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Auto-icon ; or, farther uses of the dead to the living ; a fragment from the
mss of Jeremy Bentham.

JONATHAN KEMP

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AUTO-ICON;

OR,

FARTHER USES OF THE DEAD TO THE LIVING.

A FRAGMENT.

FROM THE MSS. OF JEREMY BENTHAM.

[NOT PUBLISHED.]

AUTO-ICON.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

THE latest literary production in which Bentham was engaged, he entitled "Auto-Icon, or Farther Uses of the Dead to the Living." He was occupied on this composition down to a very short period preceding his death; and spoke of it to me more than once as his "last work." In December 1831, he arranged the materials he had then written; but there are passages added as late as May 1832. The object of the work was to recommend the preservation of the dead as a means of enjoyment, and of instruction to the living. The work was never wholly completed; but the novelty of the subject—the special interest which Bentham took in it, and the fact, that it occupied the last literary hours of his existence, induce me to present an analysis of the manuscripts.

VARIOUS are the means by which animal bodies have been preserved for ages. Bruce speaks of the bodies of men which he found in the torrid regions of Africa: and Acerbi mentions the preservation of part of the body of a Mammoth in the ice of the poles. Human bodies were discovered in the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii. In rocks, antediluvian animals are often seen; and from bogs, impregnated with tannine matter, beings of the human race have been not unfrequently brought to light.

Every fact of this sort furnishes valuable materials for thought: but all these facts are the result of accident—not of intention. Those who lived contemporaneously with the lifetime of these remains thought not of futurity, or of any use of which the dead might become to the living.

In process of time, {however, the dead have been turned by the living to beneficial account. Their bodies, delivered to anatomists, have become important subjects for physiological, chirological, and medical study. From the examination of the insensible dead, alleviation and healing have been communicated to the susceptible living:

and in this, the groundwork is laid of more extensive benefits.

These cases are exceptions; for, generally, in the present state of things, our dead relations are a source of evil—and not of good: the fault is not theirs, but ours.

They are nuisances—and we make them so: they generate infectious disease; they send forth the monster, Typhus, to destroy;—we may prevent this. Why do we not prevent it?

They levy on us needless contributions: undertaker, lawyer, priest—all join in the depredation. To the relatively opulent, pride, vanity and ostentation, present a compensation: but in the case of the poor, often are the savings of a family thrown into the grave,—relations left destitute, creditors defrauded.

So much for evil done—and now for good prevented: of the dead a certain number might have served the living: knight's service, no—what end of utility is in that? but surgeon's service—yes!—and the utility is immense.

Immense as it is, far wider is the field of possible usefulness. As in the progress of time, instruction has been given to make "every man his own broker,"

or "every man his own lawyer:" so now may every man be his own statue. *Every man is his best biographer.* This is a truth, whose recognition has been followed by volumes of most delightful instruction. *Auto-Icon*—is a word I have created. It is self-explanatory.

Two objects have been proposed: 1. a transitory, which I shall call anatomical, or dissectional: 2. a permanent,—say a conservative, or statuary. Of the first I need not speak,—Dr Southwood Smith has, by an article in N° XII. of the *Westminster Review*, rendered my speaking useless.

For many a year the subject has been a favourite one at my table. I have disposed of my own body after death. By that disposal I shall have made to the fund of human happiness a contribution, more or less considerable. This is no hasty,—no recent determination. In 1769, on coming of age, I left my body for dissection. The will was deposited in the hands of Chamberlain Clark, at whose death it was returned to the testator, when not only its contents, but its existence had escaped the testator's memory.

As regards anatomical purposes, one body serves for instruction nearly as well as another; but the head of each individual is peculiar to him, and, when properly preserved, is better than a statue.

The usage of the New Zealanders in reference to the preservation of their friends, is scarcely unknown to any one in Great Britain.

Rambling over the whole field of thought and action,—not to speak specially of that part which constitutes the field of art and science,—in quest of matter and means for adding to the common stock of human happiness, it occurred to me that civilized man might be benefited by an application of this savage ingenuity. I do not stop to consider what, on another occasion, might be well worth considering, how it has chanced that the barbarous New Zealanders have preceded the most cultivated nations in the *Auto-Icon* art; nor shall I dwell on the curious contrast between their weaknesses and their

sagacity. Nor shall I stop to wonder why, the greatest-happiness principle, which has been applied to so few subjects, should not have been applied to this.

Experiments have been making in this country, which promise complete success, by the slow exhaustion of the moisture from the human head. Specimens exist in the College of Physicians. In colour only is there any considerable change; and colour may be easily supplied.

The eyes present no difficulty. Eyes have long been manufactured not distinguishable from those which nature makes.

It is not proposed to coerce people into the adoption of *Auto-Iconism*; but that, with the consent of parties concerned, the mass of matter which death has created, be disposed of with a view to the felicity of mankind,—in a word, to the best advantage,—the comparatively incorruptible part converted into an *Auto-Icon*,—the soft and corruptible parts employed for the purpose of anatomical instruction, in so far as there is a demand for them. Why should the employment of such materials produce disgust? Think of the chemist: out of the vilest and most offensive species of matter, he produces the light-giving, the wonder-working phosphorus. It was only when the *Auto-Icon* art was burst open by me, that I perceived its varied bearings upon man's felicity.

Ridiculed it will be, of course; for too many there are by whom, for a paltry gratification to a paltry vanity, ridicule is endeavoured to be thrown on whatever is good,—whatever be the degree in which it is so. But the invention will go on producing its beneficial uses ages after ages after those who ridicule it have been sunk into the oblivion which they so well merit,—an oblivion which so well befits them.

The word *auto* has been made familiar to English ears by its use in *autobiography*, (why should there not be *auto-thanatography*?) *autograph*, &c. *Auto-Icon* will be soon understood for a man who is his own image.

In Geometry, identity is the source and standard of equality. In the Fine

Arts, identity is the source and standard of similitude. What resemblance, what painting, what statue of a human being can be so like him, as, in the character of an Auto-Icon, he or she will be to himself or herself. Is not identity preferable to similitude?

"In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas Corpora."—*Ovid*.

Now as to uses. Had these not presented themselves the subject never would have been broached: uses—by which addition is to be made to human happiness. And these are—1. Moral, including 2. Political; 3. Honorific; 4. Dehonorific; 5. Economical, or money-saving; 6. Lucrative, or money-getting; 7. Commemorial, including 8. Genealogical; 9. Architectural; 10. Theatrical; and 11. Phrenological.

But this crowd of uses involves us in a labyrinth: each cries—First place! each demands precedence. Cede to the worthiest, says moral use; in value, in dignity, no claim like mine. Be it so, answers commemorial; but I must precede all,—must precede even you,—for without me for your introducer, how are any of you to come in? Behind you, as far as I am concerned, may follow the others; but am I not the father of ye all?

Well, then; but in the second row, the economical use presses hard for a station above the moral. It appears in the form in which Jupiter paid his court to Danae. It is intelligible to all: it comes home to men's "business and bosoms."

The situation of each has been shifted more than once. Their presence being more important than their places, they will be produced in turn.

Our churches are ready—provided receptacles for Auto-Icons,—provided for all classes,—for rich and poor.

There would no longer be needed monuments of stone or marble,—there would be no danger to health from the accumulating of corpses,—and the use of churchyards would gradually be done away.

Such of the rich as chose it, would have an apartment destined exclusively for their own kindred. On occasions

they might be produced. If a country gentleman had rows of trees leading to his dwelling, the Auto-Icons of his family might alternate with the trees. Copal varnish would protect the face from the effects of rain,—caoutchouc the habiliments.

If at the common expense poor and rich were Iconized, the beautiful commandment of Jesus would be obeyed; they would indeed "meet together,"—they would be placed on the same level.

There might be whole-length Auto-Icons, and Auto-Icons of the head alone. In one case many generations might be deposited on a few shelves, in a moderate sized cupboard; in the other case, an apartment of considerable size would be necessary.

Hanway, in his Travels, speaks of an edifice he saw in Persia, constructed altogether of the skulls of men slain in some great battle. They were piled one upon another, (it is believed perpendicularly,) like bricks in a wall, but without any cement to fill up the interstices. At Brighton, and other places on the sea-coast of England, the walls of houses are faced by globular pebbles, embedded in mortar; such a wall presents to the imagination an appearance not very different to that of a wall composed of head-length Auto-Icons. In arsenals, cannon-balls and bomb-shells are stowed one above another in four-sided pyramids. This is another form in which Auto-Icons of the head-length might be aggregated in a parish church, or other edifice serving in common for the use of a population of a local district. For a church, the perpendicular wall presents to the mind a more appropriate form than the pyramid,—the pyramid presents only a small number of Auto-Icons to view,—the multitude would remain like the mummies enclosed in Egyptian Pyramids, in a state of everlasting concealment.

