

THE STUDENT,
A SERIES OF PAPERS.

O ' N E I L L,
OR THE REBEL.

BY

EDWARD LYTTON BULWER.

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE AND A PORTRAIT OF
THE AUTHOR.

LEIPZIG,
FREDERICK FLEISCHER.
1835.



Edward Lyman Berwey

Leipsic. Frederik Fleischer.

THE
COMPLETE WORKS

OF

E. L. BULWER.

V O L. X.

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*Taken from the literary Characters in the
new monthly Magazine.*

THE great first cause why our English literature has obtained so high a character for truth and nature is, that it has always reflected, as in a mirror, the age which was passing over it. The chivalric romances were filled with the spirit of their times. The dramas, with their passionate poetry and rich variety of incident, were transcripts of their own wild and adventurous day. The Revolution next left its mental imprint. Milton embodied the stern energy of resistance which had been in action, while the satire of „Hudibras,“ and the light and licentious comedies which followed, were no less faithful pictures of the wit and profligate indulgence which then prevailed. The ensuing age was one of political intrigue rather than of excitement. It equally gave its literary tone. People reasoned rather than felt, were moral by maxims, and witty in antithesis. The genius of style was abroad. Observation was just rather than profound, keen rather than deep. Wit was carried to its perfection, and also to its excess;

people were witty on every thing. Essays, letters, satires, sermons, were the circulating coin. The novels, excellent in plot, coarse, but vigorous in delineation of character, were comedies put into narrative, their merits and their defects equally of their actual period. This cycle also revolved, and its successor was one of wild imagination and strong passion. The few paint the feeling of the many; and the many adopt such words as if they were their own. The great writers, we can scarcely say of our time, embodied the excitement, the morbid sensibility, the visionary philosophy, the melancholy ever attendant upon imaginative feeling, which were the characteristics of an essentially poetical age; and such was the one just departed. Another great change is now passing over our literature, because it is also passing over our time; not less powerful, though perhaps less marked. The former change was more violent; it was wrought by enthusiasm, which, for the time, carries all before it. The present is being worked by opinion, which, if more still, is also more lasting. To-day has nothing in common with Yesterday. People required to be amused in order to be instructed; now, they only permit themselves to be entertained while laying the flattering unction to their souls that it is the vehicle of information. For every why, we ask a wherefore. We will not allow an author to display his talents merely as the knights broke each other's limbs of old, for honour: we expect that he should have a purpose in this display, and that purpose one of tangible benefit. It is this that makes the excellence of the writer before us. With that keen perception of reality, which is the executive power of genius, he has entered into

the spirit of his own times. Mr. Bulwer is the first novelist who has placed his best reward, and his great aim, in the utility of his writings. He has seen, that in order to improve, we must first enlighten; and that ridicule, if not the test of truth, is, at least, a good conductor to its lightning. His genius has taken service with reality. In every event he has wrought out, in every character he has created, he has never had the actual out of mind; and his works are living pictures, filled with the crimes and the virtues, the thoughts and the feelings, the hopes and the fears which are now among us in daily operation. Young, rich, and high-born, Mr. Bulwer * lacked many of the ordinary excitements to exertion. It is a fact not to be disputed, that the aristocracy have not „progressed” in proportion to the other classes. A young nobleman of the present day has not a better education than his ancestor in the time of Elizabeth. If we look back to the old records, we shall find that the classics, the modern tongues, some knowledge of philosophy,

* Edward Earle Lytton Bulwer is the third and youngest son of General Bulwer, of Heydon Hall, Norfolk, by Elizabeth, daughter and sole heiress of Richard Warburton Lytton, of Knebworth Park, Herts. Both these are very ancient families. The Bulwers have possessed lands still held by them in Wood Dalling, Norfolk, since the Conquest; and Knebworth has been the property of the Lyttons since the reign of Henry VII., when it passed into the hands of the first De Lytton, of Lytton, in Derbyshire, Treasurer to that King, and Governor of Boulogne Castle. Mr. E. Lytton Bulwer has two brothers, one, William, the present proprietor of Heydon Hall; the other, Henry, the present Member for Wilton: with both of these he has been sometimes confounded. Both in the paternal and maternal branches, Mr. Bulwer's family is connected, by ancient intermarriages, with some of the most distinguished in England — viz. the De Greys, ancestors of the Lords of Walsingham; the Cecils, of the Marquess of Exeter; the Spencers, of the Duke of Marlborough; the St. Johns, of Bletsoe; the Lords Falkland; the Wyndhams, of Felbrig; the Longuevilles, &c. — æc. *See Collins's Baronetage and Peerage.*

and the information collected by foreign travel, were held indispensable to the formation of a gentleman. What more is now required among the higher ranks? We doubt whether even as much be effected. It would seem that education, in ceasing to be a distinction, had lost half its attraction. The evaded study and dissipation of a public school is succeeded by the equally evaded study and dissipation of a college; and too many of our youthful aristocracy begin life with self-sufficiency for knowledge, prejudices for opinions, and with pleasure a habit rather than an enjoyment. The great error of their condition is, that their road through life is too royal a one, using that phrase quite in its ancient acceptation. We must remember, that to this class Mr. Bulwer belongs, in order to do justice to the energy of mind which has so nobly preferred exertion to indulgence, and has set out by acknowledging the general sympathies, and advocating the general rights of mankind. In the history of an author, it is labour wasted to inquire what first turned his mind to its peculiar pursuit. Even if the fact could be ascertained, it would be useless as an example, for no circumstance affects two men alike; and if brought forward only to support a theory, the theory which cannot be carried into action is rather ingenious than useful. That the subject of our sketch was early addicted to reading is nothing; so are thousands, from whose labour fruit never comes. Literary taste is often confounded with literary talent by others, quite as much as by ourselves. The Cambridge prize poem on Sculpture, afterwards published in a small volume of poems, printed for private circulation, was his first literary effort. Mr. Bulwer is essentially imbued with the spirit of poetry: perhaps, born a few years

sooner, he would have been a poet only; but, though circumstances do not make genius, they certainly have much to do with its direction. He had early read largely, and seen much of society: his judgment thus balanced his imagination, and the same accuracy of observation which has since shown itself to be one of his most characteristic merits, told him, that the celebrity of one age must be sought in an opposite path by its successor. We had been rich in poetry, even to luxury; and when has not luxury led to satiety? Mr. Bulwer's literary career may even thus early be divided into the two worlds of romance and reality. His first works, to use his own words, were brought from

“—————the poet's golden land,
Where thought finds happiest voice and glides along
Into the silver rivers of sweet song,”

touched with that imaginative melancholy which after-years deepens into reflection, and marked with that keen perception which experience ripens into thought. Poetry is a good foundation for philosophy: we must have felt ourselves to allow for the feelings of others. To this period belong “Weeds and Wildflowers,” “The Rebel,” and his first prose work, “Falkland.” * Each of these productions bears the same stamp — the broad arrow of genius. But they were too selfishly beautiful: melancholy had just finished its monopoly, and the age of sympathy, like that of chivalry, was passed. Ridicule is the re-action of enthusiasm. Sentiment was considered confined to schools; and, so far from affecting too much feeling, people were beginning to be

* “Weeds and Wildflowers,” 1826; “Falkland,” 1827; “O’Neil,” 1827.

ashamed of having any. Mr. Bulwer has since had a brighter and a higher aim; but these writings belong to those earlier days, when, to quote himself, "Romance, that bright magician," was wont

"O'er the dim glades of duller life to fling
Hues from the sun and blossoms from the spring."

Life has little breathing time; and, even when we do for a moment reflect, it is rather on our present than our past: the pains and pleasures of memory are put aside as quickly as the poem which celebrates them. But, if such a feat of mental magic could be performed, who would be so utterly a stranger to all our thoughts and feelings, as the self of five years ago with the self of to-day? We cannot but believe that experience has wrought a great change in Mr. Bulwer's mind. His views of life are more true, while his ideas of excellence are at once more elevated, and yet more practical. He seems to have laid it down as a principle, that, though poetry may "breathe the difficult height of the iced mountain-tops," its most precious gift, as he beautifully says, is

"————— to sing over all,
Making the common air most musical."

He has felt that knowledge was only desirable as the pioneer of utility, and genius only glorious as the high priest of virtue. It is not too much to say, that where, in the "Disowned," he puts the developement of these principles into the mouth of Algernon Mordaunt, those half dozen pages are one of the noblest and the truest moral and philosophical essays in our language.

“Pelham,” one of the most successful novels of our day, appeared in 1828. Its delineations were too true not to be taken as personal affronts in these days, when every author is identified with his hero, if in that hero there is any thing that offends. If we except the “Literary Gazette,” which perceived and did justice to the extraordinary mind then putting forth its powers, “the whole commons” of periodicals, like those “in Kent, were up in arms.” One represented “Pelham” as an insolent sneer at the middle ranks, reprobated the effeminacy of perfumes, and talked of an English cook, and the Magna Charta, their own and their country’s Constitution, in a breath. Others, again, considered it as an effusion of sheer egotism, and got into a rage with the author, whom they comforted themselves by denouncing as “a coxcomb.” One would think that irony was like the Delphin classics, and required notes of explanation. People in general do not understand it. Matthews tells a good story of this density of apprehension: — a criminal, doomed to perish by the sharp edge of the law, was willing that the edge should be really sharp. “I will give you fifty ducats,” said he to the executioner, “if you cut off my head at a single stroke.” In the pride of his art, the headsman gave a flourish with his sword. “Fifty ducats,” reiterated the criminal. “Just shake your head,” replied the executioner: he did so, and it rolled on the scaffold. The matter-of-fact man, believing the story up to this point, says, “Well, did he give him the fifty ducats?” In this *point device* spirit were the coxcombries of “Pelham” arraigned. “Perfumes, indeed, — how effeminate!” “Almond paste! — I wonder of what materials he thinks he must be made; soap would do for him as

well as other people." "Feeding his poodle on chicken and sweet-breads!— what wicked waste, when there are so many poor starving." But wit cuts its bright way through the glass-door of public favour; and "Pelham" took its station, not only as a most entertaining novel, but as a satire, equally just, keen, and amusing. By the way, it is curious to remark how the affectations of one age are made up of the affectations of its predecessors: our present has gone back upon classical materials. What is its indifference, but stoicism made small for common use; its indolence, but a copy of the Lacedemonian, who, when an Athenian had been fined for idleness, requested to be introduced to the gentleman, "who had been punished for keeping up his dignity;" its gourmandism is but the luxury, without the magnificence of the Roman; and, as for perfumes, there was an ancient sage who perfumed his feet instead of his hair. "In the one case," as he justly observed, "the grateful odours ascended to his own nostrils, while, in the other instance, the sweetness but exhaled in the general air." Pelham was an incarnation of the spirit of the times, only with some fine talents and high qualities not quite so general. But the author's own words, in the preface to the second edition, best set forth his intentions.

"Nor have I indulged in frivolities for the sake of frivolity; under that which has the most semblance of levity, I have often been the most diligent in my endeavours to inculcate the substances of truth." "By treating trifles naturally, they may be rendered amusing; and that which adherence to nature renders amusing, the same cause may also render instructive."

One great charm in "Pelham," and in all Mr. Bulwer's works, is the mind which shows itself in every

part, and continually breaks out in some clear observation or true remark. An excellent English Rochefoucauld might be formed from his pages, only with all the feeling and higher sense of excellence in which the Frenchman is so deficient. We must quote two or three, the truth of whose thoughts can only be equalled by the grace of their expression.

“Since benevolence is inseparable from all morality, it must be clear, that there is a benevolence in little things as well as in great; and that he who strives to make his fellow creatures happy, though only for an instant, is a much better man than he who is indifferent to, or, what is worse, despises it. I do not see that kindness to an acquaintance is at all destructive to sincerity as a friend.” “The object of education is to instill principles which are hereafter to guide and instruct us; facts are only desirable so far as they illustrate those principles; principles ought, therefore, to precede facts.” “Learning without knowledge is but a bundle of prejudices.” We would call particular attention to the truth of the next remark. “They never spoke of things by their right names, and, therefore, those things never seemed so bad as they really were: insensibly my ideas of right and wrong became perfectly confused, and the habit of treating all crimes as subjects of jest in conversation, soon made me regard them as matters of very trifling importance.”

Lord Byron makes a very true remark in one of his letters, that the most politic authors have always been the most popular. Such has certainly been the case with Mr. Bulwer. “The Disowned,” “Devereux,” „Paul Clifford,” “The Siamese Twins,” followed each other in rapid succession. The most singular characteristic about these works is their utter dissimilitude: save in a general tone of benevolence, as the basis of philosophy, and an extended and liberal view of the general interests of mankind, these productions are striking contrasts. “Pelham” was a moral Diorama—a view of London, as

it is. "The Disowned" was a poetical and imaginative picture, but not the less true because the colours were created and combined rather than copied. It is not, perhaps, fair to ascribe your own supposed plan to an author, but we have always thought that "The Disowned" was the finest illustration of ambition possible—an illustration, too, of its many varieties. The desire of honourable but worldly success in Clarence, is brought into fine contrast with the dreaming and feverish desire of fame which consumes the young artist. Again, the disinterested but fatal patriotism of Wolfe, fatal because confined, is admirably opposed to that of Algernon Mordaunt, whose patriotism takes the ground-work of knowledge, and works hand in hand with philosophy and charity. Mordaunt is one of those ideals of excellence which we respect an author for conceiving. "The Disowned" also developed a new talent, that of description: there are several landscapes as beautiful and as English as those of our natural painter Collins. As an analysis of cause and effect, the history of Mr. Talbot, the vain man, is a perfect specimen of moral dissection. His vanity is the opposite of Lord Boradail's conceit. Vanity and conceit are often confounded: nevertheless, they are very opposite qualities; as much difference as there is between search and possession; vanity craves "golden opinions" from all ranks of men; conceit sits down quietly in the enjoyment of its own property. More poetical in its views, more elevated in its philosophy, the remarks scattered through "The Disowned," though less worldly, are not less true than those in its predecessor. They take a higher, though not a less actual tone; and we doubt if the sarcastic inference be a whit more accurate than the kindlier one.

The difference between their observations is, that in the one they are taken in the spirit of satire; in the other, they are taken in that of philosophy. If "Pelham" and the "Disowned" were different, "Devereux" was equally opposed to either. For ourselves, we are free to confess, that "Devereux" is our favourite of all Mr. Bulwer's works. It is at once an historical, a philosophical, and a poetical novel. The historical scenes have that which is usually admitted as the great merit of historical fiction, verisimilitude—if not exactly what people did do, it was exactly what they might be supposed to have done: to use a theatrical phrase, the illusion is well supported. But they have also another great and peculiar merit, the lesson pointed for the apprehension of even the most careless reader. Moral knowledge is the fine gold extracted from the crucible of moral satire. The interview between the Czar and Devereux is an admirable and forcible exposition of a great truth: we allude to the scene where the influence of shame in punishment is illustrated by the difference between the Russian and the German, while under the discipline of the knout. The same remark may apply to the inimitable scenes in Paris. The spirit of that age of epigrams was never so caught by an English writer before. But we draw no false inferences: the dust is diamond-dust, and it sparkles;—it is not thrown in our eyes. We see that it was a time equally witty and worthless; and the same glance which takes in its brilliancy also reveals its baseness. Lord Bolingbroke's* character is the most original feature in "Devereux." Historical personages

* How strongly do several of the letters lately published in the Marchmont Correspondence confirm Mr. Bulwer's view of Bolingbroke's character.

have often lent "the magic of a name" to the fictitious page: but this is the first instance of historical research, philosophical investigation, and the fellow-feeling of a noble mind being devoted to embody, and to appreciate the merits of one to whom historians (we will not say history) have shown scant mercy and less justice. The various conversations in which Bolingbroke takes part, the just observations which throw such light on his sentiments, the eloquent appreciation of his excellence, the clear reasoning on his motives, are the perfection (if we may use such a phrase) of dramatic biography. Mr. Bulwer himself says, "that to do justice to a great man is the highest of literary pleasures;" and in this analysis of Bolingbroke, we know not which most to admire, the truth of the defence, or the generous warmth of the defender. The tomb of one great man is the altar of another. One very futile objection against this noble impersonation has been urged by the Chinese of criticism, or rather its Chancery barristers, who refer every thing to precedent;—that, forsooth, "a novel is not the proper place for political or historical discussion." Why, we would ask, is truth to be debarred from taking its most effective, because most popular form? Such critics are either strangely behind, or wilfully blind, to their own time, who deny the importance of the novel. In works of imagination, a novel has been the Aaron's rod which has swallowed up the rest. If a few great writers choose any one vehicle for their talents, hundreds of their inferiors will choose the same mode, and follow in the track in which they never could have led. We do firmly believe great popularity is never gained without great desert. All will admit, that the first-rate talent of our time has been developed in the novel. It is an error

to say, that this is because it is the most amusing; it is rather because it is the most appropriate. Still, in literature, as in life, the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, even unto the third and fourth generation; and works, like Scott's, which have done more towards giving us real ideas of the days of yore, and drawn closer the links of the past and present, than any chronicle ever written; or works like Godwin's, and these of the author now before us, full of the most important truths, are to receive for their heritage the ill name of works in which, if the scene were laid in former days, a dungeon, a beauty, white plumes and iron fetters, a little valour, and a great deal of love, (*love à l'impossible en passant*;) were all that could be required; or if of modern life, the lover first raked, and then reformed; the heroine was first miserable and then married. Such was the circulating cycle, and hence the novel was held, nay, is still held by many, to be the Paria of literature. Truly may it be said, that to change an opinion is difficult; but to remove a prejudice is impossible. Before we resume our analysis, we cannot but remark on the singular silence preserved towards the most rising author of their day, in the two pseudo-called great Reviews, the Edinburgh and Quarterly. The former might have hesitated to censure in the very beginning, made wise by experience: for nothing is more mortifying than your own prophecy unfulfilled; and it is somewhat disagreeable to find the general judgment in direct opposition to your criticism. We may suppose that Byron, Wodsworth, Coleridge, &c. have served as landmarks. Every one of these names are now standard ones in our "land's language;" and the Reviewer is remembered by his injustice. Mr. Jeffrey

was the Judge Jeffries of literature,—a most partial and unjust judge. The faculty of appreciation, that highest sign of a great mind, was wanting in his: and, take the range of our first-rate authors, they are all instances of public opinion reversing the verdict which proceeded from his tribunal. As for the Quarterly, we all know it is too well trained, to wander beyond the districts of *Moravia*.* It has not room, forsooth, for works that are in every one's hands, whose thoughts and whose feelings are actuating thousands; but, let a dull tragedy, now as much forgotten as the Emperor of Constantinople,† whose name it bears, or a volume of travels, whose young writer carefully records the slender ankles and dark eyes of every Spanish girl with whom he had a flirtation; or let the laureate of "Wat Tyler," and the apotheosis of George III. put forth the poetical annals of the pantry, and mark in italics the pathos of a young lady, not ringing her bell for coals or candles;—let any of these issue from Albemarle-street, and the Quarterly at once finds room for analysis and adulation. The truth is, that we have no great literary review, each being engrossed in politics, busy deciding whether Sadler is a fool, or Malthus a demon. Still, we wonder that observation has not been more awake to the tremendous power the novel possesses as an engine for the dissemination of opinion: but more of this when we come to "Paul Clifford."

To return to "Devereux." The character of the hero seems to us to be one of Mr. Bulwer's most powerful

* Quere—The shire of Moray?—*Printer's Imp.*

† Lest none of our readers should have heard of "The Worthy Isaac," it was a tragedy published by Murray, and entitled "Isaac Comnenus." We merely name it as one of the latest unfulfilled literary predictions we recall.

and original conceptions: the influence of circumstances upon nature is finely and profoundly traced. "Devereux" is imaginative, affectionate, passionate by nature; worldly, cold, and guarded in his crust of circumstance. The poetry inherent, and the philosophy acquired, are exquisitely developed. We never could read the account of his boyhood without the most intense interest,—the warm love of the child thrown back upon itself by unkind coldness and unjust preference. We shall only say, fortunate are those who do not sympathize with the affectionate, yet unloved boy, whose heart becomes sullen as sadness always does when utterly unshared. There is terrible injustice in the treatment of children: how arbitrary is the authority exercised over them! How much does the anger or the fondness lavished upon them depend on the temper of the moment! What a contradiction between the much we expect them to acquire, and the little we expect them to observe! At one time they are to learn all that demands comprehension and industry,—(think how much pure abstract knowledge a child is expected to master;) and then, at another period, they are treated like a machine, that neither sees nor hears; or, at least, seeing and hearing as one who understandeth not; saying that memory is a most faithless faculty, a mirror in which a man looks, and "straightway forgetteth what manner of man he is," or was. Our own experience might teach us a different lesson. But preference, and its consequence, neglect, is the child's most cruel wrong. The bitter feeling of comparing our own lot with another's, will come quite soon enough without its being taught in infancy. Early injustice is like the thread of silk planted with the tulip—it colours all the after leaves. Its influence runs through all Devereux's future character;

the warm emotions concealed—the affectionate temper checked—restraint deepening into reserve, and self-dependance hardening into self-reliance, are all traced with the accuracy of an anatomist, and with a beauty even beyond their truth. The awakening of all his better nature under the affection of his uncle, and that kind old uncle himself, are transcripts from one of the very best and dearest pages of human life. As for Sir William, we do not insist upon every reader liking him as much as we do ourselves; but we must own, if they do not, we shall have a very bad opinion of them. It is curious to mark the likeness of position and the dissimilarity of character between Pelham and Devereux: both are young, noble, panting, first for pleasure, next for worldly distinction; and both are fops, “mandarins of the first class;” but still how different. Pelham’s worldliness is the philosophy of his calm, calculating, yet high nature: that of Devereux, on the contrary, is a disguise and a security. The coxcombry of Pelham is like a cast from his features; that of Devereux is a mask to his face. The difference is imagination in the one, the want of it in the other. This is especially shown in their love:—love, which, if but an episode in the active life of man, is a lasting influence in his ideal one. We do not think the most susceptible reader is very unquiet about the success of Pelham’s suit: we think the very coldest must be touched by Devereux’s generous and devoted attachment to the beautiful and desolate Spanish girl. Love was never more passionate in Byron, more true in Shakspeare, more lovely in nature, than it is here “gently bodied forth.” We have hitherto dwelt on other merits than the rich passionate colours given by the heart. But the whole history of

Isora is touched by that poetical spirit, which does not, it is true, make nature more beautiful than nature often is, but shows that beauty in its fairest light, the light of imagination. There is, to us, something inexpressibly touching in Devereux's abiding affection, when, to quote an exquisite passage from the "Milton" in after-years, "her memory made the moonlight of his mind," and

"Her thoughts stole o'er like a spirits lay?
Singing the darkness of his fate away."

One great peculiarity in Mr. Bulwer's writings is, the singular originality of his minor characters: they are not merely "two or three puppets to fill up the scene," whose only distinguishing mark is a name, but each is some embodied thought, and distinguished by some natural touch: in short, people in his books are as different as they are in real life. Mr. Bulwer combines, to a rare degree, the power of creation with the faculty of observation; and it is this union which gives such infinite variety to "his storied page of human life." *

"Paul Clifford" came next; as different to its brethren as if they had not had "one common father."

"Paul Clifford" is at once a political satire, a romance of middle life; a practical and moral treatise, put forth in the popular form of a novel. The satire is levelled at existing persons and abuses — the romance

* In this age of facts, where an assertion is held to be a shadow, unless backed by its substance, proof, we must mention instances; we, therefore, refer the reader to Jean Desmarais, the philosophic valet; to Mr. Vavasour, the epitome of respectability, whose unrighteous grasping takes the name of natural affection; Mrs. Lobkins, who qualifies a violent temper, as "her feelings being unkimmon strong;" Dummie Duna-ker, rogue, thief, liar, but with one redeeming touch of humanity, — "What, Do little Paul a mischief! vy, I've known the cull ever since he vas *that* high;" Mr. Copperas, with his one pun; and, to close a list, (only a sample one,) Mr. Brown, and his late Lady W.

is the poetry which passion and feeling extract from the daily events of common life — the moral is that drawn from the temptation which leads, and the punishment which follows, the crimes we know to be hourly committed. For the first time, Mr. Bulwer seems to have felt what an engine of power was the novel for present utility; how forcibly it could be brought to play on the vice whose result is misery — the indolence whose result is injury, and the selfishness which is at once its own best and worst punishment. What leading-article in a review ever brought forward the evil influence of laws, that punish rather than guard, upon the lower classes, with such energy and truth as the dramatic exposition of their hardship and insufficiency in “Paul Clifford?” It is a great and noble distinction for an author (and we know no other modern novelist that can “lay the flattering unction to his soul”) to be able to say, “I have written in the hope of pointing attention to great abuses — to awful suffering. The feelings, the weaknesses, the wretchedness of a great body of my countrymen have been utterly neglected; to their benefit I dedicate my talents — the spirit of ‘Paul Clifford’ is the cause of the people.” As a matter of taste, we have owned to liking “Devereux” the best; but as matter of principle, we give the preference to “Paul Clifford.” The use of the last is more actual and immediate.

Whether in lively satire, keen remark, or accurate reflection — whether in deducing the character from circumstance — whether in painting the nice distinction of natural good feeling which favourable position ripens into virtue, or natural strong passion, or weakness, which events harden into crime — the desire of benefit from an obvious lesson, or practical inference necessa-

rily drawn by the reader, the same desire of conferring a moral benefit on the author's kind is paramount through all. Fiction is the eloquence of experience, and to be useful it must be actual. The character of William Brandon is as yet our author's most powerful conception. The lava-flood of passion, which bursts in one red flood, chills, hardens — never to melt again — the evil knowledge brought by too early experience (for experience may come too soon — the fruit must be mature that the east wind will not injure); the bitter consciousness of surpassing talent, unused and useless — the pride, which though inherent in the nature, has no outward cause of display, and takes refuge and flights under the shield of scorn — passion, talent, and knowledge — these best gifts of our kind, and yet those that may be turned to the worst purpose — never were these more finely developed than in William Brandon. One single touch of human kindness in this proud and cold man is in his gentle and fatherly love for Lucy, his orphan niece. It may seem fanciful, but it has always reminded us of the tuft of blue violets Frazer records with such expression of pleasure, when he finds them growing, lonely and lovely, on the high and icy mountains of Himala. Lord Mauliverer is an inimitable satire on aristocratic indulgence; he is the *far niente* of indolent luxury embodied in all its selfishness. One single expression sets forth his whole system of action. Brandon, at a *tête-à-tête* dinner, refuses or neglects some dainty of the table, and Mauliverer exclaims, "Oh, hang your abstemiousness, it is d——d unfriendly to eat so little!" This slight speech is the essence of one who desires companionship for its pleasantness, and not for its sympathy. Lucy Brandon, the

heroine, is an entire contrast to all Mr. Bulwer's former female portraits. Isabel and Isora were high-wrought, beautiful, and ideal — as if poetry had lent its aid to life, to show “how divine a thing a woman might be made;” but Lucy is a sweet, simple, gentle creature — entirely a girl — only a very lovely and loveable one, till circumstances discover that gold lies beneath the stream which had hitherto only “broke into dimples and laughed in the sun.” It is the “unconquerable strength of love,” giving its own force to a nature essentially timid and feminine. One of the great merits of this work is the many slight touches, which, like the finishings of a portrait, give such identity to a picture. The descriptions are singularly accurate, from that of the small and most wretched streets in London on a wet night, to the ancient manor-house with its one old chesnut tree “worth a forest.” The affections delineated are such as are in constant play, brightening and sweetening from the loftiest to the lowest; while the deeper colouring of passion is terrible from its truth. The scattered observations are as valuable for their justice as they are remarkable for their acuteness. Take the following admirable remark for an instance: — “Showy theories are always more seductive to the young and clever than suasive examples, and the vanity of the youthful makes them better pleased by being convinced of a thing than by being enticed to it.” One personage we must not omit — Peter Mac Grawler, critic, editor, thief, cook, hangman. We doubt whether “the last” of that man was “worse than the first.” We are reforming all abuses so much, that, perhaps, in a few years, the redoubtable Peter will be an historical memento of a base and cowardly school of criticism, which may then have

left "but the name" "of its faults and its sorrows behind." The personal attacks; the virulent sneers; the coarse and false statements; the foolish opinions of a set whose incognito is indeed their existence — for who would or could care for the abuse of an individual whose own character was below contempt, or who would not despise the judgment of one whose only right to pronounce such judgment lay in his own previous failure in some similar attempt to that which he denounces? Who shall deny that the great body of critics are made up of unsuccessful writers? — the inferior magazines and journals are truly the refuge for the literary destitute. Men who are anonymous are usually abusive, and want of principle and want of responsibility are only too synonymous. Nothing can be perfect in this world, but two rules would greatly conduce to the perfectibility of criticism: — the first to speak, not of the author, but of his works; his pages, not himself, are amenable to your remarks: secondly, to do away with the present anonymous system; this would have a double advantage; it would force the critic to be just, if not generous, for his own sake — for men weigh opinions for which they are to be instantly answerable; and also, when the critic is known, the public would be able to judge, from previous knowledge of what he had himself done, how far he was competent to decide on the labours of others; but our present literary bush-fighting is as deteriorating as it is disgraceful. There are some excellent remarks, and written in the best spirit of criticism, in the dedicatory epistle to "Paul Clifford."

Many of the *dramatis personæ* in this work are lightly-sketched caricatures, woodcuts à la Cruikshank of

individuals in that high rank to which our meaner ambitions direct themselves, "like the sparks which fly upward," and, we must add, to end in smoke. They are curious and bitter illustrations of "the might and magic of a name." One would think that the wrong and the despicable must be immutable terms; not so — much depends on position, whether we look *down* or *up*. Bachelor Bill being exclusive in Fish-lane, and giving a "hop and a feed," seems a ridiculous and vulgar person — the Duke of Devonshire giving a fête to "the fashionable world," with all its nice distinctions, is "quite another thing."

The Spartans had made no small advance in practical philosophy when, in order to show their children the shame of inebriety, they made their slaves drunk. It is not enough to denounce a vice — you will do more by disgracing it. We have heard some pseudo-genteel readers object to the hero's being only "a highwayman!" Besides the obvious answer, that human nature is human nature all the world over, we will just give the author's own view of the case: "For my part, I will back an English highwayman, masked, armed, mounted, and trotting over Hounslow Heath, against the prettiest rascal the Continent ever produced." These did not possess such bad materials for a hero; the days are quite past for readers to be contented with the condescending court-suits which enchanted our grandmothers, or with "dark-haired young gentlemen, born to be the destruction of every one connected with them." Mr. Bulwer required a hero surrounded with difficulties, and beset with the temptations to which poverty is subjected in real and social life — such a hero is Paul Clifford. Critics, like copy-books, are ruled by columns — our limits forbid its ex-

tract; but we must say how eloquent and how just is the sketch of our late monarch. * It is a fine historical picture, discriminating between good and evil, neither trenching upon the sanctity of the grave with false pænegetic nor with coarse insult, and drawing from faults, it were vain to deny, a warning, not a reproach. — The “Siamese Twins” came last. We think scant justice has been done to the passages of the Corinthian order of poetry with which it abounds — the splendid address to Earl Grey; the beautiful descriptions of sleep; the noble tribute to Burns; the exquisite single lines, “painting by words,” such as hopes

“That colour while they *point* the goal;”

or such a description as

“The storm slept dark on the dull sea.”

The author says, in the preface to the second edition, “that he would himself rest his fame on ‘Milton.’” It would rest on a sure foundation. “Milton” is a noble poem, “a worthy offering to the immortal dead.” “The Westminster” has a fine remark on Channing’s Essay on Milton: it says — “The spirit of Milton was upon him, and possessed him; and he writes as one constrained to do so by thoughts too fervid, intense, and expansive to be restrained. He speaks as a priest, under the immediate influence of the god at whose altar he was ministering — so should genius be honoured!” We can have nothing to say that will better apply to this poem. We have heard the term satire objected

* We allude to the sketch of Gentleman George in the Second Edition.

to, as applied to "The Siamese Twins;" we confess it does not belong to the Sunday-newspaper school of satirists, in which real names and nicknames, personality and brutality constitute what is called a powerful article; but if abuse is not the whole of wit, to wit — the keen and the ready — this poem may well lay claim. If Mr. Bulwer wants any thing, it is that innate gaiety, which in a writer, like good spirits in a companion, carries us along with it. Mr. Bulwer's serious satire is more apparent than his more playful vein, simply because the one has, and the other has not, the impress of his own mind. Nothing, especially in poetry, divides opinion more than great originality; readers are at fault when no good old rule is at hand to serve as a guage — and when at a loss, it is always safest to condemn. To be the first to praise requires more self-reliance than the generality of people possess, and the "Siamese Twins" is too different from its predecessors for early opinions to be safely trusted to walk alone. But its feelings and its thoughts, "the deep and the true," daily become more familiar; the fine passage is remembered — the exquisite expression quoted — and the laurel puts forth its green boughs, leaf by leaf, till it stands forth a stately tree. This poem is dedicated to his mother — genius making affection as beautiful in expression as it is in spirit. We cannot conceive a more touching tribute. Mr. Bulwer's father died when he was but three years of age, and the care of his education * devolved on a mother, whose love and whose pride must equally be gratified by the result.

We have now, as far as our power extends, done our duty (for what is justice but a duty?) to this ex-

* We believe Mr. E. Lytton Bulwer was never at a public school.

traordinary writer. If we have cordially expressed our admiration, it is because we have cordially felt it. We have neither attempted to detail the stories nor describe the characters; the meagre sketch of a tale, or the bare outline of a character, is as a skeleton, which requires to be clothed in flesh before it can rise up in grace or beauty. We have endeavoured to give our own strong impression — to select some of the most detachable merits, and then to say to our readers, judge for yourselves on the right of our opinion, bearing in mind that we can set forth only a very small part of sixteen volumes, full of all the various developement of mind and feeling.

A transition from the author's works to the author's self has been a common consequence of fame in all ages. Though we do not quite go the length of the Genevese, who, publishing an account of Rousseau's visit to his native city, deems it worthy of mention that Jean Jacques wore a cap trimmed with fur, but that he would not decide whether it was lined with fur or not, for he never took it off: still, by that rule which leads us to judge of others' feelings by our own, we think the curiosity, personal though it be, about a distinguished author, is, to say the least, very excusable. We often hear complaints that the author does not sustain the *beau ideal* of his hero; this complaint, at least, cannot be made of Mr. Bulwer. His appearance is distinguished, his features chiselled and regular, and the whole expression of his face highly intellectual as well as handsome. Generally, though we confess to having but a slight personal knowledge, Mr. Bulwer is silent and reserved in society; but this may in some measure arise from his extreme distaste to mixing with it: for at times nothing can exceed the flashing wit of his gayer converse, unless

it be the originality and interest of his more serious discourse. Mr. Bulwer is married, * and as we believe among the instances that genius is very compatible with domestic happiness. Prediction has an easy task in foretelling a future when its prophecy is founded on a past of such promise. When we say that he gave us the idea of one whose habits were fastidious and tastes refined — when we find in him the descendant of an ancient and aristocratic family, and know him to be one nursed in all the lavish indulgence of wealth, the more are our causes of admiration for one whose talents have disdained repose, and whose pages have ever advocated the cause of right. Sophocles, in the days of old, could dream away his summer midnight on the reeds by the Ilyssus, listening to the moonlight music of the nightingales. Mr. Bulwer early felt that a modern writer had nothing in common with this literary luxury, and his genius has ever seemed held by him as a trust rather than an enjoyment. We should think the great success of his writings in other countries must be very gratifying. ** Praise from afar comes the nearest to fame. Mr. Bulwer has already produced four standard novels, works replete with thought and mind, and he yet wants some years of thirty. A still more active career, that of public life, now lies before him. If first-rate talents, enlarged and liberal views, strong and noble principles, can make one man's future an object and benefit to his country, we are justified in the high anticipations with which we look forward to Mr. Bulwer's future. Last

* Mr. Bulwer married Rosina, only surviving daughter of the late Francis Massey Wheeler, Esq., of Lizard Connel, Limerick, grandson of Hugh Lord Massey, by Anna, daughter of Archdeacon Doyle.

** Besides being translated into the French and German languages, numerous editions have been published in America.

year, he was eagerly solicited, by a large body of its most respectable inhabitants, to stand for Southwark. Reluctance to oppose Mr. Calvert made him decline the honour; but we cannot conclude this article better than by part of his first declaration of public faith — “I should have founded my pretensions, had I addressed myself to your notice, upon that warm and hearty sympathy in the great interests of the people, which, even as in my case, without the claim of a long experience or the guarantee of a public name, you have so often, and I must add, so laudably, esteemed the surest and the highest recommendation to your favour. And, gentlemen, to the eager wish, I will not hesitate to avow that I should have added the determined resolution to extend and widen, in all their channels, those pure and living truths which can alone circulate through the vast mass of the community that political happiness so long obstructed from the many, and so long adulterated even for the few.

THE STUDENT.

P R E F A C E.

I PRESENT these volumes to the reader with considerable diffidence, and with the full consciousness that they need an apology. A series of papers which I published some time since in the *New Monthly Magazine*, under the title of “*Conversations with an Ambitious Student*,” attracted much favourable attention; and I have been often earnestly requested to collect and republish them. I postponed, however, doing so, from time to time, in the impression that their grave and serious character was not likely to command an attentive audience with the many, at all commensurate with the exaggerated and enthusiastic estimate already conceived of their value by the few. At length deciding to publish certain *Essays and Tales*, I found that their general train of thought was so much in harmony with the *Conversations* referred to, that I resolved to incorporate the latter (corrected, somewhat enlarged, and under the altered denomination of „*The New Phædo*”) — leaving them at the end of the collection — to be read or avoided, as the inclination of the reader may prompt him; — a sort of sup-

plementary walk in the enclosure, at which he may stop short, or through which he may pursue his wanderings, in proportion as the preliminary excursion may have allured or fatigued him.

Of the general nature both of these Conversations and the various papers which precede them (some of which have also appeared before), I should observe that they belong rather to the poetical than the logical philosophy — that, for the most part, they address the sentiment rather than the intellect — choosing for their materials the metaphysics of the heart and the passions, which are more often employed in the Fiction than the Essay. If the title were not a little equivocal and somewhat presumptuous, I should venture to entitle them “Minor Prose Poems:” they utter in prose, what are the ordinary didactics of poetry. I allow that they must therefore be taken *cum grano* — that they assert rather than prove, and that they address themselves more to those prepared to agree with the views they embrace, than to those whom it would be necessary to convert. This is yet more the case, perhaps, with the Essays than the Tales, in which latter the moral is often more homely — more addressed to the experience of the reason, and less constructed from the subtleties and refinements of the feelings. The Tales, in short, partake as much of the nature of the essay as the Essays themselves — availing themselves of a dramatic shape, the more earnestly and the less tediously to inculcate truths.

Although some of the contents of these volumes have appeared before, I yet trust that the component parts have been so selected and arranged as to form a tolerably symmetrical whole — each tending to maintain an unity of purpose, and to illustrate one general vein of ethical sentiment and belief. — Nay, from my desire to effect this the more completely, I fear that I may occasionally have incurred the charge of repetition and tautology — although, perhaps, the fault was unavoidable, and it was necessary to repeat the deduction of one Essay in the problems contended for in another.

Perhaps I may hereafter (when I have completed an historical work, in which I am now, and at different intervals, have, for years, been engaged) — add to these volumes, by some papers of a more solid and demonstrative character, divided into two additional series — the one upon certain topics of the Ancient Learning, the other upon Politics and Commerce. It was with this intention that I adopted the present title, which, if my plan be completed, will be more elaborately borne out than it is by these volumes, regarded as a single publication.

I repeat that it is with the most unaffected diffidence, that after mature deliberation and long delay, I decide upon committing these papers to the judgment of the Public. I am fully aware that they are trifles in themselves, and that miscellanies of this nature are liable to be considered even more trifling than they are — still

they convey some thoughts, and some feelings which I wished not to have experienced without result; and the experience by which an individual believes he has profited is rarely communicated without some benefit, however humble, to the world.

ON THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AUTHORS
AND
THE IMPRESSION CONVEYED OF THEM
BY THEIR WORKS.

THIS is one of those subtle and delicate subjects which Literary philosophers have not taken the trouble to discuss; it is one which is linked with two popular errors. The first error is in the assertion that Authors are different from the idea of them which their writings tend to convey; and the second error is in the expectation that nevertheless Authors ought to be exactly what their readers choose to imagine them. The world does thus, in regard to Authors, as it does in other matters — expresses its opinions in order to contrast its expectations. But if an Author disappoint the herd of spectators, it does not follow that it is his fault. The mass of men are disappointed with the Elgin Marbles. Why? Because they are like life — because they are natural. Their disappointment in being brought into contact with a man of genius is of the same sort. He is too natural for them,

— they expected to see his style in his clothes. Mankind love to be cheated: thus the men of genius who have not disappointed the world in their externals, and in what I shall term *the management of self*, have always played a part, — they have kept alive the vulgar wonder by tricks suited to the vulgar understanding, — they have measured their conduct by device and artifice, — and have walked the paths of life in the garments of the stage. Thus did Pythagoras and Diogenes, — thus did Napoleon and Louis XIV. (the last of whom was a man of genius if only from the delicate beauty of his compliments), — thus did Bolingbroke, and Chatham (who never spoke except in his best wig, as being the more imposing) — and above all Englishmen, thus did Lord Byron. These last three are men eminently interesting to the vulgar, not so much from their genius as their *charlatanism*. It requires a more muscular mind than ordinary to recover the shock of finding a great man simple. There are some wise lines in the Corsair, the peculiar merit of which I never recollect that any of the million critics of that poem discovered: —

„He bounds — he flies, until his footsteps reach
 The spot where ends the cliff, begins the beach,
There checks his speed; but pauses, less to breathe
 The breezy freshness of the deep beneath,
Than there his wonted statelier step renew,
Nor rush, disturbed by haste, to vulgar view;
 For well had Conrad learned to curb the crowd
 By arts that veil and oft preserve the proud:
 His was the lofty port, the distant mien
 That seems to shun the sight, and awes if seen;
 The solemn aspect and the high-born eye,
 That checks low mirth, but lacks not courtesy.

In these lines — shrewd and worldly to the very marrow — are depicted the tricks which Chiefs have ever been taught to play, but which Literary Men (Chiefs of

a different order) have not learned to perform. Hence their simplicity, — hence the vulgar disappointment. No man was disappointed with the late Lord Londonderry, but many were with Walter Scott; none with Charles X. — many with Paul Courier; none with the late Archbishop of **** — many with Wordsworth. Massillon preserved in the court the impression he had made in the pulpit: he dressed alike his melodious style and his handsome person to the best advantage. Massillon was a good man, but he was a quack; it was his vocation, — for he was also a good courtier.

This, then, is the difference between the great men of letters and the great men of courts: the former generally disappoint the vulgar — the latter do not; because the one are bred up in the arts that hide defects and dazzle the herd, and the other know nothing but knowledge, and are skilled in no arts save those of composition. It follows, then, that the feeling of disappointment is usually a sign of a weak mind in him who experiences it, — a foolish, apprentice-sort of disposition, that judges of everything great by the criterion of a puppetshow, and expects as much out of the common way in a celebrated Author as in the Lord Mayor's coach. I hear, therefore, the common cry, that a great man does not answer expectation, with a certain distrustful scorn of the persons who utter it. What right have they to judge of the matter at all? Send them to see Gog and Magog; they will not be disappointed with *that* sight. Is it not, in fact, a great presumption in the petty herd of idlers to express an opinion of the man, when they can scarcely do so of his works, which are but a part of him? Men who knew not, nor could have known, a line in the Principia, thought them-

selves perfectly at liberty to say that Sir Isaac Newton was quite a different man from what might have been expected. There is scarcely a good critic of books born in an age, and yet every fool thinks himself justified in criticising persons. "There are some people," said Necker, in one of his fragments, "who talk of *our* Pascal — *our* Corneille. I am thunderstruck at their familiarity!"

In real truth, I believe that there is much less difference between the author and his works than is currently supposed; it is usually in the *physical appearance* of the writer, — his manners — his mien — his exterior, — that he falls short of the ideal a reasonable man forms of him — rarely in his mind. A man is, I suspect, but of a second-rate order whose genius is not immeasurably above his works, — who does not feel within him an inexhaustible affluence of thoughts — feelings — inventions which he will never have leisure to embody in print. He will die, and leave only a thousandth part of his wealth to Posterity, which is his Heir. I believe this to be true even of persons, like La Fontaine, who succeed only in a particular line; men seemingly of one idea shining through an atmosphere of simplicity — the Monomaniacs of Genius. But it is doubly true of the mass of great Authors who are mostly various, accomplished, and all-attempting: such men never can perfect their own numberless conceptions.

It is, then, in the physical or conventional, not the mental qualities, that an Author usually falls short of our ideal: this is a point worthy to be fixed in the recollection. Any of my readers who have studied the biography of men of letters will allow my assertion is borne out by facts: and, at this moment, I am quite sure that

numbers, even of both sexes, have lost a portion of interest for the genius of Byron, on reading in Lady Blessington's Journal that he wore a nankin jacket and green spectacles. Of such a nature are such disappointments. No! in the mind of a man there is always a resemblance to his works. His heroes may not be like himself, but they are like certain qualities, which belong to him. The sentiments he utters are his at the moment; — if you find them predominate in all his works, they predominate in his mind: if they are advanced in one, but contradicted in another, they still resemble their Author, and betray the want of depth or of resolution in his mind. His works alone make not up a man's character, but they are the index to that living book.

Every one knows how well Voltaire refuted the assertion of J. Baptiste Rousseau that goodness and talent must exist together. The learned Strabo, holding the same error as Baptiste Rousseau, says (lib. i) that there cannot be "a good poet who is not first a good man." This is a paradox, and yet it is not *far* from the truth: a good poet may not be a good man, but he must have certain good dispositions. Above all, that disposition which sympathises with noble sentiments — with lofty actions — with the Beauty of the Mind as of the Earth. This may not suffice to make him a good man — its influence may be counteracted a hundred ways in life, but it is not counteracted in his compositions. *There* the better portion of his Intellect awakes — there he gives vent to enthusiasm, and enthusiasm to generous and warm emotions. Sterne may have been harsh to his wife, but his heart was tender at the moment he wrote of Maria. Harshness of conduct is not a contradiction of extreme susceptibility to sentiment in writing. The latter

may be perfectly sincere, as the former may be perfectly indefensible; in fact, the one may be a consequence, not a contradiction, of the other. The craving after the Ideal, which belongs to Sentiment, makes its possessor discontented with the mortals around him, and the very overfineness of nerve that quickens his feelings sharpens also his irritability. For my own part, so far from being surprised to hear that Sterne was a peevish and angry man, I should have presumed it at once from the overwrought fibre of his graver compositions. This contrast between softness in emotion, and callousness in conduct, is not peculiar to poets. Nero was womanishly affected by the harp; and we are told by Plutarch, that Alexander Pheræus, who was one of the sternest of tyrants, shed a torrent of tears upon the acting of a play. So that he who had furnished the most matter for tragedies was most affected by the pathos of tragedy!

But who shall say that *the feelings* which produced such emotions even in such men were not laudable and good? Who that has stood in the dark caverns of the Human Heart, shall dare to scoff at the contrast of act and sentiment, instead of lamenting it? Such scoffers are the Shallows of Wit — their very cleverness proves their superficiality. There are various dark feelings within us which do not *destroy*, but which, when roused, *overwhelm* for the time the feelings which are good — to which last, occupied in literature, or in purely mental emotions, we are sensible alone, and unalloyed. Of our evil feelings, there is one in especial which is the usual characteristic of morbid literary men, though, hitherto, it has escaped notice as such, and which is the cause of many of the worst faults to be found both in the Author and the Tyrant: this feeling is *Suspicion*: and I

think I am justified in calling it the characteristic of morbid literary men. Their quick susceptibilities make them over-sensible of injury, — they exaggerate the injuries they have awakened — the slanders they have incurred. They are ever fearful of a trap: nor this in literature alone. Knowing that they are not adepts in the world's common business, they are perpetually afraid of *being taken in*; and, feeling their various peculiarities, they are often equally afraid of being ridiculed. Thus Suspicion, in all ways and all shapes, besets them; this makes them now afraid to be generous, and now to be kind; and acting upon a soil that easily receives, but rarely loses an impression — that melancholy vice soon obdures and encrusts the whole conduct of the *acting* man. But in literary composition it sleeps. The *thinking* man then hath no enemy at his desk, — no hungry trader at his elbow — no grinning spy on his uncouth gestures. His soul is young again — he is what he embodies, — and the feelings, checked in the real world, obtain their vent in the imaginary. It was the *Good Natural*, to borrow a phrase from the French, that spoke in the erring Rousseau, when he dwelt on the loveliness of Virtue. It was the Good Natural that stirred in the mind of Alexander Phœreus, when he wept at the mimic sorrows subjected to his gaze. When the time for action and for the real world arrived to either, it roused other passions, and Suspicion made the Author no less a wretch than it made the Tyrant.

Thus the tenderest sentiments may be accompanied with cruel actions, and yet the solution of the enigma be easy to the inquirer; and thus, though the *life* of an Author does not correspond with his work, his *nature* may.

But this view is the most partial of all, — and I have, therefore, considered it the first. How few instances there are, after all, of even that *seeming* discrepitude, which I have just touched upon, between the Author's conduct and his books; in most they rhyme together — and all the notes from the mighty instrument are in concord! Look at the life of Schiller, how completely his works assimilate with his restless, questioning, and daring genius: the animation of Fiesco — the solemnity of Wallenstein — are alike emblematic of his character. His sentiments are the echo to his life. Walter Scott and Cobbett — what a contrast! Could Cobbett's life have been that of Scott — or Scott's character that of Cobbett? You may read the character of the Authors in their several Works, as if the works were meant to be autobiographies. Warburton! — what an illustration of the proud and bitter Bishop, in his proud and bitter Books! Sir Philip Sidney* is the Arcadia put into action; — the wise and benevolent Fenelon; — the sententious and fiery Corneille; — the dreaming and scarce intelligible Shelley; — pompous vigour of Johnson, with his prejudice and his sense — his jealousies and his charity — his habitual magniloquence in nothings — and his gloomy independence of mind, yet low-born veneration for rank; — Johnson is no less visible in the Rambler, the Rasselas, the Lives of the Poets, the Taxation no Tyranny, than in his large chair at Mrs. Thrale's — his lonely chamber in the dark court out of Fleet-street — or his leonine unbendings with the canicular soul of Boswell. How in the playfulness and the depth — the eccentricity and the solid sense — the

* "Poetry put into action" is the fine saying of Campbell in respect to Sidney's life; — true, but the poetry of the Arcadia.

ubiquitous sympathy with the larger mass of men — the absence of almost all sympathy with their smaller knots and closer ties, — how in those features, which characterise the pages of Bentham, you behold the wise, singular, benevolent, and passionless old man! I might go on enumerating these instances for ever: — Dante, Petrarch, Voltaire, rush on my memory as I write, — but to name them is enough to remind the reader that if he would learn their characters, he has only to read their works. I have been much pleased in tracing the life of Paul Louis Courier, the most brilliant political writer France ever possessed — to see how singularly it is in keeping with the character of his writings. Talking the other day at Paris with some of his friends, they expressed themselves astonished at my accurate notions of his character — “You must have known him,” they said. “No — but I know his works.” When he was in the army in Italy, he did not distinguish himself by bravery in his profession of Soldier, but by bravery in his pursuits as an Antiquarian! perfectly careless of danger, he pursued his own independent line of occupation — sympathizing with none of the objects of others — untouched by the vulgar ambition — wandering alone over the remains of old — falling a hundred times into the hands of the *brigands*, and a hundred times extricating himself by his address, and continuing the same pursuits with the same nonchalance. In all this you see the identical character which, in his writings, views with a gay contempt the ambition and schemes of others — which sneers alike at the Bourbon and the Bonaparte — which, careless of subordination, rather than braving persecution, pursues with a gallant indifference its own singular and independent career.

A critic, commenting on writings that have acquired

some popularity, observed, that they contained two views of life contradictory of each other, — the one inclining to the Ideal and Lofty — the other to the Worldly and Cynical. The critic remarked, that “this might arise from the Author having two separate characters, — a circumstance less uncommon than the world supposed.” There is great depth in the critic’s observation. An Author usually *has* two characters, — the one belonging to his Imagination — the other to his Experience. From the one come all his higher embodyings: by the help of the one he elevates — he refines; — from the other come his beings of “the earth, earthy,” and his aphorisms of worldly caution. From the one broke — bright yet scarce distinct — the Rebecca of *Ivanhoe*, — from the other rose, shrewd and selfish, the Andrew Fairservice of *Rob Roy*. The original of the first need never to have existed — her elements belonged to the Ideal; but the latter was purely the creature of Experience, and either copied from one, or moulded unconsciously from several, of the actual denizens of the living world. In Shakspeare the same doubleness of character is remarkably visible. The loftiest Ideal is perpetually linked with the most exact copy of the commoners of life. Shakspeare had never seen *Miranda* — but he had drunk his glass with honest *Stephano*. Each character embodies a separate view of life — the one (to return to my proposition) the offspring of Imagination, the other of Experience. This complexity of character — which has often puzzled the inquirer — may, I think, thus be easily explained — and the seeming contradiction of the tendency of the work traced home the conflicting principles in the breast of the Writer. The more an

imaginative man sees of the world, the more likely to be prominent is the distinction I have noted.

I cannot leave this subject — though the following remark is an episode from the inquiry indicated by my title — without observing that the characters drawn by Experience — usually the worldly, the plain, and the humorous — stand necessarily out from the canvass in broader and more startling colours, than those created by the Imagination. Hence superficial critics have often considered the humorous and coarse characters of an author as his best, — forgetful that the very indistinctness of his ideal characters is not only inseparable from the nature of purely imaginary creations, but a proof in the exaltation and intensesness of the imaginative power. The most shadowy and mist-like of all Scott's heroes is the Master of Ravenswood, and yet it is perhaps the highest of his characters in execution as well as conception. Those strong colours and massive outlines, which strike the vulgar gaze as belonging to the best pictures, belong rather to the lower Schools of Art. Let us take a work — the greatest the world possesses in those Schools, and in which the flesh-and-blood vitality of the characters is especially marked — I mean Tom Jones — and compare it with Hamlet. The chief characters in Tom Jones are all plain, visible, eating, drinking, and walking beings; those in Hamlet are shadowy, solemn, and mysterious — we do not associate them with the ordinary wants and avocations of Earth — they are

“Lifeless, but lifelike, and awful to sight,
Like the figures in arras that gloomily glare,
Stirred by the breath of the midnight air.”

But who shall say that the characters in Tom Jones are better drawn than those in Hamlet — or that there is

greater skill necessary in the highest walk of the Actual School, than in that of the Imaginative? — Yet there are some persons who, secretly in their hearts, want Hamlet to be as large in the calves as Tom Jones! These are they who blame Lara for being indistinct — that very indistinctness shedding over the poem the sole interest it was capable of receiving. With such critics, *Mari-tornes* is a more masterly creation than *Undine*.

We may observe in Humorous Authors, that the faults they chiefly ridicule have often a likeness in themselves. Cervantes had much of the knight-errant in him; — Sir George Etherege was unconsciously the *Fopling Flutter* of his own satire, — Goldsmith was the same hero to chambermaids, and coward to ladies, that he has immortalized in his charming comedy; — and the antiquarian frivolities of Jonathan Oldbuck had their resemblance in Jonathan Oldbuck's creator. The pleasure or the pain we derive from our own foibles makes enough of our nature to come off somewhere or other in the impression we stamp of ourselves on Books.

There is — as I think it has been somewhere remarked by a French writer — there is that in our character which never can be seen except in our writings. Yes, all that we have formed from the Ideal — all our noble aspirations — our haunting visions — our dreams of virtue, — all the *celata Venus* which dwells in the lonely *Ida* of the heart — who could pour forth these delicate mysteries to gross and palpable hearers, — who could utterly unveil to an actual and indifferent spectator the cherished and revered images of years — dim regrets and vague hopes?

In fact, if you told your best friend half what you put upon paper, he would yawn in your face, or he

would think you a fool. Would it have been possible for Rousseau to have gravely communicated to a living being the tearful egotisms of his *Reveries*? — could Shakspeare have uttered the wild confessions of his sonnets to his friends at the “Mermaid?” — should we have any notion of the youthful character of Milton — its lustrous but crystallized purity — if the *Comus* had been unwritten? *Authors are the only men we ever really do know*, — *the rest of mankind die with only the surface of their character understood.* True, as I have before said, even in an Author, if of large and fertile mind, much of his most sacred self is never to be revealed, — but still we know what species of ore the mine would have produced, though we may not have exhausted its treasure.

Thus, then, to sum up what I have said, so far from there being truth in the vulgar notion, that the character of Authors is belied in their works — their works are, to a diligent inquirer, their clearest and fullest illustration — an appendix to their biography far more valuable and explanatory than the text itself. From this fact we may judge of the beauty and grandeur of the materials of the human mind, although those materials are so often perverted, and their harmony so fearfully marred. It also appears that — despite the real likeness between the book and the man — the vulgar will not fail to be disappointed, because they look to externals; — and the man composed not the book with his face, nor his dress, nor his manners — but with his mind. Hence, then, to proclaim yourself disappointed with the Author, is usually to condemn your own accuracy of judgment, and your own secret craving after pantomimic effect. Moreover, it would appear, on looking over these remarks, that there are often two characters to an Author,

— the one essentially drawn from the Poetry of life — the other from its Experience; and that hence are to be explained many seeming contradictions and inconsistencies in his works. Lastly, that so far from the book belying the author, unless he had written that book — you (no, even if you are his nearest relation, his dearest connexion, — his wife, — his mother) — would never have known the character of his mind.

