

II.

On the Apparel of Women.⁷⁹

Book I.

[Translated by the Rev. S. Thelwall.]



Chapter I.—Introduction. Modesty in Apparel Becoming to Women, in Memory
of the Introduction of Sin into the World Through a Woman.

If there dwelt upon earth a faith as great as is the reward of faith which is expected in the heavens, no one of you at all, best beloved sisters, from the time that she had first “known the Lord,”⁸⁰ and learned (the truth) concerning her own (that is, woman’s) condition, would have desired too gladsome (not to say too ostentatious) a style of dress; so as not rather to go about in humble garb, and rather to affect meanness of appearance, walking about as Eve mourning and repentant, in order that by every garb of penitence⁸¹ she might the more fully expiate that which she derives from Eve,—the ignominy, I mean, of the first sin, and the odium (attaching to her as the cause) of human perdition. “In pains and in anxieties dost thou bear (children), woman; and toward thine husband (is) thy inclination, and he lords it over thee.”⁸² And do you not know that you are (each) an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age.⁸³ the guilt must of necessity live too. *You* are the devil’s gateway: *you* are the unsealer⁸⁴ of that (forbidden) tree: *you* are the first deserter of the divine law: *you* are she who persuaded⁸⁵ him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. *You* destroyed so easily God’s image, man. On account of *your* desert—that is, death—even the Son of God had to die. And do you think about adorning yourself over and above your tunics of skins?⁸⁶ Come, now; if from the beginning of the world⁸⁷ the

79 [Written about a.d. 202. See Kaye, p. 56.]

80 Comp. [Heb. viii. 11](#); [Jer. xxxi. 34](#) (in the LXX. it is xxxviii. 34).

81 Satisfactionis.

82 Comp. [Gen. iii. 16](#), in Eng. ver. and in LXX.

83 Sæculo.

84 Resignatrix. Comp. the phrase “*a fountain sealed*” in [Cant. iv. 12](#).

85 “Suasisti” is the reading of the mss.; “persuasisti,” a conjectural emendation adopted by Rig.

86 See [Gen. iii. 21](#).

87 Rerum.

Milesians sheared sheep, and the Serians⁸⁸ spun trees, and the Tyrians dyed, and the Phrygians embroidered with the needle, and the Babylonians with the loom, and pearls gleamed, and onyx-stones flashed; if gold itself also had already issued, with the cupidity (which accompanies it), from the ground; if the mirror, too, already had licence to lie so largely, Eve, expelled from paradise, (Eve) already dead, would also have coveted *these* things, I imagine! No more, then, ought she *now* to crave, or be acquainted with (if she desires to live again), what, when she *was* living, she had neither had nor known. Accordingly these things are all the baggage of woman in her condemned and dead state, instituted as if to swell the pomp of her funeral.

88 i.e., Chinese.

Chapter II.—The Origin of Female Ornamentation, Traced Back to the Angels Who Had Fallen.⁸⁹

For they, withal, who instituted them are assigned, under condemnation, to the penalty of death,—those angels, to wit, who rushed from heaven on the daughters of men; so that this ignominy also attaches to woman. For when to an age⁹⁰ much more ignorant (than ours) they had disclosed certain well-concealed material substances, and several not well-revealed scientific arts—if it is true that they had laid bare the operations of metallurgy, and had divulged the natural properties of herbs, and had promulgated the powers of enchantments, and had traced out every curious art,⁹¹ even to the interpretation of the stars—they conferred properly and as it were peculiarly upon women that instrumental mean of womanly ostentation, the radiance of jewels wherewith necklaces are variegated, and the circlets of gold wherewith the arms are compressed, and the medicaments of orchil with which wools are coloured, and that black powder itself wherewith the eyelids and eyelashes are made prominent.⁹² What is the quality of these things may be declared meantime, even at this point,⁹³ from the quality and condition of their teachers: in that sinners could never have either shown or supplied anything conducive to integrity, unlawful lovers anything conducive to chastity, renegade spirits anything conducive to the fear of God. If (these things) are to be called *teachings*, ill masters must of necessity have taught ill; if as *wages of lust*, there is nothing base of which the wages are honourable. But why was it of so much importance to show these things as well as⁹⁴ to confer them? Was it that women, without material causes of splendour, and without ingenious contrivances of grace, could not please *men*, who, while still unadorned, and uncouth and—so to say—crude and rude, had moved (the mind of) *angels*? or was it that the lovers⁹⁵ would appear sordid and—through gratuitous use—contumelious, if they had conferred no (compensating) gift on the women who had been enticed into connubial connection with them? But these questions admit of no calculation. Women who possessed angels (as husbands) could desire nothing more; they had, forsooth, made a grand match! Assuredly they who, of course, did sometimes think whence they had fallen,⁹⁶ and, after the heated impulses of their lusts, looked up toward heaven, thus required that

89 Comp. with this chapter, *de Idol.*, c. ix.; *de Or.*, c. xxii.; *de Cult. Fem.*, l. ii. c. x.; *de Virg. Vel.*, c. vii.

90 Sæculo.

91 Curiositatem. Comp. *de Idol.*, c. ix., and [Acts xix. 19](#).

92 Quo oculorum exordia producuntur. Comp. ii. 5.

93 “Jam,” i.e., without going any farther. Comp. c. iv. et seqq.

94 Sicut. But Pam. and Rig. read “sive.”

95 i.e., the *angelic* lovers.

96 Comp. [Rev. ii. 5](#).

very excellence of women, natural beauty, as (having proved) a cause of evil, in order that their good fortune might profit them nothing; but that, being turned from simplicity and sincerity, they, together with (the angels) themselves, might become offensive to God. Sure they were that all ostentation, and ambition, and love of pleasing by carnal means, was *displeasing* to God. And these are the angels whom we are destined to judge:⁹⁷ these are the angels whom in baptism we renounce:⁹⁸ these, of course, are the reasons why they have deserved to be judged by man. What business, then, have their *things* with their *judges*? What commerce have they who are to condemn with them who are to be condemned? The same, I take it, as Christ has with Belial.⁹⁹ With what consistency do we mount that (future) judgment-seat to pronounce sentence against those whose gifts we (now) seek after? For you too, (women as you are,) have the self-same angelic nature promised¹⁰⁰ as your reward, the self-same sex as men: the self-same advancement to the dignity of judging, does (the Lord) promise you. Unless, then, we begin even here to *pre-judge*, by pre-condemning their *things*, which we are hereafter to condemn in *themselves*, they will rather judge and condemn *us*.