Would the sight,—the constant sight of the dead be too melancholy,—too saddening to the living? A curtain or sliding screen provides a remedy.

On certain days the Auto-Icons might be exhibited, and their exhibition associated with religious observances. Every sect would choose its own exhibition-day.

In our cathedrals, oratorios and other sacred music, vocal and instrumental, might accompany the solemnity; and thus the senses of sight and hearing effectively administer to the religious susceptibilities.

The age at which a human being should be admitted to the honours of Auto-Iconism, would have to be debated and determined.

The higher part of the Auto-Icon galleries might be furnished with head-lengths alone: the lower floor of whole lengths,—the two sexes alternating with one another, in the manner of Persians and Caryatides.

Thus every man would be his own monument; and if copies were wanting, a cast in plaster would supersede the necessity of sculpture.

The Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in their *Auto-Icon* state, should be disposed of in their own most Honourable House. Their robes on their back—their coronets on their head—how rare a gallantry-show! The wax-works in the vaults of Westminster Abbey—Mrs Salmon's Museum in Fleet Street—yea, even Solomon in all his glory at the puppet-show, would dissolve before it, and—

“Like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a rack behind.”

Is it in the Persian, or the Peruvian Tales—offsprings of the Arabian Nights—that the tale is told of a town, all whose inhabitants were, by the touch of some magic wand, transmuted from flesh and blood into stone? And does not some Latin author speak of an apprehension that, by the number of statues in Rome, the whole of the population was menaced with *lapidification*?

In the appropriate disposal of Auto-Icons immediately after death, there might sometimes be a difficulty. But as in some congregations the sexes are divided—the male side on one side, the female side on another—so also might the Auto-Icons. *He* or *she* would occupy *his* or *her* place without dispute or doubt.

Cases would occur when the arrangement in families would present many difficulties. In Mahomedan lands, or Hindoo lands, or Negro lands, and in

Thibet, a man has contemporaneously *many* wives. In Christian lands, a man may have successively wives in any number (and even without acting the part of Bluebeard) more than one. The same woman may have had successively the same unlimitable number of husbands; and then come children of the whole blood, and children of the half-blood; and then come the cases of divorce. Thus it is, that in Poland a wife has been seen seated between two husbands—and at the same table a husband seated between two wives. But the division into sexes, as proposed, presents an easy solution for embarrassing questions.

Out of Auto-Icons, a selection might be made for a Temple of Fame—not in miniature—a temple filled with a population of illustrious Auto-Icons.

In the location of Auto-Icons, the lowest rank should be raised above the spectators; they would thus be better preserved from injury—and were there any disagreeable impression it would be modified by distance.

In Scotland, a parallel to Auto-Iconism existed in the transfer, from generation to generation, of stands of garments belonging to their predecessors. In Canterbury Cathedral, hung aloft beyond the reach of handling, or even of adequate inspection, is the so-styled coat of the Black Prince.

What a field is open for the preservation of costumes! How shall Auto-Icons be clad?—in their ordinary dress—in their professional—in a fancy dress: of these there would be the option.

To each Auto-Icon, might be attached the name and description—the day of birth, and day of death.

It might be too much for the inventor of the institution to say

“Exegi monumentum ære perennius;”—*Hor.* but he might say, it would not be possible to assign a time, during which it would not continue in existence, and unchanged in appearance. The Auto-Icons may be varnished as pictures are varnished, and thus perpetually renovated.

Hark! what a noise—what is that crash?—that tremendous crash? whence does it come? It comes from the Heralds' office. The edifice is shaken to

its foundation. A little while, and it will be a heap of ruins. At present, if a man be contented to go only a few hundred years back, he may be descended from anybody he pleases. At this moment, at Ford Abbey in Devonshire, lives a country gentleman—not exactly a gentleman of Wales, but a gentleman of Welsh descent, reckoning for sons, those who are so by adoption—a gentleman who is actually descended from Adam, as his pedigree shows delineated,—in a roll, as the form of the skin is denominated in Westminster Hall, or in one volume, as was said in the days of ancient Rome, and specially in the days of Ovid.

Names may be invented—can be forged; and the existence of persons bearing them can be asserted—in black and white, and red and white, and gold and white. But Auto-Icons cannot be invented, cannot be forged.

As things are, progenitors are sometimes begotten by their progenitors, sometimes by fees,—and in any number, of any creed, and by any name, they may be, and are, begotten by fees. Fees beget Antediluvians,—fees might,—what should hinder them?—might beget Pre-Adamites. In classic days, in the arms of imperial Jove, was not Danae impregnated by showers of gold! And what were the drops of it, but fees? Ask Bacon else—Bacon, who after being the father of his own *wit*, christened it the “Wisdom of the Ancients,” having Dean Swift for one of its godfathers.

But now for private use,—the genealogical or aristocratical use. To the document called a *pedigree*, what an appropriate accompaniment would the corresponding Auto-Icons be!—what expressive remains,—likenesses more perfect than painting or sculpture could furnish. In their mansions opulent families might have an apartment as a receptacle for the Auto-Icons belonging to it, ranged like so many statues. If consecration be desired to sanctify the depository,—consecration might be obtained,—and such a depository be an advantageous substitute for a mausoleum or churchyard.

There are historical analogies. In

such a closet the terrific Blue Beard secreted the remains of his ill-fated wives. But analogy, it is hoped, when thus officiating, will know better than to bring terror in her hand. To murder, Auto-Iconism has no natural relation whatever. On the contrary, Auto-Iconism would coöperate with Justice for the conviction and punishment of a murderer. Were a murder committed, and the body taken in hand by the Auto-Icon-making practitioner before the features had been subject to change by the putrefaction process, a person on whom any just grounds of suspicion had attached themselves, might be introduced into the awful closet, and there might experience such emotions as would lead to conclusive evidence of guilt.

Commemoration Clubs there will be, over which the names they bear will preside bodily in the Auto-Icon form. The Pitt Club has had its chairman,—and so the Fox Club. They have had many chairmen. But when Bentham has ceased to live, (in memory will he never cease to live!) whom shall the Bentham Club have for its chairman? Whom but Bentham himself? On him will all eyes be turned,—to him will all speeches be addressed.

Will he not say with the poet,—

“Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?”—
Virgil.

And what are Pitt's,—what Fox's claims to merit clubs, or public gratitude. Pitt, with his *os rotundum* mainly assisted George III. in loading the inhabitants of the British empire with so many hundred millions of debt, (not to speak of the loads under which so many other nations groan!) and consigning to untimely death so many thousands of his fellow-creatures. And Fox,—what did he? Seeing no chance of getting into Pitt's place, he opposed Pitt. Was he not a Law Reformer? Yes! he gave stability to the power of a Jury. But the herald of the greatest-happiness principle has done something more.

“Opinionum commenta delet dies.”—Cicero.
“Vera gloria radices agit atque etiam propagatur.”—*Id.*

or,

“Magna est veritas et prevalebit.”

What if the Auto-Icon system had existed in the last days of Pitt and Fox? and they been placed as presidents over these clubs?

These clubs, with no other cement than a fraternity of party interest,—a partnership in political favour, could not live long. Bubble is succeeded by bubble. To the human race in general, —to their own country in any determinate way, or for any considerable length of time, of what service were these heroes of the day? Their lights still gleam in the socket,—a little while, and both of them will be extinguished. Their Auto-Icons, if preserved, would have no other than a sort of historical value, —whose foundation would be notoriety rather than beneficence.

Sometimes for honour, sometimes for reproach, will Auto-Icons be preserved. Not many years ago, the heads of so called traitors presided over the gate of Temple Bar. Were they taken down by order of the constituted authorities,—or did they fall of themselves,—no order being given for their replacement,—to be ground to dust by the passing carriages,—mingled in undistinguished dust to dust?

