balneas me refero, prudentis condiscipuli valido consilio et numis simul privatus et coena."

Apuleius enjoyed during his life a very high reputation for deep and various learning, which has been transmitted to the present time by the testimony of numerous and respectable writers in all ages. A slight acquaintance with his works will convince us, that this was obtained in the obsolete method of close application, by extraordinary diligence, patient accurate investigation, and a strict intimacy with learned men and their works; not in the more easy and more fashionable course of gaining a title to renown merely by occupancy. This title is thus described by the lawyers, and in speaking of an advocate, legal terms are the most proper: "Occupancy is the taking possession of those things, which before belonged to nobody.—When it was once agreed that every thing capable of ownership should have an owner, natural reason suggested, that he who could first declare his intention of appropriating any thing to his own use, and in consequence of such intention, actually took it into possession, should thereby gain the absolute property of it—*quod nullius est, id ratione naturali occupanti conceditur*."[21]

Upon these principles in this well-taxed land, and especially at the two Universities,[22] where natural reason governs with uncontrolled and absolute dominion, if any person declare his intention of appropriating the sole knowledge of any subject whatever, unless it interfere with the prior claim of

some one else, which is rarely the case, the claim is immediately allowed, under a tacit agreement, which might be thus expressed:—Claimant. "I understand this subject better than any other man." University. "Take your reputation, and welcome, only do not talk to us about it: for God's sake! do not compel any of us to know any thing."

If some confirmed sceptic ventures to doubt the reality of such practices, he may satisfy himself by an easy experiment, and readily bring the question to a fair trial: let him only arrogate to himself the exclusive or superior knowledge of any science, language, or author whatever, and, if the world refuses to concede it, his doubt is well founded.

It may be truly said that Apuleius was an universal genius: there are but few subjects which he has not handled. He translated the Phædo of Plato,[23] and the Arithmetic of Nicomachus:[24] he wrote a treatise *de Republica;* another *de Numeris* and one *de Musica*. His *Convivales Quæstiones*, his Proverbs, his Hermagoras and his *Ludicra*, are quoted.[25] We have still his Metamorphoses, or the Golden Ass; his Apology;[26] some treatises of Natural Philosophy; of Moral Philosophy; *de Interpretatione*; *de Deo Socratis; de Mundo*; and his *Florida*.[27]

He was not more distinguished by his learning, than by an insatiable curiosity to know every thing, which induced him to enter himself in several religious fraternities, and to spend his whole fortune in travelling; insomuch, that having a desire to dedicate himself to the service of Osiris,[28] he was in want of money to defray the expense of the ceremonies incident to his reception, and was compelled to pawn even his clothes to make up the necessary sum.

As a listless indifference is the invariable characteristic of dull sluggish minds, and of ages of darkness and of barbarism, so an active, enterprising, and even rash curiosity, is

the constant indication of genius in the individual, and is a most conspicuous quality in periods of liberality and refinement. This curious disposition was doubtless one of the principal causes of his prodigious acquirements; but in order duly to appreciate his motives for desiring to be initiated in the religious mysteries, it is necessary briefly to consider the nature of those institutions.

To countenance any species of superstition is, it must be admitted, beneath the dignity of a philosopher; yet we must remember, that the mysteries were not only of great antiquity, and had been effectually shrouded in impenetrable secrecy (so effectually indeed, that we are now perfectly ignorant of their purport) but, that they were not like the greater part of prevailing superstitions, a farrago of absurd and contradictory dogmas, which inculcate such doctrines as tend to enslave and degrade the soul, which are celebrated by sordid and puerile rites; which can captivate the minds of the lowest vulgar only, and mislead none but the grossest of the ignorant.

The ancient cultivation of the Divine Being was enriched with all that is dazzling in the higher departments of philosophy, and comprehended many unpublished stores of traditionary lore; it was taught in a language unparalleled, and had every decoration of music, perhaps superior to any thing that we can conceive, of painting, most probably, far surpassing the masterpieces of modern artists, and of sculpture and architecture manifestly transcendant and inimitable. The whole was exalted by a chastening taste, the value of which we are now most unfortunately little capable of estimating; and secured by a liberty of thought and speech, of which, could we once more thoroughly feel the worth, we should have again in our power the key to unlock the treasury of all good things.

It is obvious then that there was enough in the mysteries to attract the attention of an ardent mind; the very secrecy alone must have inflamed even ordinary curiosity.

The Golden Asse has been supposed by credulous alchemists to contain the secret of the philosopher's stone; and to its author, as well as to all other persons, who have had the smallest pretensions to distinction, the power of working miracles was attributed by the multitude.