97 See [1 Cor. vi. 3](#).

98 Comp. *de Idol.*, c. vi.

99 Comp. [2 Cor. vi. 14–16](#).

100 See [Matt. xxii. 30](#); [Mark xii. 25](#); [Luke xx. 35, 36](#); and comp. [Gal. iii. 28](#).

Chapter III.—Concerning the Genuineness of “The Prophecy of Enoch.”¹⁰¹

I am aware that the Scripture of Enoch,¹⁰² which has assigned this order (of action) to angels, is not received by some, because it is not admitted into the Jewish canon either. I suppose they did not think that, having been published before the deluge, it could have safely survived that world-wide calamity, the abolisher of all things. If that is the reason (for rejecting it), let them recall to their memory that Noah, the survivor of the deluge, was the great-grandson of Enoch himself;¹⁰³ and he, of course, had heard and remembered, from domestic renown¹⁰⁴ and hereditary tradition, concerning his own great-grandfather’s “grace in the sight of God,”¹⁰⁵ and concerning all his preachings;¹⁰⁶ since Enoch had given no other charge to Methuselah than that he should hand on the knowledge of them to his posterity. Noah therefore, no doubt, might have succeeded in the trusteeship of (his) preaching; or, had the case been otherwise, he would not have been silent alike concerning the disposition (of things) made by God, his Preserver, and concerning the particular glory of his own house.

If (Noah) had not had this (conservative power) by so short a route, there would (still) be this (consideration) to warrant¹⁰⁷ our assertion of (the genuineness of) this Scripture: he could equally have *renewed* it, under the Spirit’s inspiration,¹⁰⁸ after it *had* been destroyed by the violence of the deluge, as, after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian storming of it, every document¹⁰⁹ of the Jewish literature is generally agreed to have been restored through Ezra.

But since Enoch in the same Scripture has preached likewise concerning the Lord, nothing at all must be rejected *by* us which pertains *to* us; and we read that “every Scripture suitable for edification is divinely inspired.”¹¹⁰ By the *Jews* it may now seem to have been rejected for that (very) reason, just like all the other (portions) nearly which tell of Christ. Nor, of course, is this fact wonderful, that they did not receive some Scriptures which spake

101 [Elucidation.]

102 Comp. *de Idol.*, c. iv.

103 See [Gen. v. 21, 25, 28, 29](#).

104 “Nomine;” perhaps = “account.”

105 Comp. [Gen. vi. 8](#).

106 Prædicatis.

107 Tueretur.

108 In spiritu.

109 Instrumentum.

110 See [2 Tim. iii. 16](#).

of Him whom even in person, speaking in their presence, they were not to receive. To these considerations is added the fact that Enoch possesses a testimony in the Apostle Jude.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ See [Jude 14, 15](#).

Chapter IV.—Waiving the Question of the Authors, Tertullian Proposes to Consider the Things on Their Own Merits.

Grant now that no mark of pre-condemnation has been branded on womanly pomp by the (fact of the) fate¹¹² of its authors; let nothing be imputed to those angels besides their repudiation of heaven and (their) carnal marriage:¹¹³ let us examine the qualities of the things themselves, in order that we may detect the purposes also for which they are eagerly desired.

Female habit carries with it a twofold idea—dress and ornament. By “dress” we mean what they call “womanly gracing;”¹¹⁴ by “ornament,” what it is suitable should be called “womanly disgracing.”¹¹⁵ The former is accounted (to consist) in gold, and silver, and gems, and garments; the latter in care of the hair, and of the skin, and of those parts of the body which attract the eye. Against the one we lay the charge of ambition, against the other of prostitution; so that even from this early stage¹¹⁶ (of our discussion) you may look forward and see what, out of (all) these, is suitable, handmaid of God, to *your* discipline, inasmuch as you are assessed on different principles (from other women),—those, namely, of humility and chastity.

112 Exitu.

113 Matrimonium carnis.

114 Mundum muliebrem. Comp. Liv. xxxiv. 7.

115 Immundum muliebrem.

116 Jam hinc; comp. *ad. Ux.*, i. 1 *ad init.* and *ad fin.*, and 8 *ad fin.*

Chapter V.—Gold and Silver Not Superior in Origin or in Utility to Other Metals.

Gold and silver, the principal material causes of worldly¹¹⁷ splendour, must necessarily be identical (in nature) with that out of which they have their being: (they must be) earth, that is; (which earth itself is) plainly more glorious (than they), inasmuch as it is only after it has been tearfully wrought by penal labour in the deadly laboratories of accursed mines, and there left its name of “earth” in the fire behind it, that, as a fugitive from the mine, it passes from torments to ornaments, from punishments to embellishments, from ignominies to honours. But iron, and brass, and other the vilest material substances, enjoy a parity of condition (with silver and gold), both as to earthly origin and metallurgic operation; in order that, in the estimation of nature, the substance of gold and of silver may be judged not a whit more noble (than theirs). But if it is from the quality of *utility* that gold and silver derive their glory, why, iron and brass excel them; whose usefulness is so disposed (by the Creator), that they not only discharge functions of their own more numerous and more necessary to human affairs, but do also none the less serve the turn of gold and silver, by dint of their own powers,¹¹⁸ in the service of juster causes. For not only are rings made of iron, but the memory of antiquity still preserves (the fame of) certain vessels for eating and drinking made out of brass. Let the insane plenteousness of gold and silver look to it, if it serves to make utensils even for foul purposes. At all events, neither is the field tilled by means of gold, nor the ship fastened together by the strength of silver. No mattock plunges a golden edge into the ground; no nail drives a silver point into planks. I leave unnoticed the fact that the needs of our whole life are dependent upon iron and brass; whereas those rich materials themselves, requiring both to be dug up out of mines, and needing a forging process in every use (to which they are put), are helpless without the laborious vigour of iron and brass. Already, therefore, we must judge whence it is that so high dignity accrues to gold and silver, since they get precedence over material substances which are not only cousin-german to them in point of origin, but more powerful in point of usefulness.

117 Sæcularis.

118 De suo. Comp. *de Bapt.*, c. xvii. *sub fin.*

Chapter VI.—Of Precious Stones and Pearls.

But, in the next place, what am I to interpret those jewels to be which vie with gold in haughtiness, except little pebbles and stones and paltry particles of the self-same earth; but yet not necessary either for laying down foundations, or rearing party-walls, or supporting pediments, or giving density to roofs? The only edifice which they know how to rear is this silly pride of women: because they require slow rubbing that they may shine, and artful underlaying that they may show to advantage, and careful piercing that they may hang; and (because they) render to gold a mutual assistance in meretricious allurements. But whatever it is that ambition fishes up from the British or the Indian sea, it is a kind of conch not more pleasing in *savour* than—I do not say the oyster and the sea-snail, but—even the giant muscle.¹¹⁹ For let me add that I know conchs (which are) sweet fruits of the sea. But if that (foreign) conch suffers from some internal pustule, that ought to be regarded rather as its defect than as its glory; and although it be called “pearl,” still something else must be understood than some hard, round excrescence of the fish. Some say, too, that gems are culled from the foreheads of *dragons*, just as in the brains of fishes there is a certain stony substance. This also was wanting to the Christian woman, that she may add a grace to herself from the serpent! Is it thus that she will set her heel on the devil’s head,”¹²⁰ while she heaps ornaments (taken) from his head on her own neck, or on her very head?

119 Peloris. Comp. Hor., S., ii. 4, 32, and Maclean’s note there.

120 See [Gen. iii. 15](#).

Chapter VII.—Rarity the Only Cause Which Makes Such Things Valuable.