As there is a fountain of honour, called a king, for the recompense of supposed merit; might there not be a fountain of dishonour, called public opinion, to dispose of the Auto-Icons of criminals? Public opinion changes: public opinion is enlightened by experience, by knowledge, by philosophy. If injury had been done to the reputation of an Auto-Icon placed in the temple of dishonour, public opinion might redress the wrong—might correct its own mistakes—might transfer the sufferer to the temple of honour; and, perhaps, some Auto-Icons, whom the interests and prejudices of our age had transferred to the temple of honour, might, when those interests and prejudices had passed away, be placed prominently in the temple of dishonour. How instructive would be the vibrations of Auto-Icons between the two temples! The objects of the admiration of one generation might become objects of detestation to another. In constitutional contests,

the same man will be regarded at one time as a beneficent patriot—and at another, as a mischievous traitor.

Paris, in days of yore, contained in one of its museums a pigmy Mont Parnasse. It had, for its object, the preserving men of letters in honourable remembrance, and allotting to each his due place in the scale of honour. At the summit of the eminence was a miniature of Voltaire; and the inscription "*à Voltaire pendant sa vie!*" How honourable was the tribute from persons of his own class: what a proof of their merit—what a testimony to their hero's literary excellence!—How much more attractive a Mount Parnassus of Auto-Icons!

The cases are few in which men obtain such a celebrity as makes their resemblances a subject matter of commerce; but Auto-Icons would furnish moulds for the creation of perfect and economical busts. They would afford studies for architectural ornaments, as introduced into many of the monuments of Greece. The variety of beneficial purposes to which images of marble were applied in the best days of classic art, would afford materials for judging of other beneficial applications. The line of the Roman poet will give indications:—

"*Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo;*"
—*Plaut.*

and while vanity filled with Auto-Icons the repositories of those whose title to remembrance had been composed of opulence and factitious dignity, public gratitude would lodge in other receptacles the Auto-Icons of those who had merited well of mankind by publicly-beneficial service.

The literary fund might collect the Auto-Icons of authors. In a circular, or quasi-circular apartment, they might surround the living, divided into the different walks in which they were distinguished. They might be arranged in the order of time of their existence or decease, or in the order of merit, to be decided by ballot; and how interesting would be the Auto-Icon of a venerated preacher in the chapel where he had taught,—"*Though dead, yet he speaketh!*"

Such are some of the commemorative uses of Auto-Iconism. The moral uses follow.

It would diminish the horrors of death, by getting rid of its deformities : it would leave the agreeable associations, and disperse the disagreeable.

Of the *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, it would be the best application : it would extract from the dead only that which is good,—that which would contribute to the happiness of the living.

It would set curiosity in motion,—virtuous curiosity. There would be pilgrimages to Auto-Icons, who had been living benefactors of the human race,—not to see miracles,—not for purposes of imposture,—but to gather from the study of individuals, benefits for mankind. The Auto-Icons of the virtuous in their silence would be eloquent preachers. “Go thou and do likewise,” would be the lessons they would teach.

New motives will thus be brought into the field of thought and action,—motives both moral and political. What will be said of my Auto-Icon hereafter? The good report obtained by good conduct will attach to the man after death,—he will not be consigned to oblivion,—he must anticipate the judgment of his fellow men. If the judgment is unfavourable, he may be exposed with his head reversed. This would be the Auto-Icon purgatory ; and should opinion change, the head might be set upright.

But why, it may be asked, should more attention be paid to the senseless carcass of the biped, than to that of the quadruped? Because, if human carcases are saleable, their value is a motive to murder. The pecuniary value attached to them created murderers in the shape of Burkes and Hares.

So far as the distribution of esteem or disesteem—of honour or dishonour, can be associated with Auto-Iconism, so far is it a moral instrument. The amount of dishonour so distributable is limited : the amount of honour various and vast. As an instrument of punishment, Auto-Iconism presents a comparatively narrow field of action ; but as

a means of reward and encouragement, the field is boundless.

Auto-Iconism has its medical uses. It would obviate danger to health from the accumulation of putrid bodies : it would serve to dissipate the prejudices and delusions which object to dissection. It would furnish the most commodious and perfect representation of the difference between the heads of the inhabitants of different parts of the globe, such as used to be kept in Dr Hunter's Museum, namely, the European, the Asiatic, the American, the African negro,—in conjunction and comparison with those of clever animals, as the ape, the dog, &c.

Uses phrenological. But Spurzheim ! Gall ! *et hoc genus omne* ! the goodly fellowship of phrenologists ! what a field for observation now opens itself to their enraptured eyes ! If the whole population of Doctors' Commons are already in arms for a war of aggression against the Auto-Icon system, the so much more numerous population of the phrenologists will as assuredly join in spreading over it the mantle of their protection, and take up arms in its defence.

In every church,—in every chapel,—in a word, in every repository for the Auto-Iconized dead, a phrenologist would behold a lecture-room, replete with subjects for the anatomico-moral instruction which it belongs to him to administer.

Comes then a question,—between the actual parson of the parish and the proposable phrenologist of the parish : of which of them would the doctrine afford the promise of being most efficiently subservient to good morality, and the happiness that depends upon it?

If to the salvation of souls under the auspices of the theological functionaries, that quantity of the matter of reward which is actually thus employed is necessary, (and by what Church of England divine can any doubt of its being so, be entertained, or so much as endured?) what is the quantity of the same precious matter that will be needful for the giving correspondent efficiency to the instruction administered by the phrenological functionary? What

number of phrenological sinecures corresponding to, and ranking with, deaneries, canonries, and prebends, with how many hundreds or thousands of pounds a-year to them respectively, for not doing anything, nor so much as pretending to do anything? How many hundreds or thousands a-year to the phrenologist of the parish, for the labour of appointing a phrenological curate of the parish to read the phrenological course of lectures above-mentioned? How many phrenological bishops and archbishops, to see over and look after the phrenological, and quasi-canonical sinecurists above-mentioned while thus busy in doing nothing, and the quasi-curates while busy in doing little,—namely, that little which might as well be left undone? The bishops, while overlooking the sinecurist phrenological quasi-parsons with their operatives the curates; the archbishops while overlooking the bishops, while occupied in reading, or making as if they read the Holy Scriptures. Singing in chorus Leo the Tenth's glee, "*Quantum nobis profuit, ista de Christo Fabula*:" mark the lots of money pocketed by the whole family, as the balls are pocketed at the billiard-table, and inwardly digesting the turtle, venison and pine-apples which so large a portion of the thousands, or, at the least, the hundreds a-year, are so appropriately employed in the purchase of.

I am reminded of a man of facetious memory, George Alexander Stevens, Lecturer-Errant or Itinerant upon heads. An assortment of busts, similar to those which are seen in hair-dressers' shops, constituted his apparatus. The several most conspicuous and influential occupations, professions, and offices, had each of them its representative. The learned council, the attorney, the soldier, the sailor, the courtier, the citizen, the dandy, (though not under that name,) all of them, with their et ceteras upon et ceteras, were "laid upon the table," the table which served as a substitute for the stage. In the course of the lecture they were severally produced, and either taken respectively for the subject-matter of descriptions and observations, or occupied in addressing themselves to

the audience, or in conversing with one another.

In this way it was that Theophrastes the Grecian and La Bruyere the French Characterist, (*caricaturists*, a diminutive which here, of course, presents itself, would misrepresent the character,) found in this our countryman a not unwilling follower and successor.

In the two instances of the phrenologist and this same George Alexander Stevens, as compared with each other, behold! the same; but how widely different the purpose,—the one jocular and risible,—the other so grave and moral!

With what delight would Auto-Iconism be welcomed by a phrenologist, supposing him to be a true believer in his theories. He would gather together multitudinous facts by which to test the truth of his system. Take the case of Socrates,—suppose him Auto-Iconized, and the Auto-Icon deposited in the British Museum, would the Auto-Icon justify Xenophon's character of him and the portrait drawn in his "*Memorabilia*?"

Collectors would give fresh seats and sources of value. Entire museums of Auto-Icons would be formed. They would be arranged in classes,—some exhibiting one organ, and some another. They would be autographs of a higher order: Auto-Iconism would throw light upon phrenology,—phrenology would encourage Auto-Iconism.

Comes the economical question,—the question of value,—the value-maximizing question. What is the destination to be given to the subject-matter by which a greater value can be given to it than by any other which can be assigned?

Private as well as public benefit may represent *value*, the removal of burthens, as well as the presence of enjoyments, or the instruments by which enjoyments are obtained.