Apuleius was admired for the qualities of his body as well as for those of his mind: his person was well proportioned; he was active and graceful. His face, which has been preserved to us on gems, is exquisitely beautiful:[29] the hair and beard, as in the portraits of Pythagoras and Numa, are smooth and flowing; the attire of the head the same, a plain fillet tied behind, the ends hanging down. The whole countenance overflows with the fine old Platonic hilarity, which we view with astonishment, when found petrified in an onyx or a jasper; the organic remains of some earlier period, when the intellect and morals grew with antediluvian vigour to a gigantic stature.

A certain little modest widow, not unaptly named Pudentilla,[30] had lived thirteen years in a solitary state, sorely against her will and to the great injury of her health, when the advocate came to lodge in her house; her disorder, which during that long-protracted Lent had been continually increasing, accidentally attained its crisis some little time after this arrival; she then found that she must either die or marry somebody, and she had no insuperable objections to her guest.

Her son Pontianus, to whom she had imparted without scruple her delicate situation, and whose filial piety could not bear to witness the anguish of a mother, then above forty years of age, pining for the want of those little conjugal

endearments, which were the more precious, as they were not likely to be lasting, besought his particular friend and fellow collegian, by all that is holy in friendship and sacred amongst men, to soothe his afflicted parent; the lady was neither young, nor beautiful, nor rich, but, for a more disinterested motive, Apuleius generously consented to marry her.

We are told that Pudentilla was a literary character, and was qualified to assist her husband, which some maintain to be a probable reason for his marrying her, as it is said that she used to hold lights to him while engaged in his studies; which expression a dull critic takes literally, and wonders how she could stand by him all night with a candlestick in each hand. Be this as it may, they were united; and considering that children are good things, and that it is good to have children, and being free from all prior and less philosophical intentions, to effect this quiet purpose more quietly, they retired together into the country.

The intercourse of refined minds and of congenial tastes, whether in town or country, is truly delightful. Miss Anna Seward and Dr. Darwin[31] amused themselves in the Doctor's study, as scandal says, but perhaps falsely, by a course of experiments on equivocal generation; by their joint efforts they nearly made a baby.

They had mingled veal broth and mashed potatoes in a glass vessel according to art, and in due time the lady had her reasons for expecting shortly to taste the delicious transports of a mother; but in her eager haste she shook the gravid bottle, and the germ was dissolved into its parent broth. They repeated the process again and again, with every variation that the fertile invention of a poetess could devise; but without success; and, sad to say, the baby-linen still lies by in lavender without a claimant.

However unequivocal the rural occupations of Pudentilla may have been, her happiness was soon broken in upon by a most extraordinary accusation, which roused the amiable pair from the warm bride's favourite covert, the long grass under some shady elm.

The accusation seems to have been almost as bad as a Chancery suit,[32] in demanding the same cruel exposure of family secrets, and the same unfeeling violation of domestic privacy, in drawing matters into court, which are not fit subjects for the jurisdiction of any tribunal; it was less dilatory, but nearly as ruinous and expensive.

Sicinius Emilianus, the brother of Pudentilla's first husband, accused Apuleius of Magic, and of having gained the affections of his wife by charms and enchantments. On which occasion he pronounced before Claudius Maximus, Proconsul of Africa,[33] his celebrated Apology; a most eloquent oration, which is still extant, and is only less engaging than the Golden Ass. The orator gives many amusing particulars of his own life; exposes admirably, and at great length, the absurdity of the accusation and the malice of his accusers. He must be allowed to have many of the faults, and much of the false eloquence of the age; but it is certain that the speaker possessed in a remarkable degree the criterion of true eloquence, in carrying along with him the feelings and passions of his hearers, and in exciting an intense interest in his favour. He was in consequence triumphantly acquitted. Some writers pretend, that he was tried before Christian judges; but in fact, as the event of the trial alone would lead us to believe, the Proconsul was by religion a Pagan.

It is difficult to imagine what could have occasioned this opinion, unless it be that he was accused, amongst other enormities, of cleaning his teeth. "I saw some time since,"

says the Apology, "that many could scarcely refrain from laughter, when that orator charged me so vehemently with washing my mouth, and spoke of tooth-powder with more indignation than any other man ever spoke of poison."

"Vidi ego dudum vix risum quosdam tenentes, cum mundicias oris videlicet orator ille asperè accusaret, et dentifricium tanta indignatione pronunciaret, quanta nemo quisquam venenum."[34]

There appear likewise to have been counts in the information for combing his hair. This was not the first time that neatness gave offence, for even Socrates,[35] as Ælian[36] relates, was charged with being curious and nice about his house, and his couch, and his fine slippers.[37]

We cannot help feeling a wish, on reading the defence, that the prosecutor's speech had been preserved; for it seems hardly possible to believe that the principal circumstances from which he sought to infer the undue influence of magic, were, that Pudentilla had consented to marry after thirteen years of widowhood, and that an old woman had not refused a young man; to which it is answered, that the real wonder is that she remained a widow so long; and that there was no need of magic to induce a female to marry a man, a widow a bachelor, an old woman a young man.