It is only from their rarity and outlandishness that all these things possess their grace; in short, within their own native limits they are not held of so high worth. Abundance is always contumelious toward itself. There are some barbarians with whom, because gold is indigenous and plentiful, it is customary to keep (the criminals) in their convict establishments chained with gold, and to lade the wicked with riches—the more guilty, the more wealthy. At last there has really been found a way to prevent even gold from being loved! We have also seen at Rome the nobility of gems blushing in the presence of our matrons at the contemptuous usage of the Parthians and Medes, and the rest of their own fellow-countrymen, only that (*their* gems) are not generally worn with a view to ostentation. Emeralds¹²¹ lurk in their belts; and the sword (that hangs) below their bosom alone is witness to the cylindrical stones that decorate its hilt; and the massive single pearls on their boots are fain to get lifted out of the mud! In short, they carry nothing so richly gemmed as that which ought *not* to be gemmed if it is (either) not conspicuous, or else is conspicuous only that it may be shown to be also neglected.

121 Smaragdi. Comp. [Rev. iv. 3.](#)

Chapter VIII.—The Same Rule Holds with Regard to Colours. God's Creatures Generally Not to Be Used, Except for the Purposes to Which He Has Appointed Them.

Similarly, too, do even the servants¹²² of those barbarians cause the glory to fade from the colours of our garments (by wearing the like); nay, even their party-walls use slightly, to supply the place of painting, the Tyrian and the violet-coloured and the grand royal hangings, which you laboriously undo and metamorphose. Purple with them is more paltry than red ochre; (and justly,) for what legitimate honour can garments derive from adulteration with illegitimate colours? That which He Himself has not produced is not pleasing to God, unless He was *unable* to order sheep to be born with purple and sky-blue fleeces! If He was *able*, then plainly He was *unwilling*: what God willed not, of course ought not to be fashioned. Those things, then, are not the best by *nature* which are not from God, the *Author* of nature. Thus they are understood to be from *the devil*, from the *corrupter* of nature: for there is no other whose they can be, if they are not God's; because what are not God's must necessarily be His rival's.¹²³ But, beside the devil and his angels, other rival of God there is none. Again, if the *material substances* are of God, it does not immediately follow that such ways of *enjoying* them among men (are so too). It is matter for inquiry not only whence come conchs,¹²⁴ but what sphere of embellishment is assigned them, and where it is that they exhibit their beauty. For all those profane pleasures of worldly¹²⁵ shows—as we have already published a volume of their own about them¹²⁶—(ay, and) even idolatry itself, derive their material causes from the creatures¹²⁷ of God. Yet a Christian ought not to attach himself¹²⁸ to the frenzies of the racecourse, or the atrocities of the arena, or the turpitudes of the stage, simply because God has given to man the horse, and the panther, and the power of speech: just as a Christian cannot commit idolatry with impunity either, because the incense, and the wine, and the fire which feeds¹²⁹ (thereon), and the animals which are made the victims, are God's workmanship;¹³⁰ since even the material thing which is adored is God's (creature). Thus then, too, with regard to their active use, does the *origin*

122 Or, "slaves."

123 Comp. *de Pæn.*, c. v. *med.*

124 Comp. c. vi. above.

125 Sæcularium.

126 i.e., the treatise *de Spectaculis*.

127 Rebus.

128 "Affici"—a rare use rather of "afficere," but found in Cic.

129 Or perhaps "is fed" thereby; for the word is "vescitur."

130 "Conditio"—a rare use again.

of the material substances, which descends from God, *excuse* (that use) as foreign to God,
as guilty forsooth of worldly¹³¹ glory!

131 Sæcularis.

Chapter IX.—God's Distribution Must Regulate Our Desires, Otherwise We Become the Prey of Ambition and Its Attendant Evils.

For, as some particular things distributed by God over certain individual lands, and some one particular tract of sea, are mutually foreign one to the other, they are reciprocally either neglected or desired: (desired) among foreigners, as being rarities; neglected (rightly), if anywhere, among their own compatriots, because in *them* there is no such fervid longing for a glory which, among its own home-folk, is frigid. But, however, the rareness and outlandishness which arise out of that distribution of possessions which God has ordered as He willed, ever finding favour in the eyes of strangers, excites, from the simple fact of *not* having what God has made native to other places, the concupiscence of *having* it. Hence is educed another vice—that of *immoderate* having; because although, perhaps, *having* may be permissible, still a limit¹³² is bound (to be observed). This (second vice) will be ambition; and hence, too, its name is to be interpreted, in that from concupiscence *ambient* in the mind it is born, with a view to the desire of glory,—a grand desire, forsooth, which (as we have said) is recommended neither by nature nor by truth, but by a vicious passion of the mind,—(namely,) concupiscence. And there are other vices connected with ambition and glory. Thus they have withal enhanced the *cost* of things, in order that (thereby) they might add fuel to themselves also; for concupiscence becomes proportionably greater as it has set a higher value upon the thing which it has eagerly desired. From the smallest caskets is produced an ample patrimony. On a single thread is suspended a million of sesterces. One delicate neck carries about it forests and islands.¹³³ The slender lobes of the ears exhaust a fortune; and the left hand, with its every finger, sports with a several money-bag. Such is the strength of ambition—(equal) to bearing on one small body, and that a woman's, the product of so copious wealth.

132 Or, "moderation."

133 "Saltus et insulæ," i.e., as much as would purchase them.

Book II.

Chapter I.—Introduction. Modesty to Be Observed Not Only in Its Essence, But in Its Accessories.

Handmaids of the living God, my fellow-servants and sisters, the right which I enjoy with you—I, the most meanest¹³⁴ in that right of fellow-servantship and brotherhood—emboldens me to address to you a discourse, not, of course, of affection, but paving the way for affection in the cause of your salvation. That salvation—and not (the salvation) of women only, but likewise of men—consists in the exhibition principally of modesty. For since, by the introduction into an appropriation¹³⁵ (in) us of the Holy Spirit, we are all “the temple of God,”¹³⁶ Modesty is the sacristan and priestess of that temple, who is to suffer nothing unclean or profane to be introduced (into it), for fear that the God who inhabits it should be offended, and quite forsake the polluted abode. But on the present occasion we (are to speak) not about modesty, for the enjoining and exacting of which the divine precepts which press (upon us) on every side are sufficient; but about the matters which pertain to it, that is, the manner in which it behoves you to walk. For most women (which very thing I trust God may permit me, with a view, of course, to my own personal censure, to censure in all), either from simple ignorance or else from dissimulation, have the hardihood so to walk as if modesty consisted only¹³⁷ in the (bare) integrity of the flesh, and in turning away from (actual) fornication; and there were no need for anything extrinsic to boot—in the matter (I mean) of the arrangement of dress and ornament,¹³⁸ the studied graces of form and brilliance:—wearing in their gait the self-same appearance as the women of the nations, from whom the sense of *true* modesty is absent, because in those who know not God, the Guardian and Master of truth, there is *nothing* true.¹³⁹ For if any modesty can be believed (to exist) in Gentiles, it is plain that it must be imperfect and undisciplined to such a degree that, although it be actively tenacious of itself in the *mind* up to a certain point, it yet allows itself to relax into licentious extravagances of attire; just in accordance with Gentile perversity, in craving after that of which it carefully shuns the effect.¹⁴⁰ How many a one, in short, is there who does not earnestly desire even to look pleasing to strangers? who does not on that