Auto-Iconists, Anti-Auto-Iconists, and Indifferentists. To one or other of these classes, in England, as in any other country or countries, every individual of the human race may, with indisputable propriety, be stated as appertaining; Auto-Iconists, those to whom,

on one account or another, the system, the practice in question, is an object of preponderant approbation; Anti-Auto-Iconists, those to whom it is an object of preponderant disapprobation; Indifferentists, those who care not whether their own bodies, or those of their relatives, as the case may be, are disposed of in this way, or in the way at present in use.

One capital use there is, in which the Auto-Iconists and the Indifferentists will be sharers: this may be styled the *economical* use, saving the expense of the *funeral rites* as at present accustomed. This expense has the effect of a tax, which, considered in one point of view, is more grievous than any by which the lower orders, as they are called, the vast majority of the species, are at present afflicted. Taxes on the cheapest kind of food, and other necessities, press, it is true, on each individual at every moment of his life. But *this* burden, upon the death of any member of a family, falls upon all its other members, and in the shape of a tax upon capital; or rather, a confiscation sweeps away the whole of its possessions, in an all-absorbing, all-consuming forfeiture.

In this case, the burthen presents itself in the shape of a tax upon, too frequently a confiscation of, property. But another case there is, in which, by a sort of *commutation*, (as they say in financial language,) the burthen is changed out of the shape of a tax on, or confiscation of capital, into the shape of a tax upon income. This case is that of the sort of society which has for its object the formation of a fund for defraying the expense of so many ostentatious funerals of the members as it shall happen to them to die off. To provide for sickness of the members,—to provide for the demand which, by the decease of the relatives, may be produced,—for contribution to the support of *life*, on the part of wife, offspring, or other dependent relation,—in this there is need, use, and practical good sense; by this there is addition made to human happiness: but to provide ostentatious funerals for the members as

they die off, by a series of contributions, carried on for and during an indefinite series of years, what in this is there better than weakness or folly? instead of addition, what is this but subtraction from human happiness.

Nay, (says somebody,) in the opinion of him who is the best judge, by this practice, addition is actually made to the stock of human happiness. The only person whose happiness is at stake, is the person by whom *the contribution*, the *commutation* is made; in his judgment, gain is made by the changing, or the change *would not*—for in the opposite case it *could not*—be made: which of you two—he and you—knows best what will make the greatest addition to his happiness? he or you?

My answer is this. If the same addition to happiness, for the making of which a certain portion of the material and efficient cause of happiness—ready money—is, by the institution in question, parted with and sacrificed—could be obtained for a quarter of the amount of the sacrifice at present made, would not this be a clear addition, to the amount of three times the sacrifice made? If, for example, the expense bestowed upon the ostentatious funeral system being £4, a degree of satisfaction equal to that purchased by the £4 were, upon the Auto-Icon system, produced by £1, leaving thus three times the amount of the sacrifice free to be applied to the purpose of bodily comfort and enjoyment—the exclusion of the pain of hunger—the perception of the pleasure of the palate—would not this be so much clear gain?

Of the multitude of cases this is but one, in which, under the appearance of coercion and hardship, benefit on those concerned may, to a large extent, be conferred. Prohibit this waste, many a family who, for decency's sake, may think it prudent to put on a face of sorrow, may experience from it inward comfort. What are the modes of disposal to which the article in question can be subjected? The answer is this:—The carcases which are worth preserving,—the carcases which in any way will pay for the expense,—let them be

converted into Auto-Icons. Those that will not,—let a hole in the ground be dug for them, and lime applied as the cheapest material by which they may be made to enter into combination, and form a compound by which no injury to the public health, nor bodily annoyance in any other shape can be produced. Of this so inconsiderable change, no innovation capable of giving offence on a religious account would be the consequence. “Dust to dust, ashes to ashes,” would, in a metaphorical sense, as near as that in present use to the true and literal one, be the application made. No food, it is true, would there be for worms. Not less true is it, that neither is any such food for any such animals administered in the present practice. In the human carcass is no other sort of worm bred after death than is bred in any other carcass, nor that except in a case which at present scarce ever happens, viz., that of its being exposed to the sort of insect which takes the carcasses of other animals for the depositories of its eggs. Look at this or that monument of a dark age, and you will see the figure of a dead body with a sort of worms not much shorter than itself crawling out of it and about it. Vermin of this sort (who does not know this?) are the mere creatures of the imagination.

But the wealth that would thus be created! here would be—not discovered—but created, the equivalent of a gold mine! treasure not trove, but made.

But before any approach to an adequate estimate can be made of the use of it in this shape, a view must be taken of the uses accruing from it—derivable from it in their several other shapes.

To speak in the language of the political economists, first would call for consideration, the value of this species of property,—of the matter of wealth in this shape.

A curious question might be mooted. A man's Auto-Icon is his own self. May not a man do what he will with his own? with his own property? Yes! With his own person? Yes! only not with his own tenants. With his own body? Yes! but beware of saying

tenants: leave that to the Duke of Newcastle.

So many uses as an Auto-Icon is capable of being put to,—so many shapes in which it is capable of operating as a benefit,—so many characters in which it is expressive of being a subject-matter of property, and as such of law and legislation. A spick and span new subject-matter of property is brought for the first time into existence,—whereunto shall it be likened? To the Aerolite genus not long ago brought within our reach, and within the dominion of our senses, by the individual specimens of it which descended to us from above? or to the literary property brought, for the first time, into notice in the Court of King's Bench during the joint reign of King George the Third and Earl of Mansfield the first? I should like to have this matter argued, quoth the Ghost of the first Lord Alvanley, chuckling and shaking his head.

Now comes an inquiry—Corporeal or Incorporeal,—of which of these two species of property is it the subject-matter? No great room for doubt here. Great doubts might be entertained, whether even the Earl of Eldon, the most accomplished doubter of his own, or any age,—he whose matchless power could have given to the whole field of law a thick covering of doubts,—whether even the great doubter could extract any considerable quantity of this invaluable and so high-priced matter from this source?

Real or Personal? *Semble que personal*. But this being granted, in come the next of kin in any number, each claiming his or her share. But admitting it to be personal, might it not, by last will, be converted into an heirloom? What more appropriate, considering the use it might and would be of for the delineation of a pedigree!

Passing in that character to co-heiresses, Could it be made the subject-matter of a writ of partition? *Semble que non*. So high is the regard the law has for horns, that, according to Lord Coke somewhere, it will not permit them to be severed. And would it have less regard for Auto-Icons? Forbid it jus-

tice. Lord Tenterden—to his Lordship, his learned Lordship, would the idea of his being severed in his Auto-Icon state, for the accommodation of some future contingent Honourable Miss Abbotts, be very agreeable?

In what manner would it pass by last will and testament?—devise or bequest,—which of those two modes of transfer would be applicable? Three witnesses are necessary to give validity to a will of land carrying a freehold interest therein. One witness, or less than one, suffices for a personal interest. If common law is powerful, equity is still more so. “Equality is equity.” Might not, therefore, the difference be split, and in this case one witness and the half of another be deemed sufficient?

Then as to the court to the cognizance of which this species of property should be subject. Let bishops and archbishops look about them. If of a turnip or a carrot the savour of the realty is so strong, as by every sound common lawyer it is known to be, upon an Auto-Icon can the savour of the spirituality be less so, especially if, as herein proposed, the parish churches were made the general repositories for these treasures? How delightful a subject for a paper-book, and a special argument thereupon, or motion in the King’s Bench for a writ of prohibition, to be directed to the Dean of the Arches.

Then as to the leases for years that might be made of an Auto-Icon, and the number that shall be deemed taken and construed to be good and valid. Seven, one-and-twenty, sixty, ninety-nine, a thousand. All these terms, of which the precedents are so numerous, of which of them all shall application be made to it?

Another riddle, Auto-Icon *in esse*—Auto-Icon *in posse*. Auto-Icon *in esse*, the body after it has undergone the conservative preparation: Auto-Icon *in posse*, the body while in its natural state waiting for the operation to be performed upon it. What a door opened to interesting and instructive pleadings!

Then as to execution: Could an Auto-Icon be taken under a Fi. Fa., or an execution in aid, or under a commis-

sion of bankruptcy; or, as part and parcel of an insolvent’s assets, could it be disposed of by an insolvency court?

Then as to the control of pledging: What if, as a security for money borrowed, the body of an illustrious person in his Auto-Icon state were consigned to the custody of a pawnbroker, would, or would not, the pawnbroker-regarding acts, be deemed construed and taken to apply to it and attach upon it?