"Igitur hoc ipsum argumentum est, nihil opus magiæ fuisse, ut nubere vellet mulier viro, vidua coelibi, major juniori."[38]

Let the reflection that, even in these days, we have accusations quite as monstrous, supported by no better evidence, but with results much less satisfactory, serve to mitigate our curiosity.

One of the proofs, if generally admitted, would convict all the world of magic; it is this: "Apuleius has something at home, which he worships in secret." "Habet quiddam

Apuleius domi, quod secreto colit."[39] Who then would be safe? who does not stand confessed a wizard? who has not something at home which he worships in secret?

Amongst the ethical writings of Plutarch, in the Nuptial Precepts sent with his good wishes to Pollianus and Eurydice,[40] we read, that the natural Magic of Love had been before confounded with the Black Art; but that the good sense of the royal rival herself could distinguish between the effects of the power of light and of the powers of darkness. "King Philip,"[41] says the tale, "loved a Thessalian woman, and she was accused of having given him a love-potion. His wife, Olympias,[42] therefore endeavoured to get the person in her power. But, when she came into her presence, and appeared comely in aspect, and conversed with gentility and prudence, "Farewell accusations," said Olympias, "for you have the love-potions in yourself." "Wherefore (infers Plutarch with his exquisite *bonhommie*)[43] a lawful married wife becomes something quite irresistible, if, placing all things in herself, dowry, and gentility, and love-potions, and the very cestus of Venus, she works out affection by good manners and virtue."

If the sculptured face of Apuleius be a faithful copy of his countenance, and, more especially, if his conversation were as engaging as his writings, a female more attractive than his bride might well exclaim with Olympias, "You have the love-potions in yourself!" The highest authority in the world, that of the divine Plato, in his masterpiece the Symposium,[44] might be cited, if it were necessary to adduce authorities to shew the sovereign influence of conversation in affairs of the heart: the passage is worthy of attention as a marvellous specimen of the antique simplicity, although we do not need proof where it is impossible to doubt:—

"In Elis,"[45] says the Divine, "and amongst the Bœotians,[46] and in every other Grecian state where the arts of speaking

flourish not, the law in such places absolutely makes it honourable to gratify the lover; nor can any person there, whether young or old, stain such a piece of conduct with dishonour: the reason of which law, I presume, is to prevent the great trouble they would otherwise have in courting the fair, and trying to win them by the arts of oratory, arts in which they have no abilities."[47]

The advantages of a good face are perhaps a little underrated in a popular anecdote of the facetious John Wilkes,[48] whose excessive squint and whimsical ugliness have been passed on by Hogarth to the laughers of the nineteenth century;[49] and whose estimate of beauty tradition has preserved, to teach humility to the handsome, and confidence to the unhappy plain.

"You say such a one is a good-looking fellow," observed the gallant patriot, "and such a one is an ill-looking fellow: I think nothing of looks. Between the finest face I ever knew and my own, I never found more than half-an-hour's difference with any woman."[50] The patriot did not know the value of half-an-hour in a case of life and death: Sappho, although ugly, was, perhaps, not more ugly than Wilkes, and perhaps Phaon relented half-an-hour too late; had the Lesbian girl been gifted with a better face, she might have found some remedy less alarming than the lover's leap.[51]

There are many editions of the Metamorphoses; old and new, but principally old; large and small, but chiefly large; with and without notes, but commonly choaked up with piles of animadversions. We sometimes see one, or two lines of text at the top of a full quarto page, like the chimnies and roofs and battlements of a town rising above a flood; sometimes only a dreary waste of waters, when the Ruhnken and the Wower, the Oudendorp and the Elmenhorst have broken their banks, and laid the smiling face of the

text under commentary: then the blank of paper above and the blank of annotation below meet in one uniform line; and the weary eye seeks in vain along the dull Dutch horizon an object to repose upon.[52] In a barn some proportion is observed between the quantity of the grain and the bulk of the chaff and straw; there is some proportion too in their relative value; but in the classics there is none between the edited and the editor, between the expounded and the expositor.

An old edition is prized by collectors for its wood-cuts, which have more merit than is usual with these antique productions; they are ugly and barbarous, but not altogether without spirit.[53]

The Metamorphoses have been translated into all the languages of Europe; the translations are principally old ones. Boiardo, who published an abridged version in Italian, in 1544, concludes his work with a pleasant sort of index; he reckons up all the pretty little *novelle*, which he makes to be twenty-four, in a table at the end of the volume.[54]

At the revival of letters the antient authors were read for some time with enthusiasm, but they soon became suspected, and it seemed better to those who govern our bodies and our minds, to discourage these studies. In order to provide substitutes for such restless spirits, as even the drunkenness of a college life cannot stupify, they restored, in some instances, the old logic of Aristotle,[55] with a dash of divinity; in others, they waste the ingenuity of the youthful mind upon the most subtle analytics. The one side say: "Did they not live very well in the middle ages without knowledge? Can we not do so now? We eat, we drink, and we sleep; we abstain from treading upon the grass: what more did they in the twelfth century?" The others, to justify themselves, enquire: "Do you wish for modern discoveries; for the

latest improvements? Here they are; here is the last, the most modish French *Calculus*. We teach what is new, the newest of the new; we expound last night's dreams." It is no wonder, therefore, that the Golden Ass is but little known: it is a vain attempt, with a few hands, to tow a heavy vessel against a strong wind and a strong tide; but it is as well to take hold of the rope; winds and tides have changed; and we owe all that is precious to vain attempts.