134 Postremissimus.

135 Consecrato.

136 See [1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19, 20](#).

137 Comp. *de Idol.*, c. ii.

138 Cultus et ornatus. For the distinction between them, see b. i. c. iv.

139 Comp. *de Pæn.*, c. i.

140 Or, “execution.”

very account take care to have herself painted out, and denies that she has (ever) been an object of (carnal) appetite? And yet, granting that even this is a practice familiar to Gentile modesty—(namely,) not actually to *commit* the sin, but still to be *willing* to do so; or even not to be *willing*, yet still not *quite* to refuse—what wonder? for all things which are not God's are perverse. Let those women therefore look to it, who, by not holding fast the *whole* good, easily mingle with evil even what they do hold fast. Necessary it is that *you* turn aside from them, as in all other things, so also in your gait; since you ought to be “perfect, as (is) your Father who is in the heavens.”¹⁴¹

141 See [Matt. v. 48](#).

Chapter II.—Perfect Modesty Will Abstain from Whatever Tends to Sin, as Well as from Sin Itself. Difference Between Trust and Presumption. If Secure Ourselves, We Must Not Put Temptation in the Way of Others. We Must Love Our Neighbour as Ourselves.

You must know that in the eye of perfect, that is, Christian, modesty, (carnal) desire of one's self (on the part of others) is not only not to be desired, but even execrated, by you: first, because the study of making personal grace (which we know to be naturally the inviter of lust) a mean of pleasing does not spring from a sound conscience: why therefore excite toward yourself that evil (passion)? why invite (that) to which you profess yourself a stranger? secondly, because we ought not to open a way to temptations, which, by their instancy, sometimes achieve (a wickedness) which God expels from them who are His; (or,) at all events, put the spirit into a thorough tumult by (presenting) a stumbling-block (to it). We ought indeed to walk so holily, and with so entire substantiality¹⁴² of faith, as to be confident and secure in regard of our own conscience, *desiring* that that (gift) may abide in us to the end, yet not *presuming* (that it will). For he who presumes feels less apprehension; he who feels less apprehension takes less precaution; he who takes less precaution runs more risk. Fear¹⁴³ is the foundation of salvation; presumption is an impediment to fear. More useful, then, is it to apprehend that we may possibly fail, than to presume that we cannot; for apprehending will lead us to fear, fearing to caution, and caution to salvation. On the other hand, if we presume, there will be neither fear nor caution to save us. He who acts securely, and not at the same time warily, possesses no safe and firm security; whereas he who is wary will be truly able to be secure. For His own servants, may the Lord by His mercy take care that to *them* it may be lawful even to *presume* on His goodness! But why are we a (source of) danger to our neighbour? why do we import concupiscence into our neighbour? which concupiscence, if God, in "amplifying the law,"¹⁴⁴ do not¹⁴⁵ dissociate in (the way of) penalty from the actual commission of fornication,¹⁴⁶ I know not whether He allows impunity to him who¹⁴⁷ has been the cause of perdition to some other. For that other, as soon as he has felt concupiscence after your beauty, and has mentally already committed (the deed) which his concupiscence pointed to,¹⁴⁸ perishes; and you have been made¹⁴⁹ the sword which

142 Substantia. Comp. *Heb. xi. 1*, ἔστι δὲ πίστις ἐλπίζομένων υπόστασις.

143 Timor.

144 *Matt. v. 17*. Comp. *de Or.*, c. xxii. mid.; *de Pa.*, c. vi. mid.; *de Pæn.*, c. iii. *sub fin.*

145 The second "non," or else the first, must apparently be omitted.

146 *Matt. v. 28*. See *de Idol.*, c. ii.; *de Pa.*, c. vi.; *de Pæn.*, c. iii.

147 "Qui," Oehler; "quæ," Rig.

148 Comp. *de Pæn.* c. iii. (latter half).

149 Tu *facta* es.

destroys him: so that, albeit you be free from the (actual) crime, you are not free from the odium (attaching to it); as, when a robbery has been committed on some man's estate, the (actual) crime indeed will not be laid to the owner's charge, while yet the domain is branded with ignominy, (and) the owner himself aspersed with the infamy. Are we to paint ourselves out that our neighbours may perish? Where, then, is (the command), "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?"¹⁵⁰ "Care not merely about your own (things), but (about your) neighbour's?"¹⁵¹ No enunciation of the Holy Spirit ought to be (confined) to the subject immediately in hand merely, and not applied and carried out with a view to *every* occasion to which its application is useful.¹⁵² Since, therefore, both our own interest and that of others is implicated in the studious pursuit of most perilous (outward) comeliness, it is time for you to know¹⁵³ that not merely must the pageantry of fictitious and elaborate beauty be rejected by you; but that of even natural grace must be obliterated by concealment and negligence, as equally dangerous to the glances of (the beholder's) eyes. For, albeit comeliness is not to be *censured*,¹⁵⁴ as being a bodily happiness, as being an additional outlay of the divine plastic art, as being a kind of goodly garment¹⁵⁵ of the soul; yet it is to be *feared*, just on account of the injuriousness and violence of suitors:¹⁵⁶ which (injuriousness and violence) even the father of the faith,¹⁵⁷ Abraham,¹⁵⁸ greatly feared in regard of his own wife's grace; and Isaac,¹⁵⁹ by falsely representing Rebecca as his sister, purchased safety by insult!¹⁶⁰

150 Lev. xix. 18; Matt. xix. 19; xxii. 39; Mark xii. 31; Luke x. 27; Rom. xiii. 9; Gal. v. 14; Jas. ii. 8.

151 Comp. 1 Cor. x. 24; xiii. 5; Phil. ii. 4.

152 Comp. 2 Pet. i. 20.

153 Jam...sciatis.

154 Accusandus.

155 Comp. Gen. xxvii. 15.

156 Sectatorum.

157 Comp. Rom. iv. 11, 16.

158 Gen. xii. 10–20, and xx.

159 Gen. xxvi. 6–11.

160 "Salutem contumelia redemit;" the "insult" being the denial of her as his wife.

Chapter III.—Grant that Beauty Be Not to Be Feared: Still It is to Be Shunned as Unnecessary and Vainglorious.