“Hæ pulcherrimæ effigies et mansuræ.”

All biography proves this remarkable fact! Who so astonished as a man's relations when he has exhibited his genius, which is the soul and core of his character? Had Alfieri or Rousseau died at thirty, what would all who had personally known either have told us of them? Would they have given us any, the faintest, notion of their characters? None. A man's mind is betrayed by his talents as much as his virtues. A councillor of a provincial parliament had a brother a mathematician — “How unworthy in my brother,” — cried the councillor, — “the brother of a councillor of the parliament in Bretagne, to sink into a mathematician!” That mathematician was Descartes! What should we know of the character of Descartes, supposing him to have renounced his science, and his brother (who might fairly be supposed to know his life and character better than any one else) to have written his biography? — A reflection that may teach us how biography in general ought to be estimated.

MONOS AND DAIMONOS.

A LEGEND.

I AM English by birth, but my early years were passed in a foreign and more northern land. I had neither brothers nor sisters; my mother died when I was in the cradle; and I found my sole companion, tutor, and playmate, in my father. He was a younger brother of a noble and ancient house: what induced him to forsake his country and his friends, to abjure all society, and to live on a rock, is a story in itself, which has nothing to do with mine.

As the Lord liveth, I believe the tale that I shall tell you will have sufficient claim on your attention, without calling in the history of another to preface its most exquisite details, or to give interest to its most amusing events. I said my father lived on a rock — the whole country round seemed nothing but rock! — wastes, bleak, blank, dreary; trees stunted, herbage blighted; caverns, through which some black and wild stream (that never knew star or sunlight, but through rare and hideous chasms of the huge stones above it) went dashing and howling on its blessed course; vast cliffs, covered with eternal snows, where the birds of prey lived, and sent, in screams and discordance, a grateful and meet music to the heavens, which seemed too cold and barren to wear even clouds upon their wan, grey, comfortless expanse: these made the characters of

that country where the spring of my life sickened itself away. The climate which, in the milder parts of ****, relieves the nine months of winter with three months of an abrupt and autumnless summer, never seemed to vary in the gentle and sweet region in which *my* home was placed. Perhaps, for a brief interval, the snow in the valleys melted, and the streams swelled, and a blue, ghastly, unnatural kind of vegetation, seemed, here and there, to scatter a grim smile over minute particles of the universal rock; but to these witnesses of the changing season were the summers of my boyhood confined. My father was addicted to the sciences — the physical sciences — and possessed but a moderate share of learning in anything else; he taught me all he knew; and the rest of my education, Nature, in a savage and stern guise, instilled in my heart by silent but deep lessons. She taught my feet to bound, and my arm to smite; she breathed life into my passions, and shed darkness over my temper; she taught me to cling to her, even in her most rugged and unalluring form; and to shrink from all else — from the companionship of man, and the soft smiles of woman, and the shrill voice of childhood; and the ties, and hopes, and socialities, and objects of human existence, as from a torture and a curse. Even in that sullen rock, and beneath that ungenial sky, I had luxuries unknown to the palled tastes of cities, or to those who woo delight in an air of odours and in a land of roses! What were those luxuries? They had a myriad varieties and shades of enjoyment — they had but a common name. What were those luxuries? *Solitude!*

My father died when I was eighteen; I was transferred to my uncle's protection, and I repaired to Lon-

don. I arrived there, gaunt and stern, a giant in limbs and strength, and to the tastes of those about me, a savage in bearing and in mood. They would have laughed, but I awed them; they altered *me*, but I changed *them*; I threw a damp over their enjoyment and a cloud over their meetings. Though I said little, though I sat with them estranged and silent, and passive, they seemed to wither beneath my presence. Nobody could live with me and be happy, or at ease! I felt it, and I hated them that they could love not me. Three years passed — I was of age — I demanded my fortune — and scorning social life, and pining once more for loneliness, I resolved to journey to those unpeopled and far lands, which if any have pierced, none have returned to describe. So I took my leave of them all, cousin and aunt — and when I came to my old uncle, who had liked me less than any, I grasped his hand with so friendly a gripe that, well I ween, the dainty and nice member was thenceforth but little inclined to its ordinary functions.

I commenced my pilgrimage — I pierced the burning sands — I traversed the vast deserts — I came into the enormous woods of Africa, where human step never trod, nor human voice ever startled the thrilling and intense Solemnity that broods over the great solitudes, as it brooded over chaos before the world was! There the primeval nature springs and perishes; undisturbed and unvaried by the convulsions of the surrounding world; the seed becomes the tree, lives through its uncounted ages, falls and moulders, and rots and vanishes; there, the slow Time moves on, unwitnessed in its mighty and mute changes, save by the wandering lion, or that huge serpent — a hundred times more vast than the puny

boa — which travellers have boasted to behold. There, too, as beneath the heavy and dense shade I couched in the scorching noon, I heard the trampling as of an army, and the crush and fall of the strong trees, and saw through the matted boughs the Behemoth pass on its terrible way, with its eyes burning as a sun, and its white teeth arched and glistening in the rabid jaw, as pillars of spar glitter in a cavern; the monster, to whom those wastes only are a home, and who never, since the waters rolled from the Dædal earth, has been given to human gaze and wonder but my own! Seasons glided on, but I counted them not; they were not doled to me by the tokens of man, nor made sick to me by the changes of his base life, and the evidence of his sordid labour. Seasons glided on, and my youth ripened into manhood, and manhood grew grey with the first frost of age; and then a vague and restless spirit fell upon me, and I said in my foolish heart, "I will look upon the countenances of my race once more!" I retraced my steps — I recrossed the wastes — I re-entered the cities — I took again the garb of man; for I had been hitherto naked in the wilderness, and hair had grown over me as a garment. I repaired to a sea-port, and took ship for England.

In the vessel there was one man, and only one, who neither avoided my companionship nor recoiled at my frown. He was an idle and curious being, full of the frivolities, and egotisms, and importance of those to whom towns are homes, and talk has become a mental aliment. He was one pervading, irritating, offensive tissue of little and low thoughts. The only meanness he had not was fear. It was impossible to awe, to silence, or to shun him. He sought me for ever; he was

a blister to me, which no force could tear away; my soul grew faint when my eyes met him. He was to my sight as those creatures which from their very loathsomeness are fearful as well as despicable to us. I longed and yearned to strangle him when he addressed me! Often I would have laid my hand on him, and hurled him into the sea to the sharks, which, lynx-eyed and eager-jawed, swam night and day around our ship; but the gaze of many was on us, and I curbed myself, and turned away, and shut my eyes in very sickness; and when I opened them again, lo! he was by my side, and his sharp quick voice grated on my loathing ear! One night I was roused from my sleep by the screams and oaths of men, and I hastened on deck: we had struck upon a rock. It was a ghastly, but, oh Christ! how glorious a sight! Moonlight still and calm — the sea sleeping in sapphires; and in the midst of the silent and soft repose of all things, three hundred and fifty souls were to perish from the world! I sat apart, and looked on, and aided not. A voice crept like an adder's hiss upon my ear; I turned, and saw my tormentor; the moonlight fell on his face, and it grinned with the maudlin grin of intoxication, and his pale blue eye glistened, and he said, "We will not part even here!" My blood ran coldly through my veins, and I would have thrown him into the sea, which now came fast and fast upon us; *but the moonlight was on him, and I did not dare to kill him.* But I would not stay to perish with the herd, and I threw myself alone from the vessel and swam towards a rock. I saw a shark dart after me, but I shunned him, and the moment after he had plenty to sate his maw. I heard a crash, and a mingled and wild burst of anguish, the anguish of three hundred and fifty

hearts that a minute afterwards were stilled, and I said in my *own* heart, with a deep joy, "*His* voice is with the rest, and we *have* parted!" I gained the shore, and lay down to sleep.

The next morning my eyes opened upon a land more beautiful than a Grecian's dreams. The sun had just risen, and laughed over streams of silver, and trees bending with golden and purple fruits, and the diamond dew sparkled from a sod covered with flowers, whose faintest breath was a delight. Ten thousand birds, with all the hues of a northern rainbow blended in their glorious and glowing wings, rose from turf and tree, and loaded the air with melody and gladness; the sea, without a vestige of the past destruction upon its glassy brow, murmured at my feet; the heavens, without a cloud, and bathed in a liquid and radiant light, sent their breezes as a blessing to my cheek. I rose with a refreshed and light heart; I traversed the new home I had found; I climbed upon a high mountain, and saw that I was in a small island — it had no trace of man — and my heart swelled as I gazed around and cried aloud in my exultation, "I shall be alone again!" I descended the hill: I had not yet reached its foot, when I saw the figure of a man approaching towards me. I looked at him, and my heart misgave me. He drew nearer, and I saw that my despicable persecutor had escaped the waters, and now stood before me. He came up with his hideous grin, and his twinkling eye; and he flung his arms round me; — I would sooner have felt the slimy folds of the serpent — and said, with his grating and harsh voice, "Ha! ha! my friend, we shall be together still!" I looked at him with a grim brow, but I said not a word. There was a great cave by the shore,

and I walked down and entered it, and the man followed me. "We shall live so happily here," said he; "we will never separate!" And my lip trembled, and my hand clenched of its own accord. It was now noon, and hunger came upon me; I went forth and killed a deer, and I brought it home and broiled part of it on a fire of fragrant wood; and the man ate, and crunched, and laughed, and I wished that the bones had choked him; and he said, when we had done, "We shall have rare cheer here!" But I still held my peace. At last he stretched himself in a corner of the cave and slept. I looked at him, and saw that the slumber was heavy, and I went out and rolled a huge stone to the mouth of the cavern, and took my way to the opposite part of the island; it was my turn to laugh then! I found out another cavern; and I made a bed of moss and of leaves, and I wrought a table of wood, and I looked out from the mouth of the cavern and saw the wide seas before me, and I said, "Now I shall be alone!"

When the next day came, I again went out and caught a kid, and brought it in, and prepared it as before; but I was not hungered, and I could not eat, so I roamed forth and wandered over the island: the sun had nearly set when I returned. I entered the cavern, and sitting on my bed and by my table was that man whom I thought I had left buried alive in the other cave. He laughed when he saw me, and laid down the bone he was gnawing.

"Ha, [ha!" said he, "you would have served me a rare trick, but there was a hole in the cave which you did not see, and I got out to seek you. It was not a difficult matter, for the island is so small; and now we *have* met, and we will part no more!"

I said to the man, "Rise, and follow me!" So he rose, and the food he quitted was loathsome in my eyes, for he had touched it. "Shall this thing reap and I sow?" thought I, and my heart felt to me like iron.

I ascended a tall cliff: "Look round," said I; "you see that stream which divides the island; you shall dwell on one side, and I on the other, but the same spot shall not hold us, nor the same feast supply!"

"That may never be!" quoth the man; "for I cannot catch the deer, nor spring upon the mountain kid; and if you feed me not, I shall starve!"

"Are there not fruits," said I, "and birds that you may snare, and fishes which the sea throws up?"

"But I like them not," quoth the man, and laughed, "so well as the flesh of kids and deer!"

"Look then," said I, "Look: by that grey stone, upon the opposite side of the stream, I will lay a deer or a kid daily, so that you may have the food you covet; but if ever you cross the stream and come into my kingdom, so sure as the sea murmurs, and the bird flies, I will slay you!"

I descended the cliff, and led the man to the side of the stream. "I cannot swim," said he; so I took him on my shoulders and crossed the brook, and I found him out a cave, and I made him a bed and a table like my own, and left him. When I was on my own side of the stream again, I bounded with joy, and lifted up my voice; "I shall be alone *now*!" said I.

So two days passed, and I *was* alone. On the third I went after my prey; the noon was hot, and I was wearied when I returned. I entered my cavern, and behold the man lay stretched upon my bed. "Ha, ha!"

said he, "here I am; I was so lonely at home that I have come to live with you again!"

I frowned on the man with a dark brow, and I said, "So sure as the sea murmurs, and the bird flies, I will slay you!" I seized him in my arms: I plucked him from my bed; I took him out into the open air, and we stood together on the smooth sand, and by the great sea. A fear came suddenly upon me; I was struck with the awe of the still Spirit which reigns over Solitude. Had a thousand been round us, I would have slain him before them all. I feared now because we were alone in the desert, with Silence and GOD! I relaxed my hold. "Swear," I said, "never to molest me again; swear to preserve unpassed the boundary of our several homes, and I will *not* kill you!" "I cannot swear," answered the man; "I would sooner die than forswear the blessed human face — even though that face be my enemy's!"

At these words my rage returned; I dashed the man to the ground, and I put my foot upon his breast, and my hand upon his neck, and he struggled for a moment — and was dead! I was startled; and as I looked upon his face I thought it seemed to revive; I thought the cold blue eye fixed upon me, and the vile grin returned to the livid mouth, and the hands which in death-pang had grasped the sand, stretched themselves out to me. So I stamped on the breast again, and I dug a hole in the shore, and I buried the body. "And now," said I, "I am alone at last!" And then *the TRUE sense of loneliness*, the vague, comfortless, objectless sense of desolation passed into me. And I shook — shook in every limb of my giant frame, as if I had been a child that trembles in the dark; and my hair rose, and my blood crept, and I would not have stayed in that

spot a moment more if I had been made young again for it. I turned away and fled — fled round the whole island; and gnashed my teeth when I came to the sea, and longed to be cast into some illimitable desert, that I might flee on for ever. At sunset I returned to my cave — I sat myself down on one corner of the bed, and covered my face with my hands — I thought I heard a noise; I raised my eyes, and, as I live, I saw on the other end of the bed the man whom I had slain and buried. There he sat, six feet from me, and nodded to me, and looked at me with his wan eyes, and laughed. I rushed from the cave — I entered a wood — I threw myself down — there opposite to me, six feet from my face, was the face of that man again! And my courage rose and I spoke, but he answered not. I attempted to seize him, he glided from my grasp, and was still opposite, six feet from me as before. I flung myself on the ground, and pressed my face to the sod, and would not look up till the night came on and darkness was over the earth. I then rose and returned to the cave; I lay down on my bed, and the man lay down by me; and I frowned and tried to seize him as before, but I could not, and I closed my eyes, *and the man lay by me*. Day followed day and it was the same. At board, at bed, at home and abroad, in my uprising and my down-sitting, by day and at night, there, by my bed-side, six feet from me, and no more, was that ghastly and dead thing. And I said, as I looked upon the beautiful land and the still heavens, and then turned to that fearful comrade, “I shall never be alone again!” And the man laughed.

At last a ship came, and I hailed it — it took me up, and I thought, as I put my foot upon the deck, “I

shall escape from my tormentor!" As I thought so, I saw him climb the deck too, and I strove to push him down into the sea, but in vain; he was by my side, *and he fed and slept with me as before!* I came home to my native land! I forced myself into crowds — I went to the feast, and I heard music — and I made thirty men sit with me, and watch by day and by night. So I had thirty-one companions, and one was more social than all the rest.

At last I said to myself, "This is a delusion, and a cheat of the external senses, and the thing is *not*, save in my mind. I will consult those skilled in such disorders, and I will be — *alone again!*"

I summoned one celebrated in purging from the mind's eye its films and deceits — I bound him by an oath to secrecy — and I told him my tale. He was a bold man and a learned, and promised me relief and release.

"Where is the figure now?" said he, smiling; "I see it not."

"And I answered, "It is six feet from us!"

"I see it not," said he again; and if it were real, my senses would not receive the image less palpably than yours." And he spoke to me as schoolmen speak. I did not argue nor reply, but I ordered the servants to prepare a room, and to cover the floor with a thick layer of sand. When it was done, I bade the Leech follow me into the room, and I barred the door. "Where is the figure now?" repeated he; and I said, "Six feet from us as before!" And the Leech smiled. "Look on the floor!" said I, and pointed to the spot; "what see you?" And the Leech shuddered, and clung to me that he might not fall. "The sand there," said he, "was smooth

when we entered, and now I see on that spot the print of human feet!"

And I laughed, and dragged my *living* companion on; "See," said I, "where we move what follows us!"

The Leech gasped for breath; "The print," said he, "of those human feet!"

"Can you not minister to me then?" cried I, in a sudden and fierce agony, "and must I *never* be alone again?"

And I saw the feet of the dead thing trace these words upon the sand: —

SOLITUDE IS ONLY FOR THE GUILTLESS — EVIL THOUGHTS ARE COMPANIONS FOR A TIME — EVIL DEEDS ARE COMPANIONS THROUGH ETERNITY — THY HATRED MADE ME BREAK UPON THY LONELINESS — THY CRIME DESTROYS LONELINESS FOR EVER."

ON THE
DEPARTURE OF YOUTH.

IN the seven stages of man's life, there are three epochs more distinctly marked than the rest, viz. — the departure of Boyhood — the departure of Youth — the commencement of Old Age. I consider the several dates of these epochs, in ordinary constitutions, commence at fifteen, thirty, and fifty years of age. It is of the second that I am about to treat. When I call it the epoch for the departure of youth, I do not of course intend to signify, that this, the prime and zenith of our years, is as yet susceptible of decay. Our frames are as young as they were five years before, it is the mind that has become matured. By youth I mean the growing and progressive season — its departure is only visible inasmuch as we have become, as it were, fixed and stationary. The qualities that peculiarly belong to youth — its "quick-thronging fancies" — its exuberance of energy and feeling, cease to be our distinctions at thirty. We are young but not youthful. It is not at thirty that we know the wild fantasies of Romeo — scarcely at thirty that we could halt irresolute in the visionary weaknesses of Hamlet. The *passions* of youth may be no less felt than heretofore; it is youth's *sen-*

timent we have lost. The muscles of the mind are firmer, but it is the nerve that is less susceptible, and vibrates no more to the lightest touch of pleasure or of pain. — Yes, it is the prime of our manhood which is the departure of our youth!

It seems to me, that to reflective and lofty minds accustomed to survey, and fitted to comprehend, the great aims of life, — this is a period peculiarly solemn and important. It is a spot on which we ought to rest for a while from our journey. It is the summit of the hill from which we look down on two even divisions of our journey. We have left behind us a profusion of bright things — never again shall we traverse such fairy fields — with such eager hopes; — never again shall we find the same

“Glory in the grass or splendour in the flower.”

The dews upon the herbage are dried up. The morning is no more.

“We made a posy while the time ran by.

But Time did beckon to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away
And wither in the hand.

Farewell, dear flowers, sweetly your time ye spent!”*

We ought then to pause for awhile — to review the past — to gather around us the memories and the warnings of experience — to feel that the lighter part of our destinies is completed — that the graver has begun — that our follies and our errors have become to us the monitors of wisdom: for since these are the tributes which Fate exacts from Mortality, they are not

* George Herbert.

to be idly regretted, but to be solemnly redeemed. And if we are penetrated with this thought, our Past becomes the mightiest preacher to our Future. Looking back over the tombs of departed errors, we behold, by the side of each, the face of a warning Angel! It is the prayer of a foolish heart, "O that my time could return — O that this had been done, or that could be undone;" rather should we rejoice that so long a season of reparation yet remains to us, and that Experience has taught us the lessons of suffering which makes men wise. Wisdom is an acquisition purchased in proportion to the disappointments which our own frailties have entailed upon us. For no one is taught by the sufferings of another. We ourselves must have felt the burning in order to shun the fire. To refer again to the beautiful poem I have already quoted, the flowers that were

"Fit while they lived, for smell and ornament,
Serve, after death, for cures."

At the age of thirty most men's characters experience a revulsion. The common pleasures of the world have been tasted to the full and begin to pall. We have reduced to the sobering test of reality, the visions of youth — we no longer expect that perfection in our species which our inexperience at first foretold — we no longer chase frivolities, or hope chimæras. Perhaps one of the most useful lessons that Disappointment has taught us, is a true estimate of Love. For at first we are too apt to imagine that woman (poor partner with ourselves in the frailties of humanity) must be perfect — that the dreams of the poets have a corporeal being, and that God has ordained to us that unclouded nature — that unchanging devotion — that seraph heart, which it has been the great vice of Fiction to attribute to the daughters

of clay. And, in hoping perfection, with how much excellence have we been discontented — to how many idols have we changed our worship! Thirsting for the Golden Fountain of the Fable, from how many streams have we turned away, weary and in disgust! The inexperience which teaches us at last the due estimate of woman, has gone far to instruct us in the claims of men. Love, once the monopolizer of our desires, gives way to more manly and less selfish passions — and we wake from a false paradise to the real earth.

Not less important is the lesson which teaches us not to measure mankind by ideal standards of morality; for to imagine too fondly that men are gods, is to end by believing that they are demons: the young pass usually through a period of misanthropy, and the misanthropy is acute in proportion to their own generous confidence in human excellence. We the least forgive faults in those from whom we the most expected excellence. But out of the ashes of misanthropy Benevolence rises again; we find many virtues where we had imagined all was vice — many acts of disinterested friendship where we had fancied all was calculation and fraud — and so gradually from the two extremes we pass to the proper medium; and feeling that no human being is wholly good, or wholly base, we learn that true knowledge of mankind which induces us to expect little and forgive much. The world cures alike the optimist and the misanthrope. Without this proper and sober estimate of men, we have neither prudence in the affairs of life, nor toleration for contrary opinions — we *tempt* the cheater, and then *condemn* him — we believe so strongly in one faith, that we would sentence dissentients as heretics. It is experience alone that teaches us that he *who is discreet is seldom betrayed*,

and that out of the opinions we condemn, spring often the actions we admire.

At the departure of youth, then, in collecting and investigating our minds, we should feel ourselves embued with these results for our future guidance, viz. a knowledge of the true proportion of the passions, so as not to give to one the impetus which should be shared by all; a conviction of the idleness of petty objects which demand large cares, and that true gauge and measurement of men which shall neither magnify nor dwarf the attributes and materials of human nature. From these results we draw conclusions to make us not only wiser but better men. The years through which we have passed have probably developed in us whatever capacities we possess — they have taught us in what we are most likely to excel, and for what we are most fitted. We may come now with better success than Rasselas to the Choice of Life. And in this I incline to believe, that we ought to prefer that career from which we are convinced our minds and tempers will derive the greatest share of happiness — not disdaining the pursuit of honours, or of wealth, or the allurements of a social career — but calmly balancing the advantages and evils of each course, whether of private life or of public — of retirement or of crowds, — and deciding on each according, not to abstract rules, not to vague maxims on the nothingness of fame, or the joys of solitude, but according to the peculiar bias and temper of our own minds. For toil to some is happiness and rest to others. This man can only breathe in crowds, and that man only in solitude. Fame is necessary to the quiet of one nature, and is void of all attraction to another. Let each choose his career according to the dictates of his own breast —

and this, not from the vulgar doctrine that our own happiness, as happiness only, is to be our being's end and aim (for in minds rightly and nobly constituted, there are aims *out* of ourselves, stronger than aught of self), but because a mind not at ease is rarely virtuous. Happiness and Virtue react upon each other — the best are not only the happiest, but the happiest are usually the best. Drawn into pursuits, however estimable in themselves, from which our tastes and dispositions recoil, we are too apt to grow irritable, morose, and discontented with our kind; our talents do not spring forth naturally; forced by the heat of circumstance, they produce unseasonable and unwholesome fruit. The genius that is roused by things at war with it, too often becomes malignant, and retaliates upon men the wound it receives from circumstance; but when we are engaged in that course of life which most flatters our individual bias, whether it be action or seclusion, literature or business, we enjoy within us that calm which is the best atmosphere of the mind, and in which all the mind's produce is robust and mellow. Our sense of contentment makes us kindly and benevolent to others; we are not chafed and galled by cares which are tyrannical, because ungenial. We are fulfilling our proper destiny, and those around us feel the sunshine of our own hearts. It is for this reason that happiness should be our main object in the choice of life, *because* out of happiness springs that state of mind which becomes virtue: — and this should be remembered by those generous and ardent dispositions who would immolate themselves for the supposed utility of others, plunging into a war of things for which their natures are unsuited. Among the few truths which Rousseau has left us, none is more true than this —

“It is not permitted to a man to corrupt himself for the sake of mankind.” We must be useful according, not to general theories, but to our individual capacities and habits. To be practical we must call forth the qualities we are *able* to practice. Each star, shining in its appointed sphere, each — no matter its magnitude or its gyration, — contributes to the general light.

To different ages there are different virtues — the reckless generosity of the boy is a wanton folly in the man. At thirty there is no apology for the spendthrift. From that period to the verge of age, is the fitting season for a considerate foresight and prudence in affairs. Approaching age itself we have less need of economy. And Nature recoils from the miser, caressing Mammon with one hand, while Death plucks him by the other. We should provide for our age, in order that our age may have no urgent wants of this world, to absorb it from the meditations of the next. It is awful to see the lean hands of Dotage making a coffer of the grave! But while, with the departure of youth, we enter stedfastly into the great business of life, while our reason constructs its palaces from the ruins of our passions — while we settle into thoughtful, and resolute, and aspiring men — we should beware how thus occupied by the world, the world grow “too much with us.” It is a perilous age that of ambition and discretion — a perilous age that when youth recedes from us — if we forget that the soul should cherish its own youth through eternity! It is precisely as we feel how little laws can make us good while they forbid us to be evil — it is precisely as our experience puts a check upon our impulses — it is precisely as we sigh to own how contaminating is example, that we should be on our guard over our own hearts — not,

now, lest they err — but rather lest they harden. Now is the period, when the affections can be easiest scared — when we can dispense the most with Love — when in the lustiness and hardihood of our golden prime we can best stand alone — remote alike from the ideal yearnings of youth, and the clinging helplessness of age. Now is the time, when neither the voice of woman, nor the smiles of children, touch us as they did once, and may again. We are occupied, absorbed, wrapt in our schemes and our stern designs. The world is our mistress, our projects are our children. A man is startled when he is told this truth; let him consider, let him pause — if he be actively engaged (as few at that age are not), and ask himself if I wrong him? — if, insensibly and unconsciously, he has not retreated into the citadel of self? — Snail-like, he walks the world, bearing about him his armour and retreat. Is not this to be guarded against? Does it not require our caution, lest caution itself block up the beautiful avenues of the heart? What can life give us if we sacrifice what is fairest in ourselves? What does experience profit, if it forbid us to be generous, to be noble — if it counterwork and blight the graces and the charities, and all that belong to the Tender and the Exalted — without which wisdom is harsh, and virtue has no music in her name. As Paley says, that we ought not to refuse alms too sternly for fear we encourage the idle, lest, on the other hand, we blunt the heart into a habit of deafness to the distressed — so with the less vulgar sympathies, shall we check the impulse and the frankness, and the kindly interpretation, and the human sensibility (which are the alms of the soul), because they may expose us to occasional deceit? Shall the error of softness justify the habits of

obduracy? — and lest we should suffer by the faults of others, shall we vitiate ourselves?

This, then, is the age in which, while experience becomes our guide, we should follow its dictates with a certain measured and jealous caution. We must remember how apt man is to extremes — rushing from credulity and weakness to suspicion and distrust. And still if we are *truly* prudent, we shall cherish, despite occasional delusions — those noblest and happiest of our tendencies — *to love and to confide*.

I know not indeed a more beautiful spectacle in the world than an old man, who has gone with honour through all its storms and contests, and who retains to the last the freshness of feeling that adorned his youth. This is the true green old age — this makes a southern winter of declining years, in which the sunlight warms, though the heats are gone, — such are ever welcome to the young — and sympathy unites, while wisdom guides. There is this distinction between respect and veneration — the latter has *always* in it something of love.

This, too, is the age in which we ought calmly to take the fitting estimate of the opinions of the world. In youth we are too apt to despise, in maturity too inclined to over-rate, the sentiments of others, and the silent influences of the public. It is right to fix the medium. Among the happiest and proudest possessions of a man is his character — it is a wealth — it is a rank of itself. It usually procures him the honours and rarely the jealousies of Fame. Like most treasures that are attained less by circumstances than ourselves, character is a more felicitous reputation than glory. The wise man therefore despises not the opinion of the world — he estimates it at its full value — he does not wantonly jeo-

pardize his treasure of a good name — he does not rush from vanity alone, against the received sentiments of others — he does not hazard his costly jewel with unworthy combatants and for a petty stake. He respects the legislation of decorum. If he be benevolent, as well as wise, he will remember that character affords him a thousand utilities — that it enables him the better to forgive the erring, and to shelter the assailed. But that character is built on a false and hallow basis, which is formed not from the dictates of our own breast, but solely from the fear of censure. What is the essence and the life of character? Principle, integrity, independence! — or, as one of our great old writers hath it, “that inbred loyalty unto Virtue which can serve her without a livery.” These are qualities that hang not upon any man’s breath. They must be formed within ourselves; they must *make ourselves* — indissoluble and indestructible as the soul! If, conscious of these possessions, we trust tranquilly to time and occasion to render them known, we may rest assured that our character, sooner or later, will establish itself. We cannot more defeat our own object than by a restless and fevered anxiety as to what the world will say of us. Except, indeed, if we are tempted to unworthy compliances with what our conscience disapproves, in order to please the fleeting and capricious countenance of the time. There is a moral honesty in a due regard for character which will not shape itself to the humours of the crowd. And this if honest is no less wise. For the crowd never long esteems those who flatter it at their own expense. He who has the suppleness of the demagogue will live to complain of the fickleness of the mob.

If in early youth it is natural sometimes to brave and causelessly to affront opinion, so also it is natural, on the

other hand, and not perhaps unamiable, for the milder order of spirits to incur the contrary extreme, and stand in too great an awe of the voices of the world. They feel as if they had no right to be confident of their own judgment — they have not tested themselves by temptation and experience. They are willing to give way on points on which they are not assured. And it is a pleasant thing to prop their doubts on the stubborn asseverations of others. But in vigorous and tried manhood, we should be all in all to ourselves. Our own past and our own future should be our main guides. “He who is not a physician at thirty is a fool” — a physician to his mind, as to his body, acquainted with his own moral constitution — its diseases, its remedies, its diet, its conduct. We should learn so to regulate our own thoughts and actions, that while comprising the world, the world should not bias them. Take away the world — and we should think and act the same — a world to ourselves. Thus trained and thus accustomed — we can bear occasional reproach and momentary slander with little pain. The rough contact of the herd presses upon no sore — the wrongs of the hour do not incense or sadden us. We rely upon ourselves and upon time. If I have rightly said that principle is a main essence of character, principle is a thing we cannot change or shift. As it has been finely expressed, “Principle is a passion for truth,”* — and as an earlier and homelier writer hath it, “The truths of God are the pillars of the world.”† The truths we believe in are the pillars of *our* world. The man who at thirty can be easily persuaded out of his own sense of

* Hazlitt.

† From a scarce and curious little tract called “The Simple Cobbler of Aggavvam.” 1647.

right, is never respected after he has served a purpose. I do not know even if we do not think more highly of the intellectual uses of one who sells himself well, than those of one who lends himself for nothing.

Lastly, this seems to me, above all, an age which calls upon us to ponder well and thoughtfully upon the articles of our moral and our religious creed. Entering more than ever into the mighty warfare of the world, we should summon to our side whatever auxiliaries can aid us in the contest -- to cheer, to comfort, to counsel, to direct. It is a time seriously to analyse the confused elements of belief — to apply ourselves to such solution of our doubts as reason may afford us. Happy he who can shelter himself with confidence under the assurance of immortality, and feel “that the world is not an Inn, but a Hospital—a place not to live but to die in,” acknowledging “that piece of divinity that is in us — that something that was before the elements, and owes no homage to the sun.”* For him there is indeed the mastery and the conquest, not only over death, but over life; and “he forgets that he can die if he complain of misery!” †

I reject all sectarian intolerance — I affect no uncharitable jargon — frankly I confess that I have known many before whose virtues I bow down ashamed of my own errors, though they were not guided and supported by Belief. But I never met with one such, who did not own that while he would not have been worse, he would have been happier *could* he have believed. I indeed, least of all men, ought harshly to search into that Realm of Opinion which no law can reach; for I, too, have had

* Religio Medici, Part II. Sect. ii.

† Religio Medici, Part I. Sect. xlv.

my interval of doubt, of despondency, of the Philosophy of the Garden. Perhaps there are many with whom Faith — the Saviour, — must lie awhile in darkness and the Grave of Unbelief, ere, immortal and immortalizing, it ascend from its tomb — a God.

But humbly and reverently comparing each state with each, I exclaim again, "Happy, thrice happy, he who relies on the eternity of the soul — who believes — as the loved fall one after one from his side — that they have returned "to their native country"* — that they await the divine re-union; who feels that each treasure of knowledge he attains he carries with him through illimitable being — who sees in Virtue, the essence and the element of the world he is to inherit, and to which he but accustoms himself betimes; who comforts his weariness amidst the storms of time, by seeing, far across the melancholy seas, the haven he will reach at last — who deems that every struggle has its assured reward, and every sorrow has its balm — who knows, however forsaken or bereaved below, that he never can be alone, and never be deserted — that above him is the protection of Eternal Power, and the mercy of Eternal Love! Ah, well said the dreamer of philosophy, "How much *He* knew of the human heart who first called God our Father!"

As, were our lives limited to a single year, and we had never beheld the flower that perishes from the earth restored by the dawning spring, we might doubt the philosophy that told us it was not dead, but dormant only for a time; yet, to continue existence to another season, would be to know that the seeming miracle was but the course of nature; — even so, this life is to eternity but as

* Form of Chinese Epitaphs.

a single revolution of the sun, in which we close our views with the winter of the soul, when its leaves fade and vanish, and it seems outwardly to rot away; but the seasons roll on unceasingly over the blank and barrenness of the grave — and those who, above, have continued the lease of life, behold the imperishable flower burst forth into the second spring!

This hope makes the dignity of man, nor can I conceive how he who feels it breathing its exalted eloquence through his heart, can be guilty of one sordid action, or brood over one low desire. To be immortal is to be the companion of God!

THE WORLD AS IT IS.

“WHAT a delightful thing the world is! Lady Lennox’s ball, last night — how charming it was! — every one so kind, and Charlotte looking so pretty — the nicest girl I ever saw! But I must dress now. Balfour is to be here at twelve with the horse he wants to sell me. How lucky I am to have such a friend as Balfour! — so entertaining — so good-natured — so devilish clever too — and such an excellent heart! Ah! how unlucky! it rains a little; but never mind, it will clear up; and if it don’t — why one can play at billiards. What a delightful thing the world is!”

So soliloquized Charles Nugent, a man of twenty-one — a philanthropist — an optimist. Our young gentleman was an orphan, of good family and large fortune; brave, generous, confiding, and open-hearted. His ability was above the ordinary standard, and he had a warm love, and a pure taste, for letters. He had even bent a knee to Philosophy, but the calm and cold graces with which the goddess receives her servants had soon discontented the young votary with the worship. “Away!” cried he, one morning, flinging aside the volume of La Rochefoucault, which he had fancied he understood; “Away with this selfish and debasing code! — men are

not the mean things they are here described — be it mine to think exultingly of my species!” My dear Experience, with how many fine sentiments do you intend to play the devil? It is not without reason that Goëthe tells us, that though Fate is an excellent, she is also a very expensive, schoolmistress.

„Ha! my dear Nugent, how are you?” and Captain Balfour enters the room; a fine dark, handsome fellow, with something of pretension in his air and a great deal of frankness. “And here is the horse. Come to the window. Does not he step finely? What action! Do you remark his forehead? How he carries his tail! Gad, I don’t think you shall have him, after all!”

„Nay, my dear fellow, you may well be sorry to part with him. He is superb! Quite sound — eh?”

“Have him examined.”

“Do you think I would not take your word for it? The price?”

“Fix it yourself. Prince Paul once offered me a hundred and eighty; but to you — —”

“You shall have it.”

“No, Nugent — say a hundred and fifty.”

“I won’t be outdone — there’s a draft for the one hundred and eighty guineas.”

“Upon my soul, I’m ashamed; but you are such a rich fellow. John, take the horse to Mr. Nugent’s stables. Where will you dine to-day? — at the Cocoa-tree?”

“With all my heart.”

The young men rode together. Nugent was delighted with his new purchase. They dined at the Cocoa-tree. Balfour ordered some early peaches. Nugent paid the bill. They went to the Opera.

"Do you see that *figurante*, Florine?" asked Balfour, „Pretty ancle — eh?"

"Yes, *comme ça* — but dances awkwardly — not handsome."

"What! not handsome? Come and talk to her. She's more admired than any girl on the stage."

They went behind the scenes, and Balfour convinced his friend that he ought to be enchanted with Florine. Before the week was out, the *figurante* kept her carriage, and in return, Nugent supped with her twice a-week.

Nugent had written a tale for "The Keepsake;" it was his first literary effort; it was tolerably good, and exceedingly popular. One day he was lounging over his breakfast, and a tall, thin gentleman, in black, was announced by the name of Mr. Gilpin.

Mr. Gilpin made a most respectful bow, and heaved a peculiarly profound sigh. Nugent was instantly seized with a lively interest in the stranger. "Sir, it is with great regret," faltered forth Mr. Gilpin, "that I seek you. I—I—I" A low, consumptive cough checked his speech. Nugent offered him a cup of tea. The civility was refused, and the story continued.

Mr. Gilpin's narration is soon told, when he himself is not the narrator. An unfortunate literary man — once in affluent circumstance — security for a treacherous friend — friend absconded — pressure of unforeseen circumstances — angel wife and four cherub children — a book coming out next season — deep distress at present — horror at being forced to beg — forcibly struck by generous sentiments expressed in the tale written by Mr. Nugent — a ray of hope broke on his mind — and *voilà* the causes of Mr. Gilpin's distress and Mr. Gilpin's visit.

Never was there a more interesting personification of the afflicted man of letters than Gregory Gilpin. He looked pale, patient, and respectable; he coughed frequently, and he was dressed in deep mourning. Nugent's heart swelled — he placed a bank-note in Mr. Gilpin's hands — he promised more effectual relief, and Mr. Gilpin retired, overpowered with his own gratitude and Mr. Nugent's respectful compassion.

“How happy I am to be rich!” said the generous young philanthropist, throwing open his chest.

Nugent went to a *conversazione* at Lady Lennox's. Her Ladyship was a widow, and a charming woman. She was a little of the blue, and a little of the fine lady, and a little of the beauty, and a little of the coquette, and a great deal of the sentimentalist. She had one daughter, without a shilling; she had taken a warm interest in a young man of the remarkable talents and singular amiability of Charles Nugent. He sate next her — they talked of the heartlessness of the world — it is a subject on which men of twenty-one and ladies of forty-five are especially eloquent. Lady Lennox complained, Mr. Nugent defended. “One does not talk much of innocence,” it is said, or something like it is said, somewhere in Madame d'Epinaÿ's Memoirs, “without being sadly corrupted;” and nothing brings out the goodness of our own hearts more than a charge against the heartlessness of others.

“An excellent woman!” thought Nugent; “what warm feelings! — how pretty her daughter is! Oh! a charming family!”

Charlotte Lennox played an affecting air; Nugent leaned over the piano; they talked about music, poetry, going on the water, sentiment, and Richmond Hill.

They made up a party of pleasure. Nugent did not sleep well that night — he was certainly in love.

When he rose the next morning, the day was bright and fine; Balfour, the best of friends, was to be with him in an hour; Balfour's horse, the best of horses, was to convey him to Richmond; and at Richmond he was to meet Lady Lennox, the most agreeable of mothers — and Charlotte, the most enchanting of daughters. The *figurante* had always been a bore — she was now forgotten. "It certainly is a delightful world!" repeated Nugent, as he tied his neckcloth.

It was some time — I will not say how long — after the date of this happy day; Nugent was alone in his apartment, and walking to and fro — his arms folded, and a frown upon his brow "What a rascal! what a mean wretch! — and the horse was lame when he sold it — not worth ten pounds! — and I so confiding — damn my folly! *That*, however, I should not mind; but to have saddled me with his cast-off mistress! — to make me the laughing-stock of the world! By heavens, he shall repent it! Borrowed money of me, then made a jest of my good-nature! — introduced me to his club, in order to pillage me! — but, thank God, I can shoot him yet! Ha! Colonel; this is kind!"

Colonel Nelmore, an elderly gentleman, well known in society, with a fine forehead, a shrewd, contemplative eye, and an agreeable address, entered the room. To him Nugent poured forth the long list of his grievances, and concluded by begging him to convey a challenge to the best of friends — Captain Balfour. The Colonel raised his eyebrows.

"But, — my dear sir, this gentleman has certainly

behaved ill to you, I allow it — but for what specific offence do you mean to challenge him?”

“For his conduct in general.”

The Colonel laughed.

“For saying yesterday, then, that I was grown a d—d bore, and he should cut me in future. He told Selwyn so in the bow-window at White’s.”

The Colonel took snuff.

“My good young friend,” said he, “I see you don’t know the world. Come and dine with me to-day — a punctual seven. We’ll talk over these matters. Meanwhile, you can’t challenge a man for calling you a bore.”

“Not challenge him! — what should I do then?”

“Laugh — shake your head at him, and say — ‘Ah! Balfour, you’re a sad fellow!’”

The Colonel succeeded in preventing the challenge, but Nugent’s indignation at the best of friends remained as warm as ever. He declined the Colonel’s invitation — he was to dine with the Lennoxes. Meanwhile, he went to the shady part of Kensington Gardens to indulge his reflections.

He sat himself down in an arbour, and looked moralizingly over the initials, the dates, and the witticisms, that hands, long since mouldering, have consigned to the admiration of posterity.

A gay party were strolling by this retreat — their laughter and their voices preceded them. “Yes,” said a sharp, dry voice, which Nugent recognised as belonging to one of the wits of the day — “Yes, I saw you, Lady Lennox, talking sentiment to Nugent — fie! how could you waste your time so unprofitably!”

“Ah! poor young man! he is certainly *bien bête*,

with his fine phrases and so forth: but 'tis a good creature on the whole, and exceedingly useful!"

"Useful!"

"Yes; fills up a vacant place at one's table, at a day's warning; lends me his carriage-horses when mine have caught cold; subscribes to my charities for me; and supplies the drawing-room with flowers. In a word, if he were more sensible, he would be less agreeable: his sole charm is his foibles."

What a description by the most sentimental of mothers, of the most talented, the most interesting of young men. Nugent was thunderstruck; the party swept by; he was undiscovered.

He raved, he swore, he was furious. He goes to the dinner to-day! No, he would write such a letter to the lady — it should speak daggers! But the daughter: Charlotte was not of the party. Charlotte — oh! Charlotte was quite a different creature from her mother — the most natural, the most simple of human beings, and evidently loved him. He could not be mistaken there. Yes, for her sake he would go to the dinner: he would smother his just resentment.

He went to Lady Lennox's. It was a large party. The young Marquis of Austerly had just returned from his travels. He was sitting next to the most lovely of daughters. Nugent was forgotten.

After dinner, however, he found an opportunity to say a few words in a whisper to Charlotte. He hinted a tender reproach, and he begged her to sing "*We met; 'twas in a crowd.*" Charlotte was hoarse — had caught cold. Charlotte could not sing. Nugent left the room, and the house. When he got to the end of the street, he discovered that he had left his cane behind.

He went back for it, glad (for he was really in love) of an excuse for darting an angry glance at the most simple, the most natural of human beings, that should prevent her sleeping the whole night. He ascended the drawing-room; and Charlotte was delighting the Marquis of Austerly, who leaned over her chair, with "*We met; 'twas in a crowd.*"

Charlotte Lennox was young, lovely, and artful. Lord Austerly was young, inexperienced, and vain. In less than a month, he proposed, and was accepted.

"Well, well!" said poor Nugent one morning, breaking from a reverie; "betrayed in my friendship, deceived in my love, the pleasure of doing good is still left to me. Friendship quits us at the first stage of life, Love at the second, Benevolence lasts till death! Poor Gilpin! how grateful he is: I must see if I can get him that place abroad." To amuse his thoughts, he took up a new magazine. He opened the page at a violent attack on himself — on his beautiful tale in the "Keep-sake." The satire was not confined to the work; it extended to the author. He was a fop, a coxcomb, a ninny, an intellectual dwarf, a miserable creature, and an abortion! These are pleasant studies for a man out of spirits, especially before he is used to them. Nugent had just flung the magazine to the other end of the room, when his lawyer came to arrange matters about a mortgage, which the generous Nugent had already been forced to raise on his estates. The Lawyer was a pleasant, entertaining man of the world, accustomed to the wants of young men. He perceived that Nugent was a little out of humour. He attributed the cause, naturally enough, to the mortgage; and to divert his thoughts, he entered first on a general conversation.

“What rogues there are in the world!” said he. Nugent groaned. “This morning, for instance, before I came to you, I was engaged in a curious piece of business enough. A gentleman gave his son-in-law a qualification to stand for a borough: the son-in-law kept the deed, and so cheated the good gentleman out of more than three hundred pounds a-year. Yesterday I was employed against a fraudulent bankrupt — such an instance of long, premeditated, coldhearted, deliberate rascality! And when I leave you, I must see what is to be done with a literary swindler, who, on the strength of a consumptive cough, and a suit of black, has been respectably living on compassion for the last two years.”

“Ha!”

“He had just committed the most nefarious fraud — a forgery, in short, on his own uncle, who has twice seriously distressed himself to save the rogue of a nephew, and who must now submit to this loss, or proclaim, by a criminal prosecution, the disgrace of his own family. The nephew proceeded, of course, on his knowledge of my client’s goodness of heart; and thus a man suffers in proportion to his amiability.”

“Is his name Gil — Gil — Gilpin!” stammered Nugent.

“The same! O-ho! have you been bit, too, Mr. Nugent?”

Before our hero could answer, a letter was brought to him. Nugent tore the seal; it was from the editor of the magazine in which he had just read his own condemnation. It ran thus:

„Sir, — Having been absent from London on unavoidable business for the last month, and the care of the — — Magazine having thereby devolved on another, who has very ill discharged its duties, I had the surprise and mortification of perceiving, on my return this day,

that a most unwarrantable and personal attack upon you has been admitted in the number for this month. I cannot sufficiently express my regret, the more especially on finding that the article in question was written by a mere mercenary in letters. To convince you of my concern, and my resolution to guard against such unworthy proceedings in future, I enclose you another and yet severer attack, which was sent to us for our next number, and for which, I grieve to say, the unprincipled author has already succeeded in obtaining from the proprietors — a remuneration. I have the honour to be, Sir," &c. &c. &c.

Nugent's eyes fell on the enclosed paper: it was in the handwriting of Mr. Gregory Gilpin, the most grateful of distressed literary men.

"You seem melancholy to-day, my dear Nugent," said Colonel Nelmore, as he met his young friend walking with downcast eyes in the old mall of St. James's Park.

"I am unhappy, I am discontented; the gloss is faded from life," answered Nugent, sighing.

"I love meeting with a pensive man," said the Colonel: "let me join you, and let us dine together, *tête-à-tête*, at my bachelor's table. You refused me some time ago; may I be more fortunate now?"

"I shall be but poor company," rejoined Nugent; "but I am very much obliged to you, and I accept your invitation with pleasure."

Colonel Nelmore was a man who had told some fifty years. He had known misfortune in his day, and he had seen a great deal of the harsh realities of life. But he had not suffered nor lived in vain. He was no theorist, and did not affect the philosopher; but he was contented with a small fortune, popular with retired habits, observant with a love for study, and, above all, he did a great deal of general good, exactly because he embraced no particular system.

"Yes," said Nugent, as they sat together after din-

ner, and the younger man had unbosomed to the elder, who had been his father's most intimate friend, all that had seemed to him the most unexampled of misfortunes — after he had repeated the perfidies of Balfour, the faithlessness of Charlotte, and the rascalities of Gilpin — “Yes,” said he, “I now see my error; I no longer love my species; I no longer place reliance in the love, friendship, sincerity, or virtue of the world; I will no longer trust myself open hearted in this vast community of knaves; I will not fly mankind, but I will despise them.”

The Colonel smiled. “You shall put on your hat, my young friend, and pay a little visit with me: — nay, no excuse: it is only an old lady, who has given me permission to drink tea with her.” Nugent demurred, but consented. The two gentlemen walked to a small house in the Regent's Park. They were admitted to a drawing-room, where they found a blind old lady, of a cheerful countenance, and prepossessing manners.

“And how does your son do?” asked the Colonel, after the first salutations were over, “have you seen him lately?”

“Seen him lately! why you know he rarely lets a day pass without calling on, or writing to, me. Since the affliction which visited me with blindness, though he has nothing to hope from me, though from my jointure I must necessarily be a burthen to one of his limited income and mixing so much with the world as he does; yet had I been the richest mother in England, and every thing at my own disposal, he could not have been more attentive, more kind to me. He will cheerfully give up the gayest party to come and read to me, if I am the least unwell, or the least out of spirits;

and he sold his horses to pay Miss Blandly, since I could not afford from my own income to pay the salary, so accomplished a musician asked to become my companion. Music, you know, is now my chief luxury. Oh, he is a paragon of sons — the world think him dissipated and heartless; but if they could see how tender he is to me!" exclaimed the mother, clasping her hands, as the tears gushed from her eyes. Nugent was charmed: the Colonel encouraged the lady to proceed; and Nugent thought he had never passed a more agreeable hour than in listening to her maternal praises of her affectionate son.

"Ah, Colonel!" said he, as they left the house, "how much wiser have you been than myself; you have selected your friends with discretion. What would I give to possess such a friend as that good son must be! But you never told me the lady's name."

"Patience," said the Colonel, taking snuff, "I have another visit to pay."

Nelmore turned down a little alley, and knocked at a small cottage. A woman with a child at her breast opened the door; and Nugent stood in one of those scenes of cheerful poverty which it so satisfies the complacency of the rich to behold.

"Aha!" said Nelmore, looking round, "you seem comfortable enough now; your benefactor has not done his work by halves."

"Blessings on his heart, no! Oh, Sir, when I think how distressed he is himself, how often he has been put to it for money, how calumniated he is by the world, I cannot express how grateful I am, how grateful I ought to be. He has robbed himself to feed us, and merely because he knew my husband in youth."

The Colonel permitted the woman to run on. Nugent wiped his eyes, and left his purse behind him. "Who is this admirable, this self-denying man?" cried he, when they were once more in the street. "He is in distress himself — would I could relieve him! Ah, you already reconcile me to the world. I acknowledge your motive, in leading me hither; there are good men as well as bad. All are not Balfours and Gilpins! But the name — the name of these poor people's benefactor!"

"Stay," said the Colonel, as they now entered Oxford-street; this is lucky indeed, I see a good lady whom I wish to accost." "Well, Mrs. Johnson," addressing a stout, comely, middle-aged woman of respectable appearance, who, with a basket on her arm, was coming out of an oil shop; "so you have been labouring in your vocation, I see — making household purchases. And how is your young lady?"

"Very well, Sir, I am happy to say," replied the old woman, curtsying. "And you are well too, I hope, Sir?"

"Yes, considering the dissipation of the long season, pretty well, thank you. But I suppose your young mistress is as gay and heartless as ever — a mere fashionable wife, eh!"

"Sir!" said the woman, bridling up, "there is not a better lady in the world than my young lady; I have known her since she was that high!"

"What, she's good-tempered, I suppose?" said the Colonel sneering.

"Good-tempered — I believe it is impossible for her to say a harsh word to any one. There never was so mild, so evenlike a temper."

“What, and not heartless, eh! this is too good!”

“Heartless! she nursed me herself when I broke my leg coming upstairs; and every night before she went out to any party, she would come into my room with her sweet smile, and see if I wanted anything.”

“And you fancy, Mrs. Johnson, that she’ll make a good wife: why she was not much in love when she married.”

“I don’t know as to that, Sir, whether she was or not; but I’m sure she is always studying my Lord’s wishes, and I heard him myself say this very morning to his brother — ‘Arthur, if you knew what a treasure I possess!’ ”

“You are very right,” said the Colonel, resuming his natural manner: “and I only spoke for the pleasure of seeing how well and how justly you could defend your mistress; she is, truly, an excellent lady — good evening to you.”

“I have seen that woman before,” said Nugent, “but I can’t think where; she has the appearance of being a housekeeper in some family.”

“She is so.”

“How pleasant it is to hear of female excellence in the great world,” continued Nugent, sighing; “it was evident to see the honest servant was sincere in her praise. Happy husband, whoever he may be!”

They were now at the Colonel’s house. “Just let me read this passage,” said Nelmore, opening the pages of a French Philosopher, “and as I do not pronounce French like a native, I will translate as I proceed.”

“In order to love mankind — expect but little from them; in order to view their faults, without bitterness,

we must *accustom* ourselves to pardon them, and to perceive that indulgence is a justice which frail humanity has a right to demand from wisdom. Now, nothing tends more to dispose us to indulgence, to close our hearts against hatred, to open them to the principles of a humane and soft morality, than a profound knowledge of the human heart. Accordingly, the wisest men have always been the most indulgent," &c.

"And now prepare to be surprised. That good son whom you admired so much — whom you wished you could obtain as a friend, is Captain Balfour — that generous, self-denying man, whom you desired yourself so nobly to relieve, is Mr. Gilpin — that young lady who in the flush of health, beauty, dissipation, and conquest, could attend the sick chamber of her servant, and whom her husband discovers to be a treasure, is Charlotte Lennox!"

"Good Heavens!" cried Nugent, "what then am I to believe? has some juggling been practised on my understanding, and are Balfour, Gilpin, and Miss Lennox, after all, patterns of perfection?"

"No, indeed, very far from it: Balfour is a dissipated, reckless man — of loose morality and a low standard of honour: he saw you were destined to purchase experience — he saw you were destined to be plundered by some one — he thought he might as well be a candidate for the profit. He laughed afterwards at your expense, not because he despised you; on the contrary, I believe that he liked you very much in his way, but because in the world he lives in, every man enjoys a laugh at his acquaintance. Charlotte Lennox saw in you a desirable match; nay,

I believe she had a positive regard for you; but she had been taught all her life to think equipage, wealth, and station better than love. She could not resist the temptation of being Marchioness of Austerly — not one girl in twenty could; yet she is not on that account the less good-tempered, good-natured, nor the less likely to be a good mistress and a tolerable wife. Gilpin is the worst instance of the three. Gilpin is an evident scoundrel; but Gilpin is in evident distress. He was, in all probability, very sorry to attack you who had benefited him so largely; but perhaps, as he is a dull dog, the only thing the Magazines would buy of him was abuse. You must not think he maligned you out of malice, out of ingratitude, out of wantonness; he maligned you for ten guineas. Yet Gilpin is a man, who, having swindled his father out of ten guineas, would in the joy of the moment give five to a beggar. In the present case he was actuated by a better feeling: he was serving the friend of his childhood — few men forget those youthful ties, however they break through others. Your mistake was not the single mistake of supposing the worst people the best — it was the double mistake of supposing commonplace people now the best — now the worst; — in making what might have been a pleasant acquaintance an intimate friend; in believing a man in distress must necessarily be a man of merit; in thinking a good-tempered, pretty girl, was an exalted specimen of Human Nature. You were then about to fall into the opposite extreme — and to be as indiscriminating in suspicion as you were in credulity. Would that I could flatter myself that I had saved you from that — the more dangerous — error of the two!”

“You have — my dear Nelmore; and now lend me your Philosopher!”

“With pleasure; but one short maxim is as good as all Philosophers can teach you, for Philosophers can only enlarge on it — it is simple — it is this — ‘TAKE THE WORLD AS IT IS!’”

KNEB WORTH.

THE English arrogate to themselves the peculiar attachment to home — the national conviction of the sacredness of its serene asylum. But the Ancients seem equally to have regarded the “veneranda Domus” with love and worship. But then the hospitable hearth was equally deemed the centre of unspeakable enjoyments — their gayest poets linger on its attractions — the House, as well as the Temple, had its secret penetralia, which no uninitiated stranger might profane with unbidden presence; the Household Gods were their especial deities — the most familiarly invoked — the most piously preserved. And a beautiful superstition it was, that of the Household Gods! — a beautiful notion that our ancestors, for us at least, were divine, and presided with unforgetful tenderness over the scene (when living) of their happiest emotions, and their most tranquil joys: a similar worship is not only to be traced to the eldest times — beyond the date of the civilized races that we popularly call “The Ancients,” but is yet to be found cherished among savage tribes. It is one of the universal proofs how little death can conquer the affections.