If the curiosity of one person only shall be excited to read the work by these remarks, the pleasure which he will derive from it will repay whatever labour the composition of them has demanded.

Some one, whose conversation is of the narrative order, was relating, at an agreeable dinner party, with unwelcome proxility, the story of his having attended, in the fields, a congregation of Ranters[56] on the preceding Sunday, and that the sermon of the preacher contained a full description of the infernal regions, when the narrator was suddenly cut short by this question: "Well, Sir, did he describe the other place? what did he say of that?" A question actually full of exquisite wit, but, in this instance, most unintentionally so, as the intimate friends of the person who asked it all confidently asserted, and vehemently repelled such an imputation.[57]

For who can describe happiness? With pain we are but too familiar. There is the same difficulty in conveying an idea of an interesting book; we can easily offer specific reasons to deter from the perusal of a worthless composition, but, when we would illustrate literary worthiness, we become vague and general. We ought not to expect that a man, who had just arrived from fairy-land, should be able to give a systematic account of all he had seen there: the poor fellow could only say that every thing was enchanted and

enchanting; he might, perhaps, name one or two of the most striking things that the fairies and their queen had shown him.

The story, as Vives says, is taken from Lucian, and is comprised by him in about sixty pages; it has been filled up and embellished by Apuleius, who has extended it to eleven books: the author, under the name of Lucius, is in both works the hero of the tale. Lucius is a handsome and accomplished young man, full of eager curiosity, who comes to Hypata, in Thessaly, the metropolis of Thessalian Magic. He there lodges with Milo, a rich miser, a pawnbroker and usurer, whose only servant Photis (Lucian[58] calls her Palæstra, and says of her, that "the girl was a bold, saucy little thing, and full of grace;" σφόδρα γαρ ην ιταμον, και χαριτων μέσον το κορασιον)[59] soon captivates the foolish young man, who suspected no harm, and continues to captivate the more foolish reader, even after he has a full knowledge of the fatal consequences of such an indiscretion.

After some amusing adventures, Lucius familiarises himselfwith Photis; the familiarities are described too minutely, especially by Lucian of Samosata, but they may easily be passed over by the not impertinently curious. He learns from her, upon a promise "to remunerate the simplicity of her relation by the tenacity of his taciturnity," that her mistress is a sorceress, and he prevails upon the fragile fair to procure him a sight of her incantations. One night Photis gives him notice that Pamphile[60] is about to change herself into a bird, in order to visit a supremely beautiful youth, whom she loved desperately, and beyond all measure. He accompanies her to the door of her mistress's bed-room; and peeping through a chink, sees Pamphile strip off all her clothes (the loved youth could not have seen more) and rub her body over entirely with an ointment, change gradually

into an owl, and fly hooting away. Man is an imitative animal; Lucius must copy the usurer's wife: he prevails upon the saucy girl to permit him to try the experiment; she gives him a box, he strips himself, and hastily rubs his body with the contents:

"And presently poising my arms with alternate efforts," says he, "I was delighted at the thoughts of turning into a similar bird. But there are no little feathers, no little wings at all; my hairs are evidently thickened into bristles, and my tender skin is hardened into a hide; at the tips of both my hands and of both my feet, all my fingers and toes, their number being lost, are forced into one hoof; and from the extremity of my back bone a great tail comes forth. My face soon becomes disproportionate, my mouth wide, my nostrils gaping, and my lips pendulous. So also my ears stick up with immoderate increase. And whilst in despair I contemplate my whole body, I see that I am not a bird, but an ass."

"Jamque alternis conatibus, libratis brachiis, in avem similem gestiebam. Nec ullæ plumulæ, nec usquam pinnulæ; sed planè pili mei crassantur in setas, et cutis tenella duratur in corium; et in extimis palmulis, perdito numero, toti digiti coguntur in singulas ungulas; et de spinæ meæ termino grandis cauda procedit. Jam facies enormis, et os prolixum, et nares hiantes, et labiæ pendulæ. Sic et aures immodicis horripilant auctibus. Ac dum salutis inopia cuncta corporis mei considerans, non avem me sed asinum video."