Vast was the sum which a single bone, when said to be that of a saint, used to be pledged for in the days succeeding those of primitive Christianity. In these days of infidelity, it were too much to expect that even upon an entire Auto-Icon of a person ever so illustrious, as much could be raised as upon the great or little toe of a saint of former days. Still, however, in this respect, the nature of the case admits of no inconsiderable latitude.

As to mortgage. The very word proclaims an Auto-Icon to be a still fitter subject-matter for the contract, than it is in the nature of any quantity or quality of land to be. Exists there anywhere a spot of ground of which it can with such propriety be said it is dead, as of an Auto-Icon it can be said to be?

Then as to the mortgagee, to which of the two will this be found to be applicable—the Auto-Icon, or the individual with whom, in equity, the Auto-Icon is said to be deposited; while, in fact, he or it remains in another place?

Then, again, as to Equity, and Bills in Equity,—could, or could not, a Bill in Equity be filed for an Auto-Icon? for treasure trove in this shape? A silver altar that had been found buried somewhere, constituted, once upon a time, the subject-matter of a performance of this sort, mention of which may be seen in the books.

Then, again, as to Tithes. Auto-Icons, ought they, or ought they not, to be deemed such subject-matter of property, as to authorize the levying on them this church-supporting impost? If yes, then comes the question between great tithe and small tithe—to which of the two divisions shall they be deemed

and taken to belong? Will it depend upon age? Will it depend upon station? At what age, at what height of station, shall an Auto-Icon cease to be part and parcel of the subject-matter of small tithes, and commence to be that of great tithes? and thereupon comes the question of an extra-parochial Auto-Icon.

Nothing shall we say on this occasion as to moduses and composition.

As little of title to property in this shape,—how many years shall have elapsed before a title which was once good, shall have become bad; and so in regard to limitation of action, as say the learned in English law; and prescription, as say the learned in Roman law; or antiquity of title, to speak in more expressive language?

But let us take possession of the throne, and seat in it a dynasty of Auto-Icons. Had we but the Auto-Icon of Judge Blackstone, to read Commentaries on Law, as the learned Judge, while *in rerum natura*, did to George the Third in his closet, before they were read in the school at Oxford! The king, when rotting in his coffin at Windsor, “never dies”—he would never die—he would be literally imperishable, in his Auto-Icon state.

Till t’other day, three royal Edwards used to be standing aloft, yielding their auspices to the predecessor of Lord Tenterden. In process of time, might not the same number of Georges or Williams be rendering service in the same shape to the successor of the said noble and learned lord? Pleas would then, in a sense more strictly and literally true, be held before the king himself, or the kings themselves at Westminster: and if to the above-mentioned three, one other were added for those judges in dernier resort, would common law have the benefit of this sacred number four, which is no less indispensable when the rule of action applied and administered, is termed Common Law, than number one is sufficient, where the word employed is Equity?

Now as to Appeals. If, as in manner herein-after, or herein-before proposed, Auto-Icons were made vocal, the Ap-

peal *ab eodem ad eundem*, so honoured by observance, as well in doctrine as English legal practice, might, in the just mentioned state of things, be made application of, without any such trouble as that of change of place. Everybody knows with what complacency this species of Appeal was regarded by Lord Eldon, as often as the Appeal from Lord Eldon, sitting in his Court of Chancery, was made to the same Lord Eldon, when sitting with one Lord Spiritual and two other Lords Temporal in his House of Lords; and with what eyes the same instructive state of things is regarded by the self-styled Reforming Chancellor, the Lord Brougham and Vaux, will ere long be known, when his voice on this subject has been heard.

In truth, so various and so perplexing are the questions of property in reference to Auto-Iconism,—so interesting to autocratical and aristocratical dynasties,—that it is humbly suggested to the influential and writing few to anticipate grievances, and provide remedies by an Auto-Icon statute law.

The Theatrical or Dramatic uses to which Auto-Iconism may be applied, present a vast field of inquiry. What shall be the stage for the exhibition of an illustrious Auto-Icon? A club-room? No! but the most extensive theatre. In such a theatre as the scene seems supposed to be.

Periodically, for the moral edification of the lower orders, as they are called—that is to say about Christmas, was wont to be performed Lillo’s domestic tragedy of *George Barnwell*—Motto, “*Learn to learn, from others learn, and thou shalt do full well.*” That it may not have been productive of more or less of the good it was designed and endeavoured to produce, it were too much to say. But make the best of it, it was a dull, a gloomy, a dispiriting exhibition.

Behold now what an exhibition, directed to the same end, intitled, “*Scenes in the Elysian Fields,*” might be made to be.

Dialogues of the Dead. With an original and beautiful production under that name, does Fontenelle, the illustri-

ous French philosopher, amuse and instruct his nation and the civilized world. Followed was he (*longo sed processu intervallo*) by Bishop Hurd, *caudataire* to the soon about to be, if not already forgotten, Bishop Warburton.

In the scenes in Elysium, will be seen and heard a variety of interlocutors conversing together; interlocutors of all ages and all civilized nations. Of these and of the subjects of conversation presently.

"Jove, in his chair, of the sky Lord Mayor," says the commencement of one of the songs in one of the scenes of the amusing melodrama, or whatever else shall we call it? *Midas*. [Some personage] will be seen sitting in the chair, not singing indeed, but sometimes conversing, and sometimes listening.

Now as to Machinery. For action there will be little need. By means of strings or wires, by persons under the stage, or if the Auto-Icon were clothed in a robe, by a boy stationed within, and hidden by the robe, the eyes being already made in imitation of his, the eyelids might be made to move;* and in so far as needful or conducive to keeping up the illusion, the hands and feet, one, more, or all. As to voice, by well-known contrivances, it may, without difficulty, be made to appear to proceed from the vocal organs of the figure;† the body, if necessary, might, by obvious contrivances, be made to appear to breathe.

As to the interlocutors in the dialogues, they would be personated by actors, habited in the costume of the nations and the times.

As to the skin of the face, by the process of exsiccation, it would be rendered of a more or less brownish hue. But as in that, and even elsewhere, paint is, without scruple, employed by persons of the male sex when living, of course so might it after death. Priests in France I remember to have seen thus adorned.

Bentham, suppose for example: One interlocutor in each group advances to him, takes him by the hand, and welcomes him on his arrival, then presents to him the others successively, beginning with the most ancient, the introducer noticing, in regard to each, the principal improvements made by him in that same branch of art and science.

How interesting would be the topics to be discussed! How various the interlocutors!

On Morals, Ethics, Deontology private, the speakers might be Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, St Paul, the author of "Human Prudence," Steele, Hawkesworth, Johnson, Helvetius, Dumont.

On Posology,—Euclid, Appollonius—the first distinguished writer on Algebra, Newton, Legendre, La Place.

On the Encyclopedia of Art and Science,—Lord Bacon, Chambers, D'Alembert.

On Jurisprudence and Procedure,—Justinian, Theodosius, Glanville, Bracton, Britton, Coke, Blackstone, Eldon, Peel, Brougham.

On Politics, including Government,—Solon, Numa, Bacon, Locke, Montesquieu.

On Legislation,—Solon, Numa, Moses,

* In "Italy as it Is," (I think,) mention is made of the figure of some saint, the eyes of which appeared to move. It was elevated above the level of the street, but not many feet,—suppose 6 or 8.

† Extracted from *The Examiner*, 11th April, 1830. "Mr Faraday's experiments prove, in the most satisfactory manner, that sounds may be transmitted from one body to another, to a very considerable distance, by means of a hard substance communicating with both. He rested on the sounding board of a pianoforte placed in a chamber beneath the lecture-room, one end of a thin rod of wood, which passed through an aperture of the floor, and entered the room above; and to the other end he applied a guitar. The instrument below

then being played upon, the music was heard in the most distinct and perfect manner by the audience in the upper room; though the moment the communication was interrupted by detaching the guitar from the wooden rod, no sound whatever from below was heard. Mr Wheatstone thinks, that by similar means he could communicate to distant rooms the effect of an orchestra, with little loss of sound. It was also shown, that a stroke being given to one end of a rod forty feet long, the other end being in contact with the sounding-board of any musical instrument, the stroke was heard as if proceeding from the instrument, and not from the end struck, or from the mallet which gave the blow, and this without any diminution of sound.—*Harmonicon for April 1830.*"

Confucius, Justinian, Theodosius Cocceius, Buonaparte.

On Architecture,—Vitruvius, some eminent Italian architect, Sir S[amuel] B[entham].

On Church Discipline,—Hurd, Warburton.

On Universal Grammar,—Horne Tooke.