But with us are required no graven likeness — no fond idolatries of outward images. We bear our Penates with us abroad as at home, their Atrium is the heart. Our Household Gods are the memories of our childhood — the recollections of the hearth round which we gathered — of the fostering hands which caressed us — of the scene of all the cares and joys — the anxieties and the hopes — the ineffable yearnings of love which made

us first acquainted with the mystery and the sanctity of Home. I was touched once in visiting an Irish Cabin, which, in the spirit of condescending kindness, the Lady Bountiful of the place had transformed into the graceful neatness of an English cottage, training roses up the wall, glazing the windows, and boarding the mud floor; — I was touched by the homely truth which the poor peasant uttered as he gazed, half gratefully, half indignantly, on the change. “It is all very kind,” said he, in his dialect, which I am obliged to translate; “but the goud lady does not know how dear to a poor man is every thing that reminds him of the time when he played instead of working — these great folks do not understand us.” It was quite true; on that mud floor the child had played, round that hearth, with its eternal smoke, which now admitted, through strange portals, the uncomfortable daylight, he had sate jesting with the kind hearts that now beat no more. These new comforts saddened and perplexed him — not because they were *comforts*, but because they were *new*. They had not the associations of his childhood; the great folks did not understand him; they despised his indifference to greater luxuries. Alas! they did not perceive that in that indifference there was all the poetry of sentiment. The good lady herself dwelt in an old-fashioned, inconvenient, mansion. Suppose some oppressive benefactor had converted its dingy rooms and dreary galleries into a modern, well-proportioned, and ungenially cheerful residence, would she have been pleased? Would she not have missed the nursery she had played in? — the little parlour by whose hearth she could yet recall to fancy the face of her mother long gone? — Would ottomans and mirrors supply the place of the old worm-eaten chair from which her father,

on sabbath nights, had given forth the holy lecture? — or the little discoloured glass in which, thirty years ago, she had marked her own maiden blushes, when some dear name was suddenly spoken? No, her old paternal house, rude though it be, is dearer to her than a new palace; can she not conceive that the same feelings may make “the hut to which his soul conforms,” dearer to the peasant than the new residence which is a palace to him? Why should that be a noble and tender sentiment in the rich, which is scorned as a brutal apathy in the poor? The peasant was right — ‘Great folks understand him not!’

Amidst the active labours, in which, from my earliest youth, I have been plunged, one of the greatest luxuries I know is to return, for short intervals, to the place in which the happiest days of my childhood glided away. It is an old manorial seat that belongs to my mother, the heiress of its former lords. The house, formerly of vast extent, built round a quadrangle, at different periods, from the date of the second crusade to that of the reign of Elizabeth, was in so ruinous a condition when she came to its possession, that three sides of it were obliged to be pulled down: the fourth yet remaining, and much embellished in its architecture, is in itself one of the largest houses in the county, and still contains the old oak hall, with its lofty ceiling, and raised music gallery. The place has something of the character of Penshurst, — and its venerable avenues, which slope from the house down the declivity of the park, giving wide views of the opposite hills crowded with cottages and spires, impart to the scene that peculiarly English, half stately, and wholly cultivated, character which the poets of Elizabeth’s day so much loved

to linger upon. As is often the case with similar residences, the church stands in the park, at a bow-shot from the house, and formerly the walls of the outer court nearly reached the green sanctuary that surrounds the sacred edifice. The church itself, dedicated anciently to St. Mary, is worn and grey, in the simplest architecture of the ecclesiastical Gothic, and, standing on the brow of the hill, its single tower at a distance blends with the turrets of the house, — so that the two seem one pile. Beyond, to the right, half-way down the hill, and neighboured by a dell, girded with trees, is an octagon building of the beautiful Grecian form, erected by the present owner — it is the mausoleum of the family. Fenced from the deer, is a small surrounding space sown with flowers — those fairest children of the earth, which the custom of all ages has dedicated to the Dead. The modernness of this building, which contrasts those in its vicinity, seems to me, from that contrast, to make its object more impressive. It stands out alone, in the venerable landscape with its immemorial hills and trees, — the prototype of the Thought of Death — a thing that dating with the living generation, admonishes them of their recent lease and its hastening end. For with all our boasted antiquity of race, we ourselves are the ephemera of the soil, and bear the truest relation, so far as our mortality is concerned, with that which is least old.

The most regular and majestic of the avenues I have described conducts to a sheet of water, that lies towards the extremity of the park. It is but small in proportion to the domain, but is clear and deep, and, fed by some subterraneous stream, its tide is fresh and strong beyond its dimensions. On its opposite bank is

a small fishing-cottage, whitely peeping from a thick and gloomy copse of firs, and larch, and oak, through which shine, here and there, the red berries of the mountain ash; and behind this, on the other side of the brown, mossgrown deer paling, is a wood of considerable extent. This, the farther bank of the water, is my favourite spot. Here, when a boy, I used to while away whole holidays, basking indolently in the noon of summer, and building castles in that cloudless air, until the setting of the sun.

The reeds then grew up, long and darkly green, along the margin; and though they have since yielded to the innovating scythe, and I hear the wind no longer glide and sigh amidst those earliest tubes of music, yet the whole sod is still fragrant, from Spring to Autumn, with innumerable heaths and wild flowers, and the crushed odours of the sweet thyme. And never have I seen a spot which the butterfly more loves to haunt, particularly that small fairy, blue-winged species which is tamer than the rest, and seems almost to invite you to admire it — throwing itself on the child's mercy as the robin upon man's. The varieties of the dragon-fly, glittering in the sun, dart ever through the boughs and along the water. It is a world which the fairest of the insect race seem to have made their own. There is something in the hum and stir of a summer noon, which is inexpressibly attractive to the dreams of the imagination. It fills us with a sense of life, but a life not our own — it is the exuberance of creation itself that overflows around us. Man is absent, but life is present. Who has not spent hours in some such spot, cherishing dreams that have no connexion with the earth, and courting with half-shut eyes, the images of the Ideal?

Stretched on the odorous grass, I see on the opposite shore that quiet church, where the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep — that mausoleum where my own dust shall rest at last, and the turrets of my childhood's home. All so solitary and yet so eloquent! Now the fern waves on the slope, and the deer comes forth, marching with his stately step to the water-side, to pause and drink. O Nymphs! — O Fairies! — O Poetry, I am yours again!

I do not know how it is, but every year that I visit these scenes I have more need of their solace. My departed youth rises before me in more wan and melancholy hues, and the past saddens me more deeply with the present. Yet every year, perhaps, has been a stepping-stone in the ambition of my boyhood, and brought me nearer to the objects of my early dreams. It is not the mind that has been disappointed, it is the heart. What ties are broken — what affections marred! the Egeria of my hopes, — no cell conceals, no spell can invoke her now! Every pausing-place in the life of the ambitious is marked alike by the trophy and the tomb. But little men have the tomb without the trophy!

It is a small, and sequestered, and primitive village that of Knebworth, though but thirty miles from London; consisting of scattered cottages, with here and there a broad green patch of waste land before the doors; and one side of the verdant lane, which makes the principal street, is skirted by the palings of the lesser park, which is not devoted to the deer. The steward's house, and the clergyman's, are the only ones — (save the manor-house itself) — aspiring to gentility. And here, nevertheless, did Dame Nature find her varieties — many were they and duly contrasted, when first, in the boundless sociability of childhood, we courted the friend-

ship of every villager. The sturdy keeper, a stalwart man and a burley, whose name was an heirloom on the estates; and who, many years afterwards, under another lord, perished in a memorable fray with the implacable poachers; — the simple, horn-eyed idiot, basking before the gardener's door, where he lodged — a privileged pensioner, sitting hour after hour, from sun-rise to sunset — what marvels did not that strange passive existence create in us — the young, the buoyant, the impetuous! how we used to gather round him, and gaze, and wonder how he could pass his time without either work or play! — the one Patriarch beggar of the place, who seemed to beg from vanity not from want; for, as he doffed his hat, his long snow-white locks fell, parted on either side, down features of apostolic beauty — and many an artist had paused to sketch the venerable head; — the single Lais of the place, stout and sturdy, with high cheekbones and tempting smile, ill-favoured enough, it is true, but boasting her admirers; — the genius, too, of the village — a woman with but one hand, who could turn that hand to anything; nominally presiding over the dairy, she was equally apt at all the other affairs of the public life of a village. — Dogs, cows, horses — none might be ill or well without her august permission; in every quarrel she was witness, juryman, and judge. Never had any one more entirely the genius of action: she was always in every thing, and at the head of every thing — mixing, it is true, with all her energy and arts, a wonderful fidelity and spirit of clanship towards her employer. Tall, dark, and muscular was she; a kind of caught-and-tamed Meg-Merrilies!

But our two especial friends were an old couple, quartered in a little angle of the village, who, hard on

their eightieth year, had jogged on, for nearly sixty revolutions of the sun, hand in hand together, and never seemed to have stumbled on an unkind thought towards each other. The love of those two old persons was the most perfect, the most beautiful I ever beheld. Their children had married and grown up and left them — they were utterly alone. Their simple affections were all in all to them. They had never been to London, never above fifteen miles from the humble spot where they had been born, and where their bones were to repose. Them the march of Knowledge had never reached. They could neither read nor write. Old Age had frozen up the portals of Intellect before the schoolmaster had gone his rounds. So ignorant were they of the world, that they scarce knew the name of the king. Changes of ministry, peace and war, the agitations of life, were as utter nothings to them — as to the wildest savage of Caffaria. Few, as the Arithmetic of Intellect can comprise, were their ideas; but they wanted not to swell the sum, for the ideas were centred, with all that the true sentiment of love ever taught the wisest, within each other. If out of that circle extended their radii of love, it was to the family under whom they had vegetated, and to us who were its young hopes. Us indeed they did love warmly, as something that belonged to them. And scarcely a day ever passed — but what, in all the riot and glee of boyhood, with half a score of dogs at our heels — we used to rush into the quiet of that lonely cottage — scrambling over the palings — bustling through the threshold — sullyng, with shoes that had made a day's circuit through all the woods and plantings, the scrupulous cleanliness of the hearth, and making their old hearts glad, and proud, and merry by the very dis-

comfort we occasioned. Then were the rude chairs drawn into the jaws of that wide ingle nook — then was the new log thrown on the hearth — then would the old dame insist upon chafing our hands numbed with the cold, as one of us — ah, happiest he! — drew forth the fragment of cake, or the handful of figs and raisins — brought to show that they had not been forgotten. And, indeed, never were they forgotten by a more powerful hand and a more steady heart than ours, for daily from the hall came the savoury meal which the old woman carved tenderly for her husband (for his hands were palsied), and until his appetite was sated, sate apart and refused to share. Old Age, so seldom unselfish! — and the old age of the poor peasant woman, how many young hearts full of the phrases of poetry and the mockeries of sentiment, would it have shamed!

I see the old man now in a great high-backed tapestry chair, which had been a part of the furniture of the old manor-house: in his youth he had been on the sporting establishment of a former squire, my grandfather's predecessor and uncle, and he had contrived to retain still, fresh and undimmed, through how many years Time might forget to register, a habit of green velvet, whose antiquated cut suited well his long grey locks and venerable countenance. Poor Newman Hagar! a blessing on that old head — surely you are living yet! — while I live, you are not all vanished — all swallowed up by the oblivious earth. And, even after I have joined you, this page, surviving both, shall preserve you amongst those whom the world does not willingly let perish! And on the opposite side of the hearth sate the partner of that obscure and harmless existence, with a face which, when *we* were there, never was without a

smile at our presence, or a tear for our parting. Plain though her features must ever have been, and worn and wrinkled as they were then, I never saw a countenance in which not the *intellect*, but the *feeling*, of our divine nature had left a more pleasant and touching trace.

Sometimes, as the winter day closed in, and dogs and children crowded alike round the comfortable fire, we delighted to make the old man tell us of his dim memories of former squires — the notes of bugles long silenced — the glories of coaches and six long vanished — how the squire was dressed in scarlet and gold — and how my lady swept the avenues in brocade. But pleasanter to me, child as I was, was it to question the good old folks of their own past fortunes — of their first love, and how they came to marry, and how, since, they had weathered the winds of the changing world.

“And I dare say you have scolded your wife very often, Newman,” said I once: Old Newman looked down, and the wife took up the reply.

“Never to signify — and if he has, I deserved it.”

“And I dare say, if the truth were told, you have scolded him quite as often.”

“Nay,” said the old woman, with a beauty of kindness which all the poetry in the world cannot excel, “how can a wife scold her good man, who has been working for her and her little ones all the day? It may be for a man to be peevish, for it is he who bears the crosses of the world; but who should make him forget them but his own wife? And she had best, for her own sake — for nobody can scold much when the scolding is only on one side.”

Who taught this poor woman her wisdom of Love? Something less common than ordinary Nature, some-

thing better than mere womanhood. For, verily, there are few out of novels to whom either Nature or Womanhood hath communicated a similar secret!

And we grew up from children to boys — from boyhood to youth. And old Hagar died — he died during my absence; and when I returned — I called at the old woman's solitary house — I opened the latch — there she sate by the hearth with dull, lack-lustre eyes. And Newman's high chair was opposite in the accustomed place, and the green velvet habit was folded carefully on the seat. Poor old woman! her pleasure at seeing me could be revived no more. She was past all pleasure. Year after year Time had essayed in vain to numb her gentle feelings and kindly sympathies: but one single hour — that had taken from her side its helpmate — had done the allotted task. Newman was dead — and the widow could feel no more. She lived on — but it was clock-work. She did not seem to mourn for him — so much as to be indifferent to every thing else. Once only I saw her weep — it was when, out of compassion for her solitary age, we wished to place a companion — a nurse in the cottage. "The sooner I'm dead the better," she said. "How can I bear to see a strange face where the old man used to sit?"

It is over now — the broken bridge is past — they are again united. If I were an Atheist for myself, I would still pray that there may be a heaven for the Poor! Without another world, who can solve the riddle of the disparities of this?

How many hours in the summer nights have I passed in the churchyard, which lies embedded in that green and venerable park! There, no unseemly decorations maintain, after the great era of Equality has com-

menced, the paltry distinctions of the Past; — distinctions of a day — the Equality of the Eternal! There, for the most part unmarked and unrecorded, rise the green hillocks of the humble dead — or, where the stone registers a little while the forgotten name and departed date, the epitaph is simple and the material rude. It is the very model — the very ideal, of the country church; so quiet is it — so solitary — so ancient — so unadorned. It is the spot above all others where Death teaches — not of the spectre, but the angel; obtruding on us no unreal terror, but eloquent with its great and tender moral of “*Repose.*” And who has not felt his heart echo to that saying of the brilliant Frenchwoman’s,* half intended as a point, but carried by nature, against the very will of the speaker, into a homely and most touching truth; “At times I feel the want to die, as the wakeful feel the want to sleep!”

This is the justest of similies — worn, wearied, and sated, who has not felt the want to die, as the wakeful the want to sleep? But this is not the lesson which, after a little thought, the true morality of the Grave bequeaths. No, it is from Death that we extract the noble and magnificent lesson of life. Awed by the sense of its shortness, we turn away elevated also by its objects. If short, let us crowd it with generous and useful deeds — if eternity be at hand, let us prepare ourselves for its threshold, by the aims and ends which are most worthy of the soul; and by the glory of our own thoughts and our own deeds, walk naturally as it were to the Immortal. Filling ourselves with this ambition, we rise beyond our sorrows and our cares — we conquer the morbid darkness that satiety gathers round us, and take from

* Madame du Deffand.

the Dead a moral won from their spirits and not their dust. He who fails in this, penetrates not the true philosophy of the tomb.

The churchyard — the village — the green sward — the woods — the fern-covered hills — the waterside, odorous with the reeds and thyme — the deep-shagged dells — the plain where the deer couch, — all united and blended together, make to me, the place above all others, which renews my youth and redeems it from the influences of the world. All know some such spot — blessed — and blessing; the Kaaba of the Earth — the scene of their childhood — the haunt of their fondest recollections. And while it is yet ours to visit it at will — while it yet rests in the dear and sacred hands to which it belonged of yore — while no stranger sits at the hearth, and no new tenants chase away “the old familiar faces,” who has not felt as if in storm and shower, there was a shelter over his head — as if he were not unprotected — as if fate preserved a sanctuary to the fugitive — and life, a fountain to the weary?

A blessing upon that Home, and upon its owner! In the presence of a Mother we feel that our childhood has not all departed! It is as a barrier between ourselves and the advance of Time. Chased and wearied out by the Cares of Manhood, we enter the temple dedicated to Youth, — (“a guardian standing near us,”*) — and our persecutors sleep while we linger at the altar.

* Æschylus — The Furies.

THE
CHOICE OF PHYLIAS.

A TALE.

PHYLIAS was a young Athenian, whom the precepts of Socrates had reared in the two great principles (or rather, perhaps, affections) which a State should encourage in her sons — the desire of Glory, and the worship of Virtue. He wished at once to be great and to be good. Unfortunately Phydias nourished a third wish, somewhat less elevated, but much more commonly entertained — the wish to be loved! He had a strong thirst for general *popularity* as well as *esteem*; and to an aspiring soul he united a too-susceptible heart.

One day, as he was wandering amongst the olive-groves that border Cephisus, and indulging in those reveries on his future destiny which make the happiest prerogative of the young, his thoughts thus broke into words:—

“Yes, I will devote my life to the service of my countrymen: I will renounce luxury and ease. Not for me shall be the cooks of Sicily, or the garlands of Janus. My chambers shall not steam with frankincense, nor resound with the loud shouts of Ionic laughter. No; I will consecrate my youth to the pursuit of wisdom, and the practice of virtue; so shall I become great, and so beloved. For when I have thus sacrificed my enjoyments

to the welfare of others, shall they not all honour and esteem me? Will they not insist that I take the middle couch at the public festivals? and will not all the friends of my youth contend which shall repose upon my bosom? It is happy to be virtuous; but, O Socrates, is it not even happier to be universally beloved for your virtue?"

While Phylas was thus soliloquizing, he heard a low sweet laugh beside him; and, somewhat startled at the sound — for he had fancied himself entirely alone — he turned hastily round, and beheld a figure of very singular appearance. It was a tall man, in the prime of life; but one side of the face and form was utterly different from the other: on one side the head was crowned with the festive wreath — the robes flowed loose and disordered — joy and self-complacency sparkled on the smiling countenance. You beheld a gaiety which you could not help liking; but an air of levity which you could not respect. Widely contrasted was the other half of this strange apparition: without crown or garland, after the fashion of a senator of the Areopagus, flowed the sober locks; the garb was costly, but decent and composed; and in the eye and brow the aspect was dignified and lofty, but somewhat pensive, and clouded either by thought or care: in the one half you beheld a boon companion, whom you would welcome and forget — in the other a lofty monitor, from whom you shrank in unacknowledged fear, and whom even in esteeming you were willing carefully to shun.

"And who art thou? And from what foreign country comest thou?" asked the Athenian, in astonishment and awe.

"I come from the land of the invisibles," answered the apparition: "and I am thy tutelary demon. Thou

art now of that age, and hast attained to that height of mind, in which it is permitted me to warn and to advise thee. What vain dreams, O Phylas, have crept into thy mind! Dost thou not see that thou art asking two boons utterly incompatible with each other — universal fame and universal regard? Take thy choice of either; thou canst not combine both. Look well at the guise and garb in which I appear to thee; if thou wouldst be loved, thou seest in one half of me the model which thou shouldst imitate; if renowned, the other half presents thee also with an example. But how canst thou hope to unite both? Look again; can any contrast be stronger? Can any opposites be more extreme? Waste not thy life in a chimera. Be above thy race, and be hated; be of their own level, and be loved. Thou hast thy choice!”

“False demon!” answered Phylas; “thou wouldst sicken me of life itself, couldst thou compel me to be hated on the one hand, or worthy to be despised on the other. Thou knowest not my disposition. It hath in it nothing cynical or severe; neither should I presume upon any distinction I might attain. Why should men hate me merely for *proving* the sincerity of my affection to them? Away! thou utterest folly or fraud, and art not of that good race of demons of which Socrates was wont to speak.”

Once more the demon laughed. “Thou wilt know me better one of these days; and what now thou deemest *folly*, thou wilt then term *experience*. Thou resolvest, then, to seek for glory?”

“With my whole soul!” cried the Athenian.

“Be it so; and from time to time contrast thyself with Glaucus. Farewell!”

The apparition vanished: musing and bewildered, Phylis returned home.

His resolutions were not shaken, nor his ambition damped. He resigned the common pleasures of his youth; he braced his limbs by hardihood and temperance, and fed the sources of his mind from the quiet fountain of wisdom.

The first essays of his ambition were natural to his period of life. He went through the preparatory exercises, and entered himself a candidate for the victorial crown at the Olympic Games. On the day preceding that on which the Games commenced, Phylis met amongst the crowd, which a ceremony of such brilliant attraction had gathered together at Olympia, a young man whom he had known from his childhood. Frank in his manner, and joyous in his disposition, Glaucus was the favourite of all who knew him.

Though possessed of considerable talents, no one envied him; for those talents were never exerted in order to distinguish himself—his ambition was to amuse others. He gave way to every caprice of his own or of his comrades, provided that it promised pleasure. Supple and versatile, even the sturdiest philosophers were charmed with his society; and the loosest profligates swore sincerely that they loved, because they were not driven to respect, him. His countenance never shamed them into a suspicion that their career was ignoble; and they did justice to his talents, because they could sympathize with his foibles.

“You do not contend for any of the prizes, I think,” said Phylis; “for I do not remember to have seen you at the preparatory exercises?”

“Not I, by Hercules,” answered Glaucus, gaily. “I play in the Games the part I play in Life — I am merely

a spectator. Could I drink more deeply, or sleep more soundly, if my statue were set up in the sacred wood? Alas! no. Let my friends love Glaucus their comrade — not hate Glaucus their rival. And you?"

"I am a competitor in the chariot race."

"Success to you! I shall offer up my sacrifice for your triumph; meanwhile I am going to hear Therycides read his new play. Farewell!"

"What a charming person is Glaucus!" thought Phylas.

Even Phylas liked Glaucus the better for knowing Glaucus was not to be his antagonist.

The morning rose—the hour of trial came on. With a flushed cheek, and a beating heart, Phylas mounted his chariot. He was successful: his locks were crowned with the olive-wreath. He returned to Athens amidst the loudest acclamations. His chariot rolled through the broken wall of his native city; the poets lauded him to the skies. Phylas had commenced the career of fame; and its first fruits were delicious. His parents wept with joy at his triumph; and the old men pointed him out as a model to their sons. Sons hate models; and the more Phylas was praised, the more his contemporaries disliked him. When the novelty of success was cooled, he began to feel that the olive-crown had its thorns. If he met his young friends in the street, they saluted him coldly: "We do not ask you to come to us," said they; "you have weightier matters on hand than our society can afford. We are going to sup with Glaucus: while you are meditating, we suppose, the best way to eclipse Alcibiades."

Meetings like these threw an embarrassment over the manner of Phylas himself. He thought that he was ill-

treated, and retired into the chamber of pride. He became shy, and he was called supercilious.

The Olympic Games do not happen every day, and Phylas began to feel that he who is ambitious has no option between excitement and exhaustion. He therefore set about preparing himself for a nobler triumph than that of a charioteer; and from the government of horses aspired to the government of men. He fitted himself for the labours of public life, and the art of public speaking. He attended the popular assemblies — he rose into repute as an orator.

Every one knows that at that time Athens was torn by intestine divisions. Alternately caressing and quarrelling with the passionate Alcibiades, his countrymen now saw him a foe in Sparta, and now hailed him a saviour in Athens. Phylas, dreading the ambition of that unprincipled genius, and yet resisting the encroaching tyranny of the four hundred rulers, performed the duty of a patriot, and, pleading for liberty, displeased both parties. Nothing could be more disinterested than his conduct, or more admired than his speeches. He proved his virtue, and he established his fame; and wherever he went he was universally abused.

He frequently met with Glaucus, who, taking no share in politics, was entertained by all parties, and the most popular man of Athens, because the most unobtrusive.

“You are become a great man now,” said Glaucus to him one day; “and you will doubtless soon arrive at the last honour Athens can confer upon her children. Your property will be confiscated, and your person will be exiled.”

“No!” said Phylas, with generous emotion; “truth

is great, and must prevail. Misinterpretation and slander will soon die away, and my countrymen will do me justice."

"The gods grant it!" said the flattering Glaucus. "No man merits it more."

In the short intervals of repose that public life allowed to the Athenians, Phylis contrived to fall in love.

Chyllene was beautiful as a dream. She was full of all amiable qualities; but she was a human being, and fond of an agreeable life.

In his passion for Chyllene, Phylis, for the first time in his career, found a rival in Glaucus; for love was the only passion in which Glaucus did not shun to provoke the jealousy of the powerful. Chyllene was sorely perplexed which to choose: Phylis was so wise, but then Glaucus was so gay; Phylis was so distinguished, but then Glaucus was so popular; Phylis made excellent speeches, — but then how beautifully Glaucus sung!

Unfortunately, in the stern and manly pursuits of his life, Phylis had necessarily outgrown those little arts of pleasing which were so acceptable to the ladies of Athens. He dressed with a decorous dignity, but not with the studied, yet easy, graces of Glaucus. How, too, amidst all his occupations, could he find the time to deck the door of his beloved with garlands, to renew the libations on her threshold, and to cover every wall in the city with her name added to the flattering epithet of *καλη*. But none of these important ceremonies were neglected by Glaucus, in whom the art to please had been the sole study of life. Glaucus gained ground daily.

"I esteem you beyond all men," Chyllene could say

to Phylia without a blush. But she trembled, and said nothing, when Glaucus approached.

“I love you better than all things!” said Glaucus, passionately, one day to Chyllene.

“I love you better than all things, save my country,” said Phylia the same morning.

“Ah, Phylia is doubtless the best patriot,” thought Chyllene; “but Glaucus is certainly the best lover!”

The very weaknesses of Glaucus were charming, but his virtues gave Phylia a little of austerity. With Phylia Chyllene felt ashamed of her faults; with Glaucus she was only aware of her excellence.

Alcibiades was now the idol of Athens. He prepared to set out with a hundred ships for the Hellespont, to assist the allies of Athens. Willing to rid the city of so vigilant a guard upon his actions as Phylia, he contrived that the latter should be appointed to a command in the fleet. The rank of Glaucus obtained him a lesser but distinguished appointment.

Chyllene was in danger of losing both her lovers.

“Wilt thou desert me?” said she to Phylia.

“Alas! my country demands it. I shall return to thee covered with laurels.”

“And thou, Glaucus?”

“Perish Alcibiades, and Greece herself, before I quit thee!” cried Glaucus, who, had there been no mistress in the case, would never willingly have renounced luxury for danger.

Phylia, with a new incentive to glory, and a full confidence in the sympathy of his beloved, set out for Andria. Glaucus was taken suddenly ill, remained at home, and a month afterwards his bride Chyllene was carried by torchlight to his house. It is true that every

body at Athens detected the imposition; but every one laughed at it good-humouredly; "for Glaucus," said they, "never set up for a paragon of virtue!" Thus his want of principle was the very excuse for wanting it.

The expedition to Andria failed—Alcibiades was banished again—and Phylis, though he had performed prodigies of valour, shared in the sentence of his leader. His fellow-citizens were too glad of an excuse to rid themselves of that unpleasant sensation which the superiority of another always inflicts on our self-love.

Years rolled away. Phylis had obtained all that his youth coveted of glory. Greece rang with his name; he was now aged, an exile, and a dependent at the Persian court. There, every one respected, but no one loved him. The majesty of his mien, the simplicity of his manners, the very splendour of his reputation, made the courtiers of Persepolis uneasy in his presence. He lived very much alone; and his only recreation was in walking at evening amongst the alleys of a wood, that reminded him of the groves of Athens, and meditating over the past adventures of his life.

It happened that at this time Glaucus, who had survived both his wife and his patrimony, had suffered himself, under the hope of repairing his broken fortunes, to be entrapped into a conspiracy to restore the Oligarchy, after the death of Conon. He was detected, and his popularity did not save him from banishment. He sought refuge at Persepolis: the elastic gaiety of his disposition still continued, and over his grey hairs yet glowed the festive chaplet of roses. The courtiers were delighted with his wit—the king could not feast without

him: — they consulted Phyliaſ, but they associated with Glaucus.

One evening as Phyliaſ was musing in his favourite grove, and as afar off he heard the music and the merriment of a banquet (held by the king in his summer-house, and with Glaucus at his right hand), the melancholy exile found himself gently plucked by the hem of his garment. He turned hastily round, and once more beheld his genius.

“Thy last hour fast approaches,” said the demon; “again, then, I come to visit thee. At the morning of life I foretold that fate which should continue to its close; I bade thee despair of uniting celebrity and love. Thou hast attempted the union — what hath been thy success?”

“Mysterious visitor!” answered Phyliaſ, “thy words were true, and my hope was formed in the foolishness of youth. I stand alone, honoured and unloved. But surely this is not the doom of all who have pursued a similar ambition.”

“Recollect thyself,” replied the fantom: “was not thy master Socrates persecuted unto death, and Aristides ostracised on account of his virtues? Canst thou name one great man who in life was not calumniated for his services? Thou standest not alone. To shine is to injure the self-love of others; and self-love is the most vindictive of human feelings.”

“Yet had I not been an Athenian,” murmured Phyliaſ, “I might have received something of gratitude.”

“They call Athens ungrateful,” answered the spectre; “but every where, while time lasts, the ingratitude shall be the same. One state may exile her illustrious men, another merely defame them; but day is not more

separate from night, than true fame from general popularity."

"Alas! thou teachest a bitter lesson," said Phylia, sighing; "better, then, to renounce the glory which separates us from the indulgent mercies of our kind. Has not my choice been an *error*, as well as a *misfortune*?"

The countenance of the genius became suddenly divine. Majesty sat upon his brow, and unspeakable wisdom shone from his piercing eyes, as he replied, "Hark! as thou askest of me thy unworthy question, the laugh of the hoary Glaucus breaks upon thy ear. The gods gave to him the privilege to be beloved — and despised. Wouldst thou, were the past at thy control, — wouldst thou live the life that he hath lived? wouldst thou, for the smiles of revellers, or for the heart of the mistress of thy manhood, feel that thy career had been worthless, and that thy sepulchre should be unknown? No; by the flush upon thy cheek, thou acknowledgest that to the great the pride of recollection is sufficient happiness in itself. Thy *only* error was in this, the wish to obtain the fleeting breath of popular regard, as the *reward* for immortal labours. The illustrious should serve the world, unheeding of its frail applause. The whisper of their own hearts should convey to them a diviner music than the huzzas of crowds. Thou shouldst have sought *only* to be great, so would it never have grieved thee to find thyself unbeloved. The soul of the great should be as a river, rejoicing in its mighty course, and benefiting all — nor conscious of the fading garlands which perishable hands may scatter upon its tide."

The corpse of Phylia was found that night in

the wood by some of the revellers returning home. And the Persian king buried the body in a gorgeous sepulchre, and the citizens of Athens ordained a public mourning for his death. And to the name of Phylis a thousand bards promised immortality—and, save in this momentary record, the name of Phylis has perished from the earth!

LAKE LEMAN, AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS.

THERE are some places in the world, which imaginative persons, who contract a sympathy with Genius, feel it almost a duty to visit. Not to perform such pilgrimages, seems a neglect of one of the objects of life. The world has many a Mecca and many a Medina for those who find a prophet in Genius, and an holiness in its sepulchre. Of these none are more sacred than

“Leman with its crystal face.”

The very name of that lovely lake is a poem in itself. It conjures up the living and actual shapes of those who have been greater than their kind. As the thought of Troy brings before us at once the bright Scamander—the heaven-defended towers—the hum of the wide Grecian camp—with the lone tent of Achilles, sullen at his loss—and the last interview of Hector and her to whom he was “father, mother, brethren”—so with the very name of Leman rise up—the rocks of Meillerie—the white walls of Chillon—we see the boat of Byron, with the storm breaking over Jura—the “covered acacia walk”—in which, at the dead of night, the Historian of Rome gazed

upon the waters after he had finished the last page of his deathless work: Voltaire, Rousseau, Calvin—beings who were revolutions in themselves—are summoned before us. Yes, Lemman is an epic; poetical in itself, it associates its name with the characters of poetry;—and all that is most beautiful in nature is linked with all that is most eloquent of genius.

The morning after my arrival at the inn, which is placed (a little distance from Geneva,) on the margin of the lake, I crossed to the house which Byron inhabited, and which is almost exactly opposite. The day was calm but gloomy, the waters almost without a ripple. Arrived at the opposite shore, you ascend, by a somewhat rude and steep ascent, to a small village, winding round which, you come upon the gates of the house. On the right-hand side of the road, as you thus enter, is a vineyard, in which, at that time, the grapes hung ripe and clustering. Within the gates are some three or four trees, ranged in an avenue. Descending a few steps, you see in a small court before the door, a rude fountain; it was then dried up—the waters had ceased to play. On either side is a small garden branching from the court, and by the door are rough stone seats. You enter a small hall, and, thence, an apartment containing three rooms. The principal one is charming,—long, and of an oval shape, with carved wainscoting,—the windows on three sides of the room command the most beautiful views of Geneva, the Lake, and its opposite shores. They open upon a terrace paved with stone; on that terrace how often he must have “watched with wistful eyes the setting sun!” It was here that he was in the ripest maturity of his genius—in the most interesting epoch of his life. He had passed the bridge

that severed him from his country, but the bridge was not yet broken down. He had not yet been enervated by the soft south. His luxuries were still of the intellect — his sensualism was yet of nature—his mind had not faded from its youthfulness and vigour — his was yet the season of hope rather than of performance, and the world dreamt more of what he would be than what he had been.

His works (the Paris edition) were on the table. Himself was everywhere! Near to this room is a smaller cabinet, very simply and rudely furnished. On one side, in a recess, is a bed,—on the other, a door communicates with a dressing-room. Here, I was told, he was chiefly accustomed to write. And what works? “Manfred,” and the most beautiful stanzas of the third Canto of “Childe Harold,” rush at once upon our memory. You now ascend the stairs, and pass a passage, at the end of which is a window, commanding a superb view of the Lake. The passage is hung with some curious but wretched portraits. Francis I., Diana of Poitiers, and Julius Scaliger among the rest. You now enter his bedroom. Nothing can be more homely than the furniture; the bed is in a recess, and in one corner an old walnut-tree bureau, where you may still see written over some of the compartments, “Letters of Lady B — —.” His imaginary life vanishes before this simple label, and all the weariness, and all the disappointment of his real domestic life come sadly upon you. You recall the nine executions in one year — the annoyance and the bickering, and the estrangement, and the gossip scandal of the world, and the “Broken Household Gods,”* Men may

* “I was disposed to be pleased. I am a lover of Nature and an admirer of beauty. I can bear fatigue, and welcome privation, and

moralize as they will, but misfortunes cause error,—and atone for it.

I wished to see no other rooms but those occupied by him. I did not stay to look at the rest. I passed into the small garden that fronts the house—here was another fountain which the Nymph had *not* deserted. Over it drooped the boughs of a willow; beyond, undivided by any barrier, spread a vineyard, whose verdant leaves and laughing fruit contrasted somewhat painfully with the associations of the spot. The Great Mother is easily consoled for the loss of the brightest of her children. The sky was more in harmony with the *Genius Loci* than the earth. Its quiet and gloomy clouds were reflected upon the unwrinkled stillness of the Lake; and afar, its horizon rested, in a thousand mists, upon the crests of the melancholy mountains.

The next day I was impatient to divert the feelings which the view of Byron's villa from the garden of my lodgment occasioned, and I repaired on a less interesting pilgrimage, though to a yet more popular, and perhaps imperishable, shrine. What Byron was for a season, Voltaire was for half a century: a power in himself—the cynosure of civilization—the dictator of the Intellectual Republic. He was one of the few in whom thought has produced the same results as action. Next to the great

have seen some of the noblest views in the world. But in all this, the recollection of bitterness, and more especially of recent and more *home desolation* which must accompany me through life, has preyed upon me here; and neither the music of the shepherd, the crashing of the avalanche, nor the torrent, the mountain, the glacier, the forest, nor the cloud, have for one moment lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty, and the power, and the glory, around, above, and beneath me." — *Byron's Journal of his Swiss Tour.*

Reformers of Religion, who has exercised a similar influence over the minds of men and the destinies of nations? Not indeed according to the vulgar sentiment that attributes to him and to his colleagues the *causes* of Revolution: the causes existed if no philosopher had ever lived; but he ripened and concentrated the effects. Whether for good or ill, time must yet show — this only can we say, that the evil that has resulted was not of Philosophy, but of Passion. They who prove a disease exists, are not to be blamed if, after their decease, wrong remedies are applied. The misfortune of human affairs is, that Sages point out the rottenness of an old system — but it is quacks that build up the new. We employ the most scientific surveyors to estimate dilapidations, and the most ignorant masons to repair them. This is not the fault of the surveyor. “Les partisans de la liberté sont ceux qui détestent le plus profondément les forfaits qui se sont commis en son nom.”*

The drive from Geneva to Ferney is picturesque and well cultivated enough to make us doubt the accuracy of the descriptions which proclaim the country round Ferney to have been a desert prior to the settlement of Voltaire. You approach the house by an avenue. To the left is the well-known church which “Voltaire erected to God.” (“Deo erexit Voltaire.”) It is the mode among tourists to wonder at this piety — and to call it inconsistent with the tenets of its founder. But tourists are seldom profound inquirers. Any one, the least acquainted with Voltaire’s writings, would know how little he was of an Atheist. He was too clever for such a belief. He is one of the strongest arguers Philosophy possesses in favour of the existence of the Supreme Being; and much

* Influence des Passions.

as he ridicules fanatics, they are well off from his satire, when compared with the Atheists. His zeal, indeed, for the Divine existence sometimes carries him beyond his judgment, as in that Romance, where Dr. Friend (Doctor of Divinity, and *Member of Parliament!*) converts his son *Jenni*, (what names these Frenchmen do give us!) and *Jenni's* friend *Birton*, in a dispute before a circle of savages.— Dr. Friend overthrows the sturdy atheist with too obvious an ease. In fact, Voltaire was impatient of an argument against which he invariably declared the evidence of all our senses was opposed. He was intolerance itself to a reasoner against the evidence of Reason. I must be pardoned for doing Voltaire this justice—I do not wish to leave Atheism so brilliant an authority.

Opposite to the church, and detached from the house, was once the theatre, now pulled down—a thick copse is planted on the site. I should like, I own, to have seen, even while I defend Voltaire's belief, whether "Mahomet" or "Le bon Dieu" were the better lodged!

The house is now before you—long, regular, and tolerably handsome, when compared with the usual character of French or of Swiss architecture. It has been described so often, that I would not go over the same ground if it did not possess an interest which no repetition can wear away. Besides, it helps to illustrate the character of the owner. A man's house is often a witness of himself.

The *salle de réception* is a small room, the furniture unaltered—the same needlework chairs in cabriole frames of oak—the same red flowered velvet on the walls. The utter apathy of the great Author to the Beautiful

is manifest in the wretched daubs on the walls, which would have put an English poet into a nervous fever to have seen every time he looked round — and a huge stove, magnificently trumpery, of barbarous shape, and profusely gilt, which was “*his own invention!*” It supports his bust. In this room is the celebrated picture of which tradition says that he gave the design. Herein Voltaire is depicted as presenting the “*Henriade*” to Apollo, while his enemies are sinking into the infernal regions, and Envy is expiring at his feet! A singular proof of the modesty of merit, and of its toleration! So there *is* a hell then for disbelievers — in Voltaire! But we must not take such a design in a literal spirit. Voltaire was a conceited man, but he was also a consummate man of the world. We may depend upon it that he laughed himself at the whole thing as much as any one else. We may depend upon it that when the old gentleman, tapping his snuff-box, showed it to his visitors, with that visage of unutterable mockery, he said as pleasant a witticism on the subject as the wittiest of us could invent. How merry he must have been when he pointed out the face of each particular foe! How gaily he must have jested on their damnatory condition! In fact, it was one of those boyish ebullitions of caricature which are too extravagant for malice, and which, to the last, were peculiar to the great animal vivacity of Voltaire. It was a hearty joke into which he plunged himself for the sake of dragging his enemies. Voltaire knew the force of ridicule too well, to mean to make himself, as the stupid starers suppose, gravely ridiculous.

The bed-room joins the salon; it contains portraits of Frederic the Great, Mad. Du Chatelet, and himself.

The two last have appeared in the edition of his works by Beaumarchais. You see here the vase in which his heart was placed, with the sentiment of "*Mon esprit est partout*—"*Mon cœur est ici.*" "As I think," said my companion, more wittily than justly, (as I shall presently show,) "that his *esprit* was better than his *cœur*, I doubt whether the preference given to Ferney was worth the having." Le Kain's portrait hangs over his bed. Voltaire was the man to appreciate an actor: he himself was the Shakspeare of artifice. One circumstance proves his indifference to natural objects. The first thing a lover of nature would have thought of in such a spot, would have been to open the windows of his favourite rooms upon the most beautiful parts of that enchanting scenery. But Voltaire's windows are all carefully turned the other way! You do not behold from them either the glorious Lake, or the haughty Alps, which (for they are visible immediately on entering the garden) might so easily have been effected. But the Lake and the Alps were not things Voltaire ever thought it necessary either to describe or study. Living in the country, he was essentially the poet of cities. And even his profound investigation of men was of artificial men. Men's tastes, their errors, and their foibles, — not their hearts and their passions. If men had neither profound emotions, nor subtle and intense imaginations, Voltaire would have been the greatest painter of mankind that ever existed.

You leave the house, then—you descend a few steps: opposite to you is a narrow road, with an avenue of poplars. You enter into a green, over-arching alley, which would be completely closed in by the thick-set hedge on either side, if here and there little mimic

windows had not been cut through the boughs; through these windows you may take an occasional peep at the majestic scenery beyond. That was the way Voltaire liked to look at Nature, through little windows in an artificial hedge! And without the hedge, the landscape would have been so glorious! This was Voltaire's favourite morning walk. At the end is a bench, upon which the great man (and with all his deficiencies, when will France produce his equal?) was wont to sit, and think. I see him now, in his crimson and gold-laced coat—his stockings drawn half-way up the thigh—his chin resting on his long cane—that eye, light (he is misrepresented sometimes as having dark eyes) and piercing, fixed, not on the ground, nor upward, but on the space before him;—thus does the old gardener, who remembers, pretend to describe him: I see him meditating his last journey to Paris, — that most glorious consummation of a life of literary triumph which has ever been afforded to a literary man — that death which came from the poison of his own laurels. Never did Fame illumine so intensely the passage to the grave; but the same torch that flashed upon the triumph, lighted the pyre. It was like the last scene of some gorgeous melodrama — and the very effect which most dazzled the audience was the signal to drop the curtain!

The old gardener, who is above a hundred, declares that he has the most perfect recollection of the person of Voltaire; I taxed it severely. I was surprised to hear that even in age, and despite the habit of stooping, he was considerably above the middle height. But the gardener dwelt with greater pleasure on his dress than his person; he was very proud of the full wig and the laced waistcoat, still prouder of the gilt coach and the

four long-tailed horses. Voltaire loved parade — there was nothing simple about his tastes. It was not indeed the age of simplicity.

Amidst a gravel space, is a long slip of turf, untouched since it was laid down by Voltaire himself, and not far from hence is the tree he planted, fair, tall, and flourishing; at the time I saw it, the sun was playing cheerily through its delicate leaves. From none of his works is the freshness so little faded. My visit to Byron's house of the day before, my visit now to Ferney, naturally brought the habitants of each, in contrast and comparison. In the persecution each had undergone, in the absorbing personal power which each had obtained, there was something similar. But Byron attached himself to the heart, and Voltaire to the intellect. Perhaps if Byron had lived to old age and followed out the impulses of Don Juan, he would have gradually drawn the comparison closer. And, indeed, he had more in common with Voltaire than with Rousseau, to whom he has been likened. He was above the effeminacy and the falseness of Rousseau; and he had the strong sense, and the stern mockery, and the earnest bitterness of Voltaire. Both Byron and Voltaire wanted a true mastery over the *passions*; for Byron does not paint nor arouse passion;*

* Byron has been called by superficial critics, the Poet of Passion, but it is not true. To paint passion, as I have elsewhere said, you must paint the struggle of passion; and this Byron (out of his plays at least) never does. There is no delineation of passion in the love of Medora, nor even of Gulnare; but the sentiment in each is made as powerful as passion itself. Everywhere, in Childe Harold, in Don Juan, in the Eastern Tales, Byron paints sentiments, not passions. When Macbeth soliloquizes on his "way of life," he utters a sentiment; — when he pauses before he murders his King — he bares to us his passions. Othello, torn by that jealousy which is half love and half hatred, is a portraiture of passion: Childe Harold moralizing over Rome, is one of sentiment. The Poets of Passion paint various and contending emo-

he paints and he arouses *sentiment*. But in Byron sentiment itself had almost the strength and all the intensity of passion. He kindled thoughts into feelings. Voltaire had no sentiment in his writings, though not, perhaps, devoid of it in himself. Indeed he could not have been generous with so much delicacy, if he had not possessed a finer and a softer spirit than his works display. Still less could he have had that singular love for the unfortunate, that courageous compassion for the oppressed, which so prominently illustrate his later life. No one could with less justice be called "heartless" than Voltaire. He was remarkably tenacious of all early friendships, and loved as strongly as he disdained deeply. Any tale of distress imposed upon him easily; he was the creature of impulse, and half a child to the last. He had a stronger feeling for Humanity than any of his contemporaries: he wept when he saw Turgot, and it was in sobs that he stammered out, "Laissez-moi baiser cette main qui a signé le salut du peuple." Had Voltaire never written a line, he would have come down to posterity as a practical philanthropist. A village of fifty peasant inhabitants, was changed by him into the home of one thousand two hundred manufacturers. His character at Ferney is still that of the father of the poor. As a man, he was vain, self-confident, wayward, irascible; kind-hearted, generous, and easily moved. He had nothing of the Mephistophiles. His fault was, that he was too human — that is, too weak and too unsteady. We must

tions, each warring with the other. The Poets of Sentiment paint the prevalence of one particular cast of thought, or affection of the mind. But the crowd are too apt to confuse the two, and to call an author a passionate writer if his hero always says he is passionately in love. Few persons would allow that Clarissa and Clementina are finer delineations of passion than Julia and Haidée.

remember, that in opposing religious opinion, he was opposing the opinion of monks and Jesuits; — and Fana-ticism discontented him with Christianity. Observe the difference with which he speaks of the Protestant faith — with what gravity and respect. Had he been born in England, I doubt if Voltaire had ever attacked Christian-ity — had he been born two centuries before, I doubt whether his spirit of research, and his daring courage, would not have made him the reformer of the church and not its antagonist. It may be the difference of time and place that makes all the difference between a Lu-ther and a Voltaire.

As an Author, we are told that he has done many things well, none pre-eminently well — a most absurd and groundless proposition. He *has written* pre-emi-nently well! He is the greatest prose writer, beyond all comparison, that his country has produced. You may as well say Swift has done nothing pre-eminently well, because he is neither so profound as Bacon, nor so poetical as Milton. Voltaire is Swift *en grand*. Swift resembles him, but ten thousand Swifts would not make a Voltaire. France may affect to undervalue the most French of her writers — France may fancy she is serving the true national genius by plagiarising from German horrors — neglecting the profundity of German genius; but with only isolated exceptions, all that of later times she has produced truly national and promising duration, is reflected and furnished forth from the peculiar qualities of Voltaire; — the political writings of Paul Courier, the poetry of Beranger, the novels of Paul de Kock. Her Romanticists are to her, what the Della Crusicans were to us: only they have this advantage — they would be immoral if they could. They have all

the viciousness of the eunuch, but happily, they have his impotence also.

But this digression leads me to one whom I must except from so general a censure. From Ferney I went to Coppet: from the last I diverted my thoughts to the most sentimental of writers. Voltaire is the moral antipodes to De Stael. The road to Coppet from Ferney is pretty but monotonous. You approach the house by a field or paddock, which reminds you of England. To the left, in a thick copse, is the tomb of Madame de Stael. As I saw it, how many of her eloquent thoughts on the weariness of life rushed to my memory! No one perhaps ever felt more palpably the stirrings of the soul within, than her whose dust lay there. Few had ever longed more intensely for the wings to flee away and be at rest. She wanted precisely that which Voltaire had — common sense. She had precisely that which Voltaire wanted — sentiment. Of the last it was well said, that he had the talent which the greater number of persons possessed in the greatest degree. Madame de Stael had the talent which few possess, but *not* in the greatest degree. For her thoughts are uncommon, but not profound; and her imagination is destitute of invention. No work so imaginative as the “Corinne” was ever so little inventive.

And now the house is before you. Opposite the entrance, iron gates admit a glimpse of grounds laid out in the English fashion. The library opens at once from the hall; a long and handsome room containing a statue of Necker; the forehead of the minister is low and the face has in it more of *bonhomie* than *esprit*. In fact, that very respectable man was a little too dull for his position. The windows look out on a gravel-walk or terrace; the

library communicates with a bedroom hung with old tapestry.

In the *salle à manger* on the first floor, is a bust of A. W. Schlegel and a print of Lafayette. Out of the billiard-room, the largest room of the suite, is the room where Madame de Stael usually slept, and frequently wrote, though the good woman who did the honours, declared, "she wrote in *all* the rooms." Her writing indeed was but an episode from her conversation. Least of all persons, was Madame de Stael one person as a writer, and another as a woman. Her whole character was in harmony; her thoughts always overflowed and were always restless. She assumed nothing factious when she wrote. She wrote as she would have spoken.* Such authors are rare. On the other side of the billiard-room, is a small salon in which there is a fine bust of Necker, a picture of Baron de Stael, and one of herself in a turban. Every one knows that countenance full of power, if not of beauty, with its deep dark eyes. Here is still shown her writing-book and inkstand. Throughout the whole house is an air of English comfort and quiet opulence. The furniture is plain and simple — nothing overpowers the charm of the place; and no undue magnificence diverts you from the main thought of the genius to which it is consecrated. The grounds are natural, but

* Madame de Stael wrote "*à la volée.*" "Even in her most inspired compositions," says Madame Necker de Saussure, "she had pleasure to be interrupted by those she loved." There are some persons whose whole life is inspiration. Madame de Stael was one of these. She was not of that tribe who labour to be inspired, who darken the room and lock the door, and entreat you not to disturb them. It was a part of her character to care little about her works once printed. They had done their office, they had relieved her mind, and the mind had passed onward to new ideas. For my own part, I have no patience with authors who are always invoking the ghosts of their past thoughts.

not remarkable. A very narrow but fresh streamlet borders them to the right. I was much pleased by the polished nature of a notice to the people not to commit depredations. The proprietor put his "grounds under the protection" of the visitors he admitted. This is in the true spirit of aristocratic breeding.

It is impossible to quit this place without feeling that it bequeaths a gentle and immortal recollection. Madame de Staël was the *male* Rousseau! She had all his enthusiasm and none of his meanness. In the eloquence of diction she would have surpassed him, if she had not been too eloquent. But she perfumes her violets, and rouges her roses. Yet her heart was womanly, while her intellect was masculine, and the heart dictated while the intellect adorned. She could not have reasoned, if you had silenced in her the affections. The charm and the error of her writings have the same cause. She took for convictions what were but feelings. She built up a philosophy in emotion. Few persons felt more deeply the melancholy of life. It was enough to sadden that yearning heart the thought so often on her lips, "Jamais je n'ai été aimée comme j'aime." But, on the other hand, her susceptibility consoled while it wounded her. Like all poets, she had a profound sense of the common luxury of *being*. She felt the truth that the pleasures are greater than the pains of life, and was pleased with the sentiment of Horne Tooke when he said to Erskine, "If you had but obtained for me ten years of life in a dungeon with my books, and a pen and ink, I should have thanked you." None but the sensitive feel what a glorious possession existence is. The religion which was a part of her very nature contributed to render to this existence a diviner charm. How tender and how characteristic that

thought of hers, that if any happiness chanced to her after her father's death, "it was to his mediation she owed it:" as if he were living! — To her he was living — in heaven! Peace to her beautiful memory! Her genius is without a rival in her own sex; and if it be ever exceeded, it must be by one more or less than woman.

The drive homeward from Coppet to Geneva is far more picturesque, than that from Ferney to Coppet. As you approach Geneva, villa upon villa rises cheerfully on the landscape; and you feel a certain thrill as you pass the house inhabited by Marie Louise after the fall of Napoleon. These excursions in the neighbourhood of Geneva, spread to a wider circle the associations of the Lake; — they are of Lemman. And if the exiles of the earth resort to that serene vicinity, hers is the smile that wins them. She received the persecuted and the weary — they repaid the benefit in glory.

It was a warm, clear, and sunny day, on which I commenced the voyage of the Lake. Looking behind, I gazed on the roofs and spires of Geneva, and forgot the Present in the Past. What to me was its little community of watchmakers, and its little colony of English? I saw Charles of Savoy at its gates — I heard the voice of Berthelier invoking Liberty, and summoning to arms. The struggle past — the scaffold rose — and the patriot became the martyr. His blood was not spilt in vain. Religion became the resurrection of Freedom. The town is silent — it is under excommunication. Suddenly a murmur is heard — it rises — it gathers — the people are awake — they sweep the streets — the images are broken. Farel is preaching to the council! Yet a little while, and the stern soul of Calvin is at work within those walls. The loftiest of the Reformers, and the one whose in-

fluence has been the most wide and lasting, is the earliest also of the great tribe of the persecuted the City of the Lake receives within her arms. The benefits he repaid — behold them around! Wherever property is secure, wherever thought is free, wherever the ancient learning is revived, wherever the ancient spirit has been caught, you trace the work of the Reformation, and the inflexible, inquisitive, unconquerable soul of Calvin! He foresaw not, it is true, nor designed, the effects he has produced. The same sternness of purpose, the same rigidity of conscience that led him to reform, urged him to persecute. The exile of Bolsec, and the martyrdom of Servet, rest darkly upon his name. But the blessings we owe to the first inquirers compensate their errors. Had Calvin not lived, there would have been not one, but a thousand Servetes! The spirit of inquiry redeems itself as it progresses; once loosed, it will not stop at the limit to which its early disciples would restrain it. Born with them, it does not grow with their growth, it survives their death — it but commences where they conclude. In one century, the flames are for the person, in another for the work; in the third, work and person are alike sacred. The same town that condemned *Le Contrat social* to the conflagration, makes now its chief glory in the memory of Rousseau.

I turned from Geneva, and the villa of Byron, and the scarce-seen cottage of Shelley glided by. Of all landscape scenery, that of lakes pleases me the most. It has the movement without the monotony of the ocean. But in point of scenic attraction, I cannot compare Lemman with Como or the Lago Maggiore. If ever, as I hope my age may, it is mine to “find out the praeceful hermitage,” it shall be amidst the pines of Como, with its waves of

liquid sunshine, and its endless variety of shade and colour, as near to the scenes and waterfalls of Pliny's delicious fountain, as I can buy or build a tenement. There is not enough of glory in the Swiss climate. It does not bring that sense of existence — that passive luxury of enjoyment — that paradise of the air and sun, which belong to Italy.

The banks of Lemman, as seen from the middle of the water, lose much of their effect from the exceeding breadth of the lake; and the distance of the Alps beyond, detracts from their height. Nearness is necessary to the sublime. A narrow stream, with Mont Blanc alone towering by its side, would be the grandest spectacle in the world. But the oppression, the awe, and the undefinable sense of danger which belong to the sublime in natural objects, are lost when the objects are removed from our immediate vicinity. The very influence of the landscape around Lemman renders it rather magnificent than grand. There is something of sameness too in the greater part of the voyage, unless you wind near the coast. The banks themselves often vary, but the eternal mountains in the background invest the whole with one common character. But to see the Lake to the greatest advantage, avoid, oh, avoid steam-vessel and creep close by either shore. Beyond Ouchy and Lausanne, the scenery improves in richness and effect. As the walls of the latter slowly receded from me, the sky itself scarcely equalled the stillness of the water. It lay deep and silent as death, the dark rocks crested with cloud, flinging long and far shadows over the surface. Gazing on Lausanne, I recalled the words of Gibbon; I had not read the passage for years; I could not have quoted a syllable of it the day before, and now it rushed upon my mind so accurately,

that I found little but the dates to alter, when I compared my recollection with the page. "It was," said he, "on the day or rather the night of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last line of the last page in a summerhouse in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a berceau, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waves, and all nature was silent." What a picture! Who does not enter into what must have been the feelings of a man who had just completed the work that was to render him immortal? What calm fulness of triumph, of a confidence too stately for vanity, does the description breathe! I know not which has the more poetry, the conception of the work or the conclusion — the conception amidst the "ruins of the Capitol, while the bareheaded friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter," or the conclusion at the stillness and solitude of night, amidst the Helvetian Alps. With what tranquil collectedness of thought, he seems to bask and luxuriate, as it were, in the sentiment of his own glory! At such a moment did Gibbon feel that his soul which produced the glory, was no less imperishable. For my own part, *I* should have felt that my soul was diviner than my genius; — the genius is but an effort of the soul, and the artificer is greater than the work. The triumphs we achieve, our conquests of the domain of Time, can but feebly flatter our self-esteem, unless we regard them as the proofs of what we are. For who would submit to deem himself the blind Nursery of Thoughts, to be grafted on other soils, when the clay which nurtured them has crumbled to

unproductive atoms? — To consider what Shakspeare thought, while on earth, is a noble contemplation, but it is nobler yet to conjecture what, *now*, may be the musings, and what the aspirations, of that spirit exalted to a sublimer career of being. It were the wildest madness of human vanity to imagine that God created such spirits *only* for the earth; like the stars, they shine upon us, but their uses and their destinies are not limited to be the lamps of this atom of creation. So vast a waste of spirit were, indeed, a monstrous prodigality, wholly alien to the economy and system of the Universe!