Nothing can equal the despair of Lucius, except the protestations of Photis, who assures him that he may be instantly restored to his human figure upon eating some roses: she regrets that it is too late to procure any that night, but promises to gather some early in the morning; he is per-

suaded meanwhile to be led off quietly to the stable; where he is most unceremoniously kicked out of the stall by his own white horse, and presently afterwards carefully beaten by his own slave with a huge green cudgel.

It is impossible not to pause here and reflect a moment.—The calamity was great; but let us hear his reason for wishing to be able to take the form of an owl at pleasure: he does not dissemble that it was to enable him, without suspicion, to pay nightly visits to certain married ladies in the neighbourhood, and to caress them without injury to their characters, and in spite of all the precautions of jealousy; a natural wish enough perhaps! but some heavy punishment as naturally follows presumption, even in thought. To the frequent practice of lovers calling upon their mistresses in this disguise, he attributes the custom of nailing to the wall of a house the bodies of such owls as have been killed in the vicinity, in order to scare away amorous visitants. The gibbetting is in full force in this virtually-represented nation, as the bodies of feathered malefactors every where testify; but the reason for these executions is not generally known, because the secret of these little misfortunes is better kept than love-secrets commonly are, or because lovers (which it is hard to believe) are no longer willing to be impaled.

Whilst the long-eared platonist is brooding over the injuries which his leathern coat has just sustained, and is expecting that the dawn will bring Photis and roses, a band of robbers plunder the miser's house, enter the stable, load the philosopher with the spoil, and drive him off, in company with his own horse, to their cave. To just such a cave as we were all confined in, when school-boys, with *Gil Blas de Santillane*.[61] Then follow adventures innumerable, in a series and long order, each that succeeds more engaging than

the last; in short, the book cannot be laid down until finished. It must be drunk at one draught. It must be taken up at sunrise on the feast of St. Barnabas,[62] the longest and the brightest day, that the sun may not go down upon the metamorphosed Lucius, but that just before sunset he may eat his roses and become a man.

When young, we all read the Adventures of a Guinea, of an Atom, of a Sopha, of a Silver Penny,[63] and of a thousand other things; we have not now a very distinct remembrance of what any one of these books is about, we have only a general recollection that we experienced pleasure in the perusal: it is an agreeable mode of stringing together adventures, and the Golden Ass is beyond comparison the best work of the kind.

There is moreover in this book something quite peculiar, of which we see no vestige elsewhere: it excites an expectation even from the commencement, a breathless curiosity, an anticipation of the marvellous so intense, that we feel prepared for whatever happens; it seems to be no more than we expected, however strange, new, or incredible. These feelings are in some degree described in what Lucius experienced the morning after his arrival at Hypata, the city of Magic.

"I saw nothing in that city which I could believe to be what it really was, but I felt that every thing had been changed into another form by some fatal whisper, so that even the stones which I trod upon had been hardened out of men, and the birds which I heard had been feathered in the same manner, and the trees which surrounded the walls had thus been covered leaves, and that the fountain streams were but flowing human bodies. I expected that the statues and images would presently begin to walk and the walls to speak, that the oxen and cattle would utter some divination, and that from the heavens and the circle of the sun an oracle

would suddenly descend. Being thus confounded, nay, rather benumbed by an excruciating desire, and unable to find any commencement, or even the least trace of what I sought, I wandered about every where."

"Nec fuit in illa civitate, quod aspiciens, id esse crederem quod esset, sed omnia prorsus ferali murmure in aliam effigiem translata, ut et lapides quos offenderem, de homine duratos; et aves, quas audirem, indidem plumatas; et arbores quæ pomerium ambirent, foliatas similiter, et fontanos latices de corporibus humanis fluxos crederem. Jam statuas et imagines incessuras, parietes locuturos, boves et id genus pecua dictura præsagium; de ipso vero cœlo, et jubaris orbe subito venturum oraculum. Sic attonitus, immo verò cruciabili desiderio stupidus, nullo quidem initio vel omnino vestigio cupidinis meæ reperto, cuncta circuibam."

In some parts of England, as the Western district of Yorkshire, they prepare a sauce for boiled meat, generally for veal, in great measure, if not altogether, of sorrel. The leaves are placed in a wooden bowl, and upon them a large stone ball, like a cannon-ball; the lady-cook, seating herself upon a low stool, takes the bowl between her knees, and by well-timed motions, persuades the stone to roll about, until the sorrel is reduced to a smooth pulp. However incredible it may appear to some, that any effect produced in this manner can be agreeable, the sauce is certainly most delicious; it tastes of the veriest freshness of the spring. Those who have witnessed this singular culinary operation will be forcibly reminded of it by a passage, where Lucius finds Photis preparing, not sorrel-sauce, but some kind of minced-meat, in an attitude nearly similar.

"She was dressed neatly in a linen tunic, with a bright red sash tied rather high under her bosom, and was turning. the bowl round and round with her rosy little hands, often

shaking it up gently whilst it revolved, and moving her limbs softly, with her loins just quivering, and her flexible back quietly stirring, she waved it gracefully."