Let it now be granted that excellence of form be not to be feared, as neither troublesome to its possessors, nor destructive to its desirers, nor perilous to its companions;¹⁶¹ let it be thought (to be) not exposed to temptations, not surrounded by stumbling-blocks: it is enough that to angels of God¹⁶² it is not necessary. For, where modesty is, there beauty is idle; because properly the use and fruit of beauty is voluptuousness, unless any one thinks that there is some other harvest for bodily grace to reap.¹⁶³ Are women who think that, in furnishing to their *neighbour* that which is demanded of beauty, they are furnishing it to *themselves* also, to augment that (beauty) when (naturally) given them, and to strive after it when not (thus) given? Some one will say, “Why, then, if voluptuousness be shut out and chastity let in, may (we) not enjoy the praise of beauty alone, and glory in a bodily good?” Let whoever finds pleasure in “glorying in the flesh”¹⁶⁴ see to that. To us in the first place, there is no studious pursuit of “glory,” because “glory” is the essence of *exaltation*. Now *exaltation* is incongruous for professors of *humility* according to God’s precepts. Secondly, if *all* “glory” is “vain” and insensate,¹⁶⁵ how much more (glory) *in the flesh*, especially to *us*? For even if “glorying” is (allowable), we ought to wish our sphere of pleasing to lie in the graces¹⁶⁶ of the Spirit, not in the flesh; because we are “suitors”¹⁶⁷ of things spiritual. In those things wherein our sphere of labour lies, let our joy lie. From the sources whence we hope for salvation, let us cull our “glory.” Plainly, a Christian *will* “glory” even in the *flesh*; but (it will be) when it has endured laceration for Christ’s sake,¹⁶⁸ in order that the spirit may be crowned in it, not in order that it may draw the eyes and sighs of youths after it. Thus (a thing) which, from whatever point you look at it, is in *your* case superfluous, you may justly disdain if you have it not, and neglect if you have. Let a holy woman, if naturally beautiful, give none so great occasion (for carnal appetite). Certainly, if even she be so, she ought not to set off (her beauty), but even to obscure it.¹⁶⁹

161 Conjunctis.

162 Angelis Dei. Comp. the opening sentence of the book.

163 Comp. *ad Ux.*, b. i. c. iv.

164 See [Gal. vi. 13](#) and [1 Cor. iii. 21](#); [v. 6](#).

165 Stuporata.

166 Bonis.

167 Sectatores.

168 Comp. [2 Cor. xi. 18](#); [xii. 10](#); [Phil. iii. 3, 4](#).

169 Non adjuvare, sed etiam impedire, debet.

Chapter IV.—Concerning the Plea of “Pleasing the Husband.”

As if I were speaking to Gentiles, addressing you with a Gentile precept, and (one which is) common to all, (I would say,) “You are bound to please your husbands only.”¹⁷⁰ But you will please *them* in proportion as you take no care to please *others*. Be ye without carefulness,¹⁷¹ blessed (sisters): no wife is “ugly” to her own husband. She “pleased” him enough when she was selected (by him as his wife); whether commended by form or by character. Let none of you think that, if she abstain from the care of her person,¹⁷² she will incur the hatred and aversion of husbands. Every husband is the exactor of *chastity*; but *beauty*, a believing (husband) does not require, because we are not captivated by the same graces¹⁷³ which the Gentiles think (to be) graces:¹⁷⁴ an *unbelieving* one, on the other hand, even regards with suspicion, just from that infamous opinion of us which the Gentiles have. For whom, then, is it that you cherish your beauty? If for a believer, he does not exact it: if for an *unbeliever*, he does not believe in it unless it be artless.¹⁷⁵ Why are you eager to please either one who is suspicious, or else one who desires it not?

170 Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 34.

171 Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 32.

172 Compositione sui.

173 Bonis.

174 Bona.

175 Simplicem.

Chapter V.—Some Refinements in Dress and Personal Appearance Lawful, Some Unlawful. Pigments Come Under the Latter Head.

These suggestions are not made to you, of course, to be developed into an entire crudity and wildness of appearance; nor are we seeking to persuade you of the good of squalor and slovenliness; but of the limit and norm and just measure of cultivation of the person. There must be no overstepping of that line to which simple and sufficient refinements limit their desires—that line which is pleasing to God. For they who rub¹⁷⁶ their skin with medicaments, stain their cheeks with rouge, make their eyes prominent with antimony,¹⁷⁷ sin against Him. To them, I suppose, the plastic skill¹⁷⁸ of God is displeasing! In their own persons, I suppose, they convict, they censure, the Artificer of all things! For censure they do when they amend, when they add to, (His work;) taking these their additions, of course, from the adversary artificer. That adversary artificer is the devil.¹⁷⁹ For who would show the way to change the *body*, but he who by wickedness transfigured man's *spirit*? He it is, undoubtedly, who adapted ingenious devices of this kind; that in your persons it may be apparent that you, in a certain sense, do violence to God. Whatever is *born* is the work of God. Whatever, then, is *plastered on*¹⁸⁰ (that), is the devil's work. To superinduce on a divine work Satan's ingenuities, how criminal is it! Our servants borrow nothing from our personal enemies: soldiers eagerly desire nothing from the foes of their own general; for, to demand for (your own) use anything from the adversary of Him in whose hand¹⁸¹ you are, is a transgression. Shall a Christian be assisted in anything by that evil one? (If he do,) I know not whether this name (of "Christian") will continue (to belong) to him; for he will be *his* in whose lore he eagerly desires to be instructed. But how alien from *your* schoolings¹⁸² and professions are (these things)! How unworthy the Christian name, to wear a fictitious face, (you,) on whom simplicity in every form is enjoined!—to lie in your appearance, (you,) to whom (lying) with the tongue is not lawful!—to seek after what is another's, (you,) to whom is delivered (the precept of) abstinence from what is another's!—to practise adultery in your mien,¹⁸³ (you,) who make modesty your study! Think,¹⁸⁴ blessed (sisters), how will you keep God's precepts if you shall not keep in your own persons His lineaments?

176 Urgent. Comp. *de Pæn.*, c. xi.

177 "Fuligine," lit. "soot." Comp. b. i. c. ii.

178 See c. ii. *ad fin.*

179 Comp. b. i. c. viii.

180 Infingitur.

181 i.e., subject to whom.

182 Disciplinis.

183 Species.

184 Credite.

Chapter VI.—Of Dyeing the Hair.

I see some (women) turn (the colour of) their hair with saffron. They are ashamed even of their own nation, (ashamed) that their procreation did not assign them to Germany and to Gaul: thus, as it is, they transfer their *hair*¹⁸⁵ (thither)! Ill, ay, *most* ill, do they augur for themselves with their flame-coloured head,¹⁸⁶ and think that graceful which (in fact) they are polluting! Nay, moreover, the force of the cosmetics burns ruin into the hair; and the constant application of even any *undrugged* moisture, lays up a store of harm for the head; while the sun's warmth, too, so desirable for imparting to the hair at once growth and dryness, is hurtful. What "grace" is compatible with "injury?" What "beauty" with "impurities?" Shall a Christian woman heap saffron on her head, as upon an altar?¹⁸⁷ For, whatever is wont to be burned to the honour of the unclean spirit, that—unless it is applied for honest, and necessary, and salutary uses, for which God's creature was provided—may seem to be a sacrifice. But, however, God saith, "Which of you can make a white hair black, or out of a black a white?"¹⁸⁸ And so they refute the Lord! "Behold!" say they, "instead of white or black, we make it *yellow*,—more winning in grace."¹⁸⁹ And yet such as repent of having lived to old age do *attempt* to change it even from white to black! O temerity! The age which is the object of our wishes and prayers blushes (for itself)! a theft is effected! youth, wherein we have sinned,¹⁹⁰ is sighed after! the opportunity of sobriety is spoiled! Far from Wisdom's daughters be folly so great! The more old age tries to conceal itself, the more will it be detected. Here is a veritable eternity, in the (perennial) youth of your head! Here we have an "incorruptibility" to "put on,"¹⁹¹ with a view to the new house of the Lord¹⁹² which the divine monarchy promises! Well do you speed toward the Lord; well do you hasten to be quit of this most iniquitous world,¹⁹³ to whom it is unsightly to approach (your own) end!