But new objects rise to demand the thought. Opposite are the heights of Meillerie; seen from the water, they present little to distinguish them from the neighbouring rocks. The village lies scattered at the base, with the single spire rising above the roofs. I made the boatmen row towards the shore, and landed somewhere about the old and rugged town or village of Evian. Walking thence to Meillerie along the banks of the lake, nothing could be richer than the scene around. The sun was slowly sinking, the waters majestically calm, and a long row of walnut-trees fringed the margin; above, the shore slopes upward, covered with verdure. Proceeding onward, the ascent is yet more thickly wooded, until the steep and almost perpendicular heights of Meillerie rise before you — here grey and barren, there clothed with tangled and fantastic bushes. At a little distance you may see the village with the sharp spiral steeple rising sharp against the mountain; and winding farther, you may survey on the opposite shore the immortal Clarens: and, whitely gleaming over the water, the walls of Chillon. As I paused, the waters languidly rippled at my feet, and one long rose-cloud, the immortalized and consecrated hues of

Meillerie transferred from their proper home, faded lingeringly from the steeps of Jura. I confess myself, in some respects, to be rather of Scott's than Byron's opinion on the merits of the Héloïse. Julie and St. Preux are to me, as to Scott, "two tiresome pedants!" But they are eloquent pedants! The charm of Rousseau is not in the characters he draws, but in the sentiments he attributes to them. I lose the individuality of the characters — I forget, I dismiss them. I take the sentiments, and find characters of my own more worthy of them. Meillerie is not to me consecrated by Julie, but by ideal love. It is the Julie of one's own heart, the visions of one's own youth, that one invokes and conjures up in scenes which no criticism, no reasoning, can divorce from the associations of love. We think not of the idealist, but the ideal. Rousseau intoxicates us with his own egotism. We are wrapt in *ourselves* — in *our own* creations, and not *his*; — so at least it was with me. When shall I forget that twilight by the shores of Meillerie — or that starlit wave that bore me back to the opposite shore? The wind breathing low from Clarens — Chillon sleeping in the distance, and all the thoughts and dreams — and unuttered, unutterable memories of the youth and passion for ever gone, busy in my soul. The place was full, not of Rousseau, but that which had inspired him — hallowed not by the Priest — but, by the God.

I have not very distinctly marked the time in which the voyage I describe was broken up; but when next I resumed my excursion it was late at noon.

I had seen at Vevay, Ludlow the regicide's tomb. A stern contrast to the *Bosquets* (now, alas! potato-grounds) of Julie. And now, from the water, the old

town of Vevay seemed to have something in its aspect grateful to the grim shade of the King-slayer. Yet even that memory has associations worthy of the tenderness of feeling which invests the place; and one of the most beautiful instances of woman's affection, is the faithful valour with which his wife shared the dangers and vicissitudes of the republican's chequered life. His monument is built by her. And, though in a time when all the nice distinctions of justice on either side were swept away, the zeal of Ludlow wrote itself in blood that it had been more just to spare, the whole annals of that mighty war cannot furnish a more self-contemning unpurchaseable, and honest heart. His ashes are not the least valuable relics of the shores of Lemman.

Again; as you wind a jutting projection of the land, Clarens rises upon you, chiefly noticeable from its look of serene and entire repose. You see the house which Byron inhabited for some little time, and which has nothing remarkable in its appearance. This, perhaps, is the most striking part of the voyage. Dark shadows from the Alps, at the right, fell over the wave, but to the left, towards Clarens, all was bright and sunny, and beautifully still. Looking back, the lake was but one sheet of molten gold — wide and vast it slept in its glory; the shore on the right indistinct from its very brightness — that to the left, marked and stern from its very shadow.

Chillon, which is long, white, and, till closely approached, more like a modern than an ancient building, is backed by mountains covered with verdure. You survey now the end of the lake; a long ridge of the greenest foliage, from amidst which the frequent poplar rises, tall and picturesque, the spire of the grove. And, now

nearing Villeneuve, you sail by the little isle hallowed by Byron —

“A little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view,
A small green isle, it seemed no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,” &c.*

The trees were still there, young and flourishing; by their side a solitary shed. Villeneuve itself, backed by mountains, has a venerable air, as if vindicating the antiquity it boasts.

I landed with regret, even though the pilgrimage to Chillon was before me. And still I lingered by the wave — and still gazed along its soft expanse. Perhaps, in the vanity common to so many, who possess themselves in thought of a shadowy and unreal future, I may have dreamt, *as* I paused and gazed, that from among the lesser names which Lemman retains and blends with those more lofty and august, she may not disdainfully reject that of one who felt at least the devotion of the pilgrim, if he caught not an inspiration from the shrine.

* Prisoner of Chillon, line 341.

THE TRUE ORDEAL OF LOVE.

A MORAL TALE FOR MARRIED PEOPLE.

NEVER were two persons more passionately attached to each other than Adolphe and Celeste! Their love was a proverb. Of course it was an unhappy attachment — no body loves heartily, unless people take pains to prevent it. The spirit of contradiction is prodigiously strong in its effects.

Adolphe was rich and noble — Celeste was noble and poor. Their families were at variance; the family of Adolphe was exceedingly ambitious, and that of Celeste exceedingly proud. Had they been the best friends in the world, their fathers would not have assented to the loves of their children — Adolphe's father because he desired a rich match for his son — Celeste's because he was too proud to be under an obligation, and he was sufficiently a man of the world to know that you are to be considered obliged when a rich nobleman marries your daughter without a dowry. Celeste's father would have married her to a wealthy *parvenu* that he might have borrowed his money, in parading his condescension. For it is a maxim in good society, that no favour can be conferred by a *roturier*. Gratitude is

for him to feel, if you accept his services. No sooner therefore was the dawning attachment of the lovers discovered, than their relations thought it necessary to be amazingly angry. There cannot be a doubt that you have an absolute right to the eyes, nerves, and hearts of your children. They have no business to be happy, unless it be exactly in the way most agreeable to yourself. These self-evident truths were not, however, irresistible for Adolphe and Celeste. Although the latter was locked up, and the former was watched; they continued often to correspond, and sometimes to see each other. Their love was no passing caprice — despite all difficulties, all obstacles, all dangers — it was more intense than ever at the end of a year. Celeste had gallantly refused two young merchants, handsome and ardent, — and a very old banker, who would have left her a widow in a year. Adolphe — the gay and handsome Adolphe — had renounced every flirtation and conquest; — all women had palled in his eyes since he had seen Celeste. But though their passion was strengthened by time, time had failed to increase their hopes of its success — they began to doubt and to despair. The rose fled from Celeste's cheek — she pined away, her lip had lost all its smile, her form shrunk from all its roundness, tears stood constantly in her eyes, and she sighed so that it went to the hearts of all the servants in the house. In fine, she fell ill, — poor girl, — she was dying for love. The more violent passion of Adolphe produced also its disorder. His pulse burnt with fever, his language was often incoherent — his great grandfather had been mad — Adolphe promised fairly to take after his ancestor.

Alarmed, but not softened, the father of our lover

spoke to him earnestly. "Renounce but this ill-placed love — if only for a time. Idleness is the parent of this youthful folly. I will devote half my fortune to purchase you that situation at court you have so often thought the height of your ambition. My son, you are young, bold, and aspiring; your fortunes, your fame will be secured. I willingly make you this sacrifice, provided you abandon Celeste."

Adolphe wrung the hand of his father. "Impossible!" he murmured, "one look from her is worth all the dreams of ambition." So saying, he left the room.

At length, finding they could not live together, our lovers formed the desperate design — not to live divided; (it is a favourite alternative in the country in which they were born) — in short, they resolved upon suicide. I wish I had been able to obtain the letters which passed between them on this melancholy subject. I never read any so simple and so touching; if you had seen them you would have thought it the plainest proposition in the world — that persons, with any real affection for each other, ought never to be unprovided with prussic acid: — who knows but what an accident may separate them of a sudden; and to be separate! — how much pleasanter to be dead!

The lovers agreed, then, to poison themselves on the same night. Their last letters were written, blistered with each other's tears. It was eleven o'clock. Adolphe had retired to his chamber — he took up the poison — he looked at it wistfully. "To-morrow," said he, musingly — "to-morrow" — and he extracted the cork — "to-morrow — it smells very disagreeably — — to-morrow I shall be at rest. This heart" — he shook the phial — "how it froths! — this heart will have ceas-

ed to beat — and our cruel parents will not forbid us a common grave." So saying, he sighed heavily, and muttering the name of Celeste, gulped down the fatal draught.

Meanwhile, the father and mother of Adolphe were still at supper. The old butler, who had wiped his eyes when Adolphe had left the room, fidgeted to and fro, with the air of a man who has something at his heart. As his master was very hungry, and his mistress very sleepy — the good old man was heeded by neither. At length, when the other attendants had withdrawn, the old man lingered behind — thrice he re-set the glasses — and thrice he re-arranged the decanters.

"That is quite right — that will do — shut the door after you."

"Sir — yes, Sir. — Did you — hem."

"Did I what?"

My young master, Sir — yes, Sir."

"Your young master. Well" —

"Alas! Sir, I fear he is not quite right. Did you observe how he looked when he left the room?"

"*Ma foi*. I was engaged with the chicken."

"And you, Madam — he kissed your hand very affectionately."

"Ah, yes (drowsily), he has an excellent heart, *le cher enfant!*"

"And, Madam, I don't like to say anything — but — but — my young master has been muttering very odd things to himself for the last two or three days, and all this morning he has been poisoning the dogs by way, he said, of experiment."

“Poison!” said the mother, thoroughly awakened—
“has he got any poison?”

“Ah, yes, Madam — his pockets full.”

“Heavens!” cried the father, “this must not be — if he should in despair — he is a very odd boy. His great-grandfather died mad. I will instantly go to his room.”

“And I too,” cried the mother.

The good couple hurried to Adolphe’s chamber; they heard a groan as they opened the door; they found their son stretched on the bed, pale and haggard; on the table was a phial, labelled ‘poison;’ the phial was empty.

“My son, my son! — you have not been so wicked — you have not — speak — speak!”

“Oh! I suffer tortures! — Oh! oh! I am dying. Leave me! Celeste also has taken poison — we could not live together — Cruel parents — we mock you, and die!”

“Recover — recover, my son, and Celeste shall be yours,” said the mother, half in hysterics.

The father was already gone for a surgeon. The surgeon lived near to Celeste, and while he was hastily preparing his antidotes, his visitor had the charity to run to the house of Celeste’s father, and hastily apprize him of the intelligence he had learnt. The poor old gentleman hobbled off to his daughter’s room. Luckily he found his wife with her; she had been giving the *petite* good advice, and that is a very prolix habit. Celeste was impatiently awaiting her departure; she was dying to be dead! In rushed her father — “Child, child — here’s news indeed! — Are you alive, Celeste — have

you poisoned yourself? That young reprobate is already —”

“Already!” cried Celeste, clasping her hands — “Already! — he awaits me, then. Ah, this appointment at least I will not break!” She sprang to her bedside, and seized a phial from under the pillow: but the father was in time — he snatched it from her hand, and his daughter fell into fits so violent, that they threatened to be no less fatal than the poison.

CHAPTER II.

‘WHATEVER the exaggerations of our lovers, they loved really, fervently, disinterestedly, and with all their hearts. Not one in ten thousand loves is so strong, or promises to be so lasting.

Adolphe did not die — the antidotes were given in time — he recovered. The illness of Celeste was more dangerous — she suffered, poor child, a delirious fever, and was several weeks before her life and reason were restored.

No parents could stand all this; ordinary caprices it is very well to resist, but when young people take to poison and delirious fevers — *il faut céder*. Besides, such events derange one’s establishment and interrupt one’s comforts. One is always glad to come to terms when one begins to be annoyed oneself. The old people then made it up, and the young people married. As the Bridegroom and Celeste were convinced that the sole object of life was each other’s company, they hastened at once to the sweet solitudes of the country. They had a charming villa and beautiful gardens — they were

both accomplished — clever — amiable — young — and in love. How was it possible they should be susceptible to *ennui*? They could never bear to lose sight of each other.

“Ah, Adolphe — traitor — where hast thou been?”

“Merely shooting in the woods, my angel.”

“What, and without me! Fie! promise this shall not happen again.”

“Ah, dearest! too gladly I promise.”

Another time —

“What, Celeste! — three hours have I been seeking you! Where have you hid yourself?”

“Don’t look so angry, my Adolphe, I was only directing the gardener to build a little arbour for you to read in. I meant it as a surprise.”

“My own Celeste! but three hours — it is an eternity without you! Promise not to leave me again, without telling me where to find you.”

“My own dearest, dearest Adolphe! how I love you — may my company ever be as dear to you!”

This mode of life is very charming with many for a few days. Adolphe and Celeste loved each other so entirely, that it lasted several months. What at first was passion had grown habit, and each blamed the other for want of affection, if he or she ever indulged in the novelty of different pursuits.

As they had nothing to do but to look at those faces they had thought so handsome, so it was now and then difficult not to yawn; and of late there had been little speeches like the following:

“Adolphe, my love, you never talk to me — put down that odious book you are always reading.”

"Celeste, my angel, you don't hear me. I am telling you about my travels, and you gape in my face."

"My dear Adolphe, I am so exceedingly sleepy."

One morning, as Adolphe woke and turned in his bed, his eyes rested on his wife, who was still asleep — "Bless me," thought he, "I never saw this before — let me look again — yes, certainly, she has — a wart on her chin!"

Adolphe rose and dressed himself — Adolphe was grave and meditative. They met at breakfast — the bride and bridegroom. Celeste was in high spirits, Adolphe was sombre and dejected.

"Let us ride to-day," said Celeste.

"My dear, I have a head-ache."

"Poor child! well, then, let us read the new poem."

"My dear, you talk so loud."

"I!" and Celeste, gazing reproachfully on Adolphe, perceived, for the first time, something in his eyes that surprised her — she looked again — "Good Heavens!" said she to herself, "Adolphe certainly squints."

On the other hand, Adolphe murmured, "The wart has grown greatly since morning."

It is impossible to say what an effect this fatal discovery had upon Adolphe. He thought of it incessantly. He had nothing else to complain of — but then warts on the chin are certainly not becoming. Celeste's beauty had improved greatly since her marriage. Every body else saw the improvement. Adolphe saw nothing but the wart on her chin. Her complexion was more brilliant, her form more rounded, her walk more majestic; but what is all this, when one has a wart on the chin! The wart seemed to grow bigger and bigger every day — to Adolphe's eyes it threatened speedily to absorb

the whole of the face. Nay, he expected, in due time, to see his beautiful Celeste all wart! He smothered his pain as well as he could, because he was naturally well-bred and delicate; and no woman likes to be told of the few little blemishes she is blind to herself—he smothered his pain, but he began to think it would be just as well to have separate apartments.

Meanwhile, strange to say, Adolphe's squint grew daily more decided and pronounced. "He certainly did not squint before we married," thought Celeste; "it is very unpleasant — it makes one so fidgety to be stared at by a person who sees two ways — and Adolphe has unfortunately a habit of staring. I think I might venture to hint, delicately and kindly — the habit can't yet be incurable."

As wives are always the first in the emulation of conjugal fault-finding, Celeste resolved to hazard the hint — on the first favourable opportunity.

"Well, my Celeste, I have brought my dog to see you," said Adolphe one morning.

"Ah! down, down! Pray turn him out; see the mark of his paws. I can't bear dogs, Adolphe."

"Poor thing!" said Adolphe, caressing his insulted favourite.

"Was that to me, or to the dog?" asked Celeste.

"Oh! to him, to be sure."

"I beg your pardon, my dear, but I thought you looked at me. Indeed, Adolphe, if the truth may be said, you have lately contracted a bad habit — you are getting quite a cast in your eye."

"Madam!" said Adolphe, prodigiously offended, and hurrying to the glass.

"Don't be angry, my love; I would not have

mentioned it, if it did not get worse every day; it is yet to be cured, I am sure; just put a wafer on the top of your nose, and you will soon see straight."

"A wafer on the top of my nose! Much better put one at the tip of your chin, Celeste."

"My chin!" cried Celeste, running in her turn to the glass, "What do you mean, Sir?"

"Only that you have a very large wart there, which it would be more agreeable to conceal."

"Sir!"

"Madam!"

"A wart on my chin — monster!"

"A cast in my eye — fool!"

"Yes! How could I ever love a man that squinted!"

"Or I a woman with a wart on her chin!"

"Sir, I shall not condescend to notice your insults. No wonder — you can't see! I pity your infirmity."

"Madam, I despise your insinuations; but since you deny the evidence of your own glass, suffer me to send for a physician, and if he can cure your deformity, so much the better for you."

"Yes, send for a physician; he will say whether you squint or not — poor Adolphe, I am not angry, no, I pity so melancholy a defect."

Celeste burst into tears. Adolphe, in a rage, seized his hat, mounted his horse, and went himself for the doctor.

The doctor was a philosopher as well as a physician — he took his pony, and ambled back with Adolphe. By the way he extracted from Adolphe his whole history, for men in a passion are easily made garrulous. "The perfidious woman," — said Adolphe, "would you believe it? — we braved every thing for each other —

never were two persons so much in love — nay, we attempted suicide rather than endure a longer separation. I renounced the most brilliant marriages for her sake — too happy that she was mine without a dowry — and now she declares I squint. And, oh, she has *such* a wart on her chin!”

The Doctor could not very well see whether Adolphe squinted, for he had his hat over his eyes; besides he prudently thought it best to attend to one malady at a time.

“As to the wart, Sir,” said he, “it is not difficult to cure.”

“But if my wife won’t confess that she has it, she will never consent to be cured. I would not mind if she would but own it. Oh the vanity of women!”

“It must have been after some absence that this little defect was perceived by you” —

“After absence — we have not been a day separated since we married.”

“O-ho,” thought the Doctor, sinking into a reverie — I have said he was a philosopher — but it did not require much philosophy to know that persons who would have died for each other a few months ago, were not alienated only by a wart or a cast in the eye.

They arrived at Adolphe’s villa — they entered the saloon. Celeste no longer wept; she had put on her most becoming cap, and had the air of an insulted but uncomplaining wife!

“Confess to the wart, Celeste, and I’ll forgive all,” said Adolphe.

“Nay, why so obstinate as to the cast of the eye — I shall not admire you less (though others may), if you will not be so vain as to disown it.”

“Enough, Madam — Doctor, regard that lady — is not the wart monstrous — *can* it be cured?”

“Nay,” cried Celeste, sobbing, “look rather at my poor husband’s squint. His eyes were so fine before we married.”

The Doctor put on his spectacles — he regarded first one and then the other.

“Sir,” said he, deliberately, “this lady has certainly a pimple on the left of her chin considerably smaller than a pin’s head. And, madam, the pupil of your husband’s right eye is, like that of nine persons out of ten, the hundredth part of an inch nearer his nose than the pupil of the left. This is the case, as it appears to me, seeing you both for the first time. But I do not wonder, that you, Sir, think the pimple so enormous; and you, madam, the eye so distorted, since you see each other every day!”

The pair were struck by a secret and simultaneous conviction: — when an express arrived breathless, to summon Adolphe to his father, who was taken suddenly ill. At the end of three months, Adolphe returned. Celeste’s wart had entirely vanished, and Celeste found her husband’s eyes were as beautiful as ever.

Taught by experience, they learnt then, that warts rapidly grow upon chins, and squints readily settle upon eyes, — that are too constantly seen. And that it is easy for two persons to die joyfully together when lovers, but prodigiously difficult, without economising the presence, to live comfortably together when married.

ON THE
WANT OF SYMPATHY.

I SMILE when I hear the young talk, in luxurious anticipation, of the delight of meeting with a wholly congenial spirit — an echo of the heart — a counterpart of self. Who ever lived that did not hope to find the phantom, and who ever lived that found it? It is the most entire and the most eternal of all our delusions. That which makes up the nature of one human being — (its nerves, sentiments, thoughts, objects, aspirations) — is infinitely multiplied and complex; formed from a variety of early circumstances, of imperfect memories, of indistinct associations, of constitutional peculiarities, of things and thoughts appropriate only to itself, and which were never known but partially to others. It is a truism which every one will acknowledge, that no two persons were ever wholly alike, and yet every one starts from the necessary but gloomy corollary, that therefore you can never find a counterpart of yourself. And so we go on, desiring, craving, seeking, sympathy to the last! It is a melancholy instance, too, of the perversity of human wishes, that they who exact sympathy the most, are, of all, the least likely to obtain it. It is a necessary part of the yearning and wayward temperament of the poet. Exactly as he finds his finer and more subtle visions uncomprehended by the herd, he sighs for the Imagined One to whom he can pour them forth, or who can rather

understand them most in silence — by an instinct — by a magnetism — by all that invisible and electric harmony of two souls, which we understand by the word ‘Sympathy,’ in its fullest and divinest sense. Yet in proportion evidently to the rareness of this nature is the improbability of finding a likeness to it. And if we succeed at last, if we do find another being equally sensitive — equally wayward — equally acute and subtle — instead of sympathizing with us, it demands only sympathy for itself. The one most resembling a poet would be a poetess. And a poetess is, of all, the last who could sympathize with a poet. Two persons linked together, equally self-absorbed, morbid, susceptible, and exacting! — Mephistophiles himself could not devise a union more unhappy and more ill-assorted! It is a strange thing, that those who are most calculated to bear with genius, to be indulgent to its eccentricities and its infirmities, to foresee and forestall its wishes, to honour it with the charity and the reverence of love, are usually without genius themselves, and of an intellect comparatively mediocre and humble. It is the touching anecdote of the wife of a man of genius, that she exclaimed on her death-bed, “Ah, my poor friend, when I am no more, who will understand thee?” Yet this woman, who felt she did comprehend the nature with which her life had been linked, was of no correspondent genius. Biography, that immortalizes her tenderness, is silent upon her talents. In fact, there is no real sympathy between the great man and another, but that which supplies its place is the reverent affection of admiration. And I doubt whether the propensity to venerate *persons* be a common faculty of the highest order of the mind. Such men know indeed veneration, their souls are imbued

with it; but it is not for *mortals*, over whom they feel their superiority, it is for *things* abstract and incorporeal — for Glory or for Virtue — for Wisdom — for Nature, or for God. Even in the greatest men around them, their sight, unhappily too acute, penetrates to the foibles; they measure their fellow mortals by the standard of their Ideal. They are not blinded by the dazzle of genius, for genius is a thing to them household and familiar. They may pity, but they cannot admire. God and the angels compassionate our frailties, they do not admire our powers. And they who approach the most to the Divine Intelligence, or the Angelic Holiness, behold their brethren from a height; — they may stoop from their empyreal air to cherish and to pity — but it is the things above them that they reverence and adore.

It is in a lower class of intellect, yet one not unelevated as compared with the herd, that the principle of admiration is most frequent and pervading, an intellect that seeks a monitor, a protector, a standard or a guide — one that can appreciate greatness, but has no measure within whereby to gauge its proportions. Thus we observe in biography, that the friendship between great men is rarely intimate or permanent. It is a Boswell that most appreciates a Johnson. Genius has no brother, no co-mate; the love it inspires is that of a pupil or a son. Hence, unconscious of the reasons, but by that fine intuition into nature, which surpasses all philosophy, the poets usually demand devotion, as the most necessary attribute in their ideals of love; they ask in their mistress a being, not of lofty intellect, nor of brilliant genius, but engrossed, absorbed in them; — a Medora for the Conrade. It was well to paint that Medora in a savage island, — to exclude her from the world. In

civilized life, poor creature, caps and bonnets — an opera box, and Madame Carson, would soon have shared her heart with her Corsair! Yet this species of love, tender, and unearthly though it be, is not sympathy. Conrade could not have confided in Medora. She was the mistress of his heart, not, in the beautiful Arabian phrase, “the keeper of his soul.” It is the inferior natures then that appreciate, indulge, reverence, and even comprehend genius the most, and yet how much is there that to inferior natures it can never reveal! How can we pour forth all that burning eloquence of passion and memory which often weighs upon us like a burden, to one who will listen to us indeed with rapt ears, but who will long, as Boswell longed, for Mr. Somebody to be present to hear how finely we can talk?

Yet we have brief passages in life when we fancy we have attained our object; when we cry “Eureka” — when we believe our counterpart, the wraith of our spirit, is before us! Two persons in love with each other, how congenial they appear! In that beautiful pliancy — that unconscious system of self-sacrifice which are the character of love in its earlier stages; each nature seems blended and circumfused in each — they are not two natures, they are one! Seen by that enchanting moonlight of delicious passion — all that is harsh or dissonant is mellowed down; the irregularities, the angles, sleep in shadow; all that we behold is in harmony with ourselves. Then is our slightest thought penetrated, our faintest desire forestalled, our sufferings of mind, or of frame, how delicately are they consoled! Then even sorrow and sickness have their charm — they bring us closer under the healing wings of our Guardian Spirit. And, fools that we are, we imagine this sympathy is

to endure for ever. But TIME — there is the divider! — by little and little, we grow apart from each other. The daylight of the world creeps in, the moon has vanished, and we see clearly all the jarring lines and corners hidden at first from our survey. The lady has her objects, and the gentleman his.

My lost, my buried, my unforgotten! You, whom I knew in the first fresh years of life — you, who were snatched from me before one leaf of the Summer of Youth and of Love was withered — you, over whose grave, yet a boy, I wept away half the softness of my soul; — now that I know the eternal workings of the world, and the destiny of all human ties, I rejoice that you are no more! — that custom never dulled the music of your voice — the pathos and the magic of your sweet eyes — that the halo of a dream was round you to the last! Had you survived till now, we should have survived — not our love, indeed — but all that renders love most divine — the rapt and wild idolatry that scarce believed it adored a mortal thing of frailty and of change — the exaggerated, the measureless credulity in the faith, the virtues of each other, that almost made us what it believed, in our desire not to fall short of the god-like standard by which we were raised in our mutual eyes above the children of earth. All this, — how long since would it have passed away! — our love would have fallen into “the portion of weeds and worn out faces,” which is the lot of all who love. As it is, I can transport myself from every earthly disappointment when I recur to you! On your image there rests no shadow of a shade! In my hours of sickness — in the darkness of despondency — in the fever of petty cares, and all the terrors of the future — you glide before me in your fresh

youth, and with your tender smile — for from you never came the harsh word or the wronging thought. In all that I recall of you there is not one memory which I would forget. Death is the great treasure-house of Love. There, lies buried the real wealth of passion and of youth; there, the heart, once so prodigal, now grown the miser, turns to contemplate the hoards it has hidden from the world. Henceforth, it is but the common and petty coins of affection, that it wastes on the uses and things of life.

The coarser and blunter minds, intent upon common things, obtain, perhaps, a sufficient sympathy to satisfy them. The man who does nothing but hunt, will find congeniality enough wherever there are hounds and huntsmen. The woman, whose soul is in a ball-room, has a host of intimate associates, and congenial spirits. It was the man of the world who talked of his numerous friends — it was the sage who replied, sadly, "Friends! happy art thou, I have never found one!"

There are two remedies for the craving after sympathy, and the first I recommend to all literary men, as the great means of preserving the moral health. It is this; we should cultivate, besides our more intellectual objects, some pursuit which we can have in common with the herd: Some end, whether of pleasure, of business, of politics, that brings us in contact with our kind. It is in this that we can readily find a fellowship — in this we can form a vent for our desire of sympathy from others. And thus, we learn to feel ourselves not alone. Solitude then becomes to us a relief, and our finer thoughts are the seraphs that watch and haunt it. Our imagination, kept rigidly from the world, is the Eden in which we walk with God. For

having in the crowd embraced the crowd's objects, and met with fellowship in return, we no longer desire so keenly a sympathy with that which is not common to others, and belongs to the nobler part of us. And this brings me to the second remedy. We learn thus to make our own dreams and thoughts our companion, our beloved, our Egeria. We acquire the doctrine of self-dependence, — self suffices to self. In our sleep from the passions of the world, God makes an Eve to us from our own breasts. Yet sometimes it will grieve us to think we shall return to clay, give up the heritage of life, our atoms dissolve and crumble into the elements of new things — with all the most lovely, the most spiritual part of us untold! — What volumes can express one tithe that we have felt? How many brilliant thoughts have broke upon us — how many divinest visions have walked by our side, that would have mocked all our efforts to transfer to this inanimate page? To sit coldly down, to copy the fitful and sudden hues of those rainbow and evanescent images varying with every moment! — no! we are not all so cased in authorship, we are greater than mere machines of terms and periods. The author is inferior to the man! As the best part of Beauty is that which no picture can express,* so the best part of the Poet is that which no words have told. Had Shakspeare lived for ever, could he have exhausted his thoughts?

It is a yet harder thought, perhaps, than the reflection which I have just referred to, and which has in it something of vanity — to know how much, for want of sympathy in those around us, our noblest motives, our purest qualities, are misunderstood. We die — none

have known us! — and yet all are to declaim on our character — measure at a glance the dark abyss of our souls — prate of us as if we were household and hackneyed to them from our cradle. One amongst the number shall write our biography — the rest shall read and conceive they know us ever afterwards. We go down to our son's sons, darkened and disguised; so that, looking on men's colourings of our mind and life, from our repose on the bosom of God, we shall not recognise one feature of the portrait we have left to earth!

ON ILL HEALTH, AND ITS CONSOLATIONS.

WE do not enough consider our physical state as the cause of much of our moral — we do not reflect enough upon our outward selves: — What changes have been produced in our minds by some external cause — an accident — an illness! For instance, a general state of physical debility — ILL HEALTH in the ordinary phrase, — is perhaps among the most interesting subjects whereon to moralize. It is not — like most topics that are dedicated to philosophy — refining and abstruse; — it is not a closet thesis — it does not touch *one* man, and avoid the circle which surrounds him; — it relates to us all — for ill health is a part of Death; — it is its grand commencement. Sooner or later, for a longer period or a shorter, it is our common doom. Some, indeed, are stricken suddenly, and Disease does not herald the Dread Comer; — but such exceptions are not to be classed against the rule; and in this artificial existence — afflicted by the vices of custom — the unknown infirmities of our sires — the various ills that beset all men who think or toil — the straining nerve — the heated air — the overwrought or the stagnant life — the cares of poverty — the luxuries of wealth — the gnawings of our several passions — the string cracks somewhere, and few of us pass even the first golden gates of Life ere we receive the admonitions of Decay. “Every contingency to every man and every creature doth preach our funeral sermon,

and calls us to look and see how the old Sexton Time throws up the earth and digs a grave where we must lay our sins, or our sorrows."

Life itself is but a long dying, and with every struggle against disease "we taste the grave and the solemnities of our own funerals. Every day's necessity calls for a reparation of that portion which Death fed on all night when we lay on his lap, and slept in his outer chambers."*

As the beautiful mind of Tully taught itself to regard the evils of Old Age, by fairly facing its approach, and weighing its sufferings against its consolations, so, with respect to habitual infirmities, we may the better bear them by recollecting that they are not without their solace. Every one of us must have observed, that during a lengthened illness the mind acquires the habit of making to itself a thousand sources of interest — "a thousand images of one that was" — out of that quiet monotony which seems so unvaried to ordinary eyes. We grow usually far more susceptible to commonplace impressions: — As one whose eyes are touched by a fairy spell, a new world opens to us out of the surface of the tritest things. Every day we discover new objects, and grow delighted with our progress. I remember a friend of mine — a man of lively and impetuous imagination — who, being afflicted with a disease which demanded the most perfect composure, — not being allowed to read, write, and very rarely to converse, — found an inexhaustible mine of diversion in an old marble chimney-piece, in which the veins, irregularly streaked, furnished forth quaint and broken likenesses to men, animals, trees, &c. He declared that,

* Jeremy Taylor on Holy Dying.

by degrees, he awoke every morning with an object before him, and his imagination betook itself instantly to its new realm of discovery. This instance of the strange power of the mind, to create to itself an interest in the narrowest circles to which it may be confined, may be ludicrous, but is not exaggerated. How many of us have watched for hours with half-shut eyes the embers of the restless fire?—nay, counted the flowers upon the curtains of the sick-bed, and found an interest in the task! The mind has no native soil; its affections are not confined to one spot,—its dispositions fasten themselves every where,—they live, they thrive, they produce, in whatever region Chance may cast them, however remote from their accustomed realm. God made the human heart weak, but elastic;—it hath a strange power of turning poison into nutriment. Banish us the air of Heaven—cripple the step—bind us to the sick couch—cut us off from the cheerful face of men—make us keep house with danger and with Darkness—we can yet play with our own fancies, and after the first bitterness of the physical thralldom, feel that despite of it we are free!

It has been my lot to endure frequent visitations of ill-health, although my muscular frame is strong, and I am capable of bearing great privation and almost any exertion of mere bodily fatigue. The reason is that I reside principally in London, and it is only of late that I have been able to inure myself to the close air and the want of exercise that belong to the life of cities. However languishing in the confinement of a metropolis, the moment I left the dull walls, and heard the fresh waving of the trees, I revived,—the nerves grew firm—pain fled me—I asked myself in wonder for my ailments!

My bodily state was, then, voluntary and self-incurred, for nothing bound or binds me to cities: I follow no calling, I am independent of men, sufficiently affluent in means, and, from my youth upward, I have learnt myself the power to live alone. Why not then consult health as the greatest of earthly goods? But is health the greatest of earthly goods? Is the body to be our main care? Are we to be the minions of self? Are we to make *any* corporeal advantage the chief end —

“Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.”

I confess that I see not how men can arrogate to themselves the Catholic boast of Immortal Hopes — how they can utter the old truths of the nothingness of life — of the superiority of mental over physical delights — of the paramount influence of the soul and the soul's objects — and yet speak of health as our *greatest* blessing, and the workman's charge of filling up the crannies of this fast mouldering clay as the most necessary of human objects. Assuredly health is a *great* blessing, and its care is not to be despised; but there are duties far more sacred, — obligations before which the body is as nought. For it is not necessary to live, but it *is* necessary to live nobly! And of this truth we are not without the support of high examples. Who can read the great poet “who sung of heaven,” and forget that his acts walked level with the lofty eminence of his genius — that he paid “no homage to the sun,” that even the blessing of light itself was a *luxury*, willingly to be abandoned — but the defence of the great rights of earth, the fulfilment of the solemn trust of nations, the vindication of ages yet to come, was a *necessity*, and not to be avoided — and wherefore? because it was a duty! Are there not duties too to *us* — though

upon a narrower scale — which require no less generous a devotion? Are there not objects which are more important than the ease and welfare of the body? Is our first great charge that of being a nurse to ourselves? No: every one of us who writes, toils, or actively serves the state, forms to himself, if he knoweth anything of public virtue, interests which are not to be renounced for the purchase of a calmer pulse, and a few years added to the feeble extreme of life. Many of us have neither fortune, nor power, nor extrinsic offerings to sacrifice to mankind; but all of us — the proud, the humble, the rich, the poor — have one possession at our command; — we may sacrifice ourselves! It is from these reasons that, at the time I refer to, I put aside the hope of health; — a good earnestly indeed to be coveted, but which, if obtained only by a life remote from man, inactive, useless, self-revolving, may be too dearly bought: and gazing on the evil which I imagined (though erroneously) I could not cure, I endeavoured to reconcile myself to its necessity.

And first, it seems to me that when the nerves are somewhat weakened, the senses of sympathy are more keen — we are less negligent of our kind: that impetuous and reckless buoyancy of spirit which mostly accompanies a hardy and iron frame, is not made to enter into the infirmities of others. How can it sympathize with what it has never known? We seldom find men of great animal health and power possessed of much delicacy of mind; their humanity and kindness proceed from an overflow of spirits — their more genial virtues are often but skin deep, and the result of good humour. The susceptible frame of women causes each more kindly and generous feeling to vibrate more powerfully on their

hearts, and thus also that which in our harsher sex sharpens the nerve, often softens the affection. And this is really the cause of that increased tendency to pity, to charity, to friendship, which comes on with the decline of life, and which Bolingbroke has so touchingly alluded to. There is an excitement in the consciousness of the glorious possession of unshaken health and natured strength, which hurries us on the road of that selfish enjoyment, which we are proud of our privilege to command. The passions of the soul are often winged by our capacities, and are fed from the same sources that keep the beating of the heart strong, and the step haughty upon the earth. Thus when the frame grows slack, and the race of the strong can be run no more, the Mind falls gently back upon itself — it releases its garments from the grasp of the Passions which have lost their charm — intellectual objects become more precious, and, no longer sufficing to be a world to ourselves, we contract the soft habit of leaning our affection upon others; the ties round our heart are felt with a more close endearment, and every little tenderness we receive from the love of those about us, teaches us the value of love. And this is therefore among the consolations of ill-health, that we are more susceptible to all the kinder emotions, and that we drink a deeper and a sweeter pleasure from the attachment of our friends. If, too, we become, as the body progressively declines from the desire of external pursuits, more devoted to intellectual objects, new sources of delight are thus bestowed upon us. Books become more eloquent of language, and their aspect grows welcome as the face of some dear consoler. Perhaps no epicure of the world's coarse allurements knows that degree of deep and serene enjoyment with

which, shut up in our tranquil chambers, we surround ourselves with the WISDOM, the POETRY, the ROMANCE of past ages, and are made free, by the Sybil of the world's knowledge, to the Elysium of departed souls. The pain, or the fever, that from time to time reminds us of our clay, brings not perhaps more frequent and embarrassing interruptions, than the restlessness and eager passion which belong to the flush of health. Contented to repose — the repose becomes more prodigal of dreams.

And there is another circumstance usually attendant on ill-health. We live less for the world — we do not extend the circle of friendship into the wide and distracting orbit of common acquaintance — we are thus less subject to ungenial interruptions — to vulgar humiliations — to the wear and tear of mind — the harassment and the vanity, — that torture those who seek after the “gallery of painted pictures,” and “the talk where no love is.” The gawd and the ostentation shrink into their true colours before the eye which has been taught to look within. And the pulses that have calmed by pain, keep, without much effort, to the even tenor of philosophy. Thus ill-health may save us from many disquietudes and errors — from frequent mortification — and “*the walking after the vain shadow.*” Plato retired to his cave to be wise; sickness is often the moral cave, with its quiet, its darkness, and its solitude, to the soul.

I may add also, that he who has been taught the precariousness of life, acquires a knowledge of its value. He teaches himself to regard Death with a quiet eye, and habit* gifts him with a fortitude mightier than the

* *Exilia, tormenta, bella, morbos, naufragia, meditare, ut nullo sis malo, Tyro. — Senec. Epist.*

stoicism of the Porch. As the lamb is shorn so the wind is tempered. Nor is the calm without moments of mere animal ecstasy unknown to the rude health, which, having never waned from its vigour, is unconscious of the treasure it inherits. What rapture in the first steps to recovery — in the buoyant intervals of release! When the wise simplicity of Hesiod would express the overpowering joy of a bridegroom, in the flush of conquest hastening to the first embraces of his bride, he can compare him only to one escaped from some painful disease, or from the chains of a dungeon.* The release of pain is the excess of transport. With what gratitude we feel the first return of health — the first budding forth of the new spring that has dawned within us. Or, if our disease admit not that blessed regeneration, still it has its intervals and reprieves: moments, when the Mind springs up as the lark to heaven, singing and rejoicing as it bathes its plumage in the intoxicating air. So that our state may be of habitual tranquillity, and yet not dumb to raptures which have no parallel in the monotony of more envied lives. But I hold that the great counterbalancing gift which the infirmity of the body, if rightly moralized upon, hath the privilege to confer, is, that the mind, left free to contemplation, naturally prefers the high and the immortal to the sensual and the low. As Astronomy took its rise among the Chaldaean shepherds, whose constant leisure upon their vast and level plains enabled them to elevate their attention undivided to the heavenly bodies, so the time left to us for contemplation in our hours of sickness, and our necessary disengagement from the things of earth, tend to di-

* *Hes. Scrut. Herc.* line 42.

rect our thoughts to the Stars, and impregnate us half unconsciously with the Science of Heaven.

Thus while, as I have said, our affections become more gentle, our souls also become more noble, and our desires more pure. We learn to think, with one of the most august of our moralists, that "earth is an hospital, not an inn — a place to die, not live in." Our existence becomes a great preparation for death, and the monitor within us is constant, but with a sweet and a cheering voice.

Such are the thoughts with which in the hour of sickness I taught myself to regard what with the vulgar is the greatest of human calamities! It may be some consolation to those who have suffered more bitterly than I have done, to feel that, by calling in the powers of the mind, there may be good ends and cheerful hopes wrought out from the wasting of the body: and that it is only the darkness — unconsidered and unexplored — which shapes the spectre, and appals us with the fear.

THE LAW OF ARREST.

A TALE FROM FACTS.

THE immediate interest which the proceedings of the Legislature have attached to the existent Law of Arrest, and its probable reform, induce me to relate the following story.

Once upon a time there lived at Hamburgh a certain merchant of the name of Meyer—he was a good little man; charitable to the poor, hospitable to his friends, and so rich that he was extremely respected, in spite of his good nature. Among that part of his property which was vested in other people's hands, and called "debts," was the sum of five hundred pounds owed to him by the Captain of an English vessel. This debt had been so long contracted, that the worthy Meyer began to wish for a new investment of his capital. He accordingly resolved to take a trip to Portsmouth, in which town Captain Jones was then residing, and take that liberty which in my opinion should in a free country never be permitted, — viz. the liberty of applying for his money.

Our worthy merchant one bright morning found himself at Portsmouth; he was a stranger to that town, but not altogether unacquainted with the English language. He lost no time in calling on Captain Jones.

“And vat?” said he to a man whom he asked to conduct him to the Captain’s house, “vat is dat fine veshell youndare?”

“She be the Royal Sally,” replied the man, “bound for Calcutta — sails to-morrow; but here’s Captain Jones’s house, Sir, and he’ll tell you all about it.”

The merchant bowed, and knocked at the door of a red-brick house — door green—brass knocker. Captain Gregory Jones was a tall man; he wore a blue jacket without skirts; he had high cheek bones, small eyes, and his whole appearance was eloquent of what is generally termed the bluff honesty of the seaman.

Captain Gregory Jones seemed somewhat disconcerted at seeing his friend — he begged for a little further time. The merchant looked grave — three years had already elapsed. The Captain demurred — the merchant pressed; — the Captain blustered — and the merchant, growing angry, began to threaten. All of a sudden Captain Jones’s manner changed — he seemed to recollect himself, begged pardon, said he could easily procure the money, desired the merchant to go back to his inn, and promised to call on him in the course of the day. Mynheer Meyer went home, and ordered an excellent dinner. Time passed — his friend came not. Meyer grew impatient. He had just put on his hat and was walking out, when the waiter threw open the door, and announced two gentlemen.

“Ah, dere comes de monish,” thought Mynheer Meyer. The gentlemen approached — the taller one whipped out what seemed to Meyer a receipt. “Ah, ver vell, I vill sign, ver vell!”

“Signing, Sir, is useless; you will be kind enough to accompany us. This is a warrant for debt, Sir; my

house is extremely comfortable — gentlemen of the first fashion go there—quite moderate, too, only a guinea a day—find your own wine.”

“I do — no — understand, Sare,” said the merchant, smiling amiably, “I am ver vell off here — thank you —”

“Come, come,” said the other gentleman, speaking for the first time, “no parlavoo, Monseer, you are our prisoner — this is a warrant for the sum of 10,000*l.* due to Captain Gregory Jones.”

The merchant stared—the merchant frowned—but so it was. Captain Gregory Jones, who owed Mynheer Meyer 500*l.*, had arrested Mynheer Meyer for 10,000*l.*; for, as every one knows, any man may arrest us who has conscience enough to swear that we owe him money. Where was Mynheer Meyer in a strange town to get bail? Mynheer Meyer went to prison.

“Dis be a strange vay of paying a man his monish!” said Mynheer Meyer.

In order to wile away time, our merchant, who was wonderfully social, scraped acquaintance with some of his fellow-prisoners. “Vat be you in prishon for?” said he to a stout respectable-looking man who seemed in a violent passion — “for vat crime?”

“I, Sir, crime!” quoth the prisoner; “Sir, I was going to Liverpool to vote at the election, when a friend of the opposite candidate’s had me suddenly arrested for 2,000*l.* Before I get bail the election will be over!”

“Vat’s that you tell me? arrest you to prevent you giving an honesht vote? is that justice?”

“Justice, no!” cried our friend, “it’s the Law of Arrest.”

“And vat be you inprishon for?” said the merchant, pityingly, to a thin cadaverous-looking object, who ever and anon applied a handkerchief to eyes that were worn with weeping.

“An attorney offered a friend of mine to discount a bill, if he could obtain a few names to indorse it—*I*, Sir, indorsed it. The bill became due, the next day the attorney arrested all whose names were on the bill; there were eight of us, the law allows him to charge two guineas for each; there are sixteen guineas, Sir, for the lawyer—but *I*, Sir—alas! my family will starve before *I* shall be released. Sir, there are a set of men called discounting attornies, who live upon the profits of entrapping and arresting us poor folk.”

“Mine Gott! but is dat justice?”

“Alas! No, Sir, it is the Law of Arrest.”

“But,” said the merchant, turning round to a lawyer, whom the Devil had deserted, and who was now the victim of his profession, “dey tell me, dat in Englant a man be called innoshent till he be proved guilty; but here am *I*, who, because von carrion of a sbailor, who owesh me five hundred pounts, takes an oath that *I* owe him ten thousand—here am *I*, on that schoundrel’s single oath, clapped up in a prishon. Is this a man’s being innoshent till he is proved guilty, Sare?”

“Sir,” said the lawyer primly, “you are thinking of criminal cases; but if a man be unfortunate enough to get into debt, that is quite a different thing:—we are harder to poverty than we are to crime!”

“But, mine Gott! is dat justice?”

“Justice! pooh! it’s the Law of Arrest,” said the lawyer, turning on his heel.

Our merchant was liberated; no one appeared to

prove the debt. He flew to a magistrate; he told his case; he implored justice against Captain Jones.

"Captain Jones!" said the magistrate, taking snuff; "Captain Gregory Jones, you mean?"

"Ay, mine goot Sare—yesh!"

"He set sail for Calcutta yesterday. He commands the Royal Sally. He must evidently have sworn this debt against you for the purpose of getting rid of your claim, and silencing your mouth till you could catch him no longer. He's a clever fellow is Gregory Jones!"

"De teufel! but, Sare, ish dere no remedy for de poor merchant?"

"Remedy! oh, yes—indictment for perjury."

"But vat use is dat! You say he be gone—ten thousand miles off—to Calcutta!"

"That's certainly against your indictment!"

"And cannot I get my monish?"

"Not as I see."

"And *I* have been arreshted instead of him!"

"You have."

"Sare, I have only von word to say—*is* dat justice?"

"That I can't say, Mynheer Meyer, but it is certainly the Law of Arrest," answered the magistrate; and he bowed the merchant out of the room.

ON SATIETY.

MORALISTS are wrong when they preach indiscriminately against Satiety and denounce the sated. There *is* a species of satiety which is productive of wisdom. When Pleasure palls, Philosophy begins. I doubt whether men ever thoroughly attain to knowledge of the world, until they have gone through its attractions and allurements. Experience is not acquired by the spectator of life, but by its actor. It was not by contemplating the fortunes of others, but by the remembrance of his own, that the wisest of Mortals felt that "All was vanity." A true and practical philosophy, not of books alone, but of mankind, is acquired by the passions as well as by the reason. The Temple of the Science is approached by the garden as well as by the desert—and a healing spirit is distilled from the rose-leaves which withered in our hand.

A certain sentiment of satiety, of the vanity of human pleasures, of the *labor ineptiarum*, of the nothingness of trite and vulgar occupations, is often the best preparation to that sober yet elevated view of the ends of life, which *is* Philosophy. As many have blest the bed of sickness on which they had leisure to contemplate their past existence, and to form an improved chart of the future voyage — so there is a sickness of the soul, when exhaustion itself is salutary, and out of the languor and the tedium we extract the seeds of the moral regeneration. Much of what is most indulgent in Morals, much

of what is most tender and profound in Poetry, have come from a sated spirit. The disappointments of an enthusiastic and fervent heart have great teaching in their pathos. As the first converts to the gospel were amongst the unfortunate and the erring — so the men who have known most the fallacies of our human nature, are perhaps those the most inclined to foster the aspirations of the spiritual. To the one Faust who found a comrade in the Fiend, there are a thousand who are visited by the Angel.

The more civilized, the more refined, becomes the period in which we are cast, the more are we subject to satiety —

“That weariness of all
We meet, or feel, or hear, or see.”

The even road of existence, the routine of nothings, the smooth and silken indolence, which is destined to those amongst us who, wealthy and well-born, have no occupation in life but the effort to live at ease, produce on the subject the same royalty of discontent that was once the attribute of a king. In a free and a prosperous country, all who are rich and idle are as kings. We have the same splendid monotony and unvarying spectacle of repeated pageants of which the victims of a court complain. All society has become a court, and we pass our lives like Madame de Maintenon, in seeking to amuse those who cannot be amused, or like Louis XIV., in seeking to be amused by those who cannot amuse us. Satiety is, therefore, the common and catholic curse of the idle portion of a highly civilized country. And the inequalities of life are fittingly adjusted. For those who are excluded from pleasure in the one extreme, there

are those who are incapable of pleasure in the other. The fogs gather dull and cheerless over the base of the mountain, but the air at the summit exhausts and withers.

Yet the poor have their satiety no less than the wealthy — the satiety of toil and the conviction of its hopelessness. "Picture to yourself," wrote a mechanic once to me, "a man, sensible that he is made for something better than to labour and to die, cursed with a desire of knowledge, while occupied only with the task to live, drudging on from year to year, to render himself above the necessity of drudgery; to feel his soul out of the clutches of want, and enabled to indulge at ease in the luxury of becoming better and wiser—picture to yourself such a man, with such an ambition, finding every effort in vain, seeing that the utmost he can do is to provide for the day, and so from day to day to live battling against the morrow. With what heart can he give himself up at night to unproductive tasks. Scarce is he lost for a moment, amidst the wonders of knowledge for the first time presented to him, ere the voice of his children disturbs and brings him back to the world, — the debt unpaid—the bill discredited—the demands upon the Saturday's wages. O, Sir, in such moments, none can feel how great is our disgust at life, how jaded and how weary we feel;—we recoil alike from amusement and knowledge — we sicken at the doom to which we are compelled — we are as weary of the sun as the idlest rich man in the land—we share his prerogative of satiety, and long for the rest in the green bed where our forefathers sleep, released for ever from the tooth of unrelenting cares."

The writer of this was a poet—let me hope that

there are not many of his order condemned with him to a spirit out of harmony with its lot. Yet as knowledge widens its circle, the number will increase, and if our social system is to remain always the same, I doubt whether the desire of knowledge, which is the desire of leisure, will be a blessing to those who are everlastingly condemned to toil.

But the satiety of the rich has its cure in what is the very curse of the poor. Their satiety is from indolence, and its cure is action. Satiety with them is chiefly the offspring of a restless imagination and a stagnant intellect. Their minds are employed on trifles, in which their feelings cease to take an interest. It is not the frivolous who feel satiety, it is a better order of spirits fated to have no other occupation than frivolities. The French memoir writers, who evince so much talent wasted away in a life of trifles, present the most melancholy pictures we possess of satiety, and of the more gloomy wisdom of apathy in which it sometimes ends. The flowers of the heart run to seed. Madame D'Épinay has expressed this briefly and beautifully — “*Le cœur se blase, les ressorts se brisent, et l'on finit, je crois, par n'être plus sensible à rien.*”

Oh, that fearful prostration of the mind — that torpor of the affections, that utter hopeless indifference to all things —

“Full little can he tell who hath not tried
What hell it is!”

To rise and see through the long day no object that can interest, no pleasure that can amuse, with a heart perpetually craving excitement to pass mechanically through the round of unexcitable occupations—to make

an enemy of Time—to count the moments of his march—to be his captive in the prison-house—to foresee no delivery but death—to be a machine and not a man, having no self-will and no emotion—wound up from day to day—things in a dream, in which we act involuntarily—feeling the best part of us locked up and lifeless, and that which is active, a puppet to a power that fools us with its objectless fancies—passive but not at rest;—the deep and crushing melancholy of such a state, let no happier being venture to despise.

It is usually after some sudden pause in the passions that we are thus afflicted. The winds drop, and the leaf they whirled aloft rots upon the ground. It is the dread close of disappointed love, or of baffled ambition. Who ever painted love when it discovers the worthlessness of its object and retreats gloomily into itself, that has not painted, even to the hackneying of the picture, the weariness that succeeds—the stale and unprofitable uses to which all the world seems abruptly and barrenly resolved? So with ambition—the retirement of a statesman before his time, is perhaps the least envious repose that his enemies could inflict on him. “Damien’s bed of steel” is a luxury to the bed of withered laurels; the gloomy exile of Swift, fretting his heart out, “a rat in a cage;” the spectre of Olivares—the petulance of Napoleon wrestling with his gaoler upon a fashion in tea-cups—what mournful parodies of the dignity of human honours! Between the past glory and the posthumous renown—how awful an interlude! The unwilling rest to a long-continued excitement, is a solitude from which the fiends might recoil!

But happy those on whom the curse of satiety falls early, and before the heart has exhausted its re-

sources; when we can yet contend against the lethargy, ere it becomes a habit, and allow satiety to extend only to the trifles of life, and not to its great objects; when we are wearied only of the lighter pleasures, and can turn to the more grave pursuits; — and the discontent of the Imagination is the spur to the Intellect. Satiety is the heritage of the Heart, not of the Reason: and the Reason properly invoked possesses in itself the genii to dissolve the charm, and awake the sleeper. For he alone, who thoroughly convinces himself that he has duties to perform — that his centre of being is in the world and not in himself — can conquer the egotisms of weariness. The objects confined to self becoming worn out and wearisome, he may find new and inexhaustible objects in the relations that he holds to others. Duty has pleasures which know no satiety. The weariness then known and thus removed, begets the philosophy I referred to in the commencement of these remarks. For wisdom is the true phoenix, and never rises but from the ashes of a former existence of the mind. Then perhaps, too, as we learn a proper estimate of the pleasures of this life, we learn also from those yearnings of our more subtle and tender soul, never satisfied below, a fresh evidence of our ultimate destinies. A consolation which Preacher and Poet have often deduced from the weariness of our disappointments — contending that our perpetual desire for something unattainable here, betokens and prophesies a possession in the objects of a hereafter — so that life itself is but one expectation of eternity. As birds, born in a cage from which they had never known release, would still flutter against the bars, and, in the instinct of their unconquered nature, long for the untried and pathless air which they behold through their narrow grating; — so,

pent in our cage of clay—the diviner instinct is not dead within us;—at times we sicken with instinct and undefinable apprehensions of a more noble birthright — and the soul feels stirringly that its wings, which it doth but bruise in its dungeon tenement, were designed by the Creator—who shapeth all things to their uses — for the enjoyment of the royalties of Heaven.

ON

INFIDELITY IN LOVE.

To the vulgar there is but one infidelity—that which, in woman at least, can never be expiated or forgiven. They know not the thousand shades in which change disguises itself—they trace not the fearful progress of the alienation of the heart. But to those who truly and deeply love, there is an infidelity with which the person has no share. Like ingratitude, it is punished by no laws. We are powerless to avenge ourselves.

When two persons are united by affection, and the love of the one survives that of the other, who can measure the anguish of the unfortunate who watches the extinction of a light which nothing can reillumine! It mostly happens too, that the first discovery is sudden. There is a deep trustfulness in a loving heart; it is blind to the gradual decrease of sympathy—its divine charity attributes the absent eye, the chilling word, to a thousand causes, save the true one; care—illness—some worldly trouble—some engrossing thought; and (poor fool that it is!) endeavours by additional tenderness, to compensate for the pain that is not of its own causing. Alas, the time has come, when it can no longer compensate! It hath ceased to be the all-in-all to its cruel partner.

Custom has brought its invariable curse—and indifference gathers round the place in which we had garnered up our soul. At length the appalling light breaks upon us. We discover we are no longer loved. And what remedy have we? None! Our first, our natural feeling, is resentment. We are conscious of treachery; this ungrateful heart that has fallen from us, how have we prized and treasured it—how have we sought to shield it from every arrow—how have we pleased ourselves, in solitude and in absence, with yearning thoughts of its faith and beauty;—now it is ours no more! Then we break into wild reproaches—we become exacting—we watch every look—we gauge every action—we are unfortunate—we weary—we offend. These, our agonies—our impetuous bursts of passion—our ironical and bitter taunts, to which we half expect, as heretofore, to hear the soft word that turneth away wrath—these only expedite the fatal hour; they are new crimes in us; the very proofs of our bitter love are treasured and repeated as reasons why we should be loved no more:—as if without a throe, without a murmur, we could resign ourselves to so great a loss. Alas—it is with fierce convulsions that the temple is rent in twain, and we hear the Divinity depart. Sometimes we stand in silence, and with a full heart, gazing upon those hard cold eyes which never again can melt in tenderness upon us. And our silence is dumb—its eloquence is gone. We are no longer understood. We long to die in order to be avenged. We half pray for some great misfortune, some agonizing illness, that it may bring to us our soother and our nurse. We say, “In affliction or in sickness it could not thus desert us.” We are mistaken. We are shelterless—the roof has been taken from our heads—

we are exposed to any and every storm. Then comes a sharp and dread sentiment of loneliness and insecurity. We are left—weak children—in the dark. We are bereft more irrevocably than by death; for will even the Hereafter, that unites the happy dead that die lovingly, restore the love that has perished, ere life be dim?