"Ipsa linea tunica mundulè amicta, et russea fasciola prænitente altiusculè sub ipsas papillas succinctula, illud cibarium vasculum floridis palmulis rotabat in circulum; et in orbis flexibus crebra succutiens, et simul membra sua leniter illubricans, lumbis sensim vibrantibus, spinam mobilem quatiens placidè, decenter undabat."

Apuleius seems to have been an enthusiast in hair, and ardently to have admired an elegant head dress; this is not inconsistent with the beauty of his own tresses: he is eloquent and impassioned when he speaks of those of Photis, yet what he says is of too heating a nature to be admitted into a composition of cool criticism, and must therefore be passed over.

But is not the whole work of a somewhat licentious cast? It is a common complaint that novelists always write about love: this is true—but what else have they to write about? —that they write too warmly; this is also true—they do write too warmly; but such as they are we must read them, until some one descends from heaven, at once calm and readable.

The most objectionable part of the Golden Ass is an allegorical satire on the female sex, which it is impossible to justify; but at the same time it is so clever, that it is equally impossible for either man or woman to be outrageously angry. On the other hand, the story of Cupid and Psyche[64] is not only one uniform piece of loveliness, but is so delicate (even in the modern and least estimable sense of the word) that it might be read at school by a class of young ladies. This episode is entirely the invention of Apuleius; it fills

more than two whole books, and is replete with erudition and pleasure.

The Emperor Severus[65] professed to despise what he called the Punic tales of Apuleius;[66]—the censure of an Emperor may recommend them to some readers.

Macrobius,[67] in his Exposition of the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero,[68] says:—

"Fables that delight the ear, like the comedies which Menander[69] and his imitators wrote for representation, or stories full of the feigned adventures of lovers, in which Petronius[70] practised much, and Apuleius sometimes amused himself to our great surprise" (and to the sorrow of consular men like myself, who cannot afford to be jocose) "all fables of this kind, which profess only to delight the ears, wisdom banishes from her sanctuary to the cradles of nurses."[71]

"Auditum mulcent, velut comediæ, quales Menander, ejusve imitatores agendas dederunt: vel argumenta fictis casibus amatorum referta: quibus vel multum se Arbiter exercuit: vel Apuleium nonnunquam lusisse miramur. Hoc totum fabularum genus, quod solas aurium delicias profitetur, e sacrario suo in nutricum cunas sapientiæ tractatus eliminat."[72]

If the use of such books only as they can read without delight be permitted to the wise, we the foolish shall almost doubt, whether it is not better to lie in the cradle with the nurse, than to sit in the sacristy with the philosopher.

A person who would take the pains and had the requisite qualifications, and he must have a great many, might draw up a very curious and instructive commentary on this romance, which contains many uncommon words, worthy of explanation, as being intimately connected with the history and manners of the second century. The last book

is singularly interesting, and indeed *unique;* it is elegant and erudite, and comprehends many of the more secret doctrines of philosophy and of the antient religion of Egypt; a learned and copious description of certain sacerdotal ceremonies, and of the initiation into the mysteries of Isis and Osiris.[73]

By patient research and diligent investigation, many facts respecting the mysteries, now buried in unopened volumes, might be brought to light: the enquiry, as well as the results, would afford no common pleasure; whether leisure and opportunity for these pursuits will always be wanting, for the present, at least, it is impossible to determine.

There are barbarisms, there is bad taste, there is false eloquence in the Golden Ass; there are all these faults and many more: but nevertheless let him who has read it read it again; let him who has never read it, all other business being omitted, suddenly read it; and, if he cannot procure a copy on easier terms, let him, Apuleius-like, sell his coat and buy one.

All that now remains, is to call the attention of the learned world to the conclusion of the Apology,[74] in which the author warns all men against marrying a widow, for this plain reason, because she can have nothing *inposcibile*[75] about her:" the passage is as follows:—

"Virgo formosa, etsi sit oppidò pauper, tamen abundè dotata est. Adfert quippe ad maritum novum animi indolem, pulchritudinis gratiam, floris rudimentum. Ipsa virginitatis commendatio jure meritòque omnibus maritis acceptissima est. Nam quodcumque aliud in dotem acceperis, potes cum libuit, ne sis beneficio obstrictus, omne ut acceperis retribuere; pecuniam renumerare, mancipia restituere, domo demigrare, prædiis cedere. Sola virginitas, cum semel accepta est, reddi nequitur; sola apud maritum

ex rebus dotalibus remanet. Vidua autem qualis nuptiis venit, talis divortio digreditur; nihil adfert inposcibile."[76]

The authority is weighty, and the Philosopher did not speak without experience: but if any one, notwithstanding, shall have the hardihood to despise this caution, let him accept, as a nuptial benediction, the phrase in which Photis used to say "Good night!"