A few subjects immediately present themselves. Between Bentham and Aristotle, the sage of the 1830th year after the Christian era, would report progress to the sage of three centuries and a half before the same, on the overthrow of fallacies, on new and useful modes of expression, on the exhaustive, or bifurcate method of disputation, &c. But kindness, candour, and courtesy, would distinguish all that was said.

Topic—end in view. [The greatest-happiness principle.] *Bentham*. "In your work on morals, at the very outset of it, you bring forward the observation, that good in some shape or other, is the end in view of all men.* Two thousand years have passed, and in all that time, nothing has been done on the subject by anybody else. Nobody has given a precise and clear import to the word corresponding to good, by translating the language of good and evil into the language of pleasure and pain. Good, the presence of pleasure or the absence of pain, of pleasures, physical, intellectual, moral. Evil the converse of this."†

Bentham, Bacon, and D'Alembert. Topic—the Encyclopedical Tree. *Bacon*. "I was the first who planted the tree of knowledge. Without much impropriety I might have called it after Holy Writ, the Tree of Good and Evil. It lived, but it had no root, and the branches of it were weak and entangled. You planted your tree. Your tree had a root, and that a strong and a sweet one,—sweet as the convolvulus, the offspring of the tropics. Yours was manured and pruned by you, each branch forming the basis of two others, each

crowned by a little, but a golden fruit, as if reared in the garden of the Hesperides." *Bentham*. "True; but my tree was but a cutting taken from yours; but for yours, mine would never have come into existence. But for this, my predecessor, contemporary, master, and correspondent, D'Alembert, your tree, O Bacon, might never have presented itself to my notice: to D'Alembert, you are too generous to deny the praise of having giving increase to the bulk, and improvement to the appearance of it."

D'Alembert. "Alas! what I did for the better was but little; but prudence, the daughter of fear,—of fear, the offspring of tyranny,—profane and sacred tyranny, restrained my hand, and gave to the production an appearance far different from what I should have given to it had I dared."‡

Bacon, Bentham, Dumont, Montesquien. Topic,—Law as it ought to be.

Bacon to Bentham. "In regard to government and law, you first drew a clear line (and kept it in a conspicuous state throughout) between that which ought to be, and that which is. By Grotius, by Puffendorf, by their predecessors, by their successors the Burlamaquis, &c., that which ought to be, and that which is, were continually confounded: observing what had been the practice of men in power, they inferred, or rather took for granted, that it was right. Forming on any occasion their conception as to what was right, they took for granted that to this pattern the practice of men in power would be found to be conformable. But the complexion of their rules was commonly neither that of the one nor that of the other, but without indication given of any distinction, something neither the one nor the other, but something between both. Thus so it is because it is right, or right this is, or has been, because thus it is, or has been."

Bentham and Locke. Substitution of the greatest-happiness principle in the field of constitutional law to the fiction of the original contract. Distinction between the names of real and the names of fictitious entities. Dispersion of the

* Out of this, it would be the object to show, how, in public matters, interest may be made to coincide with duty—how in private it does coincide.

† See the initial sentence of the Nicomachean Ethics.—*Ed*.

‡ See the Exposition of the Encyclopedical Tree, in Bentham's Works, vol. viii., p. 63 *et seq*.

mist thrown over the field by language, by which the same existence is ascribed to a power as to a power-holder.

Let logic be the subject-matter of conversation. Interlocutors: Bentham, Porphyrius, Locke, Bishop Sanderson. Inventor of the Logic of the Understanding, Aristotle. Inventor of an additional branch, the technical branch having for its fruit the exhaustively-bifurcate system, or bifurcately-exhaustive system, Bentham—witness Chrestomathia; inventor of the logic of the will.

Subject-matter of conversation. Mathematics. Interlocutors with Bentham, —Euclid, Apollonius, Diophantus, Newton, La Place. Of the labours of those great men, the fruit has been the advancement of this branch of art and science; though for the diffusion of it as a separate object, little, if anything, has as yet been done. To the diffusion of it by facilities afforded in novel and various ways, the labours of Bentham on this ground have been directed. He who makes mathematics easy confers on society the most important benefit.

On the birthday of an eminently beneficent individual, a commemorative festival might be exhibited after the manner of a comedy at one or more of the theatres. Astrea flying down from heaven to crown a law-reformer sitting in his chair, before a statue of Justice, with her sword and scales; audience of suitors, judges, and advocates.

Reader, whoever thou art, put on for a moment the wings of imagination, transport thyself to future ages. Fear not the fate either of Phaëton or of Dædalus, or of any of the hapless modern aeronauts. No harm awaits you in this great voyage.

Conceive the old philosopher preserved in some safe repository, to which the name of sacred might be applied, were it not so open to abuse, as well as already so much abused,—what might not be the pilgrimages made to him!

Accompaniments to the *quasi* sacred Auto-Icon, (if by the adverb, the attribute sacred may be rendered endurable,) accompaniments of it, his unedited and unfinished manuscripts, lodged in an appropriate case of shelves. Why not to this monument, as well as to an

old stone-coffin, or an old tombstone? In this far-famed receptacle, there would be no want of matter of wonder and admiration. Of miraculousness as well as of sanctity, it would repel with scorn the name.

Pilgrims, the votaries of the greatest-happiness principle. Hadji? No, but as above, Quasi-Hadji might each pilgrim be yelected from and after his return.

Why not to this receptacle as well as to Mahomet's? Is not Bentham as good as Mahomet was? In this or that, however distant, age, will he not have done as much good as Mahomet will have done evil to mankind? But earlier than the last day of the earth, what will be the last day of the reign of the greatest-happiness principle? Here ends reverie, —here ends the waking dream.

A pair of barber's poles metamorphosed into a pair of fashionably-dressed ladies. Once upon a time, in the highest perfection, was this miracle wrought at Astley's Theatre, near Westminster Bridge; wholly unexpected, and proportionably astonishing, was the exhibition then made to an admiring audience, as the company on these occasions are called, whether there be anything for them to hear or not.

With a whole-length or a head-length Auto-Icon for a mask, a Mr Kean of next Christmas hundred years, might be assuring everybody who would hear, that for the accomplishment of all the ends of justice nothing more was necessary than the packing, according to the recipe given by Sir Robert Peel, any twelve men whatsoever into a box,—vituperating the ballot one day, and embracing it another,—preaching at one moment the necessity of placing interest at daggers drawn with duty, by the fee-gathering system, and exposing the corruptness and wickedness of it another time; vaunting the simplicity that would be given to the judicial establishment, by squeezing into one and the same judicial robe five different judicatories, all of them administering that to which, as if in mockery, they give the name of *Justice*, upon that same number of mutually and irreconcilably discordant principles. Add a similar miniature picture of the Bankruptcy Reform Bill.

Nor must we care to pass unheeded the use that might be made of the Auto-Icon system by a novelist of the terrific school,—a Mrs Radcliffe, or a member of the German ghost-seeing illuminati, of whom, by the by, we have heard little for some years past. But if, as the proverb says, “A word to the *wise* be sufficient,” much more, surely, will it be so to the illuminati.

But now come the obstacles: “abstract, visionary, theoretical, Utopian, heretical, schismatical, atheistical!” “Excommunicate him—away with him to the ecclesiastical Coventry,” cry the kings-at-arms, the heralds-at-arms, in chorus, with the saints, sextons, gravediggers, undertakers, masons, and sculptors, with the Judges of Doctors’ Commons, and the Archbishops of York and Canterbury. No Auto-Icon! None of your Auto-Icons! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen!

But setting aside superstition, are there any objections on the score of religion?

Has religion anything to do with the matter? Nothing at all. Free as air does religion leave the disposal of the dead.

Oh horrible, says somebody, “Oh horriddest horror,”—our sacred rites! would you profane them? Would you discard them? Is there no religion in this? Would you fly in the face of religion?

Sir! *bona verba quæso*. Religion is neuter. Religion is silent. True religion knows that she has nothing to do with the business. The religion of Jesus takes no cognizance of the matter. The religion of Jesus leaves it to rank among things indifferent.

Not so priestcraft. Priestcraft does indeed, take cognizance of it—cognizance of it? and for what purpose? For what purpose!—For what, but for its universal all-comprehensive and constant purpose, depredation. The pie—where is the pie into which priestcraft does not thrust her finger?

Permanent sources of permanent influx of wealth, objects of uninterrupted depredation, are glebe and tithes; occasional influx, fees,—their denomination surplice fees.