What shall we do? We have accustomed ourselves to love and to be loved. Can we turn to new ties, and seek in another that which is extinct in one? How often is such a resource in vain! Have we not given to this—the treacherous and the false friend—the best years of our life—the youth of our hearts—the flower of our affections? Did we not yield up the harvest? how little is there left for another to glean! This makes the crime of the moral infidelity. The one who takes away from us his or her love, takes from us also the love of all else. We have no longer, perhaps, the youth and the attractions to engage affections. Once we might have chosen out of the world—now the time is past. Who shall love us in our sear and yellow leaf, as in that time, when we had most the qualities that win love? It was a beautiful sentiment of one whom her lord proposed to put away—“Give me, then, back,” said she, “that which I brought to you.” And the man answered, in his vulgar coarseness of soul, “Your fortune shall return to you.” “I thought not of fortune,” said the lady; “give me back my real wealth—give me back my beauty and my youth—give me back the virginity of soul—give me back the cheerful mind, and the heart that had never been disappointed.”

Yes: it is of these that the unfaithful rob us, when they dismiss us back upon the world, and tell us with a

bitter mockery to form new ties. In proportion to the time that we have been faithful—in proportion to the feelings we have sacrificed—in proportion to the wealth of soul—of affection, of devotion that we have consumed, are we shut out from the possibility of atonement elsewhere. But this is not all—the other occupations of the world are suddenly made stale and barren to us! the daily avocations of life—the common pleasures—the social diversions so tame in themselves, had had their charm when we could share, and talk over, them with another. It was sympathy which made them sweet — the sympathy withdrawn they are nothing to us — worse than nothing. The talk has become the tinkling cymbal, and society the gallery of pictures. Ambition, toil, the great aims of life—even these cease abruptly to excite. What, in the first place, made labour grateful and ambition dear? Was it not the hope that their rewards would be reflected upon another self? And now there is no other self. And, in the second place (and this is a newer consideration), does it not require a certain calmness and freedom of mind for great efforts? Persuaded of the possession of what most we value, we can look abroad with cheerfulness and hope;—the consciousness of a treasure inexhaustible by external failures, makes us speculative and bold. Now, all things are coloured by our despondency; our self-esteem—that necessary incentive to glory—is humbled and abased. Our pride has received a jarring and bitter shock. We no longer feel that we are equal to stern exertion. We wonder at what we have dared before. And therefore it is, that when Othello believed himself betrayed, the occupations of his whole life suddenly become burthensome and abhorred.

“Farewell,” he saith, —

“Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!”

And then, as the necessary but unconscious link in the chain of thought, he continues at once —

*“Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! oh, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner; and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
Farewell! — Othello’s occupation’s gone.”*

But there is another and a more permanent result from this bitter treason. Our trustfulness in human nature is diminished. We are no longer the credulous enthusiasts of Good. The pillars of the moral world seem shaken. We believe, we hope, no more from the faith of others. If the one whom we so worshipped, and so served—who knew us in our best years—to whom we have offered countless, daily offerings — whom we put in our heart of hearts—against whom if a world hinted, we had braved a world—if *this one* has deserted us, *who* then shall be faithful?

At length, we begin to reconcile ourselves to the worst; gradually we gather the moss of our feelings from this heart which has become to us as stone. Our pride hardens down into indifference. Ceasing to be loved, we cease to love. Seasons may roll away, all other feelings ebb and flow. Ambition may change into apathy—generosity may sour into avarice — we may forget the enmity of years — we may make friends of foes; but the love we have lost is never renewed. On that dread vacuum of the breast the temple and the garden rise no more:—that feeling, be it hatred, be it scorn, be it indifference, which replaces love, endures to the last. And, altered for ever to the one—how

many of us are altered for ever to the world;— neither so cheerful, nor so kind, nor so active in good, nor so incredulous of evil as we were before! The Deluge of Passion has rolled back—the Earth is green again. But we are in a new world. And the New World is but the sepulchre of the Old.

FI-HO-TI.

OR,

THE PLEASURES OF REPUTATION.

A CHINESE TALE.

FI-HO-TI was considered a young man of talents; he led, in Peking, a happy and comfortable life. In the prime of youth, of a highly-respectable family, and enjoying a most agreeable competence, he was exceedingly popular among the gentlemen whom he entertained at his board, and the ladies who thought he might propose. Although the Chinese are not generally sociable, Fi-ho-ti had ventured to set the fashion of giving entertainments, in which ceremony was banished for mirth. All the pleasures of life were at his command: he drank, though without excess, the cup of enjoyment; — ate, laughed, and loved his fill. No man in Peking was more awake during the day, or enjoyed a serener slumber during the night.

In an evil hour, it so happened that Fi-ho-ti discovered that he possessed the talents we have referred to. A philosopher, — who, being also his uncle, had the double right, both of philosophy and relationship, to say every thing unpleasant to him, — took it into his head to be very indignant at the happy life which Fi-ho-ti so peacefully enjoyed.

Accordingly, one beautiful morning he visited our young Chin-Epicurean. He found him in his summer-house, stretched on luxurious cushions, quaffing the most delicious tea, in the finest little porcelain cups imaginable, reading a Chinese novel, and enlivening the study, from time to time, by a light conversation with a young lady, who had come to visit him.

Our philosopher was amazingly shocked at the prospect of so much comfort. Nothing could be more unphilosophical; for the duty of Philosophy being to charm us with life, she is anxious, in the first place, to make it a burden to us. The goddess is enamoured of patience, but indignant at pleasure.

Our sage was a man very much disliked and very much respected. Fi-ho-ti rose from his cushions, a little ashamed of being detected in so agreeable an indolence, and reminded, for the first time, of the maxims of Chinese morality, which hold it highly improper for a gentleman to be seen with a lady. The novel fell from his hand; and the young lady, frightened at the long beard and the long nails of the philosopher, would have run away, if her feet would have allowed her; as it was, she summoned her attendants, and hastened to complain to her friends of the manner in which the pleasantest *têtes-à-tête* could be spoilt, when young men were so unfortunate as to have philosophers for uncles.

The Mandarin, — for Fi-ho-ti's visiter enjoyed no less a dignity, and was entitled to wear a blue globe in his cap,* — seeing the coast clear, hemmed three times, and commenced his avuncular admonitions.

* The distinction of Mandarins of the third and fourth order.

“Are you not ashamed, young man,” said he, “of the life that you lead? — are you not ashamed to be so indolent and so happy? You possess talents; you are in the prime of youth, you have already attained the rank of Keu-jin;* — are you deaf to the noble voice of ambition? Your country calls upon you for exertion, — seek to distinguish your name, — recollect the example of Confucius, — give yourself up to study, — be wise and be great.”

Much more to this effect spoke the Mandarin, for he loved to hear himself talk; and, like all men privileged to give advice, he fancied that he was wonderfully eloquent. In this instance, his vanity did not deceive him; for it was the vanity of another that he addressed. Fi-ho-ti was moved; he felt he had been very foolish to be happy so long. Visions of disquietude and fame floated before him: he listened with attention to the exhortations of the philosopher; he resolved to distinguish himself, and to be wise.

The Mandarin was charmed with the success of his visit: it was a great triumph to disturb so much enjoyment. He went home, and commenced a tract upon the advantages of philosophy.

Every one knows that in China learning alone is the passport to the offices of state. What rank and fortune are in other countries, learning is in the Celestial Empire. Fi-ho-ti surrendered himself to Knowledge. He retired to a solitary cavern, near upon Kai-son-gu; he filled his retreat with books and instruments of science; he renounced all social intercourse; the herbs of the plain

* A collegiate grade which renders those who attain it eligible to offices of state.

and the water of the spring sufficed the tastes hitherto accustomed to the most delicious viands of Peking. Forgetful of Love and of pleasure, he consigned three of the fairest years of his existence to uninterrupted labour. He instructed himself — he imagined he was capable of instructing others.

Fired with increasing ambition, our student returned to Peking. He composed a work, which, though light and witty enough to charm the gay, was the origin of a new school of philosophy. It was at once bold and polished; and the oldest Mandarin or the youngest beauty of Peking could equally appreciate and enjoy it. In one word, Fi-ho-ti's book became the rage, — Fi-ho-ti was *the* author of his day.

Delighted by the novelty of literary applause, our young student more than ever resigned himself to literary pursuits. He wrote again, and again succeeded; — all the world declared that Fi-ho-ti had established his reputation, and he obtained the dazzling distinction of Bin-sze.

Was Fi-ho-ti the happier for his reputation? You shall judge.

He went to call upon his uncle, the Mandarin. He imagined the Mandarin would be delighted to find the success of his admonitions. The philosopher received him with a frigid embarrassment. He talked of the weather and the Emperor, — the last pagoda and the new fashion in tea-cups; he said not a word about his nephew's books. Fi-ho-ti was piqued; he introduced the subject of his own accord.

"Ah!" said the philosopher drily, "I understand you have written something that pleases the women; no doubt

you will grow solid as your judgment increases. But, to return to the tea-cups — —”

Fi-ho-ti was chagrined; he had lost the affection of his learned uncle for ever; for he was now considered to be more learned than his uncle himself. The common mortification in success is to find that your own family usually hate you for it. “My uncle no longer loves me,” thought he, as he re-entered his palanquin. “This is a misfortune” — Alas! — it was the effect of REPUTATION!

The heart of Fi-ho-ti was naturally kind and genial; though the thirst of pleasure was cooled in his veins, he still cherished the social desires of friendship. He summoned once more around him the comrades of his youth: he fancied they, at least, would be delighted to find their friend not unworthy of their affection. He received them with open arms;—they returned his greeting with shyness, and an awkward affectation of sympathy;— their conversation no longer flowed freely — they were afraid of committing themselves before so clever a man; — they felt they were no longer with an equal; and yet they refused to acknowledge a superior. Fi-ho-ti perceived, with indescribable grief, that a wall had grown up between himself and the companions of past years; their pursuits, their feelings, were no longer the same. They were not proud of his success — they were jealous; the friends of his youth were the critics of his manhood.

“This, too, is a misfortune,” thought Fi-ho-ti, as he threw himself at night upon his couch. — Very likely: — it was the effect of REPUTATION!

“But if the old friends are no more, I will gain new,” thought the student. “Men of the same pursuits will have the same sympathies. I aspire to be a sage: I will court the friendship of sages.”

This was a notable idea of Fi-ho-ti's. He surrounded himself with the authors, the wits, and the wise men of Peking. They ate his dinners, — they made him read their manuscripts — (and a bad handwriting in Chinese is no trifle!) — they told him he was a wonderful genius, — and they abused him anonymously every week in the Peking journals; for China is perhaps the only despotism in the world in which the press is entirely free. The heart of Fi-ho-ti, yearning after friendship, found it impossible to expect a single friend amongst the literati of China; they were all too much engrossed with themselves to dream of affection for another. They had no talk — no thought — no feeling — except that which expressed love for their own books, and hatred for the books of their contemporaries.

One day Fi-ho-ti had the misfortune to break his leg. The most intimate of his acquaintance among the literati found him stretched on his couch, having just undergone the operation of setting, which a French surgeon had charitably performed on him.

“Ah,” said the author, “how very unlucky — how very unfortunate!”

“You are extremely obliging,” said Fi-ho-ti, touched by his visiter's evident emotion.

“Yes, it is particularly unlucky that your accident should occur just at this moment; for I wanted to consult you about this passage in my new book before it is published to-morrow.”

The broken leg of his friend seemed to the author only as an interruption to the pleasure of reading his own works.

But, above all, Fi-ho-ti found it impossible to trust men who gave the worst possible character of each other.

If you believed the literati themselves, so envious, malignant, worthless, unprincipled a set of men as the literati of Peking never were created! Every new acquaintance he made told him an anecdote of an old acquaintance which made his hair stand on end. Fi-ho-ti began to be alarmed. He contracted more and more the circle of his society; and resolved to renounce the notion of friendship amongst men of similar pursuits.

Even in the remotest provinces of the Celestial Empire, the writings of Fi-ho-ti were greatly approved. The gentlemen quoted him at their tea, and the ladies wondered whether he was good-looking; but this applause — this interest that he inspired — never reached the ears of Fi-ho-ti. He beheld not the smiles he called forth by his wit, nor the tears he excited by his pathos: — all that he saw of the effects of his reputation was in the abuse he received in the Peking journals; he there read, every week and every month, that he was but a very poor sort of creature. One journal called him a fool, another a wretch; a third seriously deposed that he was hump-backed; a fourth that none of his sentiments could be found in the works of Confucius. In Peking any insinuation of originality is considered as a suspicion of the most unpardonable guilt. Other journals, indeed, did not so much abuse as misrepresent him. He found his doctrines twisted into all manner of shapes. He could not defend them — for it is not dignified to reply to all the Peking journals; but he was assured by his flatterers that truth would ultimately prevail, and posterity do him justice. “Alas!” thought Fi-ho-ti, “am I to be deemed a culprit all my life, in order that I may be acquitted after death? Is there no justice for me until I am past the power of malice? Surely this is a misfortune!” — Very

likely; — it was the necessary consequence of REPUTATION!

Fi-ho-ti now began to perceive that the desire of fame was a chimera. He was yet credulous enough to follow another chimera, equally fallacious. He said to himself — “It was poor and vain in me to desire to shine. Let me raise my heart to a more noble ambition; — let me desire only to instruct others.”

Fraught with this lofty notion, Fi-ho-ti now conceived a more solid and a graver habit of mind: he became rigidly conscientious in the composition of his works. He no longer desired to write what was brilliant, but to discover what was true. He erased without mercy, the most lively images — the most sparkling aphorisms — if even a doubt of their moral utility crossed his mind. He wasted two additional years of the short summer of youth: he gave the fruits of his labour to the world in a book of the most elaborate research, the only object of which was to enlighten his countrymen. “This, at least, they cannot abuse,” thought he, when he finished the last line. Ah! how much was he mistaken!

Doubtless, in other countries the public are remarkably grateful to any author for correcting their prejudices and combating their foibles; but in China, attack one orthodox error, prove to the people that you wish to elevate and improve them, and renounce all happiness, all tranquillity, for the rest of your life!

Fi-ho-ti's book was received with the most frigid neglect by the philosophers. — First, because the Peking philosophers are visionaries, and it did not build a system upon visions, — and secondly, because of Fi-ho-ti himself they were exceedingly jealous. But from his old

friends, the journalists of Peking — O Fo! — with what invective, what calumny, what abuse it was honoured! He had sought to be the friend of his race, — he was stigmatized as the direst of its enemies. He was accused of all manner of secret designs; the painted slippers of the Mandarins were in danger: and he had evidently intended to muffle all the bells of the grand pagoda! Alas! let no man wish to be a saint unless he is prepared to be a martyr.

“Is this injustice?” cried Fi-ho-ti to his flatterers. “No,” said they, with one voice; “No, Fi-ho-ti, — it is REPUTATION!”

Thoroughly disgusted with his ambition, Fi-ho-ti now resolved to resign himself once more to pleasure. Again he heard music, and again he feasted and made love. In vain! — the zest, the appetite was gone. The sterner pursuits he had cultivated of late years had rendered his mind incapable of appreciating the luxuries of frivolity. He had opened a gulf between himself and his youth; — his heart could be young no more.

“One faithful breast shall console me for all,” thought he. “Yang-y-se is beautiful and smiles upon me; I will woo and win her.”

Fi-ho-ti surrendered his whole soul to the new passion he had conceived. Yang-y-se listened to him favourably. He could not complain of cruelty: he fancied himself beloved. With the generous and unselfish ardour that belonged to his early character, and which in China is so especially uncommon, he devoted his future years to — he lavished the treasure of his affections upon — the object of his love. For some weeks he enjoyed a dream of delight: he woke from it too soon. A rival beauty was willing to attach to herself

the wealthy and generous Fi-ho-ti. "Why," said she, one day, why do you throw yourself away upon Yang-y-se? Do you fancy she loves you? You are mistaken: she has no heart; it is only her vanity that makes her willing to admit you as her slave." Fi-ho-ti was incredulous and indignant. "Read this letter," said the rival beauty. "Yang-y-se wrote it to me but the other day."

Fi-ho-ti read as follows: —

"We had a charming supper with the gay author last night, and wished much for you. You need not rally me on my affection for him; I do not love him, but I am pleased to command his attentions; in a word, my vanity is flattered with the notion of chaining to myself one of the most distinguished persons in Peking. But — love — ah! *that* is quite another thing."

Fi-ho-ti's eyes were now thoroughly opened. He recalled a thousand little instances which had proved that Yang-y-se had been only in love with his celebrity.

He saw at once the great curse of distinction. Be renowned, and you can never be loved for yourself! As you are hated not for your vices, but your success, so are you loved not for your talents, but their fame. A man who has reputation is like a tower whose height is estimated by the length of its shadow. The sensitive and high-wrought mind of Fi-ho-ti now gave way to a gloomy despondency. Being himself misinterpreted, calumniated, and traduced; and feeling that none loved him but through vanity, that he stood alone with his enemies in the world, he became the prey to misanthropy, and gnawed by perpetual suspicion. He distrusted the smiles of others. The faces of men seemed to him as masks; he felt everywhere the presence of

deceit. Yet these feelings had made no part of his early character, which was naturally frank, joyous, and confiding. Was the change a misfortune? Possibly; but it was the effect of REPUTATION!

About this time, too, Fi-ho-ti began to feel the effects of the severe study he had undergone. His health gave way; his nerves were shattered; he was in that terrible revolution in which the Mind — that vindictive labourer — wreaks its ire upon the enfeebled taskmaster, the Body. He walked the ghost of his former self.

One day he was standing pensively beside one of the streams that intersect the gardens of Peking, and, gazing upon the waters, he muttered his bitter reveries. "Ah!" thought he, "why was I ever discontented with happiness? I was young, rich, cheerful; and life to me was a perpetual holiday; my friends caressed me, my mistress loved me for myself. No one hated, or, maligned, or envied me. Like yon leaf upon the water, my soul danced merrily over the billows of existence. But courage, my heart! I have at least done some good; benevolence must experience gratitude — young Psi-ching, for instance. I have the pleasure of thinking that *he* must love me; I have made his fortune; I have brought him from obscurity into repute; for it has been my character as yet never to be jealous of others!"

Psi-ching was a young poet, who had been secretary to Fi-ho-ti. The student had discovered genius and insatiable ambition in the young man; he had directed and advised his pursuits; he had raised him into fortune and notice; he had enabled him to marry

the mistress he loved. Psi-ching vowed to him everlasting gratitude.

While Fi-ho-ti was thus consoling himself with the idea of Psi-ching's affection, it so happened that Psi-ching, and one of the philosophers of the day whom the public voice esteemed second to Fi-ho-ti, passed along the banks of the river. A tree hid Fi-ho-ti from their sight; they were earnestly conversing, and Fi-ho-ti heard his own name more than once repeated.

"Yes," said Psi-ching, "poor Fi-ho-ti cannot live much longer; his health is broken; you will lose a formidable rival when he is dead."

The philosopher smiled. "Why, it will certainly be a stone out of my way. You are constantly with him, I think?"

"I am. He is a charming person; but the real fact is, that, seeing he cannot live much longer, I am keeping a journal of his last days; in a word, I shall write the history of my distinguished friend. I think it will take much, and have a prodigious sale."

The talkers passed on.

Fi-ho-ti did not die so soon as was expected, and Psi-ching never published the journal from which he anticipated so much profit. But Fi-ho-ti ceased to be remarkable for the kindness of his heart and the philanthropy of his views. He was rather known for the sourness of his temper and the bitterness of his satire.

By degrees he rose into public eminence, and on the accession of a new Emperor, Fi-ho-ti was commanded to ask any favour that he desired. The office of Tsung-tuh (or viceroy) of the rich province of Che-kiang, was just vacant. The courtiers waited breathless to hear the vacancy requested. The emperor smiled

benignly — it was the post he secretly intended for Fi-ho-ti. “Son of heaven, and lord of a myriad of years,” said the favourite, “suffer then thy servant to retire into one of the monasteries of Kai-fon-gu, and — *to change his name!*”

The last hope of peace that was left to Fi-ho-ti, was to escape from — his REPUTATION.

THE
KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD
IN MEN AND BOOKS.

ROYALTY and its symbols were abolished in France. A showman of wild beasts possessed an immense Bengal tiger (the pride of his flock), commonly called the *Royal Tiger*. What did our showman do? — Why, he knew the world, and he changed the name of the beast, from the *Tigre Royal* to the *Tigre National*! Horace Walpole was particularly charmed with this anecdote, for he knew the world as well as the showman. It is exactly these little things — the happy turn of a phrase — a well-timed pleasantry (which no unobservant man ever thinks of), that, while seeming humour, are in reality wisdom. There are changes in the vein of wit, as in every thing else. Sir William Temple tells us, that on the return of Charles II. none were more out of fashion than the old Earl of Norwich, who was esteemed the greatest wit of the time of Charles the First. But it is clear that the Earl of Norwich must have wanted knowledge of the world; he did not feel, as by an instinct, like the showman, how to vary an epithet — he stuck to the last to his *tigre royal*!

This knowledge of the world baffles our calculations — it does not always require experience. Some men take to it intuitively; their first step in life exhibits the same profound mastery over the minds of their contemporaries — the same subtle consideration — the same felicitous address, as distinguish the close of their career. Congreve had written his comedies at twenty-five; the best anecdotes of the acuteness of Cyrus are those of his boyhood. I should like, above all things, a veracious account of the childhood of Talleyrand. What a world of shrewdness may he have vented in trundling his hoop! Shakspeare has given us the madness of Hamlet the youth, and of Lear the old man — but there is a far deeper wisdom in the young man's thoughts than those of the old man.

Minds early accustomed to solitude usually make the keenest observers of the world, and chiefly for this reason — when few objects are presented to our contemplation, we seize them — we ruminate over them — we think, again and again, upon all the features they present to our examination; and we thus master the knowledge of the great book of Mankind, as Eugene Aram mastered that of Learning — by studying five lines at a time, and ceasing not from our labour till those are thoroughly acquired. A boy, whose attention has not been distracted by a multiplicity of objects — who, living greatly alone, is obliged therefore to think, not as a task, but as a diversion, emerges at last into the world — a shy man, but a deep observer. Accustomed to reflection, he is not dazzled by novelty; while it strikes his eye, it occupies his mind. Hence, if he sit down to describe what he sees, he describes it justly at once, and at first; and more vividly, perhaps, than he might

in after-life, because it is newer to him. Perhaps, too, the moral eye resembles the physical — by custom familiarizes itself with delusion, and inverts, mechanically, the objects presented to it, till the deceit becomes more natural than nature itself.

There are men who say they know the world, because they know its vices. Could we admit this claim, what sage would rival an officer at Bow-street, or the turnkey at Newgate? This would indeed be knowledge of the world, if the world were inhabited only by rogues. But pretenders of this sort are as bad judges of our minds as a physician would be of our bodies, if he had never seen any but those in a diseased state. Such a man would fancy health itself a disease! We generally find, indeed, that men are governed by their *weaknesses*, not their *vices*, and those weaknesses are often the most amiable part about them. The wavering Jaffier betrays his friend through a weakness, which a hardened criminal might equally have felt, and which, in that criminal, might have been the origin of his guilt. It is the knowledge of these weaknesses, as by a glance, that serves a man better in the understanding and conquest of his species, than a knowledge of the vices to which they lead — it is better to seize the one cause than ponder over the thousand effects. It is the former knowledge which I chiefly call the knowledge of the world. It is this which immortalised Molière in the drama, and distinguishes Talleyrand in action.

It has been asked whether the same worldly wisdom which we admire in a writer would, had occasion brought him prominently forward, have made him equally successful in action? Certainly not, as a necessary consequence. Swift was the most sensible writer

of his day, and one of the least sensible politicians, in the selfish sense — the only sense in which he knew it — of the word. What knowledge of the world in “Don Juan” and Byron’s “Correspondence” — what seeming want of that knowledge in the great poet’s susceptibility to attack, on the one hand, and his wanton trifling with his character, on the other! How is this difference between the man and the writer to be accounted for? Because, in the writer, the infirmities of constitution are either concealed or decorated by genius — not so in the man: fretfulness, spleen, morbid sensitiveness, eternally spoil our plans in life — but they often give an interest to our plans on paper. Byron, quarrelling with the world, as Childe Harold, proves his genius; but Byron quarrelling with the world in his own person, betrays his folly! To show wisdom in a book, it is but necessary that we should possess the theoretical wisdom; but in life, it requires not only the theoretical wisdom, but the practical ability to act up to it. We may know exactly what we ought to do, but we may not have the fortitude to do it. “Now,” says the shy man in love, “I ought to go and talk to my mistress — my rival is with her — I ought to make myself as agreeable as possible, — I ought to throw that fellow in the shade by my *bons mots* and my compliments.” Does he do so? No! he sits in a corner and scowls at the lady. He is in the miserable state described by Persius. He knows what is good and cannot perform it. Yet this man, if an author, from the very circumstance of feeling so bitterly that his constitution is stronger than his reason, would have made his lover in a book all that he could not be himself in reality. Hence the best advisers of *our* conduct are often those

who are the least prudent in the regulation of their own. Their sense is clear when exerted for us, but vanity, humour, passion, blind them when they act for themselves.

There is a sort of wit peculiar to knowledge of the world, and we usually find that writers, who are supposed to have the most exhibited that knowledge in their books, are also commonly esteemed the wittiest authors of their country — Horace, Plautus, Molière, Le Sage, Voltaire, Cervantes, Shakspeare, Fielding, Swift; * and this is, because the essence of the most refined species of wit *is truth*. Even in the solemn and grave Tacitus, we come perpetually to sudden turns — striking points of sententious brilliancy, which make us smile, from the depth itself of their importance; — an aphorism is always on the borders of an epigram. †

It is remarkable that there is scarcely any *very popular* author of great imaginative power, in whose works we do not recognise that common sense which is knowledge of the world, and which is so generally supposed by the superficial to be in direct opposition to the imaginative faculty. When an author does not possess it eminently, he is never eminently *popular*, whatever be his *fame*. Compare Scott and Shelley, the two most *imaginative* authors of their time. The one, in his wildest flights, never loses sight of common sense — there is an affinity between him and his

* Let me mention two political writers of the present day — men equally remarkable for their wit and wisdom — Sidney Smith, and the Editor of the "Examiner" Mr. Fonblanque; the latter writer (however we may differ from his politics) is perhaps the greatest master of that art which makes "words like sharp swords," that our age has produced.

† And every one will recollect the sagacious sneer of Gibbon.

humblest reader; nay, the more discursive the flight the closer that affinity becomes. We are even more wrapt with the author when he is with his *Spirits of the Mountain and Fell* — with the mighty dead at Melrose, than when he is leading us through the humours of a guardroom, or confiding to us the interview of lovers. But Shelley disdained common sense. Of his “*Prince Athanase*,” we have no earthly comprehension — with his “*Prometheus*” we have no human sympathies; and the grander he becomes, the less popular we find him. Writers who do not, in theory, know their kind, may be admired, but they can never be popular. And when we hear men of unquestionable genius complain of not being appreciated by the herd, it is because they are not themselves skilled in the feelings of the herd. For what is knowledge of mankind, but the knowledge of their feelings, their humours, their caprices, their passions? — touch these, and you gain attention — develop these, and you have conquered your audience.

Among writers of an inferior reputation we often discover a sufficient shrewdness and penetration into human foibles to startle us in details, while they cannot carry their knowledge far enough to please us on the whole. They can paint nature by a happy hit, but they violate all the likeness before they have concluded the plot — they charm us with a reflection and revolt us by a character. Sir John Suckling is one of these writers — his correspondence is witty and thoughtful, and his plays — but little known in comparison to his songs — abound with just remarks and false positions, the most natural lines and the most improbable inventions. Two persons in one of these plays are under

sentence of execution, and the poet hits off the vanity of the one by a stroke worthy of a much greater dramatist.

“I have something troubles me,” says Pellagrin.

“What’s that?” asks his friend.

“The people,” replies Pellagrin, “will say, as we go along, *‘thou art the properer fellow!’*”

Had the whole character been conceived like that sentence, I should not have forgotten the name of the play, and instead of making a joke, the author would have consummated a creation. Both Madame de Stael and Rousseau appear to me to have possessed this sort of imperfect knowledge. Both are great in aphorisms, and feeble in realizing conceptions of flesh and blood. When Madame de Stael tells us “that great losses, so far from binding men more closely to the advantages they still have left, at once loosen all ties of affection,” she speaks like one versed in the mysteries of the human heart, and expresses exactly what she wishes to convey; but when she draws the character of Corinne’s lover, she not only confounds all the moral qualities into one impossible compound, but she utterly fails in what she evidently attempts to picture. The proud, sensitive, generous, high-minded Englishman, with a soul at once alive to genius, and fearing its effect — daring as a soldier, timid as a man — the slave of love that tells him to scorn the world, and of opinion that tells him to adore it — this is the new, the delicate, the many-coloured character Madame de Stael conceived, and nothing can be more unlike the heartless and whining pedant she has accomplished.

In Rousseau, every sentence Lord *Edouard* utters is full of beauty, and sometimes of depth, and yet those

sentences give us no conception of the utterer himself. The expressions are all soul, and the character is all clay — nothing can be more brilliant than the sentiments, or more heavy than the speaker.

It is a curious fact that the graver writers have not often succeeded in plot and character in proportion to their success in the allurements of reflection, or the graces of style. While Goldsmith makes us acquainted with all the personages of his unrivalled story — while we sit at the threshold in the summer evenings, and sympathize with the good vicar in his laudable zeal for monogamy — while ever and anon we steal a look behind through the lattice, and smile at the gay Sophia, who is playing with Dick, or fix our admiration on Olivia, who is practising an air against the young squire comes — while we see the sturdy Burchell crossing the stile, and striding on at his hearty pace with his oak cudgel cutting circles in the air — nay, while we ride with Moses to make his bargains, and prick up our ears when Mr. Jenkinson begins with “Ay, sir! the world is in its dotage;” — while in recalling the characters of that immortal tale, we are recalling the memory of so many living persons with whom we have dined, and walked, and argued — we behold in the gloomy Rasselas of Goldsmith’s sager cotemporary, a dim succession of shadowy images without life or identity, mere machines for the grinding of morals, and the nice location of sonorous phraseology. Perhaps indeed Humour is an essential requisite in the flesh-and-blood delineation of character; and a quick perception of the Ridiculous is necessary to the accurate insight into the True. We can better ascertain the profundity of Machiavel after we have enjoyed the unrivalled humour of his novel.

That delightful egotist — half-good-fellow, half-sage, half-rake, half-divine, the pet gossip of philosophy, the — in one word — inimitable and unimitated Montaigne, insists upon it in right earnest, that *continual* cheerfulness is the most indisputable sign of wisdom, and that her estate, like that of things in the regions above the moon, is always calm, cloudless, and serene. And in the same essay he recites the old story of Demetrius the grammarian, who, finding in the Temple of Delphos a knot of philosophers chatting away in high glee and comfort, said, “I am greatly mistaken, gentlemen, or by your pleasant countenances you are not engaged in any very profound discourse.” Whereon Heracleon answered the grammarian with a “Pshaw, my good friend! it does very well for fellows who live in a perpetual anxiety to know whether the future tense of the verb *Ballo* should be spelt with one *l* or two, to knit their brows and look solemn; but we who are engaged in discoursing of true philosophy, are cheerful as a matter of course!” Heracleon, the magician, knew what he was about when he resolved to be wise. And yet, after all, it is our constitution and not our learning, that makes us one thing or the other — grave or gay, lively or severe! We may form our philosophy in one school, but our feelings may impel us to another; and while our tenets rejoice with Democritus, our hearts may despond with Heraclitus. And, in fact, it requires not only all that our wisdom can teach us, but perhaps, also, something of a constitution of mind naturally sanguine and elastic, to transmute into golden associations the baser ores of our knowledge of the world. Deceit and Disappointment are but sorry sti-

mulants to the Spirits! "The pleasure of the honey will not pay for the smart of the sting." *

As we know, or fancy that we know, mankind, there is a certain dimness that falls upon the glory of all we see. "The lily is withered, the purple of the violet turned into paleness;" † without growing perhaps more selfish, we contract the circle of our enjoyments. We do not hazard — we do not venture as we once did. The sea that rolls before us proffers to our curiosity no port that we have not already seen. About this time, too, our ambition changes its character — it becomes more a thing of custom than of ardour. We have begun our career — shame forbids us to leave it; but I question whether any man moderately wise, does not see how small is the reward of pursuit. Nay, ask the oldest, the most hacknied adventurer of the world, and you will find he has some dream at his heart, which is more cherished than all the honours he seeks — some dream perhaps of a happy and serene retirement which has lain at his breast since he was a boy, and which he will never realize. The trader and his retreat at Highgate are but the type of Walpole and his palace at Houghton. The worst feature in our knowledge of the world is, that we are wise to little purpose — we penetrate the hearts of others, but we do not content our own. Every wise man feels that he ought not to be ambitious, nor covetous, nor subject to emotion — yet the wisest go on toiling, and burning to the last. Men who have declaimed most against ambition have been among the most ambitious; so that, at the

* Jeremy Taylor, Sermon vi. Part 2.

† Jeremy Taylor. Contemplations of the State of Man.

best, we only become wise for the sake of writing books which the world seldom values till we are dead — or of making laws and speeches, which, when dead, the world hastens to forget. “When all is done, human life is at the greatest and the best but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over.” *

* Sir William Temple.

THE
TALE OF KOSEM KESAMIM,
THE MAGICIAN.*

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It was deep night, and the Magician suddenly stood before me. "Arise," said he, "and let us go forth upon the surface of the world."† I rose, and followed the sorcerer until we came to the entrance of a cavern. Pursuing its subterranean course for some minutes, — with the rushing sound of prisoned waters loud and wild upon the ear, we came at length to a spot where the atmosphere struck upon my breath with a chill and earthy freshness; and presently, through a fissure in the rock, the sudden whiteness of the moon broke in, and lit up, partially, walls radiant with spars, and washed by a deep stream, that wound its mysterious way to the upper air. And now, gliding through the chasm, we sood in a

* This tale, complete in itself, is extracted from a work at present crude and unfinished, but which I may hereafter remodel and complete — a philosophical Prose-Poem, in which, through the means, sometimes of humour, sometimes of terror, certain social and metaphysical problems will be worked out. I need scarcely say that the chief task in such a composition would be to avoid any imitation of the Faust.

† The Narrator is supposed to have been with the Magician amidst the caverns of the interior of the Earth.

broad cell, with its lofty arch open to the sea. Column and spire (brilliant with various crystallizations — spars of all hues) sprang lightly up on either side of this cavern — and with a leap, and a mighty voice, the stream, whose course we had been tracking, rushed into the arms of the great Sea. Along that sea, star after star mirrored its solemn lustre — and the moon, clad in a fuller splendour than I had ever seen gathered round her melancholy orb, filled the cavern with a light that was to the light of day what the life of an angel is to that of a mortal. Passionless, yet tender — steadfast — mystic — unwavering — she shone upon the glittering spars, and made a holiness of the very air; and in a long line, from the cavern to the verge of heaven, her sweet face breathed a measured and quiet joy into the rippling billows — “smiles of the sea.”* A few thin and fleecy clouds alone varied the clear expanse of the heavens — and they rested, like the cars of spirits, far on the horizon. — And,

“Beautiful,” said I, “is this outward world — your dim realms beneath have nothing to compare with it. There are no stars in the temples of the hidden earth — and one glimpse from the lovely moon is worth all the witchfires and meteors of the Giant palaces below.”

“Thou lookest, young Mortal,” said the Wizard in his mournful voice, “over my native shore. Beside that sea stood my ancestral halls — and beneath that moon first swelled within my bosom the deep tides of human emotion — and in this cavern, whence we now look forth on the seas and heavens, my youth passed some of its earnest hours in contemplations of that high

* Æschylus' *Prometheus*.

and starred order which your lessened race — clogged with the mire of ages — never know : for that epoch was far remote in those ages which even tradition scarcely pierces. Your first fathers — what of their knowledge know ye? — what of their secrets have ye retained? their vast and dark minds were never fathomed by the plummet of your researches. The waves of the Black Night have swept over the Ancient World — and all that you can guess of its buried glories are from the shivered fragments that ever and anon Chance casts upon the shores of the modern race.”

“Do we sink, then,” said I, “by comparison with the men of those distant times? Is not our lore deeper and more certain? — Was not their knowledge the offspring of a confused and labouring conjecture? — Did they not live among dreams and shadows, and make Truth itself the creature of a fertile Imagination?”

“Nay,” replied the shrouded and uncertain form beside me — “their knowledge pierced into the heart of things. They consulted the stars — but it was to measure the dooms of earth; — and could we raise from the dust their perished scrolls, you would behold the mirror of the living times. Their prophecies — (wrung from the toil and rapture of those powers which ye suffer to sleep, quenched, within the soul) — traversed the wilds of ages, and pointed out among savage hordes the cities and laws of empires yet to be. Ten thousand arts have mouldered from the earth — and Science is the shadow of what it was. — Young mortal, thou hast set thine heart upon Wisdom — thou hast wasted the fresh and radiant hours of opening life amidst the wearying thoughts of others: — thou hast laboured after Knowledge, and in that labour the healthful hues have for

ever left thy cheek, and age creeps upon the core while the dew is yet upon the leaf: — and for this labour — and in the transport and the vision that the soul's labour nurtures — thy spirit is now rapt from its fleshly career on earth, — wandering at will amongst the dread chasms and mines wombed within the world, — breathing a vital air amongst the dead, — comraded by Spirits, and the Powers that are not of flesh, — and catching, by imperfect glimpse and shadowy type, some knowledge of the arch mysteries of Creation; — and thou beholdest in me and in my science that which thy learning and thy fancy tracked not before. No legend ever chanced upon my strange and solemn being; nor does aught of my nature resemble the tales of Wizard or Sorcerer that the vulgar fantasies of Superstition have embodied. Thou hast journeyed over a land without a chart, and in which even Fable has hacknied not the Truth. Thou wouldst learn something of the Being thus permitted to thy wonder; — be it so. Under these sparkling arches — and before my ancestral sea — and beneath the listening ear of the halting Moon — thou shalt learn a history of the Antique World.”

THE TALE OF KOSEM KESAMIM.

Along the shores which for thirty centuries no human foot has trod — and upon plains where now not one stone stands upon another, telling even of decay — was once the city and the empire of the Wise Kings — for so termed by their neighbours were the monarchs that ruled this country. Generation after generation they had toiled to earn and preserve that name. Amidst the gloom of mysterious temples, and the oracular learning of the star-read priests, the youth of each succeeding King was

reared into a grave and brooding manhood. — Their whole lives were mystery. — Wrapt in the sepulchral grandeur of the Imperial palace — seen rarely — like gods — they sent forth, as from a cloud, the light of their dread but benign laws: — the courses of their like were tracked not — but they were believed to possess the power over the seasons and elements — and to summon, at their will, the large-winged spirits, that walk to and fro across the earth, governing, like dreams, with a vague and unpenetrated power, the destinies of nations and the ambition of kings.

There was born to this imperial race a son, to whom seer and king alike foretold a strange and preternatural destiny. His childhood itself was of a silent, stern, and contemplative nature. And his learning, even in his boyish youth, had ransacked all that the grey priests could teach him.

But the passions are interwoven deeply with the elements of thought. And real wisdom is only gained by the process of fierce emotion. — Amidst all the pursuits of his aspiring mind, the heart of the young prince burned with a thousand passions untold and unregulated.

The Magician paused for a moment, and then, in a voice far different from the cold and solemn tone in which his accents were usually clothed, he broke forth: —

“O, beautiful, beyond the beauty of these sicklied and hoary times, was the beauty of Woman in the young world! — The glory of Eden had not yet departed from her face, and the lustre of unwearied Nature glowed alike upon Earth and Earth’s majestic daughters. Beauty is youth’s idol — and in the breast of Gondorah, for so was the Prince popularly called (his higher and

mystic titles may not be revealed), the great passion — the great yearning — the great desire — was for the Lovely and the August — whatever their shape or mould. Not in woman only, but in all things, the Beautiful made his worship — wherever he beheld it, the image of the Deity was glassed on his adoring soul. But to him — or rather to *myself* — (if memory retain identity through the shift and lapse of worlds; making *me*, the same as one who, utterly dissimilar, lived a man amongst men, long ages back) — to *me*, there was yet a fiercer and more absorbing passion than love, or the idolatry of Nature — *THE DESIRE TO KNOW!* — My mind launched itself into the depth of Things — I loved step after step to trace Effect to its first Cause. Reason was a chain from heaven to earth, and every link led me to aspire to the stars themselves. And the wisdom of my wise fathers was mine; I knew the secret of the elements, and could charm them into slumber, or arouse them to war. The mysteries of that dread Chemistry which is now among the Sciences that sleep — by which we can command the air and walk on its viewless paths — by which we can wake the thunder — and summon the cloud — and rive the earth; — the exercise of that high faculty — the Imagining Power — by which Fancy itself *creates* what it *wills*, and which, trained and exercised, can wake the spectres of the dead — and bring visible to the carnal eye the Genii that walk the world; — the watchful, straining, sleepless science, that can make a Sage's volume of the stars; — these were mine, and yet I murmured — I repined! — what higher mysteries were yet left to learn! The acquisition of to-day was but the disappointment of the morrow, and the dispensation of my ambition — was — to *desire!*

It was evening, and I went from the groves of the sacred Templē, to visit one whom I loved. The way spread over black and rugged masses of rock, amidst which, the wild shrub and dark weed sprung rife and verdant; for the waste as yet was eloquent of some great revulsion of the soil in the earlier epochs of the World — when Change often trod the heels of Change; and the Earth was scarcely reconciled to the sameness of her calm career. And I stood beneath the tree where SHE was to meet me — and my heart leapt within me as I saw her footsteps bounding along — and she came with her sweet lips breathing the welcome of human love, and I laid my head on her bosom and was content.

And, “Oh,” said she, “art thou not proud of thy dawning fame? The Seers speak of thee with wonder, and the Priests bow their heads before thy name.”

Then the passion of my soul broke forth, and I answered, — “What is this petty power that I possess, and what this barren knowledge? The Great Arch Secret of all, I have toiled night after night to conquer, and I cannot attain it. What I desire is not knowledge, but *the source* of knowledge. I wish that my eye should penetrate at once into the germ and cause of things: that when I look upon the outward beauty of the world, my sight should pierce within, and see the mechanism that causes and generates the beauty working beneath. Enough of my art have I learned to know that there is a film over human eyes which prevents their penetrating beyond the surface; it is to remove that film, and dart into the essence, and survey the One Great Productive Spirit of all Things, that I labour and yearn in vain. All other knowledge is a cheat; this is the high prerogative which mocks at conjecture and equals us with a God!”

Then Lyciah saw that I was moved, and she kissed me, and sung me the sweet songs, that steeped my heart, as it were, in a bath of fragrant herbs.

Midnight had crept over the earth as I returned homeward across that savage scene. Rock heaped on rock bordered and broke upon the lonely valley that I crossed — and the moon was still, and shining, as at this hour, when its life is four thousand years nearer to its doom. Then suddenly I saw moving before me, with a tremulous motion, a meteoric Fire of an exceeding brightness. Ever as it moved above the seared and sterile soil, it soared and darted restlessly to and fro; — and I thought, as it danced and quivered, that I heard it laugh from its burning centre with a wild and frantic joy. I fancied, as I gazed upon the Fire, that in that shape revelled one of the children of the Elementary Genii; and addressing it in their language, I bade it assume a palpable form. But the Fire darted on unheeding, save that now the laugh from amidst the flame came all distinct and fearfully on my ear. Then my hair stood erect — and my veins curdled — and my knees knocked together; — I was under the influence of an Awe; for I felt that the Power was not of the world — nor of that which my ancestral knowledge of the Powers of other worlds had yet pierced. My voice faltered, and thrice I strove to speak to the Light — but in vain; and when at length I addressed it in the solemn adjuration by which the sternest of the Fiends are bound, the Fire sprang up from the soil — towering aloof and aloft — with a livid but glorious lustre, bathing the whole atmosphere in its glare, — quenching, with an intenser ray, the splendours of the Moon, — and losing its giant crest in the Far Invisible of Heaven!

And a voice came forth, saying — “Thou callest upon inferior Spirits; I am that which thou hast pined to behold — I am ‘The Living Principle of the World!’”

I bowed my face, and covered it with my hands, and my voice left me; and when again I looked round, behold, the Fire had shrunk from its momentary height, and was (now dwarfed and humble) creeping before me in its wavering and snake-like course. But fear was on me, and I fled, and fast fled the Fire by my side; and oft, but faint, from its ghastly heart came the laugh that thrilled the marrow of my bones. And the waste was past, and the Giant Temple of the One God rose before me; I rushed forward, and fell breathless by its silent Altar. And there sat the High Priest, for night and day some one of the Sacred Host watched by the Altar; and he was of great age, and all human emotion had left his veins; but even he was struck with my fear, and gazed upon me with his rayless eyes, and bade me be of cheer, for the place was holy. I looked round, and the Fire was not visible, and I breathed freely; but I answered not the Priest, for years had dulled him into stone, and when I rose his eye followed me not. I gained the purple halls set apart for the King’s son. And the pillars were of ivory inlaid with gold — and the gems and perfumes of the East gave light and fragrance to those wondrous courts; and the gorgeous banquet was spread, and music from unseen hands swelled along arch and aisle as I trod the royal Hall. But lo! by the throne, crouching beneath the purple canopy, I saw the laughing Fire — and it seemed, lowly and paled, to implore protection. I paused, and took the courtiers aside, and asked them to mark the flame; but they saw it not — it burnt to mine eye alone. Then knew I that it was in-

deed a Spirit of that high race, which, even when they take visible form, are not visible save to the students of the Dread Science! And I trembled, but revered.

And the Fire stayed by me night and day, and I grew accustomed to its light. But never, by charm of spell, could I draw further word from it; and it followed my steps with a silent and patient homage. And by degrees a vain and proud delight came over me, to think that I was so honoured; and I looked upon the pale and changeful face of the Fire as the face of a friend.

There was a man who had told years beyond the memory of the living — a renowned and famous seer — to whom, in times of dread and omen, our Priests and Monarchs themselves repaired for warning and advice. I sought his abode. The seer was not of our race — he came from the distant waters of the Nile, and the dark mysteries of Egypt had girded his youth. It was in the cavern itself in which, young stranger of the North, this tale is now poured into thy ear, that the Seer held his glittering home — for lamp upon lamp then lighted up, from an unfailing naphtha, these dazzling spars — and the seamen of the vessels that crowded yonder bay beheld, far down the blue waters, the nightly blaze flickering along the wave, and reminding the reverent mariner of many an awful legend of the Cavern Home. And hither had often turned my young feet in my first boyhood, and from the shrivelled lip of the old Egyptian had much of my loftiest learning been gleaned; for he loved me — and seeing with a prophet eye far down the great depths of Time, he knew that I was fated to wild and fearful destinies, and a life surpassing the period of his own.

It was on that night, when the New Moon scatters

its rank and noxious influence over the foliage and life of earth, that I sought the Egyptian. The fire burned with a fiercer and redder light than its wont; as it played and darted by my side. And when, winding by the silver sands, I passed into the entrance of the Cave, I saw the old man sitting on a stone. As I entered, the Seer started from his seat in fear and terror — his eyes rolled — his thin grey hairs stood erect — a cold sweat broke from his brow — and the dread master stood before his pupil in agony and awe.

“Thou comest,” muttered he with white lips; “What is by thy side? hast thou dared to seek knowledge with the Soul of all Horror — with the ghastly Leper of — — Avaunt! bid the fiend begone!”

His voice seemed to leave the old man, and with a shriek he fell upon his face on the ground.

“Is it,” said I, appalled by his terror — “is it the Fire that haunts my steps at which thou tremblest? behold, it is harmless as a dog; it burns not while it shines; if a fiend, it is a merry fiend, for I hear it laugh while I speak. But it is for this, Dread Sire, that I have sought thee. Canst thou tell me the nature of the Spirit — for a Spirit it surely is? Canst thou tell me its end and aim?”

I lifted the old man from the earth — and his kingly heart returned to him — and he took the Wizard Crown from the wall, and he placed it on his brows — for he was as a Monarch among the Things that are not of clay. And he said to the Fire — “Approach!” And the Fire glided to his knees. And he said, “Art thou the Spirit of the Element, and was thy cradle in the Flint’s heart?”

And a voice from the flame answered “No.”

And again the Egyptian trembled.

“What art thou, then?” said he.

And the Fire answered, “Thy Lord.”

And the limbs of the Egyptian shook as with the grasp of death.

And he said, “Art thou a Demon of *this* world?”

And the Fire answered “I am the Life of this world — and I am *not* of other worlds.”

“I know thee — I fear thee — I acknowledge thee!” said the Egyptian, “and in thy soft lap shall this crowned head soon be laid.”

And the Fire laughed.

“But tell me,” said I, — for though my blood stood still, my soul was brave and stern — “Tell me, O Sire, what hath this Thing with me?”

“It is the Great Ancestor of us all! said the Egyptian, groaning.

“And knows it the Secrets of the Past?”

“The Secrets of the Past are locked within it.”

“Can it teach me that which I pine to know? — Can it teach me the essence of things — the nature of all I see? — Can it raise the film from my human eyes?”

“Rash Prince, be hushed!” cried the Egyptian, rising, and glaring upon me with his stony eye — “Seek not to know that which will curse thee with the knowledge. Ask not a power that would turn life into a living grave. All the lore that man ever knew is mine; but *that* secret have I shunned, and *that* power have I cast from me, as the shepherd casts the viper from his hand. Be still — be moderate — be wise. And bid me exorcise the Spirit that accosts thee from the Fire!”

“Can it teach me the arch mystery? When I gaze upon the herb or flower, can it gift my gaze with the power to pierce into the cause and workings of its life?”

"I can teach thee this," said the Fire; and it rose higher, and burned fiercer, as it spake, till the lamps of naphtha paled before it.

"Then abide by me, O Spirit," said I; "and let u not be severed."

Miserable boy," cried the Egyptian; "was this, then, the strange and preternatural doom which my Art fore-saw was to be thine, though it deciphered not its nature? Knowest thou that this Fire so clear — so pure — so beautiful — is ———"

"Beware!" cried the voice from the Fire; and the crest of the flame rose, as the crest of a serpent about to spring upon its prey.

"Thou awest me not," said the Egyptian, though the blood fled from his shrivelled and tawny cheeks. "Thou art —"

"The Living Principle of the World," interrupted the voice.

"And thine other name?" cried the Egyptian.

"Thy Conqueror!" answered the voice; and straight, as the answer went forth, the Egyptian fell, blasted as by lightning, a corpse at my feet. The light of the Fire played with a blue and tremulous lustre upon the carcass, and presently I beheld by that light that the corpse was already passed into the loathsomeness of decay — the flesh was rotting from the bones — and the worm and the creeping thing, that the rottenness generates, twined in the very jaws and temples of the Sage.

I sickened and gasped for breath — "Is this thy work, oh Fearful Fiend!" said I, shuddering. And the Fire, passing from the corpse, crept humbly at my feet — and its voice answered — "Whatever my power, it is thy slave!"

“Was that death thy work?” repeated my quivering lips.

“Thou knowest,” answered the Fire, “that Death is not the will of any Power — save one. The death came from His will — and I but exulted over the blow!”

I left the cavern; my art, subtle as it was, gave me no glimpse into the causes of the Egyptian’s death. I looked upon the Fire, as it crept along the herbage, with an inquisitive, yet dreading eye. I felt an awe of the Demon’s power; and yet the proud transport I had known in the subjection of that power was increased, and I walked with a lofty step at the thought that I should have so magnificent a slave. But the words of the mysterious Egyptian still rang in my ear — still I shuddered and recoiled before his denunciation of the power and the secret I desired. And the voice of the Fire now addressed me (as I passed along the starry solitude) with a persuasive and sweet tone. “Shrink not, young Sage,” it said, or rather sang, “from a power beyond that of which thy wisest ancestors ever dreamed — lose not thy valour at the drivelling whispers of age — when did ever age approve what youth desires? Thou art formed for the destiny which belongs to royal hearts — the destiny courts thee. Why dost thou play the laggard?”

“Knowledge,” said I, musingly, “can never be productive of woe. If it be knowledge thou canst give me, I will not shrink. Lo! I accept thy gift!”

The fire played cheerily to and fro. And from the midst of it there stepped forth a pale and shadowy form, of female shape and of exceeding beauty; her face was indeed of no living wanness, and the limbs were indistinct, and no roundness swelled from their vapoury

robes; but the features were lovely as a dream, and long yellow hair — glowing as sunlight — fell adown her neck. “Thou wouldst pierce,” said she, “to the Principle of the World. Thou wouldst that thine eye should penetrate into my fair and most mystic dominion. But not yet; there is an ordeal to pass. To the Whole Knowledge thou must glide through the Imperfect!” Then the female kissed my eyes, and vanished, and with it vanished also the Fire.

Oh, beautiful! — Oh, wondrous! — Oh, divine! A scale had fallen from my sight — and a marvellous glory was called forth upon the face of earth. I saw millions and millions of spirits shooting to and fro athwart the air — spirits that my magic had yet never descried — spirits of rainbow hues, and quivering with the joy that made their nature. Wherever I cast my gaze, life upon life was visible. Every blade of grass swarmed with myriads invisible to the common eye — but performing with mimic regularity all the courses of the human race; every grain of dust, every drop of water, was a universe — mapped into a thousand tribes, all fulfilling the great destinies of Mortality; — Love — Fear — Hope — Emulation — Avarice — Jealousy — War — Death. My eyes had been touched with a glorious charm. And even in that, which to the casual eye would have been a mute, and solitary, and breathless hour, I was suddenly summoned into a dazzling atmosphere of life — every atom a world. And, bending my eyes below, I saw emerging from the tiny hollows of the earth, those fantastic and elfin shapes that have been chiefly consecrated by your Northern Bards; forth they came merrily, merrily — dancing in the smooth sheen of the silent heavens, and chasing the swift-

winged creatures, that scarcely the glass of science can give to the eye. If all around was life, it was the life of enchantment and harmony — a subtle, pervading element of delight. Speech left me for very joy, and I gazed, thrilled and breathless, around me — entered, as it were, into the Inner Temples of the Great System of the Universe.

I looked round for the Fire — it was gone. I was alone amidst this new and populous creation, and I stretched myself voluptuously beneath a tree, to sate my soul with wonder. As a Poet in the height of his delirium was my rapture — my veins were filled with Poesy, which is Intoxication — and my eyes had been touched with Poesy, which is the Creative Power — and the miracles before me were Poesy, which is the Enchanter's Wand.

Days passed, and the bright Demon which had so gifted me appeared not, nor yet did the spell cease; but every hour, every moment, new marvels rose. I could not walk. — I could not touch stone or herb, without coming into a new realm utterly different from those I had yet seen, but equally filled with life — so that there was never a want of novelty; and had I been doomed to pass my whole existence upon three feet of earth, I might have spent that existence in perpetual variety — in unsatisfied and eternally new research. But most of all, when I sought Lyciah I felt the full gift I possessed; for in conversing with her my sense penetrated to her heart, and I felt, as with a magnetic sympathy, moving through its transparent purity, the thoughts and emotions that were all my own.

By degrees I longed indeed to make her a sharer in my discovered realms; for I now slowly began to feel

the weariness of a conqueror who reigns alone — none to share my power or partake the magnificence in which I dwelt.

One day, even in the midst of angelic things that floated blissfully round me — so that I heard the low melodies they hymned as they wheeled aloft — one day this pining, this sense of solitude in life — of satiety in glory — came on me. And I said, “But this is the imperfect state; why not enjoy the whole? Could I ascend to that high and empyreal Knowledge, to which this is but a step, doubtless this dissatisfied sentiment would vanish; discontent arises because there is something still to attain; attain all, and discontent must cease. Bright Spirit,” cried I aloud, “to whom I already owe so great a benefit, come to me now — why hast thou left me? Come and complete thy gifts. I see yet only the wonders of the secret portions of the world — touch mine eyes that I may see *the cause* of the wonders. I am surrounded with an air of life; let me pierce into the principle of that life. Bright Spirit, minister to thy servant!” Then I heard the sweet voice that had spoken in the Fire — but I saw not the Fire itself. And the voice said unto me.

“Son of the Wise Kings, I am here!”

“I see thee not,” said I. Why hidest thou thy lustre?”

“Thou seest the Half, and that very sight blinds thee to the Whole. This redundance and flow of life gushes from me as from its source. When the mid-course of the River is seen, who sees also its distant spring? In thee, not myself, is the cause that thou beholdest me not. I am as I was when I bowed my crest to thy feet; but thine eyes are not what then they were!”

“Thou tellest me strange things, O Demon!” said I; “for why, when admitted to a clearer sight of things, should my eyes be darkened alone when they turn to thee?”

“Does not all knowledge, save the one right knowledge, only lead men from the discovery of the Primal Causes. As Imagination may soar aloft, and find new worlds, yet lose the solid truth — so thou mayest rise into the regions of a preternatural lore, yet recede darklier and darklier from the clue to Nature herself.”

I mused over the words of the Spirit, but their sense seemed dim.

“Canst thou appear to me in thine old, wan, and undulating brightness!” said I, after a pause.