185 Jam capillos: so Oehler and Rig. But the others read *patriam capillo*: "they change their country by the instrumentality of their hair."

186 Comp. *ad Ux.*, b. i. c. vi.

187 Aram.

188 See [Matt. v. 36](#).

189 Gratia faciliorem.

190 Comp. [Ps. xxv. 7](#) (in LXX. xxiv. 7).

191 Comp. [1 Cor. xv. 53](#).

192 Comp. [2 Cor. v. 1](#).

193 Sæculo.

Chapter VII.—Of Elaborate Dressing of the Hair in Other Ways, and Its Bearing Upon Salvation.

What service, again, does all the labour spent in *arranging* the hair render to salvation? Why is no rest allowed to your hair, which must now be bound, now loosed, now cultivated, now thinned out? Some are anxious to force their hair into curls, some to let it hang loose and flying; not with good simplicity: beside which, you affix I know not what enormities of subtle and textile perukes; now, after the manner of a helmet of undressed hide, as it were a sheath for the head and a covering for the crown; now, a mass (drawn) backward toward the neck. The wonder is, that there is no (open) contending against the Lord's prescripts! It has been pronounced that no one can add to his own stature.¹⁹⁴ *You*, however, *do* add to your *weight* some kind of rolls, or shield-bosses, to be piled upon your necks! If you feel no shame at the enormity, feel some at the pollution; for fear you may be fitting on a holy and Christian head the slough¹⁹⁵ of some one else's¹⁹⁶ head, unclean perchance, guilty perchance and destined to hell.¹⁹⁷ Nay, rather banish quite away from your "free"¹⁹⁸ head all this slavery of ornamentation. In vain do you labour to seem adorned: in vain do you call in the aid of all the most skilful manufacturers of false hair. God bids you "be veiled."¹⁹⁹ I believe (He does so) for fear the heads of some should be seen! And oh that in "that day"²⁰⁰ of Christian exultation, I, most miserable (as I am), may elevate my head, even though below (the level of) your heels! I shall (then) see whether you will rise with (your) ceruse and rouge and saffron, and in all that parade of headgear:²⁰¹ whether it will be women thus tricked out whom the angels carry up to meet Christ in the air!²⁰² If these (decorations) are *now* good, and of God, they will *then* also present themselves to the rising bodies, and will recognise their several places. But nothing can rise except flesh and spirit sole and pure.²⁰³ Whatever, therefore, does not rise in (the form of)²⁰⁴ spirit and flesh is condemned, because

194 Mensuram. See [Matt. vi. 27](#).

195 Exuvias.

196 "Alieni:" perhaps here = "*alien*," i.e., "heathen," as in other places.

197 Gehennæ.

198 Comp. [Gal. iv. 31](#); [v. 13](#).

199 See [1 Cor. xi. 2–16](#); and comp. *de Or.*, c. xxii., and the treatise *de Virg. Vel.*

200 Comp. *ad Ux.*, b. ii. c. iii.

201 *Ambitu* (*habitu* is a conjectural emendation noticed by Oehler) capitis.

202 See [1 Thess. iv. 13–17](#).

203 Comp. [1 Cor. xv. 50](#) with [1 Thess. v. 23](#).

204 Or, "within the limits of the flesh and the spirit."

it is not of God. From things which are condemned abstain, even at the present day. At the present day let God see you such as He will see you *then*.

Chapter VIII.—Men Not Excluded from These Remarks on Personal Adornment.

Of course, now, I, a man, as being envious²⁰⁵ of women, am banishing them quite from their own (domains). Are there, in our case too, some things which, in respect of the sobriety²⁰⁶ we are to maintain on account of the fear²⁰⁷ due to God, are disallowed?²⁰⁸ If it is true, (as it is,) that in men, for the sake of women (just as in women for the sake of men), there is implanted, by a defect of nature, the will to please; and if this sex of ours acknowledges to itself deceptive trickeries of form peculiarly its own,—(such as) to cut the beard too sharply; to pluck it out here and there; to shave round about (the mouth); to arrange the hair, and disguise its hoariness by dyes; to remove all the incipient down all over the body; to fix (each particular hair) in its place with (some) womanly pigment; to smooth all the rest of the body by the aid of some rough powder or other: then, further, to take every opportunity for consulting the mirror; to gaze anxiously into it:—while yet, when (once) the knowledge of God has put an end to all wish to please by means of voluptuous attraction, all these things are rejected as frivolous, as hostile to modesty. For where God is, there modesty is; there is sobriety²⁰⁹ her assistant and ally. How, then, shall we practise modesty without her instrumental mean,²¹⁰ that is, without sobriety?²¹¹ How, moreover, shall we bring sobriety²¹² to bear on the discharge of (the functions of) modesty, unless seriousness in appearance and in countenance, and in the general aspect²¹³ of the entire man, mark our carriage?

205 Æmulus.

206 Gravitatis.

207 Metus.

208 Detrahuntur.

209 Gravitas.

210 Comp. *de Pa.*, c. xv. *ad fin.*

211 Gravitate.

212 Gravitatem.

213 Contemplatione.

Chapter IX.—Excess in Dress, as Well as in Personal Culture, to Be Shunned. Arguments Drawn from I Cor. VII.

Wherefore, with regard to clothing also, and all the remaining lumber of your self-elaboration,²¹⁴ the like pruning off and retrenchment of too redundant splendour must be the object of your care. For what boots it to exhibit in your *face* temperance and unaffectedness, and a simplicity altogether worthy of the divine discipline, but to invest all the *other* parts of the body with the luxurious absurdities of pomps and delicacies? How intimate is the connection which these pomps have with the business of voluptuousness, and how they interfere with modesty, is easily discernible from the fact that it is by the allied aid of dress that they prostitute the grace of personal comeliness: so plain is it that if (the pomps) be wanting, they render (that grace) bootless and thankless, as if it were disarmed and wrecked. On the other hand, if natural beauty fails, the supporting aid of outward embellishment supplies a grace, as it were, from its own inherent power.²¹⁵ Those times of life, in fact, which are at last blest with quiet and withdrawn into the harbour of modesty, the splendour and dignity of dress lure away (from that rest and that harbour), and *disquiet* seriousness by seductions of appetite, which compensate for the chill of age by the provocative charms of apparel. First, then, blessed (sisters), (take heed) that you admit not to your use meretricious and prostitutionary garbs and garments: and, in the next place, if there are any of you whom the exigencies of riches, or birth, or past dignities, compel to appear in public so gorgeously arrayed as not to appear to have attained wisdom, take heed to temper an evil of this kind; lest, under the pretext of necessity, you give the rein without stint to the indulgence of licence. For how will you be able to fulfil (the requirements of) humility, which our (school) profess,²¹⁶ if you do not keep within bounds²¹⁷ the enjoyment of your riches and elegancies, which tend so much to “glory?” Now it has ever been the wont of glory to *exalt*, not to *humble*. “Why, shall we not use what is our own?” Who prohibits your using it? Yet (it must be) in accordance with the apostle, who warns us “to use this world²¹⁸ as if we abuse it not; for the fashion²¹⁹ of this world²²⁰ is passing away.” And “they who buy are so to act as if they possessed not.”²²¹ Why so? Because he had laid down the premiss,