From its birth to its death, the priest keeps his fixed predatory eye on the prey he covets, and this prey is everything human that either breathes or has breathed. Not a human operation but furnishes him an occasion and a pretence,—the operation by which the individual is continued in existence,—the operation by which the species is continued in existence. No sooner are you born, than priestcraft lays hold of you, and till you have paid toll to it, keeps shut against you the gate of the road which conducts you to your rights, and in return for the money, perhaps the “utmost farthing” thus extorted from your friends, tells them that he has *christened* you; and unless this be done to you, and done by *him* to you, heaven, he informs them, has no comforts for you, nor will earth have any of which it is in his power to deprive you.

When a man’s life had departed from his body, among the Jews, his relatives were wont to put it into the appropriate receptacle, such as we now call a coffin, and that moveable receptacle was placed in an immoveable one called a sepulchre. The Jews did well. They did well, and why? Why? but because they chose to do so.

Jesus, (we learn from Holy Writ,) Jesus being a Jew, was thus dealt with. True—but what of that: did he ever say, either to the human race at large, or on the occasion of the farewell meal, or on any other, to his own particular associates, “Do this in remembrance of me?” Not he, indeed. Not so much as a pretence to this effect has by any man been ever made.

Whatever was commonly done by the Jews in those days, are we who live in these days, under obligation to do,—obligation, moral, political, or religious, and this for no other reason than because they did it? Everything that they did not do, is it that by any such obligation, we, for that reason, and no other, stand precluded from doing it?

Infinitely diversified are the modes in which, in different nations, man has been dealt with after death. With as much reason might any one or more of them be taken in hand and fixed upon,

and all others then interdicted to us, as that to the yoke of which we are subjected as it is.

Of these various rites, such of them as chance has presented to our observation, let them now pass in review before us—the reader, if such be his pleasure, shall see them pass in review before him.

It would be practicable, perhaps, to collect a large mass of facts, showing how divers nations deal with their dead.

—1. Without interment.—2. On the way to interment.—3. On interment.—4. In the way of dissection, complete or partial.—5. With interment; and 6, in lieu of interment. But to reproduce all the accessible details, to make any attempt at exhausting the subject, would demand more space and time than can be appropriated to it. A few topics will, therefore, be presented as they occur.

In the disposal of dead bodies, the most interesting and instructive *source of division* is that constituted by the consideration of expense. 1. The unexpensive. 2. The expensive. Of the unexpensive, the most obvious and universally practicable is deposition under the surface of the earth,—in one word, *inhumation*: objects, or say, ends in view, exclusion of bodily annoyance, afflictive to the sense of smelling, and, supposing the existence of the masses of matter in mutual contiguity or vicinity, in a quantity more or less considerable, detrimental to health.

Such was the first mode that would suggest itself to societies of men, when habituated to a stationary abode,—in a word, to men in the agricultural state; for to men in the huntsman state, these inducements, the inducements to the expenditure of the quantity of men and labour requisite could not have place.

Nor yet would it have place in the pastoral state. For a long time, the labour by which the inhumation process was carried on, would consist of nothing more than what was expended in making in the ground a hole of the requisite dimensions, to a certain depth, by taking the earth out, and then, after the body had been deposited, throwing the earth in again—say stage the first, simple inhumation.

But while the body lay in this state, by the scent of it animals of the carnivorous class, with and without feathers, would be attracted to it, and would lacerate and disfigure it. Of a scene of this sort, the impression, and thence the idea, would naturally enough be more or less afflictive to the surviving relatives, witness old Homer, at the opening of his *Iliad*:

Οἰωνοῖσι τε πάσι
δι' ἰλόγισα πύχχι κύνισσιν

Hence the practice of providing for them, and lodging them in a receptacle, by which they should be secured against such treatment,—in a word, in a coffin. Stage the second, inhumation in a coffin.

Bodies thus disposed of become, in process of time, the food of plants, and thus the sustenance of man; and the operation is facilitated, when the use of lime prepares them for manure.

So far as regards the mixture with *lime*, this mode of exposal is exemplified in existing usage. Witness the empire of Brazil:—

“In Brazil, the practice is, to immerse the body of the dead in quicklime; and when the flesh is consumed by its causticity, the bones are collected, scraped, and cleaned, and deposited together in a box, with a lock and key, which is then closed, and the key delivered to the family. These cases have no resemblance to coffins. They are of different shapes; and with their ornamental exterior, the smaller ones rather resemble a lady's dressing-box. They are deposited in dry receptacles, made in the walls of the cloisters, or other parts of the church; and on this annual festival are brought out, and the living friends come with their keys and inspect them.”*—[*Walsk's Notices of Brazil.*]

At the idea of applying directly to the purpose of his own nourishment any portion of the matter of which the body of an ancestor of his was composed, a man naturally starts with horror. But let the intervention be supposed of the decomposition of that same matter, and

* In Portugal, the same method obtains, though I never saw bones scraped. The body is consumed by quicklime, the remains put into a case, and the key of the case delivered to the family.—*Ed.*

its recomposition in the shape of a grain of wheat, or in that of a blade of grass, and after passing through the body of a fowl or a sheep, and thereafter through either of those mediums, passing into his stomach, the horror vanishes: and, since the establishment of sedentary and civilized society, more or less considerable cannot but have been the extent to which this supposition has been realized.*

As to the material of this coffin, it would be either of stone or wood; the one or the other, according to local and temporary circumstances;—but in either case, labour, to an amount more or less considerable, would be necessary.

So much as to the comparatively unexpensive mode of disposal. Now as to the comparatively expensive.

Mode of disposal among the Greeks in the instance of the people at large, simple inhumation—whether with or without a coffin, unknown; but in the case of leading men, with the addition of a monument. By a monument, the expense of an ordinary tomb was multiplied. Last of all came a *mausoleum*, by which the expense of a monument was multiplied.

Mode of disposal in use among the Romans, combustion—fuel, wood. Of this mode, the expense taken at its minimum might be less or greater than

that of inhumation in a coffin, according to circumstances. But when by conflagration, fuel and body together had been reduced to ashes, then arose an *urn*—an urn, or other receptacle for containing the ashes,—and the consequent expenses.†

Upon this mode of disposal, the natives of Hindostan had already made an improvement: it consisted in taking the living body for the subject-matter of the combustion; no other than partial, however, was this improvement; nor beyond the tender sex did it extend itself; nor, in that case, to any but those who were in a state of recent widowhood. Among those, as it should seem, it was, and is, confined to a small proportion,—that is to say, those belonging to a few of the highest among the higher orders.

But of the modes known, or imaginable, the Egyptian—the mummification mode, is, beyond all comparison, the most expensive. Whatever it has to recommend it, is possessed by Auto-Iconism. In duration, Auto-Iconism would be equal to it—in expense, incomparably less:—resemblance to the living the mummy has none: for moral and political uses, Auto-Iconism possesses far higher recommendations. For theatrical, phrenological, architectural, and various commemorative purposes,

* “APPROPRIATION OF THE DEAD TO THE USE OF THE LIVING.—The exportation of bones from Germany to England, say the Vienna papers, constitutes a singular epoch in the annals of commerce. Myriads of tons have been already exported without glutting the market, or causing a cessation of the demand. In the vicinity of the North Sea, mills have been erected to pulverise them. This bone-powder, or bone-dust, was long ago exclusively applied to the purposes of hot-houses by German horticulturists; but the English, emboldened by their riches, extend its use to general objects of agriculture, and fertilise, by these expensive means, their humid, cold, and poorest land, and have thus brought the uplands of Nottinghamshire, the western part of Holderness, &c., into the highest state of cultivation, both in point of extent and intenseness of fertility. There is, consequently, a proverb, ‘That one ton of German bone-dust saves the importation of ten tons of German corn.’ As Malta formerly covered her naked rocks with foreign soil, so does England now fertilise her clay and sandy heaths with German bones. Near the sea-coast even the churchyards are robbed of their venerable relics, which is ironically excused by rendering the German bone trade popular. An

agriculturist being rendered attentive by this vast exportation, instituted privately some comparative experiments, the results of which prove that bone-dust acts in the cultivation of grain, as compared to the best stable manure,

1. In respect to the quality of corn as 7 to 5
2. In respect to quantity as - - 5 to 4
3. In respect to durability of the energy of soil as - - - 3 to 2

It produces several collateral advantages:—1. It destroys weeds; 2. It diminishes the necessity of suffering the land to lay fallow; 3. This concentrated manure, or substitute for manure, is more easy of conveyance, less laborious to spread, and can with facility be applied to the steepest vineyards, or other inaccessible lands, either in mountainous countries or in wet meadow land; 4. It renders agriculture practicable without cattle-breeding, grazing,” &c., &c.—*Examiner*, March 18, 1832.