“Not until thine eyes receive power to behold me.”

“And when may I be worthy that power?”

“When thou art thoroughly dissatisfied with thy present gifts.”

“Dread Demon, I am so now!”

“Wilt thou pass from this pleasant state at a hazard — not knowing that which may ensue? Behold, all around thee is full of joy! Wilt thou abandon that state for a dark and perilous Unknown?”

“The Unknown is the passion of him who aspires to know.”

“Pause; for it is a dread alternative,” said the Invisible.

“My heart beats steadily. — Come, — mine be the penalty of desire!”

“Thy wish is granted,” said the Spirit.

Then straightway a pang, quick, sharp, agonizing, shot through my heart. I felt the stream in my veins stand still, hardening into a congealed substance — my

throat rattled, I struggled against the grasp of some iron power. — A terrible sense of my own impotence seized me — my muscles refused my will, my voice fled — I was in the possession of some authority that had entered, and claimed, and usurped the citadel of my own self. Then came a creeping of the flesh, a deadly sensation of ice and utter coldness: and lastly, a blackness, deep and solid as a mass of rock, fell over the whole earth — I had entered DEATH!

From this state I was roused by the voice of the Demon. "Awake, look forth! — Thou hast thy desire! — Abide the penalty!" The darkness broke from the earth; the ice thawed from my veins; once more my senses were my servants.

I looked, and behold, I stood in the same spot, but how changed! The earth was one blue and crawling mass of putridity; its rich verdure, its lofty trees, its sublime mountains, its glancing waters, had all been the deceit of my previous blindness; the very green of the grass and the trees was rottenness, and the leaves (not each leaf one and inanimate as they seemed to the common eye) were composed of myriads of insects and puny reptiles, battered on the corruption from which they sprang. The waters swarmed with a leprous life — those beautiful shapes that I had seen in my late delusion were corrupt in their several parts, and from that corruption other creatures were generated living upon them. Every breath of air was *not* air, a thin and healthful fluid, but a wave animalculæ, poisonous and foetid; (for the Air is the Arch Corruptor, hence all who breathe die; it is the slow, sure venom of Nature, pervading and rotting all things;) the light of the Heavens was the sickly, loathsome glare that steamed from the

universal Death in Life. The tiniest thing that moved — you beheld the decay moving through its veins, and its corruption, unconscious to itself, engendered new tribes of life! The World was one dead carcass, from which every thing the World bore took its being. There was not such a thing as beauty! — there was not such a thing as life that did not generate from its own corruption a loathsome life for others! I looked down upon myself, and saw that my very veins swarmeth with a mote-like creation of shapes, springing into hideous existence from mine own disease, and mocking the Human Destiny with the same career of love, life, and death. Methought it must be a spell, that change of scene would change. I shut my eyes with a frantic horror, and I fled, fast, fast, but blinded; and ever as I fled, a laugh rang in my ears, and I stopped not till I was at the feet of Lyciah, for she was my first involuntary thought. Whenever a care or fear possessed me, I had been wont to fly to her bosom, and charm my heart by the magic of her sweet voice. I was at the feet of Lyciah — I clasped her knees — I looked up imploringly into her face — God of my Fathers! the same curse attended me still! Her beauty was gone. There was no whole, — no one life in that Being whom I had so adored. Her life was composed of a million lives. Her stately shape, of atoms crumbling from each other, and so bringing about the ghastly state of corruption which reigned in all else around. — Her delicate hues, her raven hair, her fragrant lips — Pah! — What, what was my agony! — I turned from her again, — I shrank in loathing from her embrace, — I fled once more, — on — on. I ascended a mountain, and looked down on the various leprosiess of Earth. Sternly I forced myself

to the task; sternly I inhaled the knowledge I sought; sternly I drank in the horrible penalty I had dared.

“Demon,” I cried, “appear, and receive my curse!”

“Lo, I am by thy side evermore,” said the voice. Then I gazed, and, behold, the Fire was by my side; and I saw that it was the livid light that the jaws of Rottenness emits; and in the midst of the light, which was as its shroud and garment, stood a Giant shape — that was the shape of a Corpse that had been for months buried. I gazed upon the Demon with an appalled yet unquailing eye, and, as I gazed, I recognised in those ghastly lineaments a resemblance to the Female Spirit that had granted me the first fatal gift. But exaggerated, enlarged, dead, — Beauty rotted into Horror.

“I am that which thou didst ask to see face to face. — I am the Principle of Life.”

“Of Life! Out, horrible mocker! — hast thou no other name?”

“I have! and the other name is **CORRUPTION!**”

“Bright Lamps of Heaven,” I cried, lifting my eyes in anguish from the loathly Charnel of the Universal Earth; “and is this, which men call ‘Nature,’ — is this the sole Principle of the World?”

As I spoke, the huge carcass beneath my feet trembled. — And over the face of the corpse beside me there fell a fear. — And lo! the Heavens were lit up with a pure and glorious light, and from the midst of them there came forth A Voice, which rolled slowly over the face of the charnel earth as the voice of thunder above the valley of the shepherd. “**SUCH,**” said the Voice, “**IS NATURE, IF THOU ACCEPTEST NATURE AS THE FIRST CAUSE — SUCH IS THE UNIVERSE WITHOUT A GOD!**”

ON THE
PASSION FOR THE UNIVERSAL.

WHEN I was a younger man than I am now, I was smitten by that ambition for the Universal, not uncommon perhaps in versatile and lively imaginations, which easily master whatever they attempt, and which find therefore labour only a triumph to their self-esteem. I held it as a doctrine, that the mind in its utmost perfection must not be entirely ignorant of any species of human knowledge or accomplishment within its reach, and that the body being a part of us, and that part most prominent and visible, had also a legitimate right to its careful education, for we are not all soul. The frame should indeed be the servant of the mind—but neglect or scorn the slave too much, and he rebels, and may become the tyrant in his turn. The notion of this all accomplishment, mental and corporeal, is an old one—it is one upon which the character of the Ancient Nations, and of Athens especially, was formed. Alcibiades and Pericles were but incarnations of the genius of their country. But, in truth, the task of circling the round of know-

ledge was more practicable two thousand years ago than it is now: books were few, speculations contracted, learning flowed with a mighty stream—but not from uumerous sources. All the fruits of the Divine Tree were near at hand to the wanderer, and not scattered as they are at present, in myriad grafts, over the surface of the globe. If this was their advantage in the mental, so in the corporeal education, the life which the ancients led—their habits and their customs so entirely dissimilar from the indolent apathy of modern times, were well suited to perfect all the faculties, and to gift with all the graces.

The bath and the gymnasium, which made a necessary part of their existence, served, without an effort, to harmonize, to strengthen, and to embellish. Their very habit of existence brought them beauty. Again; the laws which at Athens were referred entirely to the people—who had to decide not more upon their taxes and their ministers, than upon refinements in music or innovations at the theatre—to approve the new statue, and consider the ornaments of the projected temple—served to diffuse the popular attention, not over all the vulgar necessities, but all the sublimer arts and necessities of life: it was necessary to have an eye to grace, an ear to poetry, a nerve to beauty, in order to discharge the daily duties of a citizen. In all things the people were made critics and gentlemen by being made in all things legislators and umpires. — Absolute liberty produced universal genius. The stir and ferment, and astonishing activity of those old republics, forced Intellect almost beyond Nature. Their very corruption fostered divine seeds, and the creatures it generated were gods.

These causes combined gave to our ancient models that character of "the all-accomplished," which the moderns, under different circumstances of society, can never but imperfectly attain.

The division of labour has become necessary to a vast and complex order of civilization, and, no longer living in petty cities, but overpopulated nations, one man cannot hope successfully to unite the poet, the soldier, the philosopher, the artist, the critic;—the oracle of one sex, and the idol of the other.* The true character of the Universal has passed away for ever. It is fortunate for us that the world, somewhat early and somewhat roughly, rouses us from this ambition, too excursive for common purposes, if pursued too long—and, that, settled betimes to the pursuit of one career, or to the mastery of one art, we accustom ourselves not to chase the golden apples which lure us from our gaol.

Yet for a short time, at least, this passion has its uses which last throughout our lives: without aiming in youth at the acquisition of many things, we should scarcely in manhood attain perfection in one. Insensibly, through a wide and desultory range, we gather together the vast hoard of thoughts, and images—of practical illustrations of life—of comparisons of the multiform aspects of Truth, whether in men or books, which are the aids and corroborants and embellishments of the single and sole pursuit to which we finally attach ourselves.

We are thus in no danger of becoming the machines of the closet—or the feasters upon one idea. Each indi-

* Prior says elegantly enough to Lord Bolingbroke, who, of all modern public men, approached the nearest to the character of the Alcibiades,— "Men respect you, and women love you."

vidual research into which we have entered may not have been carried to a sufficient depth to open a separate mine. But the broad surface we have ploughed up yields us an abundant harvest. To an active mind it is astonishing what use may be made of every the pettiest acquisition. Gibbon tells us with solemn complacency of the assistance he derived to his immortal work—the sieges and the strategy it expounds — from having served in the Militia! A much wider use of accomplishment is to be found in the instance of Milton: — what a wonderful copiousness of all knowledge, seemingly the most motley, the most incongruous, he has poured into his great poem! Perhaps there is no mighty river of genius which is not fed by a thousand tributary streams. Milton is indeed an august example of the aspiration to the Universal. This severe republican, who has come down to the vulgar gaze in colours so stern though so sublime — had in his early tendencies all that most distinguishes our ideal of the knight and cavalier. No man in these later days was ever by soul and nature so entirely the all-accomplished and consummate gentleman. Beautiful in person—courtly in address—skilled in the gallant exercise of arms—a master of each manlier as each softer art—versed in music—in song—in the languages of Europe — the admired gallant of the dames and nobles of Italy—the cynosure of all eyes “that rained influence and adjudged”—he, the destined Dante of England, was the concentration of our dreams of the Troubadour—and the reality of the imaginary Crichton. In his later life we find the haughty patriot recurring, with a patrician pride, to all the accomplishments he had mastered — the sword as well as lute; and if we could furnish forth the outline of the education he prescribes as necessary to others, we should

have no reason to complain that the versatility and the range of Athenian genius had passed away.*

Yet this Greek yearning after all lore, not only that instructs, but embellishes, invariably exposes us, with the vulgar, to two charges—superficiality and frivolity—the last accusations which we are likely to deserve. *Perhaps no men are more superficial in their views than those who cultivate one branch of learning, and only one branch;—perhaps no men are less superficial than those who know the outlines of many.* A man, indeed, who, in letters or statesmanship, cultivates *only* one pursuit, can rarely master it thoroughly. It is by eternal com-

* In his letter to Master Samuel Hartlib, Milton does indeed startle the most ambitious of modern scholars. After declaring, in his own stately manner, that he calls “a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, *all* (!) the offices of peace and *war* (!)” he proceeds to chalk out a general outline of rational studies for young gentlemen between twelve and twenty-one:—Grammar, arithmetic, agriculture, natural history, geometry, astronomy, geography, fortification, architecture, engineering, navigation, history of meteors, minerals, plants, and living creatures, as far as anatomy, and the art of medicine. All this to be assisted by the “helpful experiences of hunters, fowlers, fishermen, shepherds, gardeners, apothecaries, architects, engineers, miners, anatomists.” And the above, by-the-by, before the tyro enters the “rural part of Virgil!” Then come ethics, theology, politics, law, as delivered first by Moses, and “as far as human prudence can be trusted, Lycurgus, Solon, Zaleucus, Charondas,” and thence “to *all* the Roman edicts and tables, with their Justinian, and *so down to the Saxon and common laws* of England, and the statutes.” Join to this French, Italian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew; “whereto it would be no impossibility to add the Chaldee and the Syrian dialect.” Thus accomplished, the pupils are to be made poets, authors, orators; and, instead of cricket, in play-hours, they are “to serve out the rudiments of soldiership, in all the skill of embattling, marching, encamping, fortifying, besieging, and battering;” besides trips after the first two or three years; [after which Milton gravely declares he would not be *much* for their studying (!)]—to our navy to learn the practical knowledge of sailing and sea-fight. If all this would not make universal scholars, it would certainly make the most universal little dunces.

parisons of truth with truth, that we come to just and profound conclusions; the wider the range of comparisons, the more accurate our inferences. There is an experience of the intellect as well as of the observation, which never can be well attained by exclusive predilections and confined circles.

We find, therefore, in all the deepest masters of the human heart, or of the human mind, an amazingly searching and miscellaneous appetite for knowledge of all sorts, small or great. The statesman who wrote the "Prince," wrote also comedies and a novel — a treatise on the military Art—and poetry without end. Goëthe was a botanist as well as a poet and a philosopher. Shakspeare seems, by the profuse allusions, "enamelling with pied flowers his thoughts of gold,"* to have diligently learnt all that his age permitted to one self-educated and not versed betimes in the ancient languages of the physical sciences—yet even of these latter he had taught himself something. You find in him metaphors borrowed from the mechanical arts of life. It was an universal smattering which helped him to be profound. No less universal, no less accomplished, was Bacon, who may be called the Shakspeare of philosophy. With the same pen which demolished the Aristotelism of the schoolmen, he writes a treatise on the laws, a cure for the gout—the translation of a psalm, and an essay on plantations. The men who, on the contrary, are so careful to avoid the Superficial—who plummet only one source of learning, and think that, in order to penetrate to its depth, no time can be spared to sport over other fountains, are usually shallow and headstrong theorists. They go round and round in a narrow circle, and never discover the outlet.

* Sir P. Sidney.

Such a man was that pedant mentioned by Boyle, who had devoted his whole life to the study of a single mineral, and who owned he had not ascertained a hundredth part of its properties. These men are not only superficial, they are the truly frivolous—they grow so wedded to their one pursuit, that its pettiest and most insignificant details have a grandeur in their eyes. They are for ever poring over the animalculæ on the one leaf of the Eden tree: they cannot see things that are large—they are spending their lives in the midst of the prodigal world in considering the hundredth part of the properties of a mineral!

Vulgar minds often mistake for frivolities what are but the indications of a certain refinement which pervades the whole character, and leaves its stamp upon small things as on great. Most remarkable men have one predominant passion of the intellect strongly developed, which pursues its object into minutiae. Thus with Goëthe, the singular affection for order or harmony which made him the greatest literary artist that ever lived, displayed itself in the neatness of his hand-writing—in his care of the nice arrangement of his furniture and papers—in his hatred to see even a blot of ink upon a manuscript. All this regard to trifles was not frivolity—it was a trait of character—it belonged to the artist: without it he would not have had the habit of mind which made him what he was. We may detect the same traits in a smaller degree in Pope. With him it was less the love of order than of neatness—(a part of order). In most poets the strongest intellectual passion is the love of beauty: and this often displays itself in the elegance of domestic detail. ***** fastidious in the flow of a curtain, is not frivolous—he but manifests the same taste which gives him his acumen in

works of art, and polishes to an excess of smoothness the ivory mechanism of his verse.

But this love of beauty in all its aspects is strongest in those whose early years have passed in the attempt to cultivate every faculty and excel in every pursuit. The students of the Universal acquire an almost intuitive instinct into the fluent harmony of things. Their early ambition opens to them a thousand sources of enjoyment. Wherever there is excellence they feel all the rapture of admiration. A landscape, a picture, a statue, a gem, a fine horse, a palace, the possessions of others—if worthy to be admired—their sense of enjoyment makes their own, while they regard;—sympathy, for the moment, appropriates them, and becomes the substitute of envy.

We all flatter ourselves in our favourite tendencies, and, for my own part, I may deceive myself as to the nature of mine — but I consider that to love the Beautiful in all things, to surround ourselves, as far as our means permit, with all its evidences, not only elevates the thoughts and harmonizes the mind, but is a sort of homage that we owe to the gifts of God and the labours of man. The Beautiful is the Priest of the Benevolent.

Yet, the ambition of the Universal is neither safe nor prudent, unless we cultivate some one pursuit above all the rest, making the others only its ministrants or its reliefs. If we know a little of every thing, it will not do to write upon every thing—but choosing that career of imagination or of thought for which we feel ourselves most fitted, and making *this* our *main* object, all the rest that we know or enjoy, illustrates and enlarges the scope of our chief design. It was wise in Milton, or in Homer, to pour the choicest of their multiform lore into their poems; but they might have been justly termed superficial had

they written separate essays upon each division of knowledge which they prove themselves to have cultivated. Far from complaining that life is too long, I honour the frankness of the old sage, who, living to a hundred, said his only regret was to die so soon. So vast is the mind of man, so various its faculties, so measureless the range of observation to feed and to elicit his powers, that if we had lived from the birth of the world till now, we could not have compassed a millionth part of that which our capacities, trained to the utmost, would enable us to grasp. — It requires an eternity to develop all the elements of the soul!

FERDINAND FITZROY,

OR

TOO HANDSOME FOR ANY THING.

“My dear friend,” said I, the other day, to a mother who was expressing her anxiety that her son should be as handsome as herself — “Believe me, that if beauty be a fatal gift for women, it is an inconvenient one to men. — A handsome face is very much against a young gentleman destined to the professions. An attorney takes an instinctive dislike to an Adonis of a barrister. What prudent man would like Antinous for his family physician? The envy of our sex (much more jealous than yours) will not acknowledge wisdom unless it has a snub nose. When Apollo came to earth, the highest employment he could obtain was that of a shepherd.”

“Pooh,” replied my fair friend — “Has it not been well said, that a handsome face is a letter of recommendation?”

“It is a Bellerophon letter, madam, and betrays while it recommends. Permit me to tell you the history of Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy.”

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was one of those models of perfection of which a human father and mother can produce but a single example. — Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was therefore an only son. He was such an amazing favourite with both his parents that they resolved to ruin him; accordingly, he was exceedingly spoiled, never annoyed by the sight of a book, and had as much plum-cake as he could eat. Happy would it have been for Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy could he always have eaten plum-cake, and remained a child. “Never,” says the Greek Tragedian, “reckon a mortal happy till you have witnessed his end.” A most beautiful creature was Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy! Such eyes — such hair — such teeth — such a figure — such manners, too, — and such an irresistible way of tying his neckcloth! When he was about sixteen, a crabbed old uncle represented to his parents the propriety of teaching Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy to read and write. Though not without some difficulty, he convinced them — for he was exceedingly rich, and riches in an uncle are wonderful arguments respecting the nurture of a nephew whose parents have nothing to leave him. So our hero was sent to school. He was naturally a very sharp, clever boy; and he came on surprisingly in his learning. The schoolmaster’s wife liked handsome children. — “What a genius will Master Ferdinand Fitzroy be, if you take pains with him!” said she, to her husband.

“Pooh, my dear, it is of no use to take pains with *him*.”

“And why, love?”

“Because he is a great deal too handsome ever to be a scholar.”

"That's true enough, my dear!" said the school-master's wife.

So, because he was too handsome to be a scholar, Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy remained the lag of the fourth form!

They took our hero from school.—"What profession shal he follow?" said his mother.

"My first cousin is the Lord Chancellor," said his father, "let him go to the bar."

The Lord Chancellor dined there that day: Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was introduced to him; his Lordship was a little, rough-faced, beetle-browed, hard-featured man, who thought beauty and idleness the same thing—and a parchment skin the legitimate complexion for a lawyer.

"Send him to the bar!" said he, "no, no, that will never do!— Send him into the army; he is much too handsome to become a lawyer."

"That's true enough, my Lord!" said the mother. So they bought Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy a cornetcy in the — — Regiment of Dragoons.

Things are not learned by inspiration. Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy had never ridden at school, except when he was hoisted; he was, therefore, a very indifferent horseman; they sent him to the riding-school, and everybody laughed at him.

"He is a d——d ass!" said Cornet Horsephiz, who was very ugly; "A horrid puppy!" said Lieutenant St. Squintem, who was still uglier; "If he does not ride better, he will disgrace the regiment!" said Captain Rivalhate, who was very good-looking; "If he does not ride better, we will cut him!" said Colonel Everdrill, who was a wonderful martinet; "I say, Mr. Bumpemwell

(to the riding-master), make that youngster ride less like a miller's sack."

"Pooh, sir, *he* will never ride better."

"And why the d—I will he not?"

"Bless you, Colonel, he is a great deal too handsome for a cavalry officer!"

"True!" said Cornet Horsephiz.

"Very true!" said Lieutenant St. Squintem.

"We must cut him!" said the Colonel.

And Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was accordingly cut.

Our hero was a youth of susceptibility—he quitted the — regiment, and challenged the Colonel. The Colonel was killed!

"What improper behaviour in Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy!" said the Colonel's relations.

"Very true!" said the world.

The parents were in despair! — They were not rich; but our hero was an only son, and they sponged hard upon the crabbed old uncle!

"He is very clever," said they both, "and may do yet."

So they borrowed some thousands from the uncle, and bought his beautiful nephew a seat in Parliament.

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was ambitious, and desirous of retrieving his character. He fagged like a dragon—conned pamphlets and reviews—got Ricardo by heart—and made notes on the English Constitution.

He rose to speak.

"What a handsome fellow!" whispered one member.

"Ah, a coxcomb!" said another.

"Never do for a speaker!" said a third, very audibly.

And the gentlemen on the opposite benches sneered and *heared!*—Impudence is only indigenious in Milesia, and an orator is not made in a day. Discouraged by his reception, Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy grew a little embarrassed.

“Told you so!” said one of his neighbours.

“Fairly broke down!” said another.

“Too fond of his hair to have anything in his head,” said a third, who was considered a wit.

“Hear, hear!” cried the gentlemen on the opposite benches.

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy sat down—he had not shone; but, in justice, he had not failed. Many a first-rate speaker had made a less flourishing commencement; and many a county member had been declared a phoenix of promise upon half his merit.

Not so, thought the heroes of corn laws.

“Your Adonises never make orators!” said a crack speaker with a wry nose.

“Nor men of business either,” added the chairman of a committee, with a face like a kangaroo’s.

“Poor devil!” said the civilest of the set. “He’s a deuced deal too handsome for work! By Jove, he is going to speak again—this will never do; we must cough him down!”

And Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was accordingly coughed down.

Our hero was now seven or eight and twenty, handsomer than ever, and the admiration of all the young ladies at Almack’s.

“We have nothing to leave you,” said the parents, who had long spent their fortune, and now lived on the credit of having once enjoyed it.—“You

are the handsomest man in London; you must marry an heiress."

"I will," said Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy.

Miss Helen Convolvulus was a charming young lady, with a hare-lip and six thousand a-year. To Miss Helen Convolvulus then our hero paid his addresses.

Heavens! what an uproar her relations made about the matter. "Easy to see his intentions," said one: "a handsome fortune-hunter, who wants to make the best of his person!"—"handsome is that handsome does," says another; "he was turned out of the army, and murdered his Colonel;"—"never marry a beauty," said a third;—"he can admire none but himself;" will have so many mistresses," said a fourth;—"make you perpetually jealous," said a fifth;—"spend your fortune," said a sixth; "and break your heart," said a seventh.

Miss Helen Convolvulus was prudent and wary. She saw a great deal of justice in what was said; and was sufficiently contented with liberty and six thousand a-year, not to be highly impatient for a husband; but our heroine had no aversion to a lover; especially to so handsome a lover as Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy. Accordingly she neither accepted nor discarded him; but kept him on hope, and suffered him to get into debt with his tailor, and his coachmaker, on the strength of becoming Mr. Fitzroy Convolvulus. Time went on, and excuses and delays were easily found; however, our hero was sanguine, and so were his parents. A breakfast at Chiswick, and a putrid fever, carried off the latter, within one week of each other; but not till they had blessed Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, and rejoiced that they had left him so well provided for.

Now, then, our hero depended solely upon the crabbed old uncle and Miss Helen Convolvulus;—the former, though a baronet and a satirist, was a banker and a man of business:—he looked very distastefully at the Hyperion curls and white teeth of Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy.

“If I make you my heir,” said he—“I expect you will continue the bank.”

“Certainly, sir!” said the nephew.

“Humph!” grunted the uncle, “a pretty fellow for a banker!”

Debtors grew pressing to Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, and Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy grew pressing to Miss Helen Convolvulus. “It is a dangerous thing,” said she, timidly, “to marry a man so admired, — will you always be faithful?”

“By heaven!” cried the lover—

“Heigho!” sighed Miss Helen Convolvulus, and Lord Rufus Pumilion entering, the conversation was changed.

But the day of the marriage was fixed; and Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy bought a new curricie. By Apollo, how handsome he looked in it! A month before the wedding-day the uncle died. Miss Helen Convolvulus was quite tender in her condolences — “Cheer up, my Ferdinand,” said she, “for your sake, I have discarded Lord Rufus Pumilion!” “Adorable condescension!” cried our hero; “but Lord Rufus Pumilion is only four feet two, and has hair like a peony.”

“All men are not so handsome as Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy!” was the reply.

Away goes our hero, to be present at the opening of his uncle’s will.

“I leave,” said the testator (who, I have before said,

was a bit of a satirist), "my share of the bank, and the whole of my fortune, legacies excepted, to"—(here Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy wiped his beautiful eyes with a cambric handkerchief, exquisitely *brodé*)—"my natural son, John Spriggs, an industrious, pains-taking youth, who will do credit to the bank. I did once intend to have made my nephew Ferdinand my heir; but so curly a head can have no talent for accounts. I want my successor to be a man of business, not beauty; and Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy is a great deal too handsome for a banker; his good looks will, no doubt, win him any heiress in town. Meanwhile, I leave him, to buy a dressing-case, a thousand pounds."

"A thousand devils!" cried Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, banging out of the room. He flew to his mistress. She was not at home. "Lies," says the Italian proverb, "have short legs, but truths, if they are unpleasant, have terribly long ones! The next day Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy received a most obliging note of dismissal.

"I wish you every happiness," said Miss Helen Convolvulus, in conclusion—"but my friends are right; you are much too handsome for a husband!"

And the week following, Miss Helen Convolvulus became Lady Rufus Pumilion!

"Alas! sir," said the bailiff, as a day or two after the dissolution of Parliament, he was jogging along with Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, in a hackney-coach bound to the King's Bench,—“Alas! sir, what a pity it is to take so handsome a gentleman to prison!”

THE NEW PHÆDO,

OR

CONVERSATIONS ON THINGS HUMAN AND DIVINE,
WITH ONE CONDEMNED.

Τί οὖν δὴ ἔστιν ἅττα εἶπεν ὁ ἀνήρ πρὸ τοῦ θανάτου; καὶ πῶς ἐλευνά; ἠδέως λαῶν ἂν ἀκούσασαιμι.

Plat. Phæd. I.

I HAVE always loved the old form of Dialogue; not, indeed, so much for investigating truth, as for speaking of truths after an easy yet not uncritical or hasty fashion. More familiar than the Essay: more impressed with the attraction of individual character, the Dialogue has also the illustrious examples of old — to associate the class to which it belongs with no commonplace or ignoble recollections. It may perhaps be still possible to give to the lighter and less severe philosophy, a form of expression at once dramatic and unpedantic. I have held, of late, some conversations, that do not seem to me altogether uninteresting with a man whom I have long considered of a singular and original character. I have obtained his permission to make these conversations public. They are necessarily of a desultory character — they embrace a variety of topics — they are marked and individualized only by that poetical and half-fantastic philosophy which belongs to my friend, and that melancholy colouring which befits a picture that has Death in the

background. If they should appear now too florid — now too careless — in their diction, — I can only say that they faithfully represent the tone of conversation, that in excited moments is the characteristic of the principal speaker. — Would that, while I retain the inanimate words, I could convey to the reader the aspect, the expression, the smile, the accents low and musical, that lent their music all its charm. As it is, they would remain altogether untold, were it not for my friend's conviction that the seal is set upon the limit of his days, and did I not see sufficient evidence in his appearance to forbid me to hope that he can linger many months beyond the present date. To his mind, whatever be its capacities, its aspirings, all matured and solid offspring is forbidden. These fugitive tokens of all he acquired, or thought, or felt, are, if we read aright human probabilities, the sole testimony that he will leave behind him; not a monument, — but at least a few leaves scattered upon his grave. I feel a pain in writing the above words, but will he? — No, or he has wronged himself. He looks from the little inn of his mortality, and anticipates the long summer journey before him; he repines not to-day that he must depart to-morrow.

On Saturday last, November 13th, I rode to L——'s habitation, which is some miles from my own home. The day was cold enough, but I found him with the windows of his room open, and feeding an old favourite in the shape of a squirrel, that had formerly been a tame companion. L——, on arriving at his present abode, had released it; but it came from the little copse in front of the windows every day to see its former master, and to receive some proof of remembrance from his good natured hospitality.

CONVERSATION THE FIRST.

The universality of evil in the world — Is no less visible in the lesser creatures than in man — The hope of perfectibility — Change in the temperament of L—— What is pleasant when recalled is often wearisome when acted — Love — The influence of custom on the connubial state — Society exacts in proportion as it is prepared to admire — L——'s sadness — Distinctions between wit and humour — Love of conversational argument less in vogue than formerly — Our inability to conceive the nature of our happiness hereafter — Anecdote of Fuseli — Plato — Quotation from Lord Herbert of Cherbury — The sentiment that our faculties cannot content themselves in this life visible in the works of genius — This sentiment more common in the English than the Continental poets — The spirituality of Goëthe's genius — Observation in the *Wilhelm Meister* — Scott's poetry greater than his prose — The painter Blake and his illustration of the *Night Thoughts* — Young — His gloom spreads only over this world, without darkening the next.

“AFTER all,” said L——, “though the short and simple annals of the poor are often miserable enough, no peasant lives so wretched a life as the less noble animals, whom we are sometimes tempted to believe more physically happy. Observe how uneasily this poor wretch looks around him. He is subject to perpetual terror from a large Angola cat, which my housekeeper chuses to retain in our domestic service, and which has twice very nearly devoured my nervous little hermit. In how large a proportion of creatures is existence composed of one ruling passion — the most agonizing of all sensations — *Fear!* No; human life is but a Rembrandt kind of picture at the best; yet we have no cause to think there are brighter colours in the brute world. Fish are devoured by intestinal worms; birds are subject to continual diseases, some of a very torturing nature. Look at yon ant-hill, what a melancholy mockery of our kind — what eternal wars between one ant-hill and another — what wrong — what violence! You know the red ants

invade the camps of the black, and bear off the young of these little negroes to be the slaves of the victors. When I see throughout all nature the same miseries, the same evil passions, whose effects are crime with us, but whose cause is instinct with the brutes, I confess there are moments when I feel a sort of despondence of our ultimate doom in this world: when I am almost inclined to surrender the noblest earthly hope that man ever formed, and which is solely the offspring of modern times — the hope of human perfectibility.”

A. You have inclined, then, to the eloquent madness of Condorcet and De Stael! You have believed, then, in spite of the countless ages before us, in which the great successions of human kind are recorded by the Persian epitome of Universal History, “They were born, they were wretched, they died!” — you have believed, despite so long, so uniform, so mournful an experience, despite, too, our physical conformation, which, even in the healthiest and the strongest, subjects the body to so many afflictions, and therefore the temper to so many infirmities — you have believed that we yet may belie the past, cast off the slough of crimes, and gliding into the full light of knowledge, become as angels in the sight of God — you have believed, in a word, that even on this earth, by progressing in wisdom we may progress to perfection.

L. What else does the age we live in betoken? Look around; not an inanimate object, not a block of wood, not a bolt of iron,

“But doth suffer an *earth-change*
Into something rich and strange.”

Wherever man applies his intellect, behold how he triumphs. What marvellous improvements in every art,

every ornament, every luxury of life! Why not these improvements ultimately in life itself? Are we “the very fiend’s Archmock,” that we can reform every thing, save that which will alone enable us to *enjoy* our victory — *the human heart*? In vain we grasp all things without, if we have no command over the things within. No! Institutions are mellowing into a brighter form; with Institutions the Character will expand: it will swell from the weak bonds of our foibles and our vices; and if we are fated never to become perfect, we shall advance at least, and eternally, towards perfectibility. The world hath had two Saviours — one divine, and one human; the first was, the Founder of our religion, the second the propagator of our knowledge. The second, and I utter nothing profane, it ministers to the first — the second is the might of the PRESS. By that, the Father of all safe revolutions, the Author of all permanent reforms — by that, man will effect what the First ordained — the reign of peace, and the circulation of love among the great herd of man.

A. Our conversation has fallen on a topic graver than usual; but these times give, as it were, a solemn and prophetic tone to all men who *think*, and are not yet summoned to act. I feel as if I stood behind a veil stretched across another and an unknown world, and waited in expectation, and yet in awe, the hand that was to tear it away.

L. Ay, I envy you at times (but not always), the long and bright career, that, for the first time in the world, is opened to a wise man’s ambition, you may live to tread it, you have activity and ardour; and, whether you fall or rise, the step forward you will at least adventure. But I am a bird chained, and the moment *my*

chain is broken my course is heavenward and not destined to the earth. After all, what preacher of human vanities is like the Flesh, which is yet their author? Two years ago my limbs were firm, my blood buoyant — how boundless was my ambition! Now my constitution is gone — and so perish my desires of glory. You and I, A..., entered the world together; —

A. Yes, — yet with what different tempers!

L. True: you were less veritable, more reserved, more solidly ambitious, than myself; your tone of mind was more solemn, mine more eager; life has changed our dispositions, because it has altered our frames. That was a merry year, our first of liberty and pleasure! — but when the sparkle leaves the cup, how flat is the draught; society is but the tinkling cymbal, and the gallery of pictures, the moment we discover that it hath no love. What makes us so wise as our follies? — the intrigues, the amours, that degrade us while enacted, enlighten us when they are passed away. We have been led, as it were, by the pursuit of a glittering insect to the summit of a mountain, and we see the Land of Life stretched below.

A. Yet shall we not exclaim, with Boileau,

“Souvent de tous nos maux la raison est le pire?”

These delusions were pleasant —

L. To remember — they were wearisome and unprofitable while we actually indulged them; a man plays the game of women with manifold disadvantages if he bring any heart to the contest: if he discover, with Marmontel's Alcibiades, that he has not been really loved, how deeply is he wounded — *if he have* been really loved, how bitterly may he repent! Society is at war

with all love except the connubial; and that love, how soon does it pass into the atmosphere of commonplace! It loses its charm with me, the moment I remark, which I always do remark, that though the good pair may be very kind to each other on the whole, they have sacrificed respect to that most cruel of undeceivers, Custom. They have some little gnawing jest at each other; they have found out every mutual weakness; and, what is worse, they have found out the sting to it. "The breath of the south can shake the little rings of the vine," and the picture preserves no more "the colours and the beauties of kindness."* The only interesting and, if I may contradict Rochefoucault, the only *delicious* marriages are those in which the husband is wise enough to see very little of his wife; the absence of the morning prevents *ennui* in the evening, and frequent separations conquer the evil charm of Custom.

A. Thus it is that an ardent imagination so often unfits us for the real enjoyments of domestic attachment — custom blunts the imagination more than it wearies the temper. But you had some bright moments in your first year of the world — I remember you the admired of all, the admirer of how many!

L. I was young, rich, well born; and I had an elastic and gay temper. See all my claims to notice! But the instant my high spirits forsook me, society cooled. It is not quite true that adventitious claims alone, unless of the highest order, give one a permanent place in the charmed circle of the Armidas of our age. Society is a

* Jeremy Taylor, in that most divine sermon on the "Marriage Ring," which contains more knowledge of the mysteries of love and the true philtres wherewith it is preserved, than can be found in all that the love poets ever wrote.

feast where every man must contribute his quota, and when our seat at the table is noted as the home of silence and gloom, we are soon left to enjoy our meditations alone. Besides, the secret of fashion is to surprise, and never to disappoint. If you have no reputation for wit, you may succeed without it; if you have, people do not forgive you for falling below their expectations; they attribute your silence to your disdain; they see the lion, and are contented to go away; to abuse him, and to see him no more.

A. I have often been surprised to remark you so contented with silence, whom I have known in some circles so — shall I say? — brilliant.

L. There is no mystery in my content, it is in spite of myself. I have always preached up the *morality* of being gay; if I do not practise it, it is because I cannot. About two years ago my spirits suddenly fled me. In vain I endeavoured to rally them: in vain to force myself into the world — in vain “I heard music, and the wooed smile of women;” a sort of stupor seized and possessed me. — I have never in mixed society been able, since that time, to shake it off; since then, too, I have slowly wasted away without any visible disease, and I am now literally dying of no disorder but the inability to live.

Speaking of wit, I met at a dinner a few months ago M—— and W—— I——, and two or three other persons, eminent, and deservedly, both for wit and for humour. One of them, I think M——, said, somebody or other had wit but no humour; it was asserted, on the other hand, that the person spoken of had humour but no wit. I asked the disputants to define the difference between wit and humour, and of course they were struck dumb.

A. No rare instance of the essence of dispute, which consists in making every one allow what nobody understands.

L. Perhaps so; but really, to understand a thing thoroughly, is less necessary than you or I think for. Each of the disputants knew very well what he meant, but he could not explain; the difference was clear enough to serve his own mind as a guide, but, not being analyzed, it was not clear enough to be of use to others. Wit is the philosopher's quality, by the way — humour the poet's; the nature of wit relates to things, humour to persons. Wit utters brilliant truths, humour delicate deductions from the knowledge of *individual* character: Rochefoucault is witty, the Vicar of Wakefield is the model of humour.

A. While you define I could dispute your definition — shall I?

L. Not in conversation, we shall end in talking nonsense; metaphysical disputes on paper are very well, but spoken disputes are only good in special pleading.

A. When we were at Cambridge together, do you remember how the young pedants of our time were wont to consider that all intellect consisted in puzzling or setting down each other.

L. Ay, they thought us very poor souls, I fancy, for being early wise, and ridiculing what they thought so fine; but that loss of conversational argument is less the mode now than in our grandfather's time; then it made a celebrity. You see the intellectual Nestors of that time still very anxious to engage you. G—— is quite offended with me for refusing to argue Helvetius's system with him in a close carriage.

“Strangulat inclusus dolor atque exæstuat intus.”

A. The true spirit of conversation consists in building on another man's observation, not overturning it; thus, the wit says, "apropos of your remark;" and the disagreeable man exclaims, "I cannot agree with you."

Here one discourse was interrupted by the entrance of a female relation of L——'s; she came with his medicine, for though he considers himself beyond human aid, he does not affect to despise the more sanguine hopes of those attached to him. "Let them think," said he, that they have done all they could for me: my boat is on the water, it is true, but it would be ill-natured if I did not loiter a little on the strand. It seems to me, by the way, a singular thing that, among persons about to die, we note so little of that anxious, intense, restless curiosity to know what will await them beyond the grave, which, with me, is powerful enough to conquer regret. Even those the most resigned to God, and the most assured of Revelation, know not, nor can dream of the *nature* of the life, of the happiness, prepared for them. They know not *how* the senses are to be refined and sublimated into the faculties of a Spirit; they know not *how* they shall live, and move, and have their being; they know not whom they shall see, or what they shall hear; they know not the colour, the capacity of the glories with which they are to be brought face to face. Among the many mansions, which is to be theirs? All this, the matter of grand and of no irreverent conjecture; all this, it seems to me, so natural to revolve — all this I revolve so often, that the conjecture incorporates itself into a passion, and I am impatient to pass the Ebon Gate, and be lord of the Eternal Secret. Thus, as I approach nearer to death, Nature, and the Face of Things, assume a more solemn and august aspect. I look upon the leaves, and the grass,

and the water with a sentiment that is scarcely mournful; and yet I know not what else it may be called, for it is deep, grave, and passionate, though scarcely sad. I desire, as I look on those, the ornaments and children of earth, to know whether, indeed, such things I shall see no more — whether they have no likeness, no archetype in the world in which my future home is to be cast; or whether they *have* their images above, only wrought in a more wondrous and delightful mould. Whether, in the strange land that knoweth neither season nor labour, there will not be, among all its glories, something familiar. Whether the heart will not recognise somewhat that it has known, somewhat of “the blessed household tones,” somewhat of that which the clay loved and the spirit is reluctant to disavow. Besides, to one who, like us, has made a thirst and a first love of knowledge, what intensesness, as well as divinity, is there in that peculiar curiosity which relates to the extent of the knowledge we are to acquire! What, after all, is Heaven but a transition, from dim guesses and blind struggling with a mysterious and adverse fate, to the fulness of a wisdom — from ignorance, in a word, to knowledge — but knowledge of what order? Thus, even books have something weird and mystic in their speculations, which, some years ago, my spirit was too encumbered with its frame to recognise — for what of those speculations shall be true — what false? How far has our wisdom gone toward the arcanum of a true morality; how near has some daring and erratic reason approached to the secret of circulating happiness round the world. Shall He, whom we now condemn as a visionary, be discovered to have been the inspired prophet of our blinded and deafened race; and shall He, whom we now honour as the lofty saint, or the profound

teacher, be levelled to the propagator and sanctifier of narrow prejudices; the reasoner in a little angle of the great and scarce-discovered universe of Truth; the moral Chinese, supposing that his Empire fills the map of the world, and placing under an interdict the improvements of a nobler enlightenment?

A. But to those — and how many are there? — who doubt of the future world itself, this solace of conjecture must be but a very languid and chilled exertion of the mind.

L. I grant it. I am not referring to the herd, whether of one faith or another, or of none. I have often pleased myself with recalling an anecdote of Fuseli — a wonderful man, whose capacities in this world were only a tithe part developed; in every thing of his, in his writings as well as his paintings, you see the mighty intellect struggling forth with labour and pain, and with only a partial success; and feeling this himself — feeling this contest between the glorious design and the crippled power — I can readily penetrate into his meaning in the reply I am about to repeat. Some coxcomb said to him, “Do you really believe, Mr. Fuseli, that I have a soul?” — “I don’t know, sir,” said Fuseli, “whether *you* have a soul or no, but, by God! I know that *I* have.” And really, were it not for the glorious and all-circling compassion expressed by our faith, it would be a little difficult to imagine that the soul, that title-deed to immortality, were equal in all — equal in the dull, unawakened clod of flesh which performs the offices that preserve itself, and no more, and in the bright and winged natures with which we sometimes exalt our own, and which seem to have nothing human about them but the garments (to use the

Athenian's * familiar metaphor,) which they wear away. You will smile at my pedantry, but one of the greatest pleasures I anticipate in arriving *at home* — as the Moravian sectarians so endearingly call Heaven — is to see Plato, and learn if he had ever rested, as he himself imagined, and I am willing to believe, in a brighter world before he descended to this. So bewitching is the study of that divine and most christian genius, that I have often felt a sort of jealous envy of those commentators who have devoted years to the contemplation of that mystical and unearthly philosophy. My ambition — had I enjoyed health — would never have suffered me to have become so dreaming a watcher over the lamp in another's tomb: but my imagination would have placed me in an ideal position, that my restlessness forbade me in reality. This activity of habit, yet love of literary indolence — this planning of schemes and conquests in learning, from which one smile from Enterprise would decoy me, when scarce begun, made C — call me, not unaptly, “the most extraordinary reader he ever knew — *in theory*.” I see, by the by, that you are leaning upon the “Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury” — will you open the page in which I have set a mark? We were speaking of the soul, and that page expresses a very beautiful, and eloquent, if not very deep sentiment, on the subject. Will you read it?

A. Certainly, — “As in my mother's womb, † that formatrix which formed my eyes, ears, and other senses, did not intend them for that dark and noisome

* Socrates,

†) I am not sure that I retail this passage *verbatim*. I committed it to memory, and (writing in the country) I cannot now obtain the book by which to collate my recollection.

place — but, as being conscious of a better life, made them as fitting organs to apprehend and perceive those things which occur in this world, — so I believe, since my coming into this world, my soul hath formed or produced certain faculties, which are almost as useless for this life as the above named senses were for the mother's womb; and these faculties are Hope, Faith, Love, and Joy, since they never rest or fix on any transitory or perishing object in this world — as extending themselves to something farther than can be here given, and, indeed, acquiescing only in the perfect Eternal and Infinite."

L. It is fine — is it not?

A. Yes. It is a proof that the writer *has* felt that vague something which carries us beyond the world. To discover the evidence of that feeling, is one of my first tasks in studying a great author. How solemnly it burns though Shakspeare! with what a mournful and austere grandeur it thrills through the yet diviner Milton! how peculiarly it has stamped itself in the pages of our later poets — Wordsworth, Shelley, and even the more alloyed and sensual, and less benevolent verse of Byron. But this feeling is rarely perceptible in any of the Continental poets, except, if I am informed rightly, the Germans.

L. Ay; Goëthe has it. To me there is something very mysterious and spiritual about Goëthe's genius — even that homely and plain sense with which, in common with all master-minds, he so often instructs us, and which is especially evident in his Memoirs, is the more effective from some delicate and subtle beauty of sentiment with which it is always certain to be found in juxtaposition.

A. I remember a very delicate observation of his in "Wilhelm Meister," a book which had a very marked influence upon my own mind; and though the observation may seem commonplace, it is one of a nature very peculiar to Goëthe: "When," he remarks, "we have despatched a letter to a friend which does not find him, but is brought back to us, what a singular emotion is produced by breaking open our own seal, and conversing with our altered self as with a third person."

L. There is something ghost-like in the conference, something like a commune with one's wraith.

A. You look in vain among the works of Scott for a remark like that.

L. Is the accusation fair? You look in vain in the "Wilhelm Meister" for the gorgeous painting of „Ivanhoe." But I confess myself no idolater of the "Waverley" novels; nor can I subscribe to the justice of advancing them beyond the wonderful poetry that preceded them. All Scott's merits seem to me especially those of a poet; and when you come to his prose writings, you have the same feelings, the same descriptions, the same scenes, with the evident disadvantage of being stripped of a style of verse peculiarly emphatic, burning, and original. Where, in all the novels, is there a scene that, for rapidity, power, and the true lightning of the poet, if I may use the phrase, equals that in "Rokeby," not often quoted now, in which Bertrand Risingham enters the church —

"The outmost crowd have heard a sound,
Like horse's hoof on harden'd ground," &c.

Rokeby Canto 6, stanza 32.

A scene, very celebrated for its compression and bold painting, is to be found in the "Bride of Abydos" —

"One bound he made, and gain'd the strand."

Bride of Abydos, Canto 2, stanza 24.

Compare the two. How markedly the comparison is in favour of Scott. In a word, he combines in his poetry all the merits of his prose; and the demerits of the latter — the trite moral, the tame love, the want of sympathy with the great herd of man, the aristocratic and kingly prejudice; either vanish from the poetry or assume a graceful and picturesque garb. I venture to prophesy that the world will yet discover that it has overrated one proof of his mighty genius, at the expense of injustice to another. Yes, his poetry burns with its own light. A reviewer in the "Edinbro'" observes, that "in spirit, however different in style, Shakspeare and Scott convey the best idea of Homer." The resemblance of Shakspeare to Homer I do not, indeed, trace; but that of Scott to the Great Greek, I have often and often noted. Scott would have translated Homer wonderfully, and in his own ballad metre.

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A. Of all enthusiasts, the painter Blake seems to have been the most remarkable. With what a hearty faith he believed in his faculty of seeing spirits and conversing with the dead! And what a delightful vein of madness it was — with what exquisite verses it inspired him!

L. And what engravings! I saw, a few days ago, a copy of the "Night Thoughts," which he had illus-

trated in a manner at once so grotesque, so sublime — now by so literal an interpretation, now by so vague and disconnected a train of invention, that the whole makes one of the most astonishing and curious productions which ever balanced between the conception of genius and the raving of insanity. I remember two or three of his illustrations, but they are not the most remarkable. To these two fine lines —

“’Tis greatly wise to talk with our past Hours,
And ask them what report they bore to heaven;”

he has given the illustration of one sitting, and with an earnest countenance conversing with a small, shadowy shape at his knee, while other shapes, of a similar form and aspect, are seen gliding heavenward, each with a scroll in its hands. The effect is very solemn. Again, the line —

“Till Death, that mighty hunter, earths them all,”

is bodied forth by a grim savage with a huge spear, cheering on fiendish and ghastly hounds, one of which has just torn down, and is griping by the throat, an unfortunate fugitive: the face of the hound is unutterably death-like.

The verse —

“We censure Nature for a span too short,”

obtains an illustration, literal to ridicule. — A bearded man of gigantic stature is spanning an infant with his finger and thumb. Scarcely less literal, but more impressive, is the engraving of the following: —

“When Sense runs savage, broke from Reason’s chain,
And sings false peace till smother’d by the pall!”

You perceive a young female savage, with long locks, wandering alone, and exulting — while above, two bodiless hands expand a mighty pall, that appears about to fall upon the unconscious rejoicer.

A. Young was fortunate. He seems almost the only poet who has had his mere metaphors illustrated and made corporeal.

L. What wonderful metaphors they are; sometimes trite, familiar, common-place — sometimes exaggerated and fantastic, but often how ineffably sublime! Milton himself has not surpassed them. But Young is not done justice to, popular as he is. He has never yet had a critic to display and make current his most peculiar and emphatic beauties.

A. We can, to be sure, but ill supply the place of such a critic; but let us, some day or other, open his "Night Thoughts" together, and make our comments.

L. It will be a great pleasure to me. Young is, of all poets, the one to be studied by a man who is about to break the golden chains that bind him to the world — his gloom, then, does not appal or deject: for it is a gloom that settles on the earth we are about to leave, and casts not a single shadow over the heaven which it contrasts — the dark river of his solemn and dread images sweeps the thoughts onward to Eternity. We have no desire even to look behind; the ideas he awakens are, in his own words, "the pioneers of Death;" they make the road broad and clear; they bear down those "arrests and barriers," the Affections; the goal, started and luminous with glory, is placed full before us; every thing else, with which he girds our path, afflicts and saddens. We recoil, we

shudder at life; and, as children that in tears and agony at some past peril bound forward to their mother's knee, we hasten, as our comfort and our parent, to the bosom of Death.

CONVERSATION THE SECOND.

L—'s increase of illness — Remarks on a passage in Bacon — Advantages in the belief of immortality — An idea in the last conversation followed out — A characteristic of the sublime — Feelings in one dying at the restlessness of life around.

WHEN I called on L — — the third day after the conversation I have attempted to record, though with the partial success that must always attend the endeavour to retail dialogue on paper, I found him stretched on his sofa, and evidently much weaker than when I had last seen him. He had suffered the whole night from violent spasms in the chest, and, though now free from pain, was labouring under the exhaustion which follows it. But nothing could wholly conquer in him a certain highwrought, rather than cheerful, elasticity of mind; and in illness it was more remarkable than in health; for I know not how it was, but in illness his thoughts seemed to stand forth more prominent, to grow more transparent, than they were wont in the ordinary state of the body. He had also of late, until his present malady, fallen into an habitual silence, from which only at moments he could be aroused. Perhaps now, however, when all his contemplations were bounded to a goal apparently near at hand, and were tinged with the grave (though in him not gloomy) colours common to the thoughts of death — that secret

yearning for sympathy — *that desire to communicate* — inherent in man, became the stronger, for the short date that seemed allowed for its indulgence. Wishes long hoarded, reflections often and deeply revolved, finding themselves cut off from the distant objects which they had travailed to acquire, seemed wisely to lay down their burthen, and arrest their course upon a journey they were never destined to complete. “I have been reading,” said L—— (after we had conversed for some minutes about himself) — “that divine work on ‘The Advancement of Learning.’ What English writer (unless it be Milton in his prose works) ever lifted us from this low earth like Bacon? How shrink before his lofty sentences all the meagre consolation and trite common-place of lecturers and preachers, — it is, as he has beautifully expressed it, upon no *‘waxen wings’* that he urges the mind through the great courses of heaven. He makes us feel less earthly in our desires, by making us imagine ourselves *wiser*, — the love of a divine knowledge inspires and exalts us. And so nobly has he forced even our ignorance to contribute towards enlarging the soul — towards increasing our longings after immortality — that he never leaves us, like other philosophers, with a sense of self-littleness and dissatisfaction. With the same hand that limits our progress on earth, he points to the illimitable glories of heaven. Mark how he has done this in the passage I will read to you. As he proceeds in his sublime vindication of Knowledge, ‘from the discredits and disgraces it hath received all from ignorance, but ignorance, severally acquired, appearing sometimes in the zeal and jealousy of divines: sometimes in the severity and arrogance of politicians; sometimes in the errors and imperfections

of learned men themselves;’ — proceeding, I say, in this august and majestic defence, he states the legitimate limits of knowledge, as follows: — ‘first, that we do not so place our felicity in knowledge, as to forget our mortality; secondly, that we make application of our knowledge, to give ourselves repose and contentment, not distaste or repining; thirdly, that we do not presume, by the contemplation of Nature, to attain to the mysteries of God.’ After speaking of the two first limits, he comes as follows to the last. ‘And for the third point, it deserveth to be a little stood upon, and not to be lightly passed over, for if any man shall think, by view and inquiry into these sensible and material things, to attain that light, whereby he may reveal unto himself the nature or will of God, then indeed is he spoiled by vain philosophy; for the contemplation of God’s creatures and works produced (*having regard to the works and creatures themselves*) knowledge; but (*having regard to God*) no perfect knowledge, but wonder, which is broken knowledge. And therefore (note how wonderfully this image is translated, and how beautifully applied), it was most aptly said by one of Plato’s school, ‘that the sense of man carrieth a resemblance with the sun, which, as we see, openeth and revealeth all the terrestrial globe; but then again it obscureth the stars and celestial globe: so doth the sense discover natural things, but it darkeneth and shutteth up divine.’” Tell me now, and speak frankly, not misled by the awe and antique splendour of the language alone, — tell me whether you do not feel, in the above passages, not humbled by your ignorance, but transported and raised by its very conviction; for, by leaving the mysteries of heaven, and heaven *alone*; un-

penetrated by our knowledge, what do we, in reality, but direct the secret and reverent desires of our hearts to that immortal life, which shall put the crown upon the great ambition of knowledge, and reveal those mysteries which are shut out from us in this narrow being? Here then there is nothing to lower our imagination, — nothing to chill us in the ardour of our best aspirings, — nothing to disgust us with the bounds of knowledge, or make us recoil upon ourselves with the sense of vanity, of emptiness, of desolation. It is this — the peculiar prerogative of the conviction of our inborn immortality, to take away from us that bitterness at the checks and arrests of knowledge, of which the wise of all ages have complained, — to give wings to our thoughts at the very moment they are stopped on their earthly course, — to ennoble us from ourselves at the moment when self languishes and droops: it is this prerogative, I say, which has always seemed to me the greatest advantage which a thinking man, who believes in our immortality, has over one who does not. And though, fortunately for mankind, and for all virtue, the time is rapidly passing away for attempting to measure the conduct of others by the proportion in which their opinions resemble our own, yet it must be confessed, that he who claims this prerogative has a wonderful advantage over him who rejects it — in the acquisition of noble and unworldly thoughts — in the stimulus to wisdom, and the exalting of the affections, the visions, and the desires! It seems to me as if not only the Form, but the SOUL of Man was made “to walk erect, and to look upon the stars.”

A. — (After some pause.) — Whether or not that it arises from this sentiment, common (however secretly

nursed) to the generality of men; this sentiment, that the sublimest sources of emotion and of wisdom remain as yet unknown, there is one very peculiar characteristic in all genius of the highest order; viz. even its loftiest attempts impress us with the feeling, that a vague but glorious "SOMETHING" inspired or exalted the attempt *and yet remains unexpressed*. The effect is like that of the spire, which, by insensibly tapering into heaven, owes its pathos and its sublimity to the secret thoughts with which that heaven is associated.

L. Yes; and this, which, you say justly, is the characteristic of the loftiest order of genius, is that token and test of sublimity so especially insisted upon by the ancients, who, perhaps, in consequence of the great scope left by their religion to inquiry, were more impressed with the sentiment we speak of, than is common to the homelier sense, and the satisfied and quiet contemplations of the moderns. The illustrious friend of Zenobia * has made it a characteristic of the true sublime, to leave behind it something more to be contemplated than is expressed; and again, Pliny, speaking of painters, observes, I think of Timanthes, "that in his works something more † than was painted was understood, and that when his art was at the highest, the genius was beyond the art." It is this which especially designates the poetry of Young.

A. Whom we were to criticise.

L. Yes; but not to-day. My mood is brighter than that of the poet, whose soul walketh in the valley

* Longin. Sect. 7.

† "In unius hujus operibus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur; et cum sit ars summa, ingenium tamen ultra artem est."

of *the shadow* of death. Let us enter upon our task, when we can both feel thoroughly satisfied with the consolations of his gloom, and forget the darkness around, in the stars "which he calls to listen." * What news is there stirring in his lower world?

Here we talked for some time on the aspect of affairs, the administration, the disturbances in the country. † I told him of a distinguished contemporary of ours at Cambridge, who had been just returned to Parliament. L—— spoke at large on his own ambition to enter a public career. "I think," said he, "if I had even at this moment the opportunity to do so, the activity, the zeal, the stimulus, which the change would produce, might yet save my life. I feel now, as if certain sources of emotion dammed up, were wasting my heart away with a suppressed ebb and flow, as if all my keenest energies were rusting in their scabbard. I should not, were I plunged into action, have time to die. As it is, I feel, like the old sage, who covered his face with his cloak, and sate himself down, waiting for death.

A. But why not enter public life then at once?

L. Look at me. Am I in a state to canvass some free borough? to ride here — to walk there — to disguise — to bustle — to feast — to flatter — to lie?

A. But your relation, Lord L——?

L. Has offered me a seat if I will support his party, the old Tories.

* "And call the stars to listen."

