

Madame Roland's *Appeal to Impartial Posterity*. Parts II, III. 383

house arrived; she was astonished to see her bed stripped of the honours of its capital, and exclaimed, with the utmost simplicity, "My God, how could this happen! it is seventeen years since the bed was put up in that very spot; and in all that time it has never budged an inch." The logic of the hostess made me laugh more than the crash of the bed. I recollected it however afterwards, and thought I could often see sufficient reason to compare the arguments I heard in the world, with the logic of the landlady of Meudon: upon such occasions I would whisper to my mother, and say, "Now that is as good as the argument of the seventeen years to prove the immortality of the bed."

The remainder of the volume is chiefly employed in amusing descriptions of mademoiselle Philipon's numerous suitors, and an affecting relation of the sickness and death of her mother.—We shall take our leave of this volume by quoting a passage in which madame Roland expresses her last thoughts concerning religion.

P. III.—"In the silence of the closet, and the dryness of discussion, I can agree with the atheist or the materialist, as to the perfect insolubility of certain questions; but in the bosom of the country, and in the contemplation of nature, my soul soars to the vivifying principle that animates all objects, to the almighty intellect that arranges them, to the goodness that instills into them such exquisite charms. Now, that immense walls separate me from those I love, that the accumulated evils of society descend upon us at once as a punishment for seeking its greatest happiness, I look beyond the bounds of life for the reward of our sacrifices, and the felicity of re-union.

"How? In what manner? I am ignorant; I only feel that it ought to be so.

The atheist is not, in my eyes, a man of ill faith: I can live with him as well, nay better than with the devotee; for he reasons more; but he is deficient in a certain sense, and his soul does not keep pace with mine; he is unmoved at a spectacle the most ravishing, and he hunts for a syllogism, where I am impressed with awe and admiration.

"It was not suddenly and at once that I fixed myself in this firm and peaceful seat, in which, enjoying the truths which are demonstrated to me, and resigning myself with confidence to the feelings that constitute my happiness, I am content to be ignorant of what cannot be known, without being disturbed by the opinions of others. I compress in a few words the essence of many years meditation and study, in the course of which I have sometimes shared the zeal of the theist, the austerity of the atheist, and the indifference of the sceptic. These fluctuations were always accompanied with sincerity, as I had no inducement to change my opinions for the purpose of countenancing a relaxation of manners: my system of conduct was fixed beyond the power of prejudice to shake: I sometimes felt the agitation of doubt, but never the torments of fear. I conformed to the established worship, because my age, my sex, my situation, made it my duty to do so; but, incapable of deceit, I said to the abbé Morel, "I come to confession for the edification of my neighbour, and the peace of
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