

Roman helmets. By it we find how unknown the modern timidity of authorship was to Baptista Porta, "without fear and without reproach" seems to have been his motto. He plumes himself on account of his venerable age, and noble acquirements, and seems dubious whether the world were worthy of his book or not. However, he says, "let envy be driven away, and a desire to benefit posterity, vanquish all other thoughts—I set my book before you, that you may discern my diligence and benevolence toward you: had I withheld these things from the world, I fear I should have undergone the reproach of a wicked man." This is an amiable specimen of literary fanaticism—the spirit is disguised, but not dead yet; some of our day, sit in their study, big with futurity and contending within themselves, whether they shall leave the world in ignorance, or rush into the responsibility of print—and, when their works appear—the leaf on ocean, is not more unknown or unimportant, than their volume. Baptista applies a salvo to his conscience, with regard to his sin—of throwing too much light on a vulgar world—for, says he,

"Such as are magnificent and most excellent, I have veil'd by the artifice of words, by transposition and depression of them; and such things as are hurtful and mischievous, I have written obscurely; yet not so, but that an ingenious reader may unfold it, and the wit of one that will thoroughly search may comprehend it."

Here again we see a germ of much of our present author-craft. The transposing and depressing of magnificent and excellent things, and the vending of mischief in obscure phraseology—have not yet ceased to be "an aim and an attainment" amid a world of literature. He then treats of former authors who wrote vaguely and ludicrously, and who promised golden mountains, only to disappoint those who trusted in them;—all which applies at the present day most forcibly to his own book. But his great care seems to be, to escape the character of a conjuror! He need not fear—a tortoise had as much cause to dread that it should be taken for a high mettled racer, as John Baptista, that, his quaint childishness should dub him a conjurer. In this preface we have a very amusing method of answering a critic. Instead of resorting to logic or to ridicule, our author merely says that *his Reviewer is an Heretic*, and prays for his conversion—we quote the passage, and our readers will find it very curious read at the present time.

"A certain Frenchman in his Book called *Dæmonomania*, terms me a Magician, a Conjuror, and thinks this book of mine, long since printed, worthy to be burnt, because I have written the *Faries Oyntment*, which I set forth onely in detestation of the fraud of Divels and Witches: That which comes by Nature is abused by their superstition, which I borrowed from the Books of the most commendable Divines. What have I offended herein, that they should call me a Conjuror? But when I enquired of many Noble and Learned Frenchmen, that were pleased to honour