214 Impedimenta compositionis.

215 De suo. Comp. *de Bapt.*, c. xvii. (*sub. fin.*), *de Cult. Fem.*, b. i. c. v. (*med.*).

216 See c. iii.

217 Repastinantes.

218 Mundo; κόσμος. See I Cor. vii. 31.

219 Habitus; σχῆμα, *ib.*

220 Κόσμου, *ib.*

221 I Cor. vii. 30.

saying, “The time is wound up.”²²² If, then he shows plainly that even wives themselves are so to be had as if they be *not* had,²²³ on account of the straits of the times, what would be his sentiments about these vain appliances of theirs? Why, are there not many, withal, who so *do*, and seal themselves up to eunuchhood for the sake of the kingdom of God,²²⁴ spontaneously relinquishing a pleasure so honourable,²²⁵ and (as we know) permitted? Are there not some who prohibit to themselves (the use of) the very “creature of God,”²²⁶ abstaining from wine and animal food, the enjoyments of which border upon no peril or solicitude; but they sacrifice to God the humility of their soul even in the chastened use of food? Sufficiently, therefore, have you, too, used your riches and your delicacies; sufficiently have you cut down the fruits of your dowries, before (receiving) the knowledge of saving disciplines. We are they “upon whom the ends of the ages have met, having ended their course.”²²⁷ We have been predestined by God, before the world²²⁸ was, (to arise) in the extreme end of the times.²²⁹ And so we are trained by God for the purpose of chastising, and (so to say) emasculating, the world.²³⁰ We are the circumcision²³¹—spiritual and carnal—of all things; for both in the spirit and in the flesh we circumcise worldly²³² principles.

222 1 Cor. vii. 29.

223 1 Cor. vii. 29.

224 Matt. xix. 12.

225 Fortem.

226 Comp. 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

227 1 Cor. x. 11, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντησεν.

228 Mundum.

229 In extimatione temporalis. See Eph. i. 4 and 1 Pet. i. 20.

230 Sæculo.

231 Comp. Phil. iii. 3.

232 Sæcularia.

Chapter X.—Tertullian Refers Again to the Question of the Origin of All These Ornaments and Embellishments.²³³

It was God, no doubt, who showed the way to dye wools with the juices of herbs and the humours of conchs! It had escaped Him, when He was bidding the universe to come into being,²³⁴ to issue a command for (the production of) purple and scarlet sheep! It was God, too, who devised by careful thought the manufactures of those very garments which, light and thin (in themselves), were to be heavy in price alone; God who produced such grand implements of gold for confining or parting the hair; God who introduced (the fashion of) finely-cut wounds for the ears, and set so high a value upon the tormenting of His own work and the tortures of innocent infancy, learning to suffer with its earliest breath, in order that from those scars of the body—born for the steel!—should hang I know not what (precious) grains, which, as we may plainly see, the Parthians insert, in place of studs, upon their very shoes! And yet even the gold itself, the “glory” of which carries you away, serves a certain race (so Gentile literature tells us) for chains! So true is it that it is not intrinsic worth,²³⁵ but rarity, which constitutes the goodness (of these things): the excessive labour, moreover, of working them with arts introduced by the means of the sinful angels, who were the revealers withal of the material substances themselves, joined with their rarity, excited their costliness, and hence a lust on the part of women to possess (that) costliness. But, if the self-same angels who disclosed both the material substances of this kind and their charms—of gold, I mean, and lustrous²³⁶ stones—and taught men how to work them, and by and by instructed them, among their other (instructions), in (the virtues of) eyelid-powder and the dyeings of fleeces, have been condemned by God, as Enoch tells us, how shall we please God while we joy in the *things* of those (angels) who, on these accounts, have provoked the *anger* and the *vengeance* of God?

Now, granting that God did foresee these things; that God permitted them; that Esaias finds fault with no garment of purple,²³⁷ represses no coil,²³⁸ reprobates no crescent-shaped neck ornaments;²³⁹ still let *us* not, as the Gentiles do, flatter ourselves with thinking that God is merely a Creator, not likewise a Downlooker on His own creatures. For how far more usefully and cautiously shall we act, if we hazard the presumption that all these things

233 Comp. i. cc. ii. iii. v. vii. viii.

234 *Universa nasci.*

235 *Veritate.*

236 *Illustrium.*

237 *De conchylio.*

238 *κοσύμβους. Isa. iii. 18 (in LXX.).*

239 *Lunulas = μηνίσκους, ib.*

were indeed provided²⁴⁰ at the beginning and placed in the world²⁴¹ by God, in order that there should now be means of putting to the proof the discipline of His servants, in order that the licence of *using* should be the means whereby the experimental trials of *continence* should be conducted? Do not wise heads of families purposely offer and permit some things to their servants²⁴² in order to try whether and how they will use the things thus permitted; whether (they will do so) with honesty, or with moderation? But how far more praiseworthy (the servant) who abstains entirely; who has a wholesome fear²⁴³ even of his lord's indulgence! Thus, therefore, the apostle too: "All things," says he, "are lawful, but not all are expedient."²⁴⁴ How much more easily will he fear²⁴⁵ what is *unlawful* who has a reverent dread²⁴⁶ of what is *lawful*?

240 Or, "foreseen."

241 Sæculo.

242 Or, "slaves."

243 Timuerit.

244 [1 Cor. x. 23.](#)

245 Timebit.

246 Verebitur.

Chapter XI.—Christian Women, Further, Have Not the Same Causes for Appearing in Public, and Hence for Dressing in Fine Array as Gentiles. On the Contrary, Their Appearance Should Always Distinguish Them from Such.

Moreover, what causes have you for appearing in public in excessive grandeur, removed as you are from the occasions which call for such exhibitions? For you neither make the circuit of the temples, nor demand (to be present at) public shows, nor have any acquaintance with the holy days of the Gentiles. Now it is for the sake of all these public gatherings, and of much seeing and being seen, that all pomps (of dress) are exhibited before the public eye; either for the purpose of transacting the trade of voluptuousness, or else of inflating “glory.” *You*, however, have no cause of appearing in public, except such as is serious. Either some brother who is sick is visited, or else the sacrifice is offered, or else the word of God is dispensed. Whichever of these you like to name is a business of sobriety²⁴⁷ and sanctity, requiring no extraordinary attire, with (studious) arrangement and (wanton) negligence.²⁴⁸ And if the requirements of Gentile friendships and of kindly offices call you, why not go forth clad in your own armour; (and) all the more, in that (you have to go) to such as are strangers to the faith? so that between the handmaids of God and of the devil there may be a difference; so that you may be an example to them, and they may be edified in you; so that (as the apostle says) “God may be magnified in your body.”²⁴⁹ But magnified He is in the *body* through modesty: of course, too, through attire suitable to modesty. Well, but it is urged by some, “Let not the Name be blasphemed in us,”²⁵⁰ if we make any derogatory change from our old style and dress.” Let us, then, not abolish our old vices! let us maintain the same character, if we must maintain the same appearance (as before); and then truly the nations will not blaspheme! A grand blasphemy is that by which it is said, “Ever since she became a Christian, she walks in poorer garb!” Will you fear to appear poorer, from the time that you have been made more wealthy; and *fouler*,²⁵¹ from the time when you have been made more clean? Is it according to the decree²⁵² of Gentiles, or according to the decree of God, that it becomes Christians to walk?