QUOD BONUM FELIX ET FAUSTUM.[77]

EDITORIAL NOTES

[1] Lucius Apuleius Madaurensis (c.124-170 AD), was a prose writer, Platonist philosopher and rhetorician. Like Hogg, Apuleius was by profession a lawyer.

[2] Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis (St. Augustine, 354-430 AD), theologian and philosopher.

[3] *De civitate Dei contra paganos*, known as *The City of God*. The edition mentioned by Hogg was translated by John Healey (St. Augustine, *Of the Citie of God*, London: George Eld., 1610).

[4] Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* or *Metamorphoses* is a novel in Latin.

[5] St. Augustine, *Of the Citie of God*, 694.

[6] Juan Luis Vives y March (1493-1540), Valencian scholar and humanist. After publishing the comment to *Civitate Dei* with a dedication to King Henry VIII, he was invited to England, where he taught at Oxford, Corpus Christi College.

[7] Thomas Wolsey (1473-1530), English Catholic Cardinal.

[8] Lucian of Samosata (c.125-180 AD), Greek satirist and rhetorician. The tale mentioned by Vives, the *Ass*, which contains the elements of Apuleius's *Golden Ass*, is now considered a "pseudo-Lucian" work.

[9] A region in central Greece.

[10] A short story, fable, or folktale featuring love and adventure, usually of an erotic or titillating nature.

[11] St. Augustine, *Of the Citie of God*, 695.

[12] Small glazed earthenware jar used by apothecaries for holding ointment and medicine.

[13] A medicinal preparation consisting mainly of plant or animal tissue.

[14] Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* or *Metamorphoses*.

[15] The Nerva-Antonine dynasty of emperors who ruled from 96 to 192 AD.

[16] Madauros, present-day M'Daourouch, in Algeria.

[17] Plutarch (46-c.120 AD), Greek Platonist philosopher, historian and biographer.

[18] A man who affects extreme elegance in clothes and manners.

[19] A Roman magistrate whose duties included the oversight of roads and buildings, markets and prices, religious ceremonies, public games.

[20] The translation is probably Hogg's own, a revision of Thomas Taylor's, which was published in 1822 as Apuleius, *The Metamorphosis, or Golden Ass, and Philosophical Works, of Apuleius. Translated from the Original Latin by Thomas Taylor* (London: Triphook, 1822).

[21] "For whatever belongs to no one, by natural reason becomes property of the first taker." A famous legal maxim, originating in Justinian's *Digest* (41.1.3).

[22] *I.e.*, Great Britain, and the universities of Cambridge and Oxford.

[23] One of the dialogues by the Greek philosopher Plato (c. 428-348 BC).

[24] *Introduction to Arithmetic* by the Greek philosopher Nicomachus of Gerasa (c. 60-c. 120 AD).

[25] Of all these works, which are now lost, we have a septenary of *Ludicra* in a work by the Roman grammarian Nonio.

[26] The apologetic speech written in self-defence from the accusation of abusing magic. Hogg discusses the episode below.

[27] Of these four, only *Florida* and *De deo Socratis* are reliably attributed to Apuleius.

[28] In Rome, Apuleius was initiated to the cults of Isis and Osiris, gods of the ancient Egyptian religion.

[29] Unidentified reference.

[30] Emilia Pudentilla, *i.e.*, "timid".

[31] Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), physician, natural philosopher and poet, and Anna Seward, friend, poet and correspondent (1742-1809).

[32] A litigation in the court of the Lord Chancellor of England, the highest court next to the House of Lords.

[33] Gaius Claudius Maximus (2nd century AD), proconsul of Africa in 158-59.

[34] Apuleius, *Apologia, sive De magia liber* (c. 158 AD).

[35] The Greek philosopher Socrates (c. 470-399 BC) was accused of impiety, of bringing new gods to the city, and corrupting the young. He was found guilty and sentenced to death.

[36] Claudius Aelianus (Aelian, 175- c.235 AD), Roman writer, author of *Varia historia*, a miscellany of anecdotes.

[37] "*Diogenes* said that *Socrates* himself was luxurious: for he was too curious in his little House, and in his little Bed, and in the Sandals which he used to wear" (Aelian, *Varia historia*, IV.xi).

[38] Apuleius, *Apologia, sive De magia liber* (c. 158 AD).

[39] Apuleius, *Apologia, sive De magia liber* (c. 158 AD).

[40] Plutarch, *Coniugalia Praecepta* (1st-2nd century AD).

[41] Philip II of Macedon (382-336 BC), father of Alexander the Great.

[42] Olympias (c. 375-316 BC), princess of the Molossians, then mother of Alexander the Great.

[43] Cheerful affability.

[44] One of the dialogues by the Greek philosopher Plato (c. 428-348 BC). The main topic of the *Symposium* is love in all its aspects.

[45] A historical region in west Peloponnese.

[46] Inhabitants of Beotia, a region in central Greece.