† Among the Kalushes, “the dead are burned, and their ashes preserved in small wooden boxes in buildings appropriated to that purpose.”—*Kotzebue’s New Voyage Round the World*, vol. ii. p. 57.

it is believed, advantages have been shown to be possessed by Auto-Iconism, which mummification could not compete with.

ILLUSTRATIVE APPENDICES TO THE
AUTO-ICON.

Extracts from Kotzebue's "New Voyage round the World, in 1823, 4, 5, and 6,"
—vol. ii.

"The burial of the dead was a very sacred ceremony, and accompanied with many forms. The corpse was laid in a pit till the flesh decayed; the bones were then cleaned, and a part of them distributed among the relations and friends, to be preserved as relics—part laid in consecrated ground. Dying persons sometimes desired that their bones should be thrown into the crater of the volcano at O Wahi, which was inhabited by the revered god Pelai."—p. 178.

"His (the late king of the Sandwich Islands, Tameamea) remains were disposed of according to the rites of the religion he professed. After they had remained some time in the Marai, the bones were cleaned, and divided among the relatives and the most distinguished of his attendants. According to the custom of this country, two persons had long before been destined for interment with him at his death; but by his express desire, this ceremony was dispensed with."—p. 195.

At Kamtschatka, "the children, when grown up, showed little affection for their parents, neglected them in old age, and did not even consider it a violation of filial duty to kill them, when they became burdensome. They also murdered their defective or weakly children, to spare them the misery of a languishing existence. They did not bury their dead, but dragged the corpse into the open air, by a thong tied about the neck, and left it a prey to the dogs; under the belief, that those devoured by these animals, would, in another world, be drawn by the best dogs."—p. 16.

Extract from Roy's "Narrateur Français."

"Le voyageur Tavernier rapporte qu'un roi de Perse ordonna d'élever, en

forme de pyramide, les têtes de toutes les bêtes qu'il avait tuées en un jour de chasse. Cela fait, l'architecte vint lui annoncer qu'il ne fallait plus, pour achever la pyramide, qu'une grosse tête à mettre au sommet. 'Il me semble,' dit le despote, 'que la tienne fera assez bien l'affaire.' La tête du constructeur termina aussitôt le nouvel édifice."

Mode of disposing of dead bodies in Brazil. From "Walsh," vol. i. Absence of bigotry and prejudice on this subject. Absence of reluctance to be subjected to dissection after death.

Extracts from Walsh's "Notices of Brazil":—

"The people, as I noticed before, are vain of their funerals, and go to a considerable expense in decorating their coffins altogether beyond their means. To gratify this desire, and, at the same time to limit the expense, the Misericordia keeps and lets out splendid coffins for hire. The body is carried in one of them to the grave, where it is deposited naked or sewed up in a cloth, and the coffin is sent back and hired to another corpse. This practice creates a considerable revenue, and the Hermandad of the Misericordia are alone allowed to employ it."—p. 393.

"At the extremity of the corridor, is a great cemetery, which is the general receptacle of the poor, die where they may. The mode of burying is very summary: a large deep trench is dug, in which the bodies are laid. Before they are deposited here, they are placed on a platform, in a small house in the middle of the cemetery, till several are collected together, when a funeral service is said for them all, and they are deposited in the trench without coffins; sometimes naked, but more usually sewed up in coarse canvass, or the fragment of a mat, and their bodies laid across, generally the head of one to the feet of the other. I never visited this place that four or five bodies were not lying for interment; and I always met others carried in while I went out. Beside the cemetery is a dissecting-room, where every student may freely take

whatever body he pleases to anatomize, without any apprehension from prejudice or prosecution."—p. 395.

"As there is no prejudice existing among the people against the dissection of dead bodies, or no law to prevent it, that important part of medical education is perfectly free and unrestricted. It is well known to the public, that anatomy is necessarily taught by dissection, and the constant practice of the students; but not the smallest repugnance is ever expressed on the subject; nor do poor or destitute persons show the least dislike to enter the hospital, because they know their bodies will be subject to the knife of the anatomist. The people are remarkably careless about the disposal of their dead friends. They often told me, that their immortal soul was the only object of their solicitude, as they knew their bodies were nothing more than clay, and deserved no more care when the immaterial spirit had left it. The bones they preserve, as they would a lock of their hair; and annex no more sanctity or respect to them, than they would to any other personal memorial."—p. 398.

"Nor are there many *post mortem* examinations. Where it may be necessary to ascertain the nature of a complaint of which a patient died, either for the information or the benefit of the surviving part of a family, neither the friends of the deceased, nor the sick person before death, ever seem to have the smallest objection; though the Portuguese physicians say there were formerly prejudices against it, and it was necessary to have the permission of the police for that purpose."—p. 399.

—"but to surround the corpse with such distinctions, to wrap the putrid body in costly robes, and to illumine it with glare and splendour, only to make its melancholy decay more conspicuous, seems to me the most miserable mockery of the dead, and the greatest, as it is the weakest, absurdity of the living."—p. 261.

From the Morning Chronicle, (June 11, 1830.)

"*Curious Will.*—A lady named Bar-

soff died some time ago at Paris, leaving rather a curious will, from which the following are extracts:—"I request that a column of marble may be raised over my tomb, on which shall be placed my bust in bronze, with this inscription:—

"Next to the misfortune of existing, is the greater one of belonging to the human race!" and lower down, "Here lies Madam Barsoff, who died the * * * *."

As to religious ceremonies, I wish them to be short and simple. In my opinion, nothing is more stupid than to buy prayers. I wish, however, that the interment should be conducted in a respectable manner. To make a traffic of religion inspires me more than anything else with a disgust I cannot conquer. At the melancholy and final ceremony, I should prefer the presence of a single friend to all the quackery of ministers appointed with another object than that which they seem usually to have in view. In short, to explain myself frankly, I should like to be transported direct to Père la Chaise; and I would make an express clause to that effect, if I were not aware of the influence of prejudice upon the best disposed minds. It would, perhaps, prevent some persons from feeling that regret at my death, which, I flatter myself, my remembrance will excite,—and I feel that friendship is necessary to me even in the tomb. I still fear, however, that the persons who make a trade of getting up splendid funerals should throw upon my executor the blame of what they may designate the most scandalous and revolutionary impiety,—for that is the fashionable phrase. With respect to myself, I have formed my own opinion, which is, that the carrying a dead body to the church is quite a superfluous formality, and only of service to those who get money by it."

From The Examiner of Nov. 7, 1830.

"SIR HUMPHREY DAVY.—A marble tablet three feet six inches long, two feet six inches high, and about three inches thick, a thing which two men might readily lift, has just been put up to his memory in Westminster Abbey: and the Chapter, to show the value at which they rate Sir Humphrey's genius, have

charged £120 as a *fine*, (so they call it,) for leave to put it up. Nor is this all,—as a punishment on his lady for allowing him to die and be buried in a foreign land, they have charged £22 as half-burial fees. It is otherwise abroad—so little was his body looked upon as a matter of *measure* and *value* price at Geneva, that the simple Calvinists told Lady Davy she might inter his body free of all expense. The Dean and Chapter of Westminster knew better the worth of him of the wonderful lamp, and drew £142,—by a draft on Drummond's,—out of a body which, to the simple church at Geneva, was not worth a penny.”—*Athenæum*.

From the Globe of Sept. 1831.

“THE UTILITARIAN SYSTEM.—The skeleton of Corder, the murderer, has been placed in a recess of the museum of the Suffolk Infirmary, Bury St Ed-

mund's. It is covered with a glass case, beneath which is a box to receive contributions. Every visiter is expected to put silver into this box, which money is applied to the wants of the necessitous patients. By an ingeniously constructed spring, the arm of the skeleton points towards the box as soon as the visitors approach it. The receipts are said to average £50 per annum.”

From the Morning Chronicle, (July 16, 1831.)

“A woman was buried on Thursday evening, in a burial-ground at Islington, who had been dead upwards of five years, a near relation having left an annuity of £30 a-year, to be paid ‘as long as she remain upon earth!’ In consequence of this legacy, her surviving husband hired a little room over a stable in the neighbourhood of Hoxton, where she was kept in a coffin till his death.”