

**DIALOGUE BETWEEN A
SCEPTICAL
PHYSICIAN AND HIS
CHRISTIAN PATIENT**

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Dialogue between a sceptical physician and his Christian patient by Various

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VARIOUS

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DIALOGUE *17.12.29.*

BETWEEN *53*

A SCEPTICAL PHYSICIAN

AND

HIS CHRISTIAN PATIENT.

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DIALOGUE,

&c. &c.



PHYSICIAN. How do you find yourself to-day?

PATIENT. I do not know: you ought rather to tell me how I am. I remember an old choleric gentleman, who flew into a great passion with the late Dr. Warren, for asking him how he did, saying, "why, Doctor, that is the very thing I sent for you to tell me!"

PH. Tell me, then, how you feel, and I will tell you how you are.

PA. I am in less pain, but weaker: this machine seems wearing out as

perceptibly to myself as I know, in theory, it must be doing perpetually.

PH. You have no reason to be discouraged by such sensations, for, as you observe, that is always the case, more or less. Bichat defines life to be *l'ensemble des fonctions qui résistent à la mort*.

PA. The definition is admirable, for it exactly expresses the fact: *la mort* is king here, and sooner or later all things submit to him: it is the necessary lot of all creation.

PH. *Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede regumque turres, et pauperum tabernas*. It is the lot, and that is sufficient for us; but I do not know why you should express yourself so largely,

when you say *necessary* of *all* creatures.

PA. First, for your quotation: I must mention a most happy translation of it by Malherbes—

“ Le pauvre en sa cabane, où le chaume le couvre
 Est sujet à ses lois;
 Et la garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre,
 N'en defend point nos rois.”

Next, for your philosophy: if death be the universal lot of all things which have life, and that is indisputable, it is universal only because it is necessary.

PH. You make your statement so broad, that it will include things which I should hardly think you would be willing to admit.

PA. How so? I state a truth: if it

be a truth, all that falls within its range must be true likewise.

PH. Your statement, I know, referred primarily to the decay arising from altered structure, or functionary derangement of your own body; but if you affirm that decay to be necessary, because it is invariable, your proposition must include the derangement and suffering of the moral, as well as of the physical creation.

PA. Well! and what then? for this is, I suppose, the conclusion that you think I should not be willing to admit.

PH. Certainly; for then you are a Necessitarian, and a Fatalist.

PA. My dear Doctor, you are a philosopher; you despise cant, supersti-

tion, and priestcraft; you are above vulgar prejudices; do not then resort to the weapons which you repudiate in others; and by affixing an opprobrious term upon me, divert your own attention, and endeavour to draw off mine from things to words.

PH. But you destroy man's responsibility.

PA. *Caro Dottore! chi va piano va sano; chi va sano, va lontano.* We must not enter upon a new point until I have made myself clear on that with which we set out, and on which I have not had the good fortune to make myself understood.

PH. You affirm that moral as well as physical ill is necessary.