247 Gravitatis.

248 Et composito et soluto.

249 See [Phil. i. 20](#).

250 Comp. *de Idol.*, c. xiv.

251 Sordidior.

252 Or “pleasure:” placitum.

Chapter XII.—Such Outward Adornments Meretricious, and Therefore Unsuitable to Modest Women.

Let us only wish that we may be no cause for just blasphemy! But how much more provocative of blasphemy is it that you, who are called modesty's priestesses, should appear in public decked and painted out after the manner of the *immodest*? Else, (if you so do,) what inferiority would the poor unhappy victims of the public lusts have (beneath you)? whom, albeit some laws were (formerly) wont to restrain them from (the use of) matrimonial and matronly decorations, now, at all events, the daily increasing depravity of the age²⁵³ has raised so nearly to an equality with all the most honourable women, that the difficulty is to distinguish them. And yet, even the Scriptures suggest (to us the reflection), that meretricious attractivenesses of form are invariably conjoined with and appropriate²⁵⁴ to bodily prostitution. That powerful state²⁵⁵ which presides over²⁵⁶ the seven mountains and very many waters, has merited from the Lord the appellation of a prostitute.²⁵⁷ But what kind of garb is the instrumental mean of her comparison with that appellation? She sits, to be sure, "in purple, and scarlet, and gold, and precious stone." How accursed are the things without (the aid of) which an accursed prostitute could not have been described! It was the fact that Tamar "had painted out and adorned herself" that led Judah to regard her as a harlot,²⁵⁸ and thus, because she was hidden beneath her "veil,"—the quality of her garb belying her as if she had been a harlot,—he judged (her to be one), and addressed and bargained with (her as such). Whence we gather an additional confirmation of the lesson, that provision must be made in every way against all immodest associations²⁵⁹ and suspicions. For why is the integrity of a chaste mind defiled by its neighbour's suspicion? Why is a thing from which I am averse hoped for in me? Why does not my garb pre-announce my character, to prevent my spirit from being wounded by shamelessness through (the channel of) my ears? Grant that it be lawful to assume the appearance of a modest woman:²⁶⁰ to assume that of an *immodest* is, at all events, *not* lawful.

253 Sæculi.

254 Debita.

255 Or, "city."

256 Or, "sits on high above."

257 Comp. Rev. xvii.

258 Comp. Gen. xxxviii. 12–30.

259 Congressus.

260 Videri pudicam.

Chapter XIII.—It is Not Enough that God Know Us to Be Chaste: We Must Seem So Before Men. Especially in These Times of Persecution We Must Inure Our Bodies to the Hardships Which They May Not Improbably Be Called to Suffer.

Perhaps some (woman) will say: “To me it is not necessary to be approved by men; for I do not require the testimony of men.”²⁶¹ God is the inspector of the heart.”²⁶² (That) we all know; provided, however, we remember what the same (God) has said through the apostle: “Let your probity appear before men.”²⁶³ For what purpose, except that malice may have no access at all to you, or that you may be an example and testimony to the evil? Else, what is (that): “Let your works shine?”²⁶⁴ Why, moreover, does the Lord call us the light of the world; why has He compared us to a city built upon a mountain;²⁶⁵ if we do not shine in (the midst of) darkness, and stand eminent amid them who are sunk down? If you hide your lamp beneath a bushel,²⁶⁶ you must necessarily be left quite in darkness, and be run against by many. The things which make us luminaries of the world are these—our good works. What is *good*, moreover, provided it be true and full, loves not darkness: it joys in being seen,²⁶⁷ and exults over the very pointings which are made at it. To Christian modesty it is not enough to *be* so, but to *seem* so too. For so great ought its plenitude to be, that it may flow out from the mind to the garb, and burst out from the conscience to the outward appearance; so that even from the outside it may gaze, as it were, upon its own furniture,²⁶⁸—(a furniture) such as to be suited to retain faith as its inmate perpetually. For such delicacies as tend by their softness and effeminacy to unman the manliness²⁶⁹ of faith are to be discarded. Otherwise, I know not whether the wrist that has been wont to be surrounded with the palmleaf-like bracelet will endure till it grow into the numb hardness of its own chain! I know not whether the leg that has rejoiced in the anklet will suffer itself to be squeezed into the gyve! I fear the neck, beset with pearl and emerald nooses, will give no room to the broadsword! Wherefore, blessed (sisters), let us meditate on hardships, and we shall not feel them; let us abandon luxuries, and we shall not regret them. Let us stand ready to endure every violence, having nothing which we may fear to leave behind. It is

261 Comp. [John v. 34](#); [1 Cor. iv. 3](#).

262 Comp. [1 Sam. xvi. 7](#); [Jer. xvii. 10](#); [Luke xvi. 15](#).

263 See [Phil. iv. 5, 8](#); [Rom. xii. 17](#); [2 Cor. viii. 21](#).

264 See [Matt. v. 16](#); and comp. *de Idol.*, c. xv. *ad init.*

265 [Matt. v. 14](#).

266 [Matt. v. 15](#); [Mark iv. 21](#); [Luke viii. 16](#); [xi. 33](#).

267 See [John iii. 21](#).

268 Suppellectilem.

269 Effeminari virtus.

these things which are the bonds which retard our hope. Let us cast away earthly ornaments if we desire heavenly. Love not gold; in which (one substance) are branded all the sins of the people of Israel. You ought to *hate* what ruined your fathers; what was adored by them who were forsaking God.²⁷⁰ Even *then* (we find) gold is food for the fire.²⁷¹ But Christians always, and now more than ever, pass their times not in gold but in iron: the stoles of martyrdom are (now) preparing: the angels who are to carry us are (now) being awaited! Do you go forth (to meet them) already arrayed in the cosmetics and ornaments of prophets and apostles; drawing your whiteness from simplicity, your ruddy hue from modesty; painting your eyes with bashfulness, and your mouth with silence; implanting in your ears the words of God; fitting on your necks the yoke of Christ. Submit your head to your husbands, and you will be enough adorned. Busy your hands with spinning; keep your feet at home; and you will “please” better than (by arraying yourselves) in gold. Clothe yourselves with the silk of uprightness, the fine linen of holiness, the purple of modesty. Thus painted, you will have God as your Lover!

270 Comp. [Ex. xxxii.](#)

271 [Ex. xxxii. 20.](#)