object in all his conferences and diſcourſes was, to lead men into an acquaintance with themſelves ; to convince them of their follies and vices; to inſpire them with the love of virtue ; and to furniſh them with uſeful moral inſtructions. Cicero might therefore very juſtly lay of Socrates, that he was the firſt who called down philo­ſophy from heaven to earth, and introduced her into the public walks and domeſtic retirements of men, that ſhe might inſtruct them concerning life and manners.

Through his whole life this good man diſcovered a mind ſuperior to the attractions of wealth and power. Contrary to the general practice of the preceptors of his time, he inſtructed his pupils without receiving from them any gratuity. He frequently refuſed rich presents, which were offered him by Alcibiades and others, though importunately urged to accept them by his wiſe. The chief men of Athens were his ſtewards : they ſent him in proviſions, as they apprehended he wanted them; he took what his preſent wants required, and returned the reſt. Obſerving the numerous articles of luxury which were expoſed to ſale in Athens, he ex­claimed, “ How many things are there which I do not want !” With Socrates, moderation ſupplied the place of wealth. In his clothing and food, he conſulted only the demands oſ nature. He commonly appeared in a neat but plain clock, with his feet uncovered. Though his table was only ſupplied with ſimple fare, he did not ſcruple to invite men of ſuperior rank to partake of his meals ; and when his wife, upon ſome ſuch occaſion, expreſſed her diſſatisſaction on being no better pro­vided, he delired her to give herſelf no concern ; for if his gueſts were wiſe men, they would be contented with whatever they found at his table ; if otherwiſe, they were unworthy of notice. Whilſt others, lays he, live to eat, wiſe men eat to live.

Though Socrates was exceedingly unfortunate in his domeſtic connection, he converted this infelicity into an occaſion of exerciſing his virtues. Xantippe, concern­ing whoſe ill humour ancient writers relate many amuſing tales, was certainly a woman of a high and unma­nageable ſpirit. But Socrates, while he endeavoured to curb the violence of her temper, improved his own. When Alcibiades expreſſed his ſurpriſe that his friend could bear to live in the ſame houſe with ſo perverſe and quarrelſome a companion, Socrates replied, that be­ing daily inured to ill humour at home, he was the better prepared to encounter perverſeneſs and injury abroad.

In the midſt of domeſtic vexations and public diſorders, Socrates retained ſuch an unruffled ſerenity, that he was never ſeen either to leave his own houſe or to return home with a diſturbed countenance. In acqui­ring this entire dominion over his paſſions and appetites, he had the greater merit, as it was not effected without **a** violent ſtruggle againſt his natural propensities. Zo­pyrus, an eminent phyſiognomiſt, declared, that he diſ­covered in the features of the philoſopher evident traces of many vicious inclinations. The friends of Socrates who were preſent ridiculed the ignorance of this pre­tender to extraordinary ſagacity. But Socrates himſelf ingenuouſly acknowledged his penetration, and confeſſed that he was in his natural diſposition prone to vice, but that he had ſubdued his inclinations by the power of reaſon and philoſophy.

Through the whole of his life Socrates gave himſelf

up to the guidance of unbiaſſed reaſon, which is ſuppo­ſed by ſome to be all that he meant by the genius or *damon* from which he profeſſed to receive inſtruction. But this opinion is inconſiſtent with the accounts given by his followers of that dæmon, and even with the lan­guage in which he ſpoke of it himſelf. Plato ſome­times calls it his *guardian,* and Apuleius his god,∙ and as Xenophon atteſts that it was the belief of his maſter that the gods occasionally communicate to men the knowledge of future events, it is by no means impro­bable that Socrates admitted, with the generality of his countrymen, the exiſtence of thoſe intermediate beings called *damons,* of one of which he might fancy himſelf the peculiar care.

It was one of the maxims of Socrates, “ That a wiſe man will worſhip the gods according to the inſtitutions of the ſtate to which he belongs.” Convinced of the weakneſs of the human underſtanding, and perceiving that the pride of philoſophy had led his predeceſſors in­to futile ſpeculations on the nature and origin of things, he judged it moſt conſiſtent with true wiſdom to ſpeak with caution and reverence concerning the divine na­ture.

The wiſdom and the virtues oſ this great man, whilſt they procured him many followers, created him alſo many enemies. The Sophists@@\*, whoſe knavery and ig­norance he took every opportunity of expoſing to pub­lic contempt, became inveterate in their enmity againſt ſo bold a reformer, and deviſed an expedient, by which they hoped to check the current of his popularity. They engaged Ariſtophanes, the firſt buffoon of the age, to write a comedy, in which Socrates ſhould be the principal character. Ariſtophanes, pleaſed with ſo promiſing an occaſion of diſplaying his low and malig­nant wit, undertook the taſk, and produced the comedy of *The Clouds,* ſtill extant in his works. In this piece, Socrates is introduced hanging in a baſket in the air, and thence pouring forth abſurdity and prophaneneſs. But the philoſopher, ſhowing in a crouded theatre that he was wholly unmoved by this ribaldry, the satire failed of its effect ; and when Ariſtophanes attempted the year following to renew the piece with alterations and additions, the repreſentation was ſo much diſcouraged, that he was obliged to diſcontinue it.

From this time Socrates continued for many years to purſue without interruption his laudable deſign of inſtructing and reforming his fellow-citizens. At length, however, when the inflexible integrity with which he had diſcharged the duty of a ſenator, and the firmneſs with which he had oppoſed every kind oſ political cor­ruption and oppreſſion, had greatly increaſed the num­ber of his enemies, clandeſtine arts were employed to raiſe a general prejudice againſt him. The people were induſtriouſly reminded, that Critias, who had been one of the moſt cruel of the thirty tyrants, and Alcibiades, who had inſulted religion, by defacing the public ſtatues of Mercury, and performing a mock repreſentation of the Eleuſinian myſteries, had in their youth been diſciples of Socrates ; and the minds of the populace be­ing thus prepared, a direct accuſation was preferred againſt him before the ſupreme court of judicature. His accuſers were Anytus a leather-dresser, who had long entertained a perſonal enmity againſt Socrates, for re­prehending his avarice, in depriving his ſons of the be­nefits of learning, that they might purſue the gains of

@@@\* See Sophist.