Young's Night Thoughts.

† Written in 1831, before the passing of the Reform Bill.

A. And your college friend, N— —?

F. Has forgotten me; yet none more than he will grieve, for an hour at least, when I am dead. Let me return to my image of the sage and his cloak, I have always thought it one of the most affecting anecdotes in history. When Pericles, hearing of the determination of the philosopher (who, you remember, was his preceptor, Anaxagoras), hastened to the spot where he sat, and tarried for the last release; he implored the sage in a late and unavailing grief to struggle with his approaching fate, and to baffle the gathering death. „Oh, Pericles,” said the old man, stung by the memory of long neglect, and in a feeble and dying voice, as he just lifted his face from his mantle, „they who need the lamp do not forget to feed it with oil”!

Returning to the excitement and the animation of the political world around; how strangely falls the sound of tumult on the ear of one who is about to die — how strange doth it seem to behold life so busy and death so near! It is this contrast which, I own, gives me the most mournful — though vague and reluctantly acknowledged — feelings that I experience; it gives me a dejection, an envy; my higher and more soaring thoughts desert me, I become sensible only of my weakness, of my want of use, in this world where all are buckling to their armour, and awaiting an excitation, an enterprise, and a danger. I remember all my old ambition — my former hopes — my energies — my anticipations; I see the great tides of action sweep over me, and behold myself not even wrestling with death, but feel it gather and darken upon me, unable to stir or to resist. I could compare myself to some neglected fountain in a ruined city: amidst the crumbling palaces of Hope,

which have fallen around me, the waters of life ooze away in silence and desolation.

L——'s voice faltered a little as he spoke, and his dog, whether, as I often think, there is in that animal an instinct which lets him know by a look, by a tone of voice, when the object of his wonderful fidelity and affection is sad at heart; his dog, an old pointer, that he had cherished for many years, and was no less his companion in the closet, than it had been in the chase, came up to him and licked his hand. I own this little incident affected me, and the tears rushed into my eyes. But I was yet more softened when I saw L——'s tears were falling fast over the honest countenance of the dog; I knew well what was passing in his mind — no womanly weakness — no repining at death; of all men he had suffered most, and felt most keenly, the neglect and perfidy of friends; and, at that moment, he was contrasting a thousand bitter remembrances with the simple affection of that humble companion. I never saw L—— *weep* before, though I have seen him in trying afflictions, and though his emotions are so easily excited that he never utters a noble thought, or reads a touching sentiment in poetry, but you may perceive a certain moisture in his eyes, and a quiver on his lips.

Our conversation drooped after this, and though I stayed with him for some hours longer, I do not remember anything else that day, worth repeating.

CONVERSATION THE THIRD.

The French worldly philosophers—The first step in wisdom is to learn to THINK, no matter how—Thought corrects itself—Brilliant writers LESS dangerous than dull ones—Why—Faults of certain philosophers—L, the respectful affection he excites—The heart turns from death—Passage in Bolingbroke—Private life does not afford a vent for all our susceptibilities—A touching thought in Milton's Latin Poems—Remarks on Byron, and the characteristics of a true poet for the present day—Portrait of a hero in the service of truth.

I CALLED on L — — the next day; K — —, one of the few persons he admits, was with him; they were talking on those writers who have directed their philosophy towards matters of the world; who have reduced wisdom into epigrams, and given the Goddess of the Grove and the Portico the dress of a lady of fashion. "Never, perhaps," said K — —, "did Virtue, despite the assertion of Plato, that we had only to behold in order to adore her, attract so many disciples to wisdom as Wit has done. How many of us have been first incited to reason, have first learned to think; to draw conclusions, to extract a moral from the follies of life, by some dazzling aphorism from Rochefoucault or La Bruyère! Point, like rhyme, seizes at once the memory and the imagination: for my own part, I own frankly, that I should never have known what it was to reflect—I should never have written on Political Economy—I should never have penetrated into the character of my rogue of a guardian, and saved my fortune by a timely act of prudence—I should never have chosen so good a wife—nay, I should never have been L — —'s friend, if I had not, one wet

day at Versailles, stumbled upon Rochefoucault's *Maxims*: from that moment *I thought*, and I thought very erroneously and very superficially for some time, but the habit of thinking, by degrees, cures the faults of its noviciateship; and I often bless Rochefoucault as the means which redeemed me from a life of extravagance and debauchery, from the clutches of a rascal, and made me fond of rational pursuits and respectable society. Yet how little would Rochefoucault's book seem, to the shallow declaimer on the heartlessness of its doctrines, calculated to produce so good an effect.

A. Yes, the faults of a brilliant writer are never dangerous on the long run, a thousand people read his work who would read no other; inquiry is directed to each of his doctrines, it is soon discovered what is sound and what is false; the sound become star-lights, and the false beacons. But your dull writer is little conned, little discussed. Debate, that great winnower of the corn from the chaff, is denied him; the student hears of him as an authority, reads him without a guide, imbibes his errors, and retails them as a proof of his learning. In a word, the dull writer does not attract to wisdom those indisposed to follow it: and to those who are disposed he bequeaths as good a chance of inheriting a blunder as a truth.

L. I will own to you very frankly that I have one objection to *beginning to think*, from the thoughts of these worldly inquirers. Notwithstanding Rochefoucault tells us himself, with so honest a gravity, that he had "les sentimens beaux," and that he approved "extrêmement les belles passions," his obvious tendency is not to ennoble; he represents the Tragi-comedy of the Great World, but he does not excite us to fill its grand parts;

he tells us some of the real motives of men, but he does not tell us also the better motives with which they are entwined, and by cultivating which they can be purified and raised. This is what I find, not to blame, but to lament, in most of the authors who have very shrewdly, and, with a felicitous and just penetration, unravelled the vices and errors of mankind. I find it in La Bruyère; in Rochefoucault, even in the more weak and tender Vauvenarges, whose merits have, I think, been so unduly extolled by Dugald Stewart; I find it in Swift, Fielding (admirable moralist as the latter indubitably is in all the lesser branches of morals), and, among the ancients, who so remarkable for the same want as the sarcastic and inimitable Lucian? But let us not judge hastily; this want of nobleness, so to speak, is not *necessarily* the companion of shrewdness. But mark, where we find the noble and the shrewd united, we acknowledge at once a genius of the *very highest* order; we acknowledge a Shakspeare, a Tacitus, a Cervantes.

A. Another characteristic of the order of writers we refer to is this—they are too apt to disregard books, and to write from their own experience; now an experience, backed upon some wide and comprehensive theory, is of incalculable value to Truth; but, where that theory is wanting, the experience makes us correct in minute points, but contracted, and therefore in error, on the whole; for error is but a view of *some* facts instead of a survey of *all*.

L. In a word, it is with philosophers as with politicians; the experience that guides the individuals must be no rule for the community. And here I remember a fine and just comparison of the Emperor Julian's: speaking of some one who derived knowledge from practice rather than principle, he compares him to an empiric who,

by practice, may cure one or two diseases with which he is familiar; but having no system, or theory of art, must necessarily be ignorant of the innumerable complaints which have not fallen under his personal observation. Yet *now*, when a man ventures to speak of a comprehensive and scientific theory, in opposition to some narrow and cramped practice, *he* who in reality is the physician —, *he* is exclaimed against as the quack.”

Shortly after this part of our conversation, K — — went away, and we talked on some matters connected with L — —’s private and household affairs. By degrees, while our commune grew more familiar and confidential, and while the shades of these long winter evenings gathered rapidly over us, as we sate alone by the fire, L — — spoke of some incidents in his early history—and I who had always felt a deep interest in even the smallest matter respecting him, and, despite our intimacy, was unacquainted with many particulars of his life, in which I fancied there must be something not unworthy recital, pressed him earnestly to give me a short and frank memoir of his actual and literary life. Indeed, I was anxious that some portion of the world should know as much as may now be known of one who is of no common clay, and who, though he has not numbered many years, and has passed some of those years in the dissipation and pleasure common to men of his birth and wealth, is now, at least, never mentioned by those who know him without a love bordering on idolatry, and an esteem more like the veneration we feel for some aged and celebrated philosopher, than the familiar attachment generally felt for those of our own years and of no public reputation.

“As to my early LIFE,” said L — —, smiling in answer to my urgent request, “I feel that it is but an echo of an echo. I do not refuse, however, to tell it you, such as it is; for it may give food to some observations from you more valuable than the events which excite them; and, as to some later epochs in my short career, it will comfort me, even while it wounds, to speak of them. Come to me, then, to-morrow, and I will recall in the meanwhile what may best merit repeating in the memoir you so inconsiderately ask for. But do not leave me yet, dear A — —. Sit down again—let us draw nearer to the fire—How many scenes have we witnessed in common—how many enterprises have we shared! let us talk of these, and to-morrow shall come *my* solitary history: self, self, the eternal self—let us run away from it one day more. Could you but know how forcibly it appears to me, that as life wanes the affections warm; I have observed this in many instances of *early* death; — early, for in the decay by years the heart outlives all its ties. As the physical parts stiffen, so harden the moral. But in youth, when all the Affections are green within us, they will not willingly perish; they stretch for their arms, as it were, from their ruined and falling prison-house—they yearn for expansion and release. ‘Is it’, as that divine, though often sullied nature, at once the luminary and the beacon to English statesmen, has somewhere so touchingly asked, ‘is it that we grow more tender as the moment of our great separation approaches, or is it that they who are to live together in another state (for friendship exists not but for the good) begin to feel more strongly that divine sympathy which is to be the great bond of their future society?’”*

* Bolingbroke’s Letters to Swift.

I could have answered this remark by an allusion to the change in the physical state; the relaxation of illness; the helplessness we feel when sick, and the sense of dependence, the desire to *lean somewhere*, that the debility of disease occasions. But I had no wish to chill or lower the imaginative turn of reasoning to which L—— was inclined, and after a little pause he continued: “For men who have ardent affections, there seems to me no medium between public life and dissatisfaction. In public life those affections find ample channel; they become benevolence, or patriotism, or the spirit of party—or, finally, attaching themselves to things, not persons, concentrate into ambition. But in private life, who, after the first enthusiasm of passion departs, who, possessed of a fervent and tender soul, is ever contented with the return it meets? A word, a glance, chills us; we ask for too keen a sympathy; we ourselves grow irritable that we find it not—the irritability offends, that is attributed to the temper which in reality is the weakness of the heart—accusation, dispute, coldness, succeed. We are flung back upon our own breasts, and so comes one good or one evil—we grow devout or we grow selfish. Denied vent among our fellows, the affections find a refuge in heaven, or they centre in a peevish and lonely contraction of heart, and self-love becomes literally, as the forgotten LEE has expressed it generally,

‘The axletree that darts through all the frame.’

This inevitable alternative is more especially to be noted in women; their affections are more acute than ours, so also is their disappointment. It is thus you see the credulous fondness of the devotee, or the fossilized heart of

the solitary crone, where, some thirty years back, you would have witnessed a soul running over with love for all things and the yearning to be loved again! Ah! why, why is it that no natures are made wholly alike? why is it that, of all blessings, we long the most for sympathy? and of all blessings it is that which none (or the exceptions are so scanty as not to avail) can say, after the experience of years and the trial of custom, that they have possessed. Milton, whose fate through life was disappointment — disappointment in his private ties and his public attachments—Milton, who has descended to an unthinking posterity as possessing a mind, however elevated, at least austere and harsh, has, in one of his early Latin poems, expressed this sentiment with a melancholy and soft pathos, not often found in the golden and Platonic richness of his youthful effusions in his own language —

‘Vix sibi quisque parem de millibus invenit unum;
Aut si fors dederit tandem non aspera votis
Illum inopina dies—qua non speraveris hora
Surripit—eternum linquens in sæcula damnum.’ *

“And who is there that hath not said to himself, if possessed for a short time of one heart, entirely resembling and responding to his own, — who has not said to himself daily and hourly, ‘*This cannot last!*’ Has he not felt a dim, unacknowledged dread of death? has he not, for the first time, shrunk from penetrating into the future? has he not become timorous and uneasy? is he

* Thus prosaically translated:

“Scarce one in thousands meets a kindred heart;
Or, if no harsh fate grant, at last, his dreams,
Swift comes the unforeboded Doom; — and lo,
Leaves to all time the everlasting loss!”

not like the miser who journeys on a road begirt with a thousand perils, and who yet carries with him his all? Alas! there was a world of deep and true feeling in Byron's expression, which, *critically* examined, is but a conceit. Love 'hath, indeed, made his best interpreter a sigh.'"

A. Say what we will of Lord Byron, and thinking men are cooling from the opinion first passed upon him, no poet hath touched upon more of the common and daily chords of our nature.

L. His merits have undoubtedly been erroneously ranked and analysed; and the just criticism of them is yet to come. Nothing seems to me more singular in the history of imitation than the extraordinary misconception which all Lord Byron's imitators incurred with respect to the strain they attempted to echo. The great characteristics of Lord Byron are vigour and nerve—he addresses the common feelings—he never grows mawkish, nor girlishly sentimental—he never, despite all his digressions, encourages the foliage to the prejudice of the fruit. What are the characteristics of all the imitators?—they are weak—they whine—they address *no* common passion—they heap up gorgeous words—they make pyramids of flowers—they abjure vigour—they talk of appealing “to the few congenial minds”—they are proud of wearying you, and consider the want of interest the proof of a sublime genius. Byron, when he complains, is the hero who shows his wounds; his imitators are beggars in the street, who cry, “Look at these sores, Sir!” In the former case there is pathos, because *there is admiration* as well as pity; in the latter there is disgust, because there is at once contempt for the practised whine and the feigned disease. A man who wishes now to succeed in

poetry must be imbued deeply with the spirit of this day, not that of the past: he must have caught the mighty inspiration which is breathing throughout the awakened and watchful world: with enthusiasm he must blend a common and plain sense; he must address the humours, the feelings, and the understandings of the middle as well as the higher orders; he must find an audience in Manchester and Liverpool. The aristocratic gloom, the lordly misanthropy, that Byron represented, have perished amidst the action, the vividness, the *life* of these times. Instead of sentiment, let shrewd wit or determined energy be the vehicle; instead of the habits and modes of a few, let the great interests of the many be the theme.

A. But, in this country, the aristocracy yet make the first class of readers into whose hands poetry falls; if *they* are not conciliated, the book does not become the fashion — if not the fashion, the middle orders will never read it.

L. But can this last?—can it even last long? Will there be no sagacious, no powerful critic, who will drag into notice what can fall only into a temporary neglect? I say temporary, for you must allow that whatever addresses the multitude through *their* feelings, or their *everlasting interests*, must be destined to immortality: the directors, the lovers of the multitude, glad of an authority, will perpetually recur to its pages — attention directed to them, fame follows. To prophesy whether or not, in these times, a rising author will become illustrious, let me inquire only, after satisfying me of his genius, how far he is the servant of Truth—how far he is willing to dedicate all his powers to her worship—to come forth from his cherished moods of thought, from the strongholds of mannerism and style — let me see him

disdain no species of composition that promotes her good, now daring the loftiest, now dignifying the lowest—let me see him versatile in the method, but the same in the purpose—let him go to every field for the garland or the harvest, but be there one altar for all the produce! Such a man cannot fail of becoming GREAT; through envy, through neglect, through hatred, through persecution, he will win his way; he will neither falter nor grow sick at heart; he will feel, in every privation, in every disappointment, the certainty of his reward; he will indulge enthusiasm, nor dread ridicule; he will brandish the blade of satire, nor fear the enmity he excites. By little and little, men will see in him who fights through all obstacles a champion and a leader. When a Principle is to be struggled for, on him will they turn their eyes; when a Prejudice is to be stormed, they will look to see his pennant wave the first above the breach. Amids the sweeping and gathering Deluge of ages, he shall be saved, for TRUTH is the indestructible and blessed Ark to which he hath confided his name!

CONVERSATION THE FOURTH.

CONTAINING L— —'S HISTORY.

IN order to make allowance for much of the manner and the matter of L— —'s conversation, I must beg the reader to observe how largely the faculties of the imagination enter even into those channels of his mind from which (were the judgment thoroughly sound) all that is

merely imaginative would be the most carefully banished. In L — —'s character, indeed, whatever may be his talents, there was always *a string loose*, something, morbid and vague, which even in perceiving, one could scarcely condemn, for it gave a tenderness to his views, and a glow of sentiment to his opinions, which made us love him better, perhaps, than if his learning and genius had been accompanied with a severer justness of reasoning. For my own part, I, who despise rather than hate the world, and seldom see anything that seems to me, if rightly analyzed, above contempt, am often carried away in spite of myself by his benevolence of opinion, and his softening and gentle order of philosophy. I often smile, as I listen to his wandering and Platonic conjectures on our earthly end and powers, but I am not sure that the smile is in disdain, even when his reasoning appears the most erratic.

I reminded L — —, when I next saw him, of his promise, in our last conversation, to give me a sketch of his early history. I wished it to be the history of his mind as well as his adventures; in a word, a literary and moral, as well as actual narrative, — “A MEMOIR OF A STUDENT.” The moment in which I pressed the wish, was favourable. He was in better spirits than usual, and free from pain; the evening was fine, and there was that quiet cheerfulness in the air which we sometimes find towards the close of one of those mild days that occasionally relieve the severity of an English winter.

THE CONFESSIONS OF AN AMBITIOUS STUDENT.

“You know,” said L—, commencing his story, “that I was born to the advantages of a good name and of more than a moderate opulence; the care of my education, for I was an orphan, devolved upon my aunt, a maiden lady, of some considerable acquirements and some very rare qualities of heart. Good old woman! how well and how kindly I remember her, with her high cap and kerchief, the tortoise-shell spectacles, that could not conceal or injure the gentle expression of her eyes—eyes above which the brow never frowned! How well, too, I remember the spelling-book, and the grammar, and (as I grew older) the odd volume of Plutarch’s Lives, that always lay, for *my* use and profit, on the old dark table beside her chair. And something better, too, than spelling and grammar, ay, and even the life of Caius Marius, with that grand and terrible incident in the memoir which Plutarch has so finely told, of how the intended murderer, entering the great Roman’s hiding-chamber (as he lay there, stricken by years and misfortune), saw through the dim and solemn twilight of the room, the eye of the purposed victim fall like a warning light upon him, while a voice exclaimed, ‘Darest thou, man, to slay Caius Marius?’ and how the stern Gaul, all awe-stricken and amazed, dropped the weapon, and fled from the chamber; better, I say, even than spelling and grammar, and these fine legends of old, were certain homely precepts with which my good aunt was wont to diversify the lecture. Never to tell a lie, never to do a mean action, never to forsake a friend, and never to malign a foe; these were the hereditary maxims of her race, and these she instilled into my mind as something,

which if I duly remembered, even the sin of forgetting how to spell words in eight syllables might be reasonably forgiven me.

“I was sent to school when I was somewhere about seven years old, and I remained at that school till I was twelve, and could construe Ovid’s Epistles. I was then transplanted to another, better adapted to my increased years and wisdom. Thither I went with a notable resolution which greatly tended in its consequences to expand my future character. At my first academy, I had been so often and so bitterly the victim of the exuberant ferocity of the elder boys, that I inly resolved, the moment I was of an age and stature to make any reasonable sort of defence, to anticipate the laws of honour, and never put up, in tranquil endurance, with a blow. When, therefore, I found myself at a new school, and at the age of twelve years, I saw (in my fancy) the epoch of resistance and emancipation, which I had so long coveted. The third day of my arrival I was put to the proof; I was struck by a boy twice my size—I returned the blow—we fought, and I was conquered, but he never struck me again. That was an admirable rule of mine, if a boy has but animal hardihood; for, for one sound beating one escapes at least twenty lesser ones, with teasings, and tormentings indefinitely numerous, into the bargain. No boy likes to engage with a boy much less than himself, and rather than do so, he will refrain from the pleasure of tyrannizing. We cannot, alas! in the present state of the world, learn too early the great wisdom of *Resistance*. I carried this rule, however, a little too far, as you shall hear. I had never been once touched, once even chidden by the master, till one day, when I was about fifteen, we had a desperate

quarrel, ending in my expulsion. There was a certain usher in the school, a very pink and pattern of ushers. He was harsh to the lesser boys, but he had his favourites among them — fellows who always called him 'Sir,' and offered him oranges. To us of the higher school, he was generally courteous, and it was a part of his policy to get himself invited home by one or the other of us during the holidays. For this purpose he winked at many of our transgressions, allowed us to give feasts on a half-holiday, and said nothing if he discovered a crib * in our possession. But, oh, to the mistress, he was meekness in a human shape. Such humble and sleek modesty never appeared before in a pair of drab inexpressibles and long gaiters. How he extolled her youngest dunce on his entrance into Greek! how delicately he hinted at her still existent charms, when she wore her new silk gown at the parish church! and how subtly he alluded to her gentle influence over the rigid doctor. Somehow or other, between the usher and myself there was a feud; we looked on each other not lovingly; he said I had set the boys against him, and I accused him, in my own heart, of doing me no good service with the fat school-mistress. Things at length came to an open rupture. One evening, after school, the usher was indulging himself, with one of the higher boys, in the gentle recreation of a game at draughts. Now, after school, the school-room belonged solely and wholly to the boys; it was a wet afternoon, and some half-a-dozen of us entered into a game, not quite so quiet as that the usher was engaged in. Mr. — — commanded

* The cant word at schools for a literal translation of some classic author.

silence; my companions were awed — not so myself; I insisted on our right to be as noisy as we would out of school. My eloquence convinced them, and we renewed the game. The usher again commanded silence; we affected not to hear him. He rose; he saw me in the act of rebellion.

“‘Mr. L— —,’ cried he, ‘do you hear me, Sir? Silence!’

“‘I beg your pardon, Sir; but we have a right to the school-room after hours; especially of a wet evening.’

“‘Oh! very well, Sir; very well; I shall report you to the Doctor.’ So saying, the usher buttoned up his nether garment, which he had a curious custom of unbracing after school, — especially when engaged in draughts, and went forthwith to the master. I continued the game. The master entered. He was a tall, gaunt, lame man, very dark in hue, and of a stern Cameronian countenance, with a cast in his eye.

“‘How is this, Mr. L— —?’ said he, walking up to me; ‘how dared you disobey Mr.— —’s order?’

“‘Sir! his orders were against the custom of the school.’

“‘Custom, Sir; and who gives custom to this school but myself? You are insolent, Mr. L— —, and you don’t know what is due to your superiors.’

“‘Superiors!’ said I, with a look at the usher. The master thought I spoke of himself; his choler rose, and he gave me a box on the ear.

“All my blood was up in a moment; never yet, under that roof, had I received a blow unavenged on the spot. I had fought my way in the school, step by step, to the first ranks of pugilistic heroism. Those taller and more

peaceable than myself, hated me, but attacked not; these were now around me exulting in my mortification; I saw them *nudge* each other with insolent satisfaction; I saw their eyes gloat and their features grin. The master had never before struck a boy in my class. The insult was tenfold, because unparalleled. All these thoughts flashed across me. I gathered myself up, clenched my fist, and, with a sudden and almost unconscious effort, I returned, and in no gentle manner, the blow I had received. The pedagogue could have crushed me on the spot; he was a remarkably powerful man. I honour him at this moment for his forbearance; at that moment for his cowardice. He looked thunderstruck, after he had received so audacious a proof of my contumacy; the blood left, and then gushed burningly back to, his sallow cheek. 'It is well, Sir,' said he, at length, 'follow me!' and he walked straight out of the school-room. I obeyed with a mechanical and dogged sullenness. He led the way into the house, which was detached from the school-room; entered a little dingy front parlour, in which only once before (the eve of my first appearance under his roof) had I ever set foot; motioned me also within the apartment; gave me one stern, contemptuous look; turned on his heel; left the room; locked the door, and I was alone. At night the maidservants came in, and made up a bed on a little black horsehair sofa. There was I left to repose. The next morning came at last. My breakfast was brought me, in a mysterious silence. I began to be affected by the monotony and dulness of my seclusion. I looked carefully round the little chamber for a book, and at length, behind a red tea-tray, I found one. It was — I remember it well — it was Beloe's *Sexagenarian*. I have never looked into the book since, but it made

considerable impression on me at the time — a dull, melancholy impression, like that produced on us by a rainy, drizzling day; there seemed to me then a stagnant quiet, a heavy repose about the memoir which saddened me with the idea of a man writing the biography of a life never enjoyed, and wholly unconscious that it had not been enjoyed to the utmost. It is very likely that this impression is not a just one, and were I to read the book again, it might create very different sensations. But I recollect that I said, at some passage or another, with considerable fervour, ‘Well, I will never devote existence to becoming a scholar.’ I had not finished the book, when the mistress entered, as if looking for a bunch of keys, but in reality to see how I was employed; a very angry glance did she cast upon my poor amusement with the Sexagenarian, and about two minutes after she left the room, a servant entered and demanded the book. The reading of the Sexagenarian remains yet unconcluded, and most probably will so remain to my dying day. A gloomy evening and a sleepless night succeeded; but early next morning a ring was heard at the gate, and from the window of my dungeon, I saw the servant open the gate, and my aunt walk up the little strait ribbon of gravel, that intersected what was termed the front garden. In about half an hour afterwards, the Doctor entered with my poor relation, the latter in tears. The Doctor had declared himself inexorable; nothing less than my expulsion would atone for my crime. Now my aunt was appalled by the word expulsion; she had heard of boys to whom expulsion had been ruin for life; on whom it had shut the gates of college; the advantages of connexion; the fold of the church; the honours of civil professions; it was a sound full of omen and doom

to her ear. She struggled against what she deemed so lasting a disgrace. I remained in the dignity of silence, struck to the heart by her grief and reproaches, but resolved to show no token of remorse.

“‘Look, Ma’am,’ cried the Doctor, irritated by my obstinacy; ‘look at the young gentleman’s countenance; do you see repentance there? My aunt looked, and I walked to the window to hide my face. This finished the business, and I returned home that day with my aunt; who saw in me a future outcast, and a man undone for life, for want of a proper facility in bearing boxes on the ear.

“Within a week from that time I was in the house of a gentleman, who professed not to keep a school, but to take pupils, — a nice distinction, that separates the schoolmaster from the tutor. There were about six of us, from the age of fifteen to eighteen. He undertook to prepare us for the University, and with him, in real earnest, I, for the first time, began to *learn*. Yes; *there* commenced an epoch both in my mind and heart, — I woke to the knowledge of books and also of myself. In one year I passed over a world of feelings. From the child I rose at once into the man. But let me tell my story methodically; and first, as to the education of the intellect. Mr. S — — was an elegant and graceful scholar, of the orthodox University *calibre*, not deeply learned, but intimately acquainted with the beauties and the subtleties of the authors he had read. You know, A — —, what authors on University scholar does read, and those which he neglects. At this time, it is with those most generally neglected that I am least imperfectly acquainted; but it was not so then, as you may suppose. Before I went to Mr. S — —’s I certainly had never betrayed any very studious disposition; the ordinary and hacknied method

of construing, and parsing, and learning by heart, and making themes, whose only possible excellence was to be unoriginal, and verses, in which the highest beauty was a dextrous plagiarism; — all this had disgusted me belimes, and I *shirked* lessons with the same avidity as the rest of my tribe. It became suddenly different with Mr. S ——. The first day of my arrival, I *took up* the *Medea* of Euripides. Into what a delightful recreation did S — — manage to convert the task I had hitherto thought so wearisome, — how eloquently he dwelt on each poetical expression — how richly he illustrated every beauty by comparisons and contrasts from the pages of other poets! What a life he breathed into the dull lecture! How glowingly, as if touched by a wand, was the Greek crabbed sentence, hitherto breathing but of lexicons and grammars, exalted into the freshness and the glory of the poet! Euripides was the first of the divine spirits of old, who taught me to burn over the dreams of fiction; and so great and deep is my gratitude, that at this day I read his plays more often than I do even those of Shakespeare, and imagine that beauties speak to me from that little old worn edition, in which I then read him, that are dumb and lifeless to every heart but my own. I now studied with a new frame of mind: first, I began to admire — then to dwell upon what I admired — then to criticise, or sometimes to imitate. Within two years I had read and pondered over the works of almost all the Greek and Latin poets, historians, orators! the pages of the philosophers alone were shut to me. The divine lore of Plato, and the hard and grasping intellect of the Stagyrite, S — — did not undertake to decipher and expound. I except, indeed, those hacknied and petty portions of the latter, through which every orthodox

schoolman pushes his brief but unwilling way. You recollect that passage in Gibbon's Memoirs, in which he subjoins, with a pedant's pleasing ostentation, the list of the books he had read, I think, within a year. Judge of the gratification to my pride, when, chancing to meet with this passage, I found that my labours in this department had at least equalled those of the triumphant historian.

"I had been little more than a year with S — —, and a fit, one bright spring morning, came over me—a fit of poetry. From that time the disorder increased, for I indulged it; and though such of my performances as have been seen by friendly eyes have been looked upon as mediocre enough, I still believe, that if ever I could win a lasting reputation, it would be through that channel. Love usually accompanies poetry, and in my case, there was no exception to the rule.

"There was a slender, but pleasant brook, about two miles from S — —'s house, to which one or two of us were accustomed, in the summer days, to repair to bathe and saunter away our leisure hours. To this favourite spot I one day went alone, and crossing a field which led to the brook, I encountered two ladies, with one of whom, having met her at some house in the neighbourhood, I had a slight acquaintance. We stopped to speak to each other, and I saw the face of her companion. Alas! were I to live ten thousand lives, there would never be a moment in which I could be alone — nor sleeping, and that face not with me!

"My acquaintance introduced us to each other. I walked home with them to the house of Miss D — — (so was the strange, who was also the younger, lady named). The next day I called upon her. The acquaintance thus

commenced did not droop; and, notwithstanding our youth—for Lucy D — — was only seventeen, and I nearly a year younger—we soon loved, and with a love, which, full of poesy and dreaming, as from our age it necessarily must have been, was not less durable, nor less heart-felt, than if it had arisen from the deeper and more earthly sources from which later life draws its affections.

“O God! how little did I think of what our young folly entailed upon us! We delivered ourselves up to the dictates of our hearts, and forgot that there was a future. Neither of us had any ulterior design; we did not think — poor children that we were — of marriage, and settlements, and consent of relations. We touched each other’s hands, and were happy; we read poetry together — and when we lifted up our eyes from the page, those eyes met, and we did not know why our hearts beat so violently; and at length, when we spake of love, and when we called each other Lucy and — —; when we described all that we thought in absence—and all we had felt when present—when we sat with our hands locked each in each—and at last, growing bolder, when in the still and quiet loneliness of a summer twilight we exchanged our first kiss, we did not dream that the world forbade what seemed to us so natural; nor—feeling in our own hearts the impossibility of change—did we ever ask whether this sweet and mystic state of existence was to last for ever!

“Lucy was an only child; her father was a man of wretched character. A profligate, a gambler—ruined alike in fortune, hope, and reputation, he was yet her only guardian and protector. The village in which we both resided was near London; there Mr. D — — had a small

cottage, where he left his daughter and his slender establishment for days, and sometimes for weeks together, while he was engaged in equivocal speculations—giving no address, and engaged in no professional mode of life. Lucy's mother had died long since, of a broken heart—(that fate, too, was afterwards her daughter's)—so that this poor girl was literally without a monitor or a friend, save her own innocence—and, alas! innocence is but a poor substitute for experience. The lady with whom I had met her had known her mother, and she felt compassion for the child. She saw her constantly, and sometimes took her to her own house, whenever she was in the neighbourhood; but that was not often, and only for a few days at a time. Her excepted, Lucy had no female friend.

“Was it a wonder, then, that she allowed herself to meet me?—that we spent hours and hours together?—that she called me her only friend—her brother as well as her lover? There was a peculiarity in our attachment worth noticing. Never, from the first hour of our meeting to the last of our separation, did we ever say an unkind or cutting word to each other. Living so much alone—never meeting in the world—unacquainted with all the tricks, and doubts, and artifices of life, we never had cause for the jealousy and the reproach, the sharp suspicion, or the premeditated coquetry, which diversify the current of loves formed in society—the kindest language, the most tender thoughts, alone occurred to us. If anything prevented her meeting me, she never concealed her sorrow, nor did I ever affect to chide. We knew from the bottom of our hearts that we were all in all to each other—and there was never any disguise to the clear and full understanding of

that delicious knowledge. Poor — poor Lucy! what an age seems to have passed since that time! How dim and melancholy, yet, oh! how faithful, are the hues in which that remembrance is clothed! When I muse over that time, I start, and ask myself if it was real, or if I did not wholly dream it — and, with the intensesness of the dream, fancy it a truth. Many other passages in my life have been romantic, and many, too, coloured by the affections. But this short part of my existence is divided utterly from the rest — it seems to have no connexion with all else that I have felt and acted — a strange and visionary wandering out of the living world — having here no being and no parallel.

“One evening we were to meet at a sequestered and lonely part of the brook’s course, a spot which was our usual rendez-vous. I waited considerably beyond the time appointed, and was just going sorrowfully away when she appeared. As she approached, I saw that she was in tears — and she could not for several moments speak for weeping. At length I learned that her father had just returned home, after a long absence — that he had announced his intention of immediately quitting their present home and going to a distant part of the country, or — perhaps even abroad.

“And this chance so probable, so certain — this chance of separation had never occurred to us before! We had lived in the Happy Valley, nor thought of the strange and desert lands that stretched beyond the mountains around us! I was stricken, as it were, into torpor at the intelligence. I did not speak, or attempt, for several moments, to console her. At length we sat down under an old tree, and Lucy it was who spoke first. I cannot say whether Lucy was beautiful or not, nor will I at-

tempt to describe her; for it has seemed to me that there would be the same apathy and triteness of heart necessary, to dwell coldly upon that face and figure — which are now dust — as it would ask in a bride-groom widowed ere the first intoxication was over, to minute and item every inch and article in his bridal chamber. But putting her outward attractions wholly aside, there was something in Lucy's sweet and kind voice which would have filled me with love, even for deformity; and now, when quite forgetting herself, she thought only of comfort and hope for me, my love to her seemed to grow and expand, and leave within me no thought, no feeling, that it did not seize and colour. It is an odd thing in the history of the human heart, that the times most sad to experience are often the most grateful to recall; and of all the passages in our brief and chequered love, none have I clung to so fondly or cherished so tenderly, as the remembrances of that desolate and tearful hour. We walked slowly home speaking very little, and lingering on the way — and my arm was round her waist all the time. Had we fixed any scheme — formed any plan for hope? — none! We were (and felt ourselves — nor struggled against the knowledge) — we were playthings in the hands of Fate. It is only in after-years that Wisdom (which is the gift of Prophecy) prepares us for, or delivers us from Destiny! There was a little stile at the entrance of the garden round Lucy's home, and sheltered as it was by trees and bushes, it was there, whenever we met, we look our last adieu — and there that evening we stopped, and lingered over our parting words and our parting kiss — and at length, when I tore myself away, I looked back and saw her in the sad and grey light of the evening still there, still

watching, still weeping! What, what hours of anguish and gnawing of heart must one, who loved so kindly and so entirely as she did, have afterwards endured!

“As I lay awake that night, a project, natural enough, darted across me. I would seek Lucy’s father, communicate our attachment, and sue for his approbation. We might, indeed, be too young for marriage — but we could wait, and love each other in the meanwhile. I lost no time in following up this resolution. The next day, before noon, I was at the door of Lucy’s cottage — I was in the little chamber that faced the garden, alone with her father.

“A boy forms strange notions of a man who is considered a scoundrel. I was prepared to see one of fierce and sullen appearance, and to meet with a rude and coarse reception. I found in Mr. D—— a person who early accustomed — (for he was of high birth) — to polished society, still preserved, in his manner and appearance, its best characteristics. His voice was soft and bland; his face, though haggard and worn, retained the traces of early beauty; and a courteous and attentive ease of deportment had been probably improved by the habits of deceiving others, rather than impaired. I told our story to this man, frankly and fully. When I had done, he rose; he took me by the hand; he expressed some regret, yet some satisfaction, at what he had heard. He was sensible, how much peculiar circumstances had obliged him to leave his daughter unprotected; he was sensible also, that from my birth and future fortunes, my affection did honour to the object of my choice. Nothing would have made him so happy, so proud, had I been older — had I been my own master. But I and he, alas! must be aware that my

friends and guardians would never consent to my forming any engagement at so premature an age, and they and the world would impute the blame to him; for calumny (he added in a melancholy tone) had been busy with his name, and any story, however false or idle, would be believed of one who was out of the world's affections.

“All this, and much more, did he say; and I pitied him while he spoke. Our conference then ended in nothing fixed; — but — he asked me to dine with him the next day. In a word, while he forbade me at present to recur to the subject, he allowed me to see his daughter as often as I pleased: this lasted for about ten days. At the end of that time, when I made my usual morning visit, I saw D—— alone: he appeared much agitated. He was about, he'said, to be arrested. He was undone for ever — and his poor daughter — he could say no more — his manly heart was overcome, and he hid his face with his hands. I attempted to console him, and inquired the sum necessary to relieve him. It was considerable; and on hearing it named, my power of consolation I deemed over at once. I was mistaken. But why dwell on so hacknied a topic, as that of a sharper on the one hand, and a dupe on the other? I saw a gentleman of the tribe of Israel — I raised a sum of money, to be repaid when I came of age, and that sum was placed in D——'s hands. My intercourse with Lucy continued; but not long. This matter came to the ears of one who had succeeded my poor aunt, now no more, as my guardian. He saw D——, and threatened him with penalties, which the sharper did not dare to brave. My guardian was a man of the world; he said nothing to me on the subject, but he begged me

to accompany him on a short tour through a neighbouring county. I took leave of Lucy only for a few days, as I imagined. I accompanied my guardian — was a week absent — returned — and hastened to the cottage: it was shut up — an old woman opened the door — they were gone, father and daughter, none knew whither!

“It was now that my guardian disclosed his share in this event, so terribly unexpected by me. He unfolded the arts of D——; he held up his character in its true light. I listened to him patiently, while he proceeded thus far; but when, encouraged by my silence, he attempted to insinuate that Lucy was implicated in her father’s artifices — that she had lent herself to decoy, to the mutual advantage of sire and daughter, the inexperienced heir of considerable fortunes, my rage and indignation exploded at once. High words ensued. I defied his authority — I laughed at his menaces — I openly declared my resolution of tracing Lucy to the end of the world, and marrying her the instant she was found. Whether or not that my guardian had penetrated sufficiently into my character to see that force was not the means by which I was to be gained, I cannot say; but he softened from his tone at last — apologized for his warmth — condescended to soothe and remonstrate — and our dispute ended in a compromise. I consented to leave Mr. S——, and to spend the next year, preparatory to my going to the university, with my guardian: he promised, on the other hand, that if, at the end of that year, I still wished to discover Lucy, he would throw no obstacles in the way of my search. I was ill-contented with this compact; but I was induced to it by my firm persuasion that Lucy would write to me, and that we should console each other, at least, by a knowledge of our mutual

situation and our mutual constancy. In this persuasion, I insisted on remaining six weeks longer with S—, and gained my point; and that any letter Lucy might write might not be exposed to officious intervention from S—, or my guardian's satellites, I walked every day to meet the postman who was accustomed to bring our letters. None came from Lucy. Afterwards, I learned that D—, whom my guardian had wisely bought, as well as intimidated, had intercepted three letters which she had addressed to me in her unsuspecting confidence — and that she only ceased to write when she ceased to believe in me.

“I went to reside with my guardian. A man of a hospitable and liberal turn, his house was always full of guests, who were culled from the most agreeable circles in London. We lived in a perpetual round of amusement; and my uncle, who thought I should be rich enough to afford to be ignorant, was more anxious that I should divert my mind than instruct it. Well, this year passed slowly and sadly away, despite of the gaiety around me; and, at the end of that time, I left my uncle to go to the University; but I first lingered in London to make inquiries after D—. I could learn no certain tidings of him, but heard that the most probable place to find him was a certain gaming-house in K— Street. Thither I repaired forthwith. It was a haunt of no delicate and luxurious order of vice; the chain attached to the threshold indicated suspicion of the spies of justice; and a grim and sullen face peered jealously upon me before I was suffered to ascend the filthy and noisome staircase. But my search was destined to a brief end. At the head of the *Rouge et Noir* table, facing

my eyes the moment I entered the evil chamber, was the marked and working countenance of D——.

“He did not look up — no, not once, all the time he played: he won largely — rose with a flushed face and trembling hand — descended the stairs — stopped in a room below, where a table was spread with meats and wine — took a large tumbler of Madeira, and left the house. I had waited patiently — I had followed him with a noiseless step — I now drew my breath hard, clenched my hands, as if to nerve myself for a contest — and as he paused for a moment under one of the lamps, seemingly in doubt whither to go — I laid my hand on his shoulder, and uttered his name. His eyes wandered with a leaden and dull gaze over my face before he remembered me. *Then* he recovered his usual bland smile and soft tone. He grasped my unwilling hand, and inquired with the tenderness of a parent after my health. I did not heed his words. ‘Your daughter?’ said I, convulsively,

“‘Ah! you were old friends,’ quoth he, smiling; ‘you have recovered that folly, I hope. Poor thing! she will be happy to see an old friend. You know, of course ——’

“‘What?’ — for he hesitated.

“‘That Lucy is married!’

“‘Married!’ and as that word left my lips, it seemed as if my very life, my very soul, had gushed forth also in the sound. When — oh! when, in the night-watch and the daily yearning, when, whatever might have been my grief or wretchedness, or despondency, when had I dreamt, when imaged forth even the outline of a doom like this? Married! my Lucy, my fond, my constant, my pure-hearted, and tender Lucy! Suddenly,

all the chilled and revolted energies of my passions seemed to re-act, and rush back upon me. I seized that smiling and hollow wretch with a fierce grasp. 'You have done this — you have broken her heart — you have crushed mine! I curse you in her name and my own! I curse you from the bottom, and with all the venom, of my soul! Wretch! wretch!' and he was as a reed in my hands.

"'Madman,' said he, as at last he extricated himself from my gripe, 'my daughter married with her free consent, and to one far better fitted to make her happy than you. Go, go — I forgive you — I also was once in love, and with *her* mother!'

"I did not answer — I let him depart.

"Behold me now, then, entered upon a new stage of life — a long, sweet, shadowy train of dreams and fancies, and forethoughts of an unreal future, was for ever past. I had attained suddenly to the end of that period which is as a tale from the East, 'a tale of glory and of the sun.' A startling and abrupt truth had come upon me in the night, and unawares! I was awakened, and for ever — the charm had fallen from me; and I was as other men! The little objects of earth — the real and daily present — the routine of trifles — the bustle and the contest — the poor employment and the low ambition — these were henceforth to me as to my fellow-kind. I was brought at once into the actual world; and the armour for defence was girded round me as by magic; the weapon adapted to the hardship and to the battle was in my hand. And all this had happened — love — disappointment — despair — wisdom — while I was yet a boy!

"I was a little while after this interview — but I mention it now, for there is no importance in the quarter from which I heard it — that I learned some few parti-

culars of Lucy's marriage. There was, and still is, in the world's gossip, a strange story of a rich, foolish man, awed as well as gulled by a sharper, and of a girl torn to a church with a violence so evident that the priest refused the ceremony. But the rite was afterwards solemnized by special licence. The pith of that story has truth, and Lucy was at once the heroine and victim of the romance. Now, then, I turn to a somewhat different strain in my narrative.

“You, A—, who know so well the habits of a University *life*, need not be told how singularly monotonous and contemplative it may be made to a lonely man. The first year I was there, I mixed, as you may remember, in none of the many circles into which that curious and motley society is split. I formed, or rather returned to, my passion for study; yet the study was desultory, and wanted that system and vigour, on which you have, at a later time, complimented my lettered ardour. Two or three books, of a vague and unmellowed philosophy, fell in my way, and I fed upon their crude theories. We live alone, and we form a system; we go into the world, and we see the errors in the systems of others. To judge and to invent are two opposite faculties, and are cultivated by two opposite modes of life, or, as Gibbon has expressed it, ‘Conversation enriches the understanding, but solitude is the school of genius.’

“My only recreation was in long and companionless rides; and in the flat and dreary country around our University, the cheerless aspect of nature fed the idle melancholy at my heart. In the second year of my college life, I roused myself a little from my seclusion; and rather by accident than design, you will remember that my acquaintance was formed among the men considered

most able and promising of our time. I appeared but to poor advantage among these young academicians, fresh as they were from public schools; their high animal spirits for ever on the wing; — ready in wit and in argument — prone now to laugh at trifles, and now earnestly to dispute on them — they stunned and confused my quiet and grave habits of mind. I have met the most brilliant of these men since, and they have been astonished, and confessed themselves astonished, even at the little and meagre reputation I have acquired, and at whatsoever conversational ability, though only by fits and starts, I may now display. They compliment me on my improvement: they mistake — my intellect is just the same — I have improved only in the facility of communicating its fruits. In the summer of that year, I resolved to make a bold effort to harden my mind and conquer its fastidious reserve; and I set out to travel over the north of England, and the greater part of Scotland, in the humble character of a pedestrian tourist. Nothing ever did my character more solid good than that experiment. I was thrown among a thousand varieties of character; I was continually forced into bustle and action, and into *providing for myself* — that great and indelible lesson towards permanent independence of character.

“One evening, in an obscure part of Cumberland, I was seeking a short cut to a neighbouring village through a gentleman’s grounds, in which there was a public path. Just within sight of the house (which was an old, desolate building, in the architecture of James the First, with gable-ends and dingy walls, and deep-sunk, gloomy windows), I perceived two ladies at a little distance before me; one seemed in weak and delicate health, for

she walked slowly and with pain, and stopped often as she leaned on her companion. I lingered behind, in order not to pass them abruptly; presently, they turned away towards the house, and I saw them no more. Yet that frail and bending form, as I too soon afterwards learned — that form, which I did not recognise — which, by a sort of fatality, I saw only in a glimpse, and yet for the last time on earth, — that form — was the wreck of Lucy D — !

“Unconscious of this event in my destiny, I left that neighbourhood, and settled for some weeks on the borders of the lake of Keswick. There, one evening, a letter, re-directed to me from London, reached me. The hand-writing was that of Lucy; but the trembling and slurred characters, so different from that graceful ease which was wont to characterise all she did, filled me, even at the first glance, with alarm. This is the letter — read it — you will know, then, what I have lost.

“I write to you, my dear, my unforgotten — —, the last letter this hand will ever trace. Till now, it would have been a crime to write to you; perhaps it is so still — but dying as I am, and divorced from all earthly thoughts and remembrances, save yours, I feel that I cannot quite collect my mind for the last hour, until I have given you the blessing of one whom you loved once; and when that blessing is given, I think I can turn away from your image, and sever willingly the last tie that binds me to earth. I will not afflict you by saying what I have suffered since we parted — with what anguish I thought of what *you* would feel when you found me gone — and with what cruel, what fearful violence, I was forced into becoming the wretch I now am. I was hurried, I was driven, into a dreadful and bitter duty — but I thank God that I have fulfilled it. What, what have I done, to have been made so miserable throughout life as I have been! I ask my heart, and tax my conscience — and every night I think over the sins of the day; they do not seem to me heavy, yet my penance has been very great. For the last two years, I do sincerely think that there has not been one day which I have not marked with tears. But enough of this, and of myself. You, dear, dear L — —, let me turn to you! Something at my heart tells me that you have not forgotten that once we were the world to each other, and even through the changes and the glories of a man’s life, I think you will not forget it. True, L — —, that I was a poor and friend-

less, and not too-well educated girl, and altogether unworthy of your destiny; but you did not think so then — and when you have lost me, it is a sad, but it is a real comfort, to feel that that thought will never occur to you. Your memory will invest me with a thousand attractions and graces I did not possess, and all that you recall of me will be linked with the freshest and happiest thoughts of that period of life in which you first beheld me. And this thought, dearest L——, sweetens death to me — and sometimes it comforts me for what has been. Had our lot been otherwise — had we been united, and had you survived your love for me (and what more probable!) my lot would have been darker even than it has been. I know not how it is — perhaps from my approaching death — but I seem to have grown old, and to have obtained the right to be your monitor and warner. Forgive me, then, if I implore you to think earnestly and deeply of the great ends of life, think of them as one might think who is anxious to gain a distant home, and who will not be diverted from his way. Oh! could you know how solemn and thrilling a joy comes over me as I nurse the belief, the certainty, that we shall meet at length, and for ever! Will not that hope also animate you, and guide you unerring through the danger and the evil of this entangled life?

“May God bless you, and watch over you — may He comfort and cheer, and elevate your heart to Him! Before you receive this, I shall be no more — and my love, my care for you will, I trust and feel, have become eternal. Farewell!

‘L. M.’

“The letter,” continued L——, struggling with his emotions, was dated from that village through which I had so lately passed; thither I repaired that very night— Lucy had been buried the day before! I stood upon a green mound, and a few, few feet below, separated from me by a scanty portion of earth, mouldered that heart which had loved me so faithfully and so well!”

“O God! what a difference throughout the whole of this various and teeming earth a single DEATH can effect! Sky, sun, air, the eloquent waters, the inspiring mountain-tops, the murmuring and glossy wood, the very

‘Glory in the grass, and splendour in the flower,’

do these hold over us an eternal spell? Are they as a part and property of an unvarying course of nature? Have they aught which is unfailing, steady — *same* in

its effect? Alas! their attraction is the creature of an accident. One gap, invisible to all but ourself, in the crowd and turmoil of the world, and every thing is changed. In a single hour, the whole process of thought, the whole ebb and flow of emotion, may be revulsed for the rest of an existence. Nothing can ever seem to us as it did: it is a blow upon the fine mechanism by which we think, and move, and have our being — the pendulum vibrates aright no more — the dial hath no account with time — the process goes on, but it knows no symmetry or order; it was a single stroke that marred it, but the harmony is gone for ever!

“And yet I often think that that shock which jars on the *mental*, renders yet softer the *moral* nature. A death that is connected with love unites us by a thousand remembrances to all who have mourned: it builds a bridge between the young and the old; it gives them in common the most touching of sympathies; it steals from nature its glory and its exhilaration, but not its tenderness. And what, perhaps, is better than all, to mourn deeply for the death of another, loosens from ourself the petty desire for, and the animal adherence to, life. We have gained the end of the philosopher, and view, without shrinking, the coffin and the pall.

“For a year my mind did not return to its former pursuits: my scholastic ambition was checked at once. Hitherto I had said, ‘If I gain distinction, *she* will know it:’ *now*, that object was no more. I could not even bear the sight of books: my thoughts had all curdled into torpor — a melancholy listlessness filled and oppressed me — the *truditur dies die* — the day chasing day without end or profit — the cloud sweeping after cloud over the barren plain — the breath after breath passing

across the unmoved mirror — these were the sole types and images of my life. I had been expected by my friends to attain some of the highest of academical rewards; you may imagine that I deceived their expectations. I left the University and hastened to London. I was just of age. I found myself courted, and I plunged eagerly into society. The experiment was perilous; but in my case it answered. I left myself no time for thought: gambling, intrigue, dissipation, these are the occupations of polished society; they are great resources to a wealthy mourner. The ‘man’ stirred again within me; the weakness of my repinings gradually melted away beneath the daily trifles of life; perpetual footsteps, though the footsteps of idlers, wore the inscription from the stone. I said to my heart, ‘Why mourn when mourning is but vanity, and to regret is only to be weak? let me turn to what life has left, let me struggle to enjoy.’

“Whoever long plays a part, ends by making it natural to him. At first I was ill at ease in feigning attention to frivolities; by degrees frivolities grew into importance. Society, like the stage, gives rewards intoxicating in proportion as they are immediate: the man who has but to appear behind the lamps of the orchestra to be applauded, must find all other species of fame distant and insipid; so with society. The wit and the gallant can seldom covet praise, which, if more lasting, is less *present* than that which they command by a word and a glance. And having one tasted the *éclat* of social power, they cannot resist the struggle to preserve it. This, then, grew my case and it did me good, though it has done others evil. I lived then my summer day, — laughed, and loved, and trifled with the herd. The

objects I pursued were petty, it is true — but to have *any* object was to reconcile myself to life. And now the London season was over: summer was upon us in all its later prodigality. I was no longer mournful, but I was wearied. Ambition, as I lived with the world, again dawned upon me. I said, when I saw the distinction mediocrity had acquired, ‘Why content myself with satirizing the claim? — why not struggle against the claimant?’ In a word, I again thirsted for knowledge and coveted its power. Now comes the main history of *the Student*; — but I have fatigued you enough for the present.

CONVERSATION THE FIFTH.

The history of L—— continued in his intellectual pursuits — Helvetius — His faults and merits — The Materialists — The philosophy of faith.

“It was observed by Descartes,” said L —— (as we renewed, a day or two after our last conversation, the theme we had then begun), “‘that in order to improve the mind, we ought less to learn than to contemplate.’ In this sentence lies the use of retirement. There are certain moments when study is peculiarly grateful to us: but in no season are we so likely to profit by it, as when we have taken a breathing-time from the noise and hubbub of the world when the world has wearied us. Behold me, then, within a long day’s journey from London, in a beautiful country, an old house, and a library collected with great labour by one of my forefathers, and augmented in more modern works at the easy cost of expense, by myself.

“The first branch of letters to which I directed my application was Moral Philosophy; and the first book I seized upon was Helvetius. I know no work so fascinating to a young thinker as the “Discours de l’Esprit:’ the variety, the anecdote, the illustration, the graceful criticism, the solemn adjuration, the brilliant point that characterise the work, and render it so attractive, not as a treatise only, but a composition, would alone make that writer delightful to many who mistake the end of his system, and are incapable of judging its wisdom in parts.

“His great metaphysical error is in supposing all men born with the same capacity; in resolving all effects of character and genius to education. For, in the first place, the weight of proof being thrown upon him, he does not prove the fact; and, secondly, if he did prove it, neither we nor his system would be a whit the better for it: for the utmost human and possible care in education cannot make all men alike;* and whether a care above humanity could do so, is, I apprehend, of very little consequence in the eyes of practical and sensible beings. Yet even this dogma has been beneficial, if not true: for the dispute it occasioned, obliged men to examine, and to *allow* the wonders that education *can* effect, and *the general* features in common which a common mode of education can bestow

*) For chance being included in Helvetius’s idea of education, and, indeed, according to him (Essay iii. Chap. i.) “making the greatest share of it,” it is evident that we must agree in what he himself almost immediately afterwards says, viz. — “That no persons being placed exactly in the same circumstances, no persons *can* receive exactly the same education” — *id est*, no persons can be exactly the same — the question then is reduced to a mere scholastic dispute. As long as both parties agree that no persons *can* be made exactly the same, it matters very little from what quarter comes the impossibility.

upon a people; — grand truths, to which the human race will owe all that is feasible in its progress towards amelioration! But, passing from this point, and steering from the metaphysical to the more plainly moral portion of his school, let us see whether he has given to that most mystical word VIRTUE its true solution. We all know the poetical and indistinct meanings with which the lofty soul of Plato, and the imitative jargon of his followers, clothed the word — a symmetry, a harmony, a beautiful abstraction, invariable, incomprehensible — that is the Platonic virtue. Then comes the hard and shrewd refining away of the worldly school. ‘What is virtue here,’ say they, ‘is vice at our antipodes; the laws of morals are arbitrary and uncertain —

‘Imposteur à la Mecque, et prophète a Médine; *

there is no permanent and immutable rule of good; virtue is but a dream.’ Helvetius is the first who has not invented, but rendered popular, this great, this useful, this all-satisfying interpretation, ‘Virtue is the habitude of directing our actions to the public good; the love of virtue is but the desire of the general happiness; virtuous actions are those which contribute to that happiness.’ In this clear and beautiful explanation all contradictions are solved: actions may be approved in one country, condemned in another, yet this interpretation will remain unchanged in its truth. What may be for the public good in China, may not be so in the Hebrides; yet, so long as we consult the public good where-soever we are thrown, our intentions are virtuous. We have thus, in every clime, one star always before

* Voltaire, Mahomet, Let. i.

us; and, without recurring to the dreams of Plato, we are not driven, by apparent inconsistencies, to find virtue itself a dream. 'The face of Truth is not less fair and beautiful for all the counterfeit visors which have been put upon her.'" *

A. And it is from this explanation of the end of virtue that Bentham has deduced his definition of the end of government. Both tend to the public good; or in yet broader terms, the greatest happiness of the greatest number. It is a matter worthy of much pondering, to think that the end of virtue and the end of good government can only have the same explanation.

L. Yes; and hence a surpassing merit in Helvetius! — more than any reasoner before him, he united public virtues with private. Though so excellent, so exemplary himself, in the minor charities and graces of life, he forbore, like egotistical preachers, to dwell upon *them*: they are less important to mankind than the great principles of public conduct — principles which rule states and enlighten them. It was a noble truth at that time, the father of how much that is inestimable now, to proclaim, "that, in order to perfectionize our moral state, legislators had two methods: the first, to unite private interests to the general interest; the other, to advance the progress and diffusion of intellect." This is a maxim the people should wear in their hearts.

A. True; before Helvetius, moralists were in league with the ills that are: they preached to man to amend himself, not to amend his laws, without which all amelioration is partial. To what use would it be to tell the

* Shaftesbury.

modern Greeks not to lie? Give them a code, in which, to lie would be to sin against self-interest.

