

neighbouring potentates, served only to rouse their jealousy lest the king of Lu should become too powerful by following the counsels of Confucius, and the following expedient was adopted by the king of Tsi to render them unavailing :—

He collected a number of young girls of extraordinary beauty, thoroughly instructed in the accomplishments of singing and dancing, and mistresses of allurements; that would charm and captivate the heart; these he presented to the king of Lu and nobles, by whom they were joyfully received.

The effects of this policy soon became apparent—the counsels of Confucius were no longer regarded; luxury and voluptuousness resumed their sway; and nothing was seen for some months but feasting, dancing, and shows.

Confucius used every possible means to stem this impetuous torrent, and bring the people back to the sense of their true interests; but, finding every effort vain, he resigned his employment, and sought in other kingdoms minds and dispositions more fit to relish and adopt his maxims.

For this purpose, he travelled through various kingdoms, but met with insuperable obstacles from the unsettled state of public affairs, and the ambition, avarice and voluptuousness that everywhere prevailed.

Finding it impossible to do the good he wished in the courts of kings and princes, he endeavoured to enlighten the minds of the people at large. His fame and his virtues soon procured him a great number of disciples, of whom he sent six hundred into different parts of the empire, for the purpose before mentioned.

Of his numerous followers, seventy-two were distinguished above the rest, for the superiority of their attainments; and ten of these greatly excelled in knowledge of the principles and doctrines of their master.

Confucius taught both by example and precept; for his gravity and sobriety, his religious abstinence, his contempt of riches, his continual attention to, and watchfulness over his actions, and above all, that modesty and humility which are not to be found among the Grecian sages, forcibly corroborated his doctrines, and rendered his preaching effectual.

But notwithstanding the astonishing success that attended his labours, the torrent of vice was too strong to be stemmed by the exertions of one man, however eminent; he is said, therefore, to have passed three years in secret solitude, indulging sorrow for the incorrigible depravity of mankind.

A few days before his last illness, he lamented to his disciples that the empire was overrun with vice and disorder, and that the edifice of perfection which he had laboured to raise was entirely overthrown. "The kings," said he, "reject my maxims, I am no longer useful on the earth, I may as well leave it." Soon after he had uttered these words, he fell into a lethargy, and at the end of seven days expired in his native kingdom, whither he had returned with his disciples, in the 79th year of his age.

Though Confucius found it impossible to induce mankind to obey