[47] See Plato, *The Banquet; a Dialogue Concerning Love*, trans. by Floyer Sidenham (London: Sandby, 1767), 62-63.

[48] John Wilkes (1725-97), reformist politician, essayist, and journalist.

[49] The 1763 "savage caricature" *John Wilkes Esquire*, by the the cartoonist William Hogarth (1697-1764). "This portrayal of an impudent demagogue with a hideous squint was to be the visual image of Wilkes conveyed both to contemporaries and to posterity. More conventional portraits show that he was not quite that ugly, but he himself was famously wont to say that it took him half an hour to talk his face away" (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*).

[50] The source of this anecdote remains unidentified, but see n. 49 above.

[51] The episode is in Ovid's *Heroides*, epistle XV, "Sappho to Phaon". See the argument in the 1806 edition containing Alexander Pope's translation: "Sappho, a lady of Lesbos, was ardently enamoured of Phaon, a youth of uncommon beauty, and universally admired, who returned her passion. On the departure, however, of Phaon from Lesbos to Sicily, she, fearing that his love was on the decline, addresses him in this epistle; in which she endeavours to recal him by urging every circumstance that can excite his compassion; declaring it to be her resolution, should he continue obdurate, to throw herself into the sea from the promontory of Leucadia in Epirus" (Ovid, "Sappho to Phaon", in *Ten Epistles of Ovid*, London: Baldwin, 1807, 246).

[52] In Hogg's metaphor, Dutch and German philologists and classicists – all commentators or editors of Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* – are overflowing rivers of ink and commentaries: David Ruhnken (1723-1798); Johann von Wowern (1574-1612); Franz Oudendorp (1696-1761); Geverhart Elmenhorst (1583-1621). Of course, the flooded Dutch lowland was an easy commonplace at the time.

[53] Unidentified edition, possibly *Apuleius cum commento Beroaldi: figuris noviter additis*, Venice, 1510.

[54] Apuleius, *L'Apulegio tradotto in volgare dal Conte Matteo Maria Boiardo* (Venice: 1544).

[55] The works in logic, later collected under the name *Organon*, by the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384/3-322 BC).

[56] "A member of any of several Nonconformist groups, especially the Primitive Methodist", *OED*, "ranter (*n.*)".

[57] Unidentified reference.

[58] Lucian of Samosata (c.125-180 AD).

[59] Pseudo-Lucian of Samosata, *Λούκιος ἢ ὄνος* (*Lucius or the Ass*).

[60] Milo's wife.

[61] The extremely popular picaresque novel *L'Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* (1715-35) by Alain-René Lesage. Several early chapters take place in the cave of a band of robbers that Gil is forced to join.

[62] Celebrated on the 11th of June.

[63] Charles Johnstone's satirical *Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea* (1760-65); Tobias Smollett's object narrative *The History and Adventures of an Atom* (1769); Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon's libertine novel *The Sofa: A Moral Tale* (1740); Richard Johnson's object narrative *The Adventures of a Silver Penny* (1786).

[64] The Tale of Cupid and Psyche occupies the books V and VI of Apuleius's *Golden Ass*.

[65] The Roman emperor Lucius Septimius Severus (reigned 193-211).

[66] "Milesias Punicas Apuleii" (see Johan Albert Fabricius, *Bibliotheca latina*, vol. 3, Leipzig, 1774, 29). A Milesian tale ("Milesia") is a short story, fable, or folktale featuring love and adventure, usually of an erotic or titillating nature.

[67] Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius (5th century AD), Roman writer, best known for his *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis*.

[68] "Somnium Scipionis", in the sixth book of *De re publica* by Marcus Tullius Cicero (146-43 BC).

[69] Menander (c. 342-290 BC), Greek representative of Athenian New Comedy.

[70] Gaius Petronius Arbiter (c. 27-66 AD), author of the satirical novel *Satyricon*.

[71] Probably Hogg's translation.

[72] See Macrobius, "Aurelii Macrobii Ambrosii Theodosii V. C. & Illustris Commentarius ex Cicerone In Somnium Scipionis liber primus", in *Aur. Theodosii Macrobii v. cl. & inlustris Opera*, London: 1694, 5.

[73] In Rome, Apuleius was initiated to the cults of Isis and Osiris, gods of the ancient Egyptian religion.

[74] The apologetic speech written in self-defence from the accusation of abusing magic.

[75] Nothing that cannot be paid back by the husband in case of separation, *i.e.*, her virginity. The sense of the ensuing passage being that while a maiden can be married and her virginity will always "remain with" the husband, a widow gets out of the marriage same as she entered it.

[76] Apuleius, *Apologia, sive De magia liber*.

[77] With this traditional auspicious phrase, Lucius wishes himself luck before making advances to the servant Photis, "licet salutare non erit", *i.e.*, although it might be risky. Apuleius puns on the contrast between the triplet *bonum*, *felix*, *faustum*, and "[not] *salutare*".