L. The form of government gives its tone to popular opinion. It is in proportion as popular opinion honours or neglects a virtue, that that virtue is popularly followed. In commercial countries wealth is respectability; in despotic countries flattery is considered wisdom: the passions lead men to action, and the passions are excited according to the reward proposed to them. These are grave and weighty truths: we are to thank Helvetius if they are now known.

A. But I have diverted you from the thread of your narrative. To what new studies did your regard for Helvetius direct you?

L. It did not immediately lead to new studies, but gave a more solid direction to those I had formerly indulged. I had, as I mentioned, been before addicted to abstract speculation; but it was of a dreamy and wild cast. I now sought to establish philosophy on the basis of common sense. I recommenced, then, a stern and resolute course of metaphysical study, giving, indeed, a slighter attention to the subtleties which usually occupy the student, than to the broader principles on which the spirit of human conduct and our daily actions do secretly depend. Moral philosophy is the grandest of all sciences: metaphysics, abstracted from moral philosophy, is at once the most pedantic and the most frivolous. And that man is indeed delirious “*qui verborum minutiis rerum frangit pondera.*”

But I soon grew chilled and dissatisfied with the materialists. Helvetius charmed my fancy — sharpened

my intellect — but filled not my soul. Locke, Condillac, alike left me disappointed — and asking solutions to questions which they either dared not answer — or discouragingly evaded. Then came the Scotch, and (so far as they were open to me) the German reasoners, with their far more ennobling systems — the wild and starry darkness of the last — the generous ardour — the prodigal and earnest faith that distinguishes the first. But I could not shut my eyes to the hair-splitting and refining — the quackery and fanaticism of the one — the haste, the rashness, the illogical intemperance, of the other. Even Plato, with all his dreams, seemed to me more conclusive, than these, his latest, imitators. Left then by my guides upon this vast and illimitable plain — awe-struck and saddened by my own doubts, I resolved, at least, not to despair, — for suddenly I felt that I was not alone! My books were deaf and sealed, but round me was the Universe, and the life of things became my teacher! — Yes — not from metaphysics, but from *analogy* I rebuilt up my crumbling faith, — and became a Philosopher to myself. Happy he whose doubts resolve themselves as mine did, into that devout, confiding, immaterial hope, which seems to suit best our limited lore below — to support most our virtue, and exalt our souls. Some men there are of stern minds, of long-practised self-denial, of habits whose austerity has become a pleasure — who may be both good and happy without a belief in an Hereafter. Lowlier than these, I own myself one amongst the herd. And never did I feel assured of the strength of my own heart, and trustful to subdue its human errors and its hourly sorrows, until I saw bright before me the birth-right and Eden of Immortality. There is a Philosophy,

attempted, it is true, but yet unattained — a Philosophy which this century ought to produce out of the ashes of the Materialism of the last — it is the Philosophy of Faith!”

CONVERSATION THE SIXTH.

The history concluded — Progress from morals to history — A state of doubt most favourable to the study of the past — Philosophical historians dangerous — Hume and Gibbon — The advantages of Tacitus and Polybius in actual experience — Bolingbroke the first English Utilitarian — History the accuser of mankind — The Greeks — Portrait of Themistocles — Patriotism and philanthropy — The errors of old — The divine hope of the future.

“SLOWLY and reluctantly,” continued L — — (resuming the next day the thread of his intellectual history), “did I turn from the consideration of motives to that of actions — from Morals to History. Volney has said, in his excellent lectures, that the proper state of mind for the examination of history, is that in which we ‘hold the judgment in suspense.’ This truth is evident; yet they who allow the doctrine when couched in the above phrase, might demur if the phrase were a little altered, and instead of a suspension of judgment, we spoke of a *state of doubt*. It is true! in this state, a state of ‘investigating doubt,’ history *should* be studied. In doubt, all the faculties of the mind are aroused — we sift, we weigh, we examine — every page is a trial to the energies of the understanding. But confidence is sleepy and inert. If we make up our minds beforehand to believe all we are about to read, the lecture glides down the memory without awakening one thought by the way. We may be stored with dates

and legends; we may be able to conclude our periods by a fable about Rome; but we do not feel that we have reasoned as well as read. Our minds may be fuller, but our intellects are not sharper than they were before; we have studied, but not investigated: — to what use investigation to those who are already persuaded? There is the same difference in the advantage of history to him who weighs, because he mistrusts, and to him who discriminates nothing, because he believes all, as there is between the value of a commonplace book and a philosophical treatise. The first may be more full of facts than the latter, but the latter its facts turned to use. It is this state of rational doubt which a metaphysical course of study naturally induces. It is, therefore, *after* the investigation of morals, that we should turn to history. Nor is this all the advantage which we derive from the previous study of morals. History were, indeed, an old almanack to him who knows neither what is right nor what is wrong; where governments have been wise, where erroneous. History, regarded in the light of political utility, is, to quote Volney again, ‘a vast collection of moral and social experiments, which mankind make involuntarily and very expensively on themselves.’ But we must know the principles of the science before we can apply the experiments.”

A. And yet, while the real uses of history are philosophical, a mere narrator of facts is often far better than a philosophical historian.

L. Because it is better to reflect ourselves than to suffer others to reflect for us. A philosopher has a system; he views things according to his theory; he is

unavoidably partial ; and, like Lucian's painter, he paints his one-eyed princes in profile.

A. It is especially in our language that the philosophical historians have been most dangerous. No man can give us history through a falser medium than Hume and Gibbon have done.

L. And this not only from the occasional inaccuracy of their facts, but their general way of viewing facts. Hume tells the history of factions, and Gibbon the history of oligarchies — the People, the People, are altogether omitted by both. The fact is, neither of them had seen enough of the mass of men to feel that history should be something more than a chronicle of dynasties, however wisely chronicled it be : they are fastidious and graceful scholars ; their natural leanings are towards the privileged elegances of life : eternally sketching human nature, they give us, perhaps, a skeleton tolerably accurate — it is the flesh and blood they are unable to accomplish : their sympathies are for the courtly — their minds were not robust enough to feel sympathies with the undiademed and unlaurelled tribes : each most pretends to what he most wants — Hume, with his smooth affectation of candour, is never candid — and Gibbon, perpetually philosophizing, is rarely philosophical.

L. Tacitus and Polybius are not easily equalled.

L. And why ? Because both Tacitus and Polybius had seen the world in more turbulent periods than our historians have done ; the knowledge of their kind was not lightly printed, but deeply and fearfully furrowed, as it were, upon their hearts ; their shrewd, yet dark wisdom, was the fruit of a terrible experience. Gibbon boasts of the benefit he derived to his History from his military studies in the militia ; it was from no such

holiday service that Polybius learned *his* method of painting wars. As the Megalopolitan passed through his stormy and bold career; as he took rough lessons from the camp, and imbued himself with the cold sagacity which the diplomatic intrigues he shared both required and taught, he was slowly acquiring that mass of observation, that wonderful intuition into the true spirit of facts, that power of seeing at a glance the Improbable, and through its clouds and darkness seizing at once upon the True, which characterise the fragments of his great history, and elevate, what in other hands would have been but a collection of military bulletins, into so inestimable a manual for the statesman and the civilian. And, when we glance over the life of the far greater Roman, we see no less palpably how much the wisdom of the closet was won by the stern nature of those fields of action in which he who had witnessed the reign of a Domitian was cast. When we grow chained to his page by the gloomy intenseness of his colourings — when crime after crime, in all the living blackness of those fearful days, arises before us — when in his grasping aphorisms the fierce secrets of kings lie bared before us — when in every sentence we shudder at a record — in every character we mark a portent, yet a mirror, of the times, we feel at once how necessary to that force and fidelity must have been the severity and darkness of his experience. Through action, toil, public danger, and public honours, he sought his road to philosophy, a road beset with rapine and slaughter; every slave that fell graved in his heart a warning, every horror he experienced animated and armed his genius. Saturate with the spirit of his age, his page has made that age incarnate to posterity — ac-

tual, vivified, consummate, and entire. If, indeed, it be dread and ghastly, it is the dread and ghastliness of an unnatural life. Time has not touched it with a charnel touch. The Magician has preserved the race in their size and posture; — motionless, breathless, — in all else, unchanged as in life.

A. It is a great loss to our language that Bolingbroke never fulfilled what seems to have been the intention of his life and the expectation of his friends — viz. the purpose so often alluded to in his Letters, of writing a History.

L. Yes; from all he has left us, he seems, to have been pre-eminently qualified for the task: his thoughts so just, yet so noble; his penetration into men so keen; his discernment of true virtue so exact!

A. He gave, certainly, its loftiest shape to the doctrine of Utility, and is the real father of that doctrine in England. *

L. Returning from these criticisms on historians to the effect which History produces, I cannot but think that its general effect tends to harden the heart against mankind. Its experience, so long, so consistent, so unvarying, seem a silent and irresistible accuser of the human species. Men have taken the greatest care to preserve their most unanswerable vilifier. All forms of government, however hostile to each other, seem alike in one effect — the general baseness of the governed. What differs the boasted Greece from the condemned Persia? — the former produces some hundred names which the latter cannot equal. True! But what are a few atoms culled from the sea-sands? — what a

* The Utilitarians have quite overlooked their obligations to Lord Bolingbroke. They would not acknowledge a leader in a Tory.

few great men to the happiness of the herd? Are not the Greek writers, the Greek sages, more than all others, full of contempt for the mass around them? — the fraud, the ingratitude, the violence, the meanness, the misery of their fellow-beings — do not these make the favourite subject of ancient satire, and ancient declamation? And even among their great men, how few on whose merits History can at once decide! — how few unsullied, even by the condemnation of their own time. Plutarch says that the good citizens of Athens were the best men the world ever produced; but that her bad citizens were unparalleled for their atrocities, their impiety, their perfidy. Let us look over even the good citizens Plutarch would select, and, judging them by the rules of their age, how much have the charitable still left to forgive! Were I to select a personification of the Genius of Athens, I would choose Themistocles; a great warrior and a wise man, resolute in adversity, accomplished in expedients, consummate in address. Reverse the portrait: he begins his career by the most unbridled excesses; he turns from them, it is said — to what? — to the grossest flattery of the multitude: the people whom he adulates at first, he continues to rule by deceiving; he has recourse to the tricks and arts of superstition to serve the designs and frauds of ambition.* As an evidence how little the wisdom of the chiefs had descended to the deliberations of the people, viz. — how

* When he was chosen admiral by the Athenians, he put off all affairs, public and private, to the day that he was about to embark, in order that he might appear, in having a vast deal of business to transact, with a greater dignity and importance. — It is quite clear that all the business thus deferred, must have been very badly done, and thus a trick to preserve power was nobler and better in his eyes than a care for the public advantage.

little the majority profited by their form of government — we find it recorded that when an Athenian orator argued a certain point too closely with Themistocles — the people stoned him, and the women stoned his wife. So much for free discussion among the ancients. He governs professedly as a quack. He thinks first of destroying his allies, and, baffled in that, contents himself with plundering them. Not naturally covetous, he yet betrays his host (Timocreon, the Rhodian) for money. Vain, as well as rapacious, he lavishes in ostentation what he gains by meanness. Finally — “linking one virtue with a thousand crimes” — he completes his own character and consummates the illustration he affords of the spirit of his country, by preserving to the last (in spite of his hollow promises of aid to the Barbarian, in spite of his resentment) his love to his native city — a passion that did not prevent error, nor baseness, nor crime, exerted in her cause — but prevented all hostility against her. The most selfish, the most crafty, the most heartless of men, destroyed himself, rather than injure Greece.*

A. Leaving his life a proof that patriotism is a contracted and unphilosophical feeling; it embraces but a segment of morals. Philanthropy is the only consistent species of public love. A patriot may be honest in one thing, yet a knave in all else — a philanthropist sees and seizes the *whole* of virtue.

L. And it is by philanthropy, perhaps (a modern affection), that we may yet add a more pleasing supple-

* These observations are too severe. L—— does not deal deeply enough with the Greek character, and he confides too much in the rhetorical exaggerations of Plutarch. But, withal, Themistocles was not an honest man.

ment to the histories of the past. This can alone correct the feeling of despair for human amendment, which history otherwise produces: we can, alas! only counteract the influence of past facts by recurring to the dreams of enthusiasts for the future; by clinging to some one or other of those dreams, and by a hope, that, if just, is at least unfounded on any example in former ages, that by the increase of knowledge, men will *approach* to that political perfection, which does not depend alone on the triumphs of art, or the advance of sciences — which does not depend alone on palaces, and streets, and temples, and a few sounding and solemn names, but which shall be felt by the common herd, viz. by the *majority* of the people: felt by them in improved comfort; in enlightened minds; in consistent virtues; in effects, we must add, which no causes have hitherto produced. For why study the mysteries of Legislation and Government? Why ransack the past, and extend our foresight to distant ages? if our skill can only improve, as hitherto it has only improved, the condition of oligarchies; if it can only give the purple and the palace to the few — if it must leave in every state the degraded many to toil, to sweat, to consume the day in a harsh and sterile conflict with circumstance for a bare subsistence; their faculties dormant; their energies stifled in the cradle; strangers to all that ennobles, refines, exalts, — if at every effort to rise, they are encountered by a law, and every enterprise darkens with them into a crime; if, when we cast our eyes along the vast plains of life, we see but one universal Arena of Labour, bounded on all sides by the gibbet, the hulks, the wheel, the prison; all ignorance, prejudice, bloodshed, sin; — if this state is to endure for ever on earth, why

struggle for a freedom which few only can enjoy — for an enlightenment, which can but call forth a few luminous sparks from an atmosphere of gloom: for a political prosperity which props a throne, and gives steeds to a triumphal car, and animates the winged words of eloquence, or the golden tomes of verse, or the lofty speculation of science — and yet leaves these glories and effects but as fractions that weigh not one moment against the incalculable sum of human miseries? Alas! if this be the eternal doom of mortality, let us close our books, let us shut the avenues to our minds and hearts, let us despise benevolence as a vanity, and speculation as a dream. Let us play the Teïan with life, think only of the Rose and Vine, and since our most earnest endeavours can effect so little to others, let us not extend our hopes and our enjoyments beyond the small and safe circle of Self! No: man must either believe in the perfectibility of his species, or virtue and the love of others are but a heated and objectless enthusiasm.

A. And this belief, whether false or true, gains ground daily.

L. I must own that, until it broke upon me, I saw nothing in learning but despondency and gloom. — As clouds across the Heaven, darkening the light, and fading one after the other into air, seemed the fleeting shadows which Philosophy had called forth between the Earth and Sun. If, day after day, in my solitary retreat, I pondered over the old aspirations of sages, with the various jargon with which, in the pursuit of truth, they have disguised error, I felt that it was not to teach myself to be wise, but to learn to despair of wisdom. What a waste of our power — what a

mockery of our schemes — seemed the fabrics they had erected — the Pythagorean Unity; and the Heraclitan Fire, to which that Philosopher of Woe reduced the origin of all things; and the “*Homoomeria*” and primitive “*Intelligence*” of Anaxagoras; and the Affinity and Discord of Empedocles, and the Atoms of Epicurus, and the bipart and pre-existent Soul which was evoked by Plato: was there not something mournful in the wanderings and chimeras of these lofty natures? — fed as they were in caves and starry solitudes, and winged by that intense and august contemplation, which they of the antique world were alone able to endure. And when, by a sounder study, or a more fortunate train of conjecture, the erratic enterprise of their knowledge approached the truth — when Democritus, for a moment, and at intervals, eyes by a glimmering light the true courses of the Heavenly Host — or when Aristippus, amid the roseate and sparkling errors of his creed, yet catches a glimpse of the true doctrine of morals and the causes of human happiness, — or when the lofty Zeno and the sounder Epicurus, differing in the path, meet at length at the true goal — and then again start forth into delusion; — their very approach to truth so momentary and partial, only mocks the more the nature of human wanderings, — “*caput ac fontem ignorant, divinant, ac delirant omnes.*” * Couple then the records of Philosophy with those of History; couple the fallacies of the wise with the sorrows and the sufferings of the herd, and how dark and mournful is our knowledge of the past, and therefore our prospects of the future! And how selfish does this sentiment render our ambition for

* *Erasmi Colloquia; Hedonius et Spudæus.*

the present! How vain seem the mighty struggle and small fruit of those around us! Look at this moment at the agitation and ferment of the world — with what pretence can they who believe that the Past is the mirror of the Future, lash themselves into interest for any cause or principle, save that immediately profitable to self! To them, if deeply and honestly acquainted with history and the progress of knowledge — to them how vain must seem the struggles and aspirations of the crowd! Why do the people imagine a vain thing? Why the hope and the strife of the rejoicing Gaul; or the slow murmur, that foretells irruption through the bright lands of Italy? Why should there be blood spilt in the Vistula? or why should the armed Belgian dispute for governments and Kings? Why agitate *ourselves* for a name — an ideal good? These orations, and parchments, and meetings, and threats, and prayers — this clamour for “reform,” — how miserable a delusion must it seem to him who believes that the *mass* of men must for ever be “the hewers of wood and drawers of water!” To them no change raises the level of existence; famine still urges on to labour — want still forbids knowledge. What matters whether this law be passed, or that fleet be launched, or that palace built, their condition is the same; the happiest concurrence of accident and wisdom brings *them* but a greater certainty of labour. A free state does not redeem them from toil, nor a despotism increase it. So long as the sun rises and sets, so long must their bread be won with travail, and their life “be rounded” with the temptation to crime. It seems, therefore, to me, impossible for a wise and well-learned man to feel *sincerely*, and without self-interest, for the public good, unless he believe that laws and increased

knowledge will at length, however gradually, devise some method of raising the great multitude to a nearer equality of comfort and intelligence with the few; that human nature is capable of a degree of amelioration that it seems never hitherto to have reached; and that the amelioration will be felt from the surface to the depth of the great social waters, over which the spirit shall move. The Republics of old never effected this object. To expect it, society must be altered as well as legislation. It is for this reason that I feel glad with an ingenious and admirable writer, * that even theory is at work: I am glad that inquiry wanders, even to the fallacies of Owen, or the chimeras of St. Simon. Out of that inquiry good may yet come; and some future Bacon overturn the axioms of an old school, polluted, not redeemed, by every new disciple. To the man who finds it possible to entertain this hope, how different an aspect the world wears! Casting his glance forward, how wondrous a light rests upon the future! the farther he extends his vision, the brighter the light. Animated by a hope more sublime than wishes bounded to earth ever before inspired, he feels armed with the courage to oppose surrounding prejudice, and the warfare of hostile customs. No sectarian advantage, no petty benefit is before him; he sees but the Regeneration of Mankind. It is with this object that he links his ambition, that he unites his efforts and his name! From the disease, and the famine, and the toil around, his spirit bursts into prophecy, and dwells among future ages; even if in error, he luxuriates through life in the largest benevolence, and dies — if a visionary — the visionary of the grandest dream!

* The Author of *Essays on the Publication of Opinion*, &c.

CONVERSATION THE SEVENTH.

Description of an English landscape — The animal enjoyment of life — Solitary persons the least repining — Cowley on the town and country — L——'s mental progress from history to works of imagination — He is inspired to emulation, not by the fame of genius, but by the luxury of composition — Genius is peculiarly susceptible of enjoyment — It even ENJOYS sadness — L——'s studies interrupted.

It is a singularly pretty spot in which L—— resides. Perhaps some of the most picturesque scenery in England is in the neighbourhood of London; and as I rode the other day, in the later April, along the quiet lane, which branches from the main road to L——'s house — Spring never seemed to me to smile upon a lovelier prospect. The year had broken into its youth as with a sudden and hilarious bound. A little while before, I had passed along the same road — all was sullen and wintry — the March wind had swept along dry hedges and leafless trees — the only birds I had encountered were two melancholy sparrows in the middle of the road — too dejected even to chirp; but now a glory had passed over the earth — the trees were dight in that delicate and lively verdure, which we cannot look upon without feeling a certain freshness creep over the heart. Here and there thick blossoms burst in clusters from the fragrant hedge, and (as a schoolboy pranked out in the hoops and ruffles of his grandsire) the whitethorn seemed to mock at the past winter by assuming its garb. Above, about, around — all was in motion, in progress, in joy — the birds, which have often seemed to me like the messengers from earth to heaven — charged with the homage and gratitude of Nature, and gifted with the most eloquent of created voices to fulfill the mission; — the birds were upon every spray, their music upon

every breath of air. Just where the hedge opened to the left, I saw the monarch of English rivers glide on his serene and silver course — and in the valley on the other side of his waters, village, spire, cottage, and (at rarer yet thick intervals) the abodes of opulence looked out among the luxuriant blossoms, and the vivid green by which they were encircled. It was a thoroughly English scene. For I have always thought that the peculiar characteristic of English scenery is a certain air of content. There is a happier smile on the face of an English landscape than I have ever beheld even in the landscapes of the South; a happier though a less voluptuous smile — as if Nature were more at home.

Presently I came to the turn of the lane which led at once to L——'s house — in a few minutes I was at the gate. Within, the grounds, though not extensive, have the appearance of being so — the trees are of great size, and the turf is broken into many a dell and hollow, which gives the lawn a wild and a park-like appearance. The house is quaint and old-fashioned (not Gothic or Elizabethan) in its architecture; it seems to have been begun at the latter period of the reign of James the First, and to have undergone sundry alterations, the latest of which might have occurred at the time of Anne. The old brown bricks are three parts covered with jessamine and ivy, and the room in which L—— generally passes his day, looks out upon a grove of trees, amidst which, at every opening, are little clusters and parterres of flowers. And in this spot, half wood half garden, I found my friend, seduced from his books by the warmth and beauty of the day, seated on a rustic bench, and surrounded by the numerous dogs, which, of all species and all sizes, he maintains in general idleness and favour.

“I love,” said L——, speaking of those retainers, “like old Montaigne, to have animal life around me. The mere consciousness and sensation of existence is so much stronger in brutes than in ourselves, their joy in the common air and sun is so vivid and buoyant, that I (who think we should sympathise with all things, if we would but condescend to remark all things) feel a contagious exhilaration of spirits, in their openness to pleasurable perceptions. And how happy, in reality, the sentiment of life *is*! — how glorious a calm we inhale in the warm sun! — how rapturous a gladness in the fresh winds! — how profound a meditation and delight in the stillness of the ‘starry time!’ — how sufficient alone to make us happy is external nature, were it not for these eternal cares that we create for ourselves. Man would be happy but that he is forbidden to be so by men. The most solitary persons have always been the least repining.”

A. But then their complacency arises from the stagnation of the intellect — it is indifference, not happiness.

L. Pardon me, I cannot think so. How many have found solitude not only, as Cicero calls it, the *pabulum* of the mind, but the nurse of their genius! How many of the world’s most sacred oracles have been uttered like those of Dodona, from the silence of deep woods! Look over the lives of men of genius, how far the larger proportion of them have been passed in loneliness. Now, for my part, I think solitude has its reward both for the dull and the wise; — the former are therein more sensible to the mere animal enjoyment which is *their* only source of happiness: the latter are not (by the irritation, the jealousy, the weariness, the round of small cares, which

the crowd produces) distracted from that contemplation, and those pursuits, which constitute the chief luxury of their life and the *το καλον* of their desires. There is a feeling of escape, when a man who has cultivated his faculties rather in thought than action, finds himself after a long absence in cities, returned to the *spissa nemora domusque Nympharum*, which none but himself can comprehend. With what a deep and earnest dilation Cowley luxuriates in that, the most eloquent essay perhaps in the language! — although, as a poet, the author of the *Davidis* was idolised far beyond his merits by a courtly audience, and therefore was not susceptible, like most of his brethren, of that neglect of the crowd which disgusts our hearts by mortifying our vanity. How calm, how august, and yet how profoundly joyful is the vein with which he dwells on the contrast of the town and the country! “We are here among the vast and noble scenes of Nature. We are there among the pitiful shifts of policy. We walk here in the light and open ways of Divine bounty. We grope there in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice!”

A. There is a zest even in turning from the harsher subjects, not only of life, but of literature, to passages like these! How these green spots of the poetry of sentiment soften and regenerate the heart!

L. And so, after wading through the long and dry details, which constitute the greater part of history, you may conceive the pleasure with which I next turned to that more grateful method of noting the progress of nations, — the history of their literature.

A. I thank you for renewing the thread broken off in our last conversation. We had been speaking of the reflexions which history awakened in your mind. That

necessary (and yet how seldom an useful) study, was followed then by the relaxation of more graceful literature?

L. Yes, and in the course of this change, a singular effect was produced in my habits of mind. Hitherto I had read without much emulation. Philosophy, while it soothes the reason, damps the ambition. And so few among historians awaken our more lively feelings, and so little in history encourages us to pass the freshness of our years in commemorating details at once frivolous to relate and laborious to collect, that I did not find myself tempted by either study to compose a treatise or a record. But Fiction now opened to me her rich and wonderful world — I was brought back to early (and early are always aspiring) feelings — by those magical fascinations, which had been so dear to my boyhood. The sparkling stores of wit and fancy, the deep and various mines of poesy, stretched before me, and I was covetous! I desired to possess, and to reproduce. There is a Northern legend of a man who had resisted all the temptations the earth could offer. The demon opened to his gaze the marvels beneath the earth. Trees effulgent with diamond fruits, pillars of gold, and precious stones, fountains with water of a million hues, and over all a floating and delicious music instead of air. The tempter succeeded; — envy and desire were created in the breast that had been calm till then. This weakness was a type of mine! — I was not only charmed with the works around me, but I became envious of the rapture which they who created them, must, I fancied, have enjoyed. I recalled that intense and all-glowing description which De Stael has given in her Essay on Enthusiasm, of the ecstasy which an author enjoys, not in the publication, but the production, of his

work. Could Shakspeare, I exclaimed, have erected his mighty Temple to Fame, without feeling, himself, the inspiration which consecrated the shrine? Must he not have enjoyed, above all the rest of mankind, every laugh that rang from Falstaff, or every moral that came from the melancholy Jacques? Must he not have felt the strange and airy rapture of a preternatural being, when his soul conjured up the Desert Island, the Caliban, and the Ariel? Must he not have been intoxicated with a gladness, lighter and more delicate, yet, oh, more exquisite and rich, than any which the harsh merriment of earth can father, when his fancy dwelt in the summer noon under the green boughs with Titania, and looked on the ringlets of the fairies, dewy with the kisses of the flowers? And was there no delight in the dark and weird terror with which he invoked the grisly Three, "so withered and so wild in their attire," who, in foretelling, themselves created, the bloody destinies of Macbeth? — So far from believing, as some have done, that the feelings of genius are inclined to sadness and dejection — it seemed to me *vitally necessary* to genius to be vividly susceptible to enjoyment. The poet in prose or verse — the Creator — can only stamp his images forcibly on the page in proportion as he has keenly felt, ardently nursed, and long brooded over them. And how few among the mass of writings that float down to posterity are not far more impregnated with the bright colourings of the mind, than its gloomier hues! Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, Voltaire, Goëthe, Cervantes — and — perhaps, a lower grade — Scott, Fielding, Le Sage, Molière. What a serene and healthful cheerfulness, nay, what a quick and vigorous zest of life, are glowingly visible in all! — It is with a very perverted judgment that some have fastened on the

few exceptions to the rule, and have asserted that the gloom of Byron or the morbidity of Rousseau, characterize not the individual, but the tribe. Nay, even in these exceptions, I imagine that, could we accurately examine, we should find, that the capacity to enjoy strongly pervaded their temperament, and made out of their griefs a luxury! — Who shall say whether Rousseau, breathing forth his ‘Reveries,’ or Byron tracing the Pilgrimage of ‘Childe Harold,’ did not more powerfully feel the glory of the task, than the sorrow it was to immortalize? Must they not have been exalted with an almost divine gladness, by the beauty of their own ideas, the melody of their own murmurs, the wonders of their own art? Perhaps we should find that Rousseau did not experience a deeper pleasure, though it might be of a livelier hue, when he dwelt on his racy enjoyment of his young and pedestrian excursion, than when in his old age, and his benighted, but haunted mood, he filled the solitude with imaginary enemies, and bade his beloved lake echo to self-nursed woes.

You see then that I was impressed, erroneously or truly, with the belief, that in cultivating the imagination I should cultivate my happiness. I was envious, not so much of the *fame* of the ornaments of letters, as of the *enjoyment* they must have experienced in acquiring it. I shut myself in a closer seclusion, not to study the thoughts of others, but to embody my own. I had been long ambitious of the deepest hoards of learning. I now became ambitious of adding to the stores of a lighter knowledge.

A. And did you find that luxury in ideal creation which you expected? —

L. I might have done so, but I stopped short in my apprenticeship. —

A. And the cause? —

L. Why, one bright day in June, as I was sitting alone in my room, I was suddenly aroused from my reverie, by a sharp and sudden pain, that shot through my breast, and when it left me I fainted away. I was a little alarmed by this circumstance, but thought the air might relieve me. I walked out, and ascended a hill at the back of the house. My attention being now aroused and directed towards myself, I was startled to find my breath so short that I was forced several times to stop in the ascent. A low, short cough, which I had not heeded before, now struck me as a warning, which I ought to prepare myself to obey. That evening, as I looked in the glass, for the first time for several weeks with any care in the survey, I perceived that my apprehensions were corroborated by the change in my appearance. My cheeks were fallen, and I detected, in the midst of their natural paleness, that hectic which never betrays its augury. I saw that my days were numbered, and I lay down on my pillow that night with the resolve to prepare for death. The next day when I looked over my scattered papers; when I saw the mighty schemes I had commenced, and recalled the long and earnest absorption of all my faculties, which even that commencement had required — I was seized with a sort of despair. It was evident that I could now perform nothing great, and as for trifles, ought they to occupy the mind of one whose eye was on the grave? — There was but one answer to this question. I committed my fragments to the flames; and now there came, indeed, upon me a despondency

I had not felt before. I saw myself in the condition of one, who, after much travail in the world, has found a retreat, and built a home, and who in the moment he says to his heart, "Now thou shalt have rest!" beholds himself summoned away. I had found an object — it was torn from me — my staff was broken, and it was only left to me to creep to the tomb, without easing by any support the labour of the way. I had coveted no petty aim — I had not bowed my desires to the dust and mire of men's common wishes — I had bade my ambition single out a lofty end and pursue it by generous means. In the dreams of my spirit, I had bound the joys of my existence to this one aspiring hope, nor had I built that hope on the slender foundations of a young inexperience — I had learned, I had thought, I had toiled, before I ventured in my turn to produce. And now, between myself and the fulfilment of schemes, that I had wrought with travail, and to which I looked for no undue reward — there yawned the Eternal Gulf. It seemed to me as if I was condemned to leave life, at the moment I had given to life an object. There was a bitterness in these thoughts which it was not easy to counteract. In vain, I said to my soul, "Why grieve? — Death itself does not appal thee. — And after all, what can life's proudest objects bring thee better than rest?" — But we learn at last to conquer our destiny, by surveying it; there is no regret which is not to be vanquished by resolve. And now, when I saw myself declining day by day, I turned to those more elevating and less earthy meditations, which supply us, as it were, with wings, when the feet fail. They have become to me dearer than the dreams which they succeeded, and they whisper to me of a brighter immortality than that of Fame.

CONVERSATION THE EIGHTH.

L——'s occasional restlessness at the thought of death — Anecdote of the last hours of a man unwilling to die — L——'s gratitude that the GRADUAL decay of his powers prepares him for his end — Criticism on the "Night Thoughts" — Survey of contemporaneous poetry — Remarkable distinction between the blank verse and rhyme of the same period — The former more English — Peculiarities of the old English muse — Its quaint love of classical allusion — Its mixture of the grave and gay — Its minuteness in rural description, &c. — Pope compared with Thomson; Askenside with Johnson — Young — His tendency to the ambitious — The views of life more gloomy in the Greek than the Roman poets — The English Muse rather adopts those of the former — Young imbued with our earlier poetry — The sublimest poets abound with the homeliest images — and, in modern literature, also with the most exaggerated conceits — Young therefore justified by their example in his homeliness and quaintness — His sublime power of personification — His terseness — Difference between the rank of the poet and that of the poem — The grandeur of the conception of the Night Thoughts as compared with Childe Harold and other didactic poems — The Poet's conception is sustained throughout — The wisdom of his maxims — The beauty of his diction — Concluding remarks on Young's character — Apology for retailing L——'s criticisms.

It is with a melancholy pleasure that I have been made sensible of the interest that these conversations have excited in the gentler and more thoughtful of the tribe of readers.* I have received more anonymous letters than I care to name, complaining of the long silence I have preserved, and urging me to renew Dialogues, already so often repeated, that I might well imagine (knowing how impatient the readers of a periodical generally are of subjects continued in a series) that they had sufficiently exhausted the indulgence of the public. To me individually, there is little that is flattering in any in-

* The reader will here remember that these dialogues first appeared in a detached shape in the New Monthly Magazine — there was an interval of several months (from May to November) between the appearance of the last and the following conversation.

terest these papers may have created. I am but the echo of another; or, to use an old, yet still graceful metaphor, I only furnish the string which keeps the flowers together. The reasons of my silence have been twofold. Amidst the strife and ferment of passing events, the thoughts and feelings, *the mental history*, of an individual seemed to fade into insignificance; and I deemed it fairer justice to L—— to reserve that history to calmer opportunities. If I must name another motive, I will frankly add, that I have not of late had the heart to proceed. Never more now — but no — I will not anticipate a story which, so far as events and incidents create interest, has so little to recommend it. The reader need fear no farther interruption. All that remains to relate is already prepared, and I have but to send it, portion by portion, to the press, until the whole is concluded,

“And the spell closes with its silent seal.”

And now I saw L—— daily, for his disease increased rapidly upon him, and I would not willingly have lost any rays of that sun that was so soon to set for ever. Nothing creates within us so many confused and strange sentiments as a conversation on those great and lofty topics of life or nature, which are rarely pleasing, except to Wisdom which contemplates, and Genius which imagines; — a conversation on such topics with one whose lips are about to be closed for an eternity. This thought impresses even common words with a certain sanctity; what, then, must it breathe into matters which, even in ordinary times, are consecrated to our most high-wrought emotions and our profoundest hopes?

I saw, then, L—— daily, and daily he grew more resigned to his fate; yet I cannot deny that there were

moments when his old ambition would break forth — when the stir of the living world around him — when action, enterprise, and fame — spoke loudly to his heart; — moments when he wished to live on, and the deep quiet of the grave seemed to him chilling and untimely: and — reflect, — while we were conversing on these calm and unearthly topics, what was the great world about? Strife and agitation — the stern wrestle between topics that have been and the things to come — the vast up-heavings of society — the revolution of mind that was abroad — was not this felt, even to the solitary heart of that retirement in which the lamp of a bright and keen existence was wasting itself away!

“I remember,” said L——, one evening, when we sat conversing in his study; the sofa wheeled round; the curtains drawn; the table set, and the night’s sedentary preparations made; “I remember hearing the particulars of the last hours of an old acquaintance of mine, a lawyer, rising into great eminence in his profession — a resolute, hard-minded, scheming, ambitious man. He was attacked in the prime of life with a sudden illness; mortification ensued; there was no hope; he had some six or seven hours of life before him, and no more. He was perfectly sensible of his fate, and wholly unreconciled to it. ‘Come hither,’ he said to the physician, holding out his arm (he was a man of remarkable physical strength); ‘Look at these muscles; they are not wasted by illness; I am still at this moment in the full vigour of manhood, and you tell me I must die!’ He ground his teeth as he spoke. ‘Mark, I am not resigned; I will battle with this enemy;’ and he raised himself up, called for food and wine, and died with the same dark struggles and fiery resistance that he would

have offered in battle to some embodied and palpable foe. Can you not enter into his feelings? I can most thoroughly. — Yes,” L—— renewed, after a short pause, “I ought to be deeply grateful that my mind has been filed down and conciliated to what is inevitable by the gradual decay of my physical powers; the spiritual habitant is not abruptly and violently expelled from its mansion; but the mansion itself becomes ruinous, and the inmate has had time to prepare itself for another. Yet when I see you all about me, strong for the race and eager for the battle — when, in the dead of a long and sleepless night, images of all I might have done, had the common date of life been mine, start up before me, I feel as a man must feel who finds himself suddenly arrested in the midst of a journey, of which all the variety of scene, the glow of enterprise, the triumph of discovery, were yet to come. It is like the traveller who dies in sight of the very land that he has sacrificed the ease of youth and the pleasures of manhood to reach. But these are not the reflections I ought to indulge — let me avoid them. And where can I find a better refuge for my thoughts than in talking to you of this poem, which, long ago, we said we would attempt to criticise, and which of all modern works, gloomy and monotonous as it seems to men in the flush of life, offers the calmest and most sacred consolation to those whom Life’s objects should no longer interest?”

A. You speak of “The Night Thoughts?” Ay, we were to have examined that curious poem, which has so many purchasers, and has been honoured with so few critics. Certainly, when we remember the day in which it appeared, and the poetry by which it has been suc-

ceeded, it is worthy of a more ample criticism than, with one exception, it has received.

“It is very remarkable,” said L——, willingly suffering himself to sink into a more common-place vein, “how great a difference the spirit of poetry in the last century assumes, *when breathed through the medium of blank verse, and through that of rhyme.* In rhyme, the fashion of poetry was decidedly French, and artificial; polish, smoothness, point, and epigram are its prevailing characteristics; but in blank-verse, that noble metre, introduced by Surrey, and perfected by Shakspeare, the old genius of English poetry seems to have made a stubborn and resolute stand. In the same year that Pope produced ‘The Dunciad,’ appeared the ‘Summer’ of James Thomson. Two years prior to that, viz. 1726, the first published of the Seasons, ‘Winter,’ had been added to the wealth of English poetry, unnoticed at first, but singled out happily by perhaps the best critic of the day, Whately, and recommended by his, to more vulgar, admiration. ‘The Seasons’ is a thoroughly national poem, thoroughly English: not that Thomson, or that any English poet of great name, has entirely escaped the affectation of classical models; that affectation is indeed to be found not the least frequently among those poets the most purely national. Nicholas Grimoald, the second English poet in blank verse after Surrey — a translator as well as poet — is a curious instance of the English spirit blended with the Latin school. Thus, in his poem on Friendship, the lines —

‘Of all the heavenly gifts, that mortal men commend,
 What trusty treasure in the world can countervail a friend!
 Our health is soon decayed, goods casual, light and vain,
 Broke have we seen the force of power, and honour suffer stain!’

These lines, I say, are soon afterwards followed by references to Scipio and Lælius, and Cicero and Atticus; and, by the way, Theseus and Pirithous, or, as he is pleased to abbreviate the latter name, *Pirith*, are thus made the vehicle to one of those shrewd hits of quaint, odd satire which the old poets so loved to introduce —

‘Down Theseus went to hell,
Pirith, his friend to find;
*Oh that the wives, in these our days,
Were to their mates as kind!*’

“So, in short, through all the long series of English poets — through those preceding Elizabeth — Vaux, Sackville — even the homely Tusser in his ‘Five Hundredth poyntes of good Husbandrie,’ (certainly as English and as rural a poem as possible) — fly with peculiar avidity to ancient times for ornaments and allusions the most unseasonable and ostentatious. The grace and elegance of Elizabeth’s age were no preventives to the same perversion of taste; Christianity and Mythology, knight-errantry and stoicism, Gothic qualities and Roman names, all unite together in the most exulting defiance of reason and common-sense; — ‘The Arcadia’ (a poem, if Telemachus has rightly been called a poem), of the polished Sidney, is the most arabesque of all these mixtures of poetical architecture; — Shakspeare does not escape the mania; Marlowe plunges into it; Ben Jonson, with all his deep learning, and certainly correct taste, portrays his own age most faithfully, but covers the dress with Roman jewellery. The *taste* continued; the sanctity of Milton’s theme, and the rigidity of his religious sect, sufficed not to exclude from his venerable page —

‘Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train.’

The gods of old are translated to sees in the modern Hell—

‘Titan, heaven’s first-born,
With his enormous brood and birthright seized
By younger Saturn, he from mightier Jove
His own and Rhea’s son, like measure found:
So Jove usurping reigned — these first in Crete
And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus ruled!’

Even in the Hebrew Paradise —

‘The universal Pan
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance
Leads on the eternal Spring!’

The climax of beauty in Raphael’s appearance, is that —

‘Like Maia’s son he stood.’

And “the Eternal” himself borrows Homer’s scales, to
decide upon the engagement between fiend and angel —

‘Golden scales yet seen
Betwixt Astræa and the Scorpion sign.’

We all know how much the same classic adulterations
mingle with the English Helicon at a latter period; how
little even the wits of the time of Charles the Second es-
cape the hereditary taint. Sedley’s mistresses are all
Uranias and Phillises. Now he borrows a moral from
Lycophron, and next he assures us, in one of the pret-
tiest of his songs that —

‘Love still has something of the sea
From whence his mother rose.’

Dryden, whose excellence never lay in accurate taste,
though in his admirable prose writings he proves that he
knew the theory while he neglected the practice, is less
painfully classical and unseasonably mythological than

might have been expected; and as from his time the school of poetry became more systematically copied from a classical model, so it became less eccentric in its classical admixtures. Pope is at once the most Roman* of all our poets, and the least offensive in his Romanism. I mention all this to prove, that when we find much that is borrowed, and often awkwardly borrowed, from ancient stores, ancient names, and ancient fables, in those poets of the last century, whom I shall take the licence to call pre-eminently English, we must not suppose that they are, from that fault, the less national; nay, that very aptitude to borrow, that very tendency to confuse their present theme with the incongruous ornaments of a country wholly opposite from our own, *are almost, on the contrary, a testimony how deeply they were imbued with that spirit which belonged to the most genuine of their predecessors.*

“Among the chief characteristics of our English poetry, are great minuteness and fidelity in rural description — a deep melancholy in moral reflection, coupled with a strong and racy aptitude to enjoy the sweets of life as well as to repine at the bitters — a glowing richness, a daring courage, of expression, and a curious love of abrupt change in thought and diction; so that the epigrammatic and the sublime, the humorous and the grave, the solemn and the quaint, are found in a juxtaposition the most singular and startling; as much the reverse of the severe implicity of the true ancient schools as possible, and having its resemblance, and that but occasionally, and in this point alone, in the Italian. †

* And the least Greek.

† Critics not acquainted with our early literature have imagined this mixture of grave and gay the offspring of late years, nay, some

“In the middle of the last century, the three greatest of the poets in blank-verse are Akenside, Thomson, and Young. Of these three, the last I consider the *most* thoroughly English in his muse; but, with the exception of that love of blending extremes, which I have noted before, the two former are largely possessed of the great features of their national tribe. Pope’s pastorals were written at so early an age that it would not be fair to set them in comparison with ‘Thomson’s Seasons,’ had Pope’s descriptions of scenery ever undergone any change in their spirit and conception, in proportion as he added to the correct ear of his youth — the bold turn, the exquisite taste, the incomparable epigram, and even (witness the prologue to ‘Cato’) the noble thought and the august image, which adorn the poetry of his maturer years; but however Pope improved in all else, his idea, his notion of rural description always remained pretty nearly the same — viz. as trite as it could be. And this, an individual failing, was the failing also of his school — the eminent failing of the French school to this very day. Well then, Pope having fixed upon Autumn as the season of a short pastoral, chooses ‘tuneful Hylas’ for his songster, and telling us first, that —

‘Now setting Phœbus shone serenely bright,
And fleecy clouds were strewed with purple light;’

‘Tuneful Hylas’ then, thus

‘Taught rocks to weep and made the mountains groan.’

‘Now bright Arcturus glads the teeming grain,
Now golden fruits on loaded branches shine,
And grateful clusters swell with floods of wine;
Now blushing berries paint the yellow grove,
Just gods! shall all things yield returns but love?’

have actually attributed its origin in England to Byron’s imitations from the Italian.

“These lines are very smooth, and for the age at which they were composed, surprisingly correct. They are as good, perhaps, as anything in ‘Les Jardins’ of Delille, but there is not a vestige of *English* poetry in them — not a vestige. Thomson would not have written them at any age, and Pope would only have polished them more had he written them when he published the ‘Dunciad,’ *i. e.* as I said before, in the same year in which Thomson published the ‘Summer.’ But thus begins the poet of the ‘Seasons’ with *his* ‘Autumn.’

‘Crowned with the sickle, and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn nodding o’er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on

. . . , broad, brown below
Extensive harvests hang the heavy head,
Rich, silent, deep they stand! for not a gate
Rolls its light billows o’er the bending plain,
A calm of plenty!

Again, how fine what follows! Wordsworth is not more true to Nature. He speaks of the Autumn fogs —

. ‘Expanding far
The huge dusk, gradual, swallows up the plain,
Vanish the woods — the dim seen river seems
Sullen and slow to roll the misty wave,
Even in the height of noon opprest, the sun
Sheds weak

. Indistinct on earth,
Seen through the tumid air, beyond the life
Objects appear; and wildered o’er the waste
The shepherd stalks gigantic — till at last
Wreathed dun around, in deeper circles still
Successive, closing sits the general fog
Unbounded o’er the world, and mingling thick,
A formless grey confusion covers all.”

This is *description!* — and this is national! — this is English — albeit it was the Tweed,

‘Whose pastoral banks first heard *that* Doric reed.’

“Again too, in another vein — that inclination to stoop from the grave to the low — which, as I have hinted, is less frequently displayed in Thomson than in Young (in Akenside, it is scarcely, if at all, noticeable) — this is English. A fox-hunter’s debauch, —

‘Set ardent in
For serious drinking,
* * * * *

. confused above
Glasses and bottles, pipes and gazetteers,
As if the table even itself was drunk,
Lie a wet broken scene, and wide below
Is heaped the social slaughter, where astride
The lubber power in filthy triumphs sits, &c.
Perhaps some doctor of *tremendous paunch*,
Awful and deep, a *black abyss of drink*,
Outlives them all!’ &c.

“These are passages, which (mixing the serious with the burlesque) would be rarely found in the same poem in any other language than ours — and the spirit that pervades blank verse, such as this, is altogether different from that which reigned over the contemporaneous rhymes of the day. It breathes of life, of action, of the open air, of the contemplative walk in the fields at eve, or the social hearth at night. But the genius of rhyme lived in London — talked with courtiers — made love and witticisms in a breath — ‘babbled about green field’s in a dusty closet — and when it walked into print it was never without a bag-wig and a sword.

“The ‘Seasons’ were completed in 1730. Fourteen years afterwards appeared Akenside’s ‘Pleasures of Imagination:’ it is a great poem; but Akenside’s habits of mind — his pedantry and stiffness — were not well adapted to the subject he chose. There is a straining and labour about his verse as if it were the offspring rather

of the Pains than the Pleasures of Imagination. His love of Latin composition tends also to unanglicise his diction. Thus his poem is infinitely too scholastic, and certainly neither in vigour or richness of expression, in close description, in sublimity, in terseness, in avoidance of cold generalities, is he to be put on a par with Thomson or Young. But still if you compare his blank verse with his own rhyme, or with that of Johnson's 'London,' (which, though I do not remember the exact date it was published, must have appeared some six or seven years before) you find the native muse more visible, more at liberty in the blank verse, than the other and more crippled metre. I mention Johnson in particular, for the genius of both was scholastic and didactic. Both thought of the Ancients — the one copied from Juvenal, the other imagined from Lucretius. The passages I shall quote from each are strictly classical. But one is of the old English race of classical description — it breathes of Spenser and of Milton — the other was the anti-national, the new, the borrowed, the diluted, the classical description, which steals the triteness of old, without its richness. One takes the dress — the other the jewels. Thus Johnson: —

'Couldst thou resign the park, and play, content,
 For the fair banks of Severn or of Trent;
 There mightst thou find some elegant retreat,
 Some hireling senator's deserted seat,
 And stretch thy prospects o'er the smiling land,
 For less than rent the dungeons of the Strand;
 There prune thy walks, support thy drooping flowers,
 Direct thy rivulets, and twine thy bowers,
 And while thy grounds a cheap repast afford,
 Despise the dainties of a venal lord;
 There every bush with nature's music rings,
 There every breeze bears health upon its wings:
 On all thy hours security shall smile,
 And bless thine evening walk, and morning toil.'

“Now then for Akenside. He has burst into an apostrophe on Beauty (with Johnson it would have been Venus!) and after asking whether She will fly —

‘With laughing Autumn to the Atlantic Isles,’

the poet adds —

‘Or wilt thou rather stoop thy vagrant plume
Where, gliding through his daughter’s honoured shades,
The Smooth Peneus from his glassy flood
Reflects purpurcal Tempe’s pleasant scene —
Fair Tempe! — haunt beloved of sylvan powers
Of Nymphs and Fauns, where in the golden age
They played in secret on the shady brink
With antient Pan. While round their *choral* steps
Young hours and genial gales with constant hand
Showered blossoms, odours, showered ambrosial dews,
And Spring’s elysian bloom!’

“Here all is classic — antique — Grecian — it might be a translation from Euripides. But how different the life in this page, to the cold resuscitation of dry bones in Johnson! Johnson, who despised the fine ballads which make the germs of all that is vivid and noble in our poetry, could not have comprehended the difference between the genuine antique and the mock. They both have filled their vases from the old fountain ‘*splendidior vitro;*’ but the vase of one is the Etruscan shape — and that of the others is a yellow-ware utensil from Fleet Street. But now, having somewhat prepared ourselves by the short survey — retrospective and contemporaneous — that we have thus taken of English poetry, we come at once to Young — a man whose grandeur of thought, whose sublimity of expression, whose wonderful power of condensing volumes into a line, place him, in my opinion, wholly beyond the reach of any of his contemporaries, and enable him to combine the various and

loftiest characteristics of prose and verse;—enable him to equal now a Milton in the imperial pomp of his imagery, and now a Tacitus in the iron grasp of his reflection.”

A. There seems to have been in Young’s mind a remarkable turn towards the Ambition. His poetry and his life equally betray that loftiness of desire and straining after effect—which both in composition and character we term ambitious.

L. It is rather a curious anecdote in literary history, that the austere Young should have attempted to enter Parliament under the auspices of that profligate bankrupt of all morality, public and private, Philip Duke of Wharton. Had he succeeded—what difference might it have made not only in Young’s life but in his character! It is not on the cards that the grandest of all theological poets (for neither Milton nor Dante are in reality theological poets, though they are often so called), might have become, in that vicious and jobbing age of parliamentary history, a truckling adventurer or an intriguing place-man?

A. The supposition is not uncharitable when we look to his after-life, and see his manœuvres for ecclesiastical preferment. For my own part I incline to suspect that half the sublime melancholy of the poet proceeded from the discontent of the worldling.

L. It is certainly possible that not even the loftiest sentiments—the fullest mind—the most devout and solemn fervour of religion, may suffice to chase away the poor and petty feelings that in this artificial world fasten themselves around the heart, and are often the base causes of the most magnificent efforts of genius. The blighting of a selfish ambition produced the Gulliver of Swift—and

possibly also deepened the ebon dyes of the verse of Young. A morbid discontent—an infirmity of constitution—breathed its gloom into the “*Rasselas*” of Johnson, and the “*Childe Harold*” of Byron. When the poet flies, after any affliction in the world, to his consolatory and absorbing art, he is unaware that that affliction which inspires him is often composed of the paltriest materials. So singular and complex, in short, are the sources of inspiration, so completely and subtly are the clay and the gold moulded together, that, though it may be a curious metaphysical pleasure to analyse, and weigh, and sift, the good and the evil therein, it is not a task that it is very wise in us to undertake. Let us drink into our souls the deep thought and lofty verse of Lucretius, without asking what share belonged to the philtre and what to the genius.

We may remark that the contemplation exhibited in the poetry of the Ancients turns usually towards a gay result, and sighs forth an Epicurean moral—the melancholy is soft, not gloomy, and brightens up at its close.

“.....Vina liques, et spatio brevi
Spem longam reseces; dum loquimur, fugerit invida
Ætas; carpe diem quàm minimum credula postero.”

Life is short—while we speak it flies—enjoy then the present and forget the future—such is the chief moral of ancient poetry, a graceful and a wise moral—indulged beneath a southern sky, and well deserving the phrase applied to it—“the philosophy of the garden”—telling us of the brief and fleeting life of the flowers that surround us, only to encourage us to hang over their odours while we may. But it must be observed that

this, the more agreeable, shape of melancholy is more remarkable among the Romans than the Greeks. Throughout the various philosophies of the latter the dark and saddening doctrine of an irresistible Fate flows like a bitter stream; — and an unrelieved and heavy despondency among the less popular of the remains of Greek poesy often comes in startling contrast with the gayer wisdom of that more commonly admired. Turn from Anacreon to the fragments of Mimnermus, collected by Stobæus — it is indeed turning from the roses to the sepulchre beneath. “Life is short — we learn from the Gods neither evil nor good — the black fates are before us — death and old age at hand. Not one among mortals whom Jupiter heaps not with afflictions,” &c. It is chiefly from this more sombre order of reflection that the English contemplative writers deduce their inspiration. Lord Sackville, in the “Mirror of Magistrates,” may furnish no inadequate notion of the exaggerating extent to which we have carried despondency. He therein represents Sorrow in Hell, introducing the reader to the principal characters in our history! With our earlier writers Young was intimately acquainted and deeply imbued. But of all great poets plagiarisms are the least naked. Drummond says —

“This world a hunting is;
The prey poor man — the Nimrod fierce is death.”

And Young at once familiarizes and exalts the image —

“I see the circling hunt of noisy men
Burst law’s enclosure, leap the mounds of right,
Pursuing and pursued, each other’s prey —
Till Death, the mighty Hunter, earths them all.”

The love of common and daily images is very remark-

able in Young; but when we come to examine the works of the greater poets, we shall generally be surprised to find that those poets who abound in the most lofty and far-fetched images, invariably furnish also the most homely. It is the genius in whom we miss the one that avoids the other. We may be quite sure when we open Shakspeare that the sublimest metaphor will be in the closest juxtaposition with what in any one else we should not hesitate to call the most vulgar —

“To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
 To the last syllable of recorded time:
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
 The way to dusty death—*Out—out, brief candle!*”

It is too much the cry to accuse Young, as a peculiarity in his genius, of being too bombastic, and turgid, and peregrinate in his metaphors — fond of conceits and addicted to exaggeration. Doubtless he is so; but as the man in the play exclaims — “Your great geniuses can never say a thing like other people” — and it certainly is noticeable, though common-place and uninvestigating critics have said the contrary, that *in all modern literature it is the loftiest order of genius that will furnish examples of the most numerous exaggerations and the most grotesque conceits.* Among the Italians we all know how prevalent they are. Even the cold rules of the French drama do not banish them, and Corneille still, beyond all comparison the grandest of the French poets, is also the most addicted to extravagances.

“Ma plus douce espérance est de perdre l’espoir.”*

is one among a thousand. You recollect, of course,

* The Cid.

those extravagances which Addison selects from Milton, and the many others in that great poet which Addison did not select; in short, when we blame Young for a want of strict taste in his metaphors, we blame him for no fault peculiar to himself, but one which he shares with the greatest poets of modern times in so remarkable a degree that it almost seems a necessary part of their genius. And I am not quite certain whether, after all, it is they, or we the critics, who are in the wrong. I think that had a list of their conceits been presented to Milton and to Young, they would have had a great deal to say, in their defence. Certainly, by the way, Dr. Johnson, in his hasty and slurring essay on Young's poetry, has not been fortunate in the instances of conceits which he quotes for reprobation. For example, he says of a certain line applied to Tyre in Young's Merchant — "Let burlesque try to go beyond him." The line is this —

"Her Merchants Princes and *each deck a throne!*"

It is at least doubtful whether the words that seem so ridiculous to Johnson, do not, on the contrary, body forth a very bold and fine image; and it is quite certain that the critic might have selected at least a hundred far more glaring specimens of conceit or tumidity. One great merit in Young, and also one great cause of his exaggerations is his habit of embodying feelings, his fondness of personifying. For instance: —

"My Hopes and Fears
Start up alarmed, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—on what? a fathomless abyss."

This vivifying the dread inmates of the human heart,

and giving the Dark Invisible a shape and action, is singularly fine in the above passage. Again:—

“Thought—busy Thought— too busy for my peace—
Through the dark postern of Time long elapsed,
Led softly by the stillness of the night,
Led like a murderer

.. . . meets the Ghosts
Of my departed joys.”

There is here a dim and sepulchral life breathed into the Thought that wanders and the Joys it meets, that belongs only to the highest order of creative poetry; and sometimes a few lines testifying of this sublime power, will show as prolific and exuberant an invention as that which calls forth the beings of the Drama and the Epic—as the Greeks often conveyed their most complicated similes in one epithet. It is scarcely possible to conceive a more solemn and impressive example of this faculty than where afterwards he calls his sorrow itself into a separate existence, and says—

“Punctual as Lovers to the moment sworn
I keep an assignation with my Woe.”

But if this great proneness to personify produces so much that is the greatest in Young—it produces also that which criticism condemns as the lowest. For instance, you will smile at the following verses :

“———Who can take
Death’s portrait true—the *Tyrant never sat.*”

* * * * *

“Rude thought runs wild in contemplation’s field,
Converse the *manège* breaks it to the bit,

* * * * *

. . . . He’s at the door,
Insidious Death—should his strong hand *arrest,*
No composition sets the prisoner free.”

It is the same habit of personification which, I think, on looking over Milton and Shakspeare, you will find mainly produce the same fault (if fault it really be) in them.

That power of the Greeks to which I have alluded of conveying the most complicated images by a *word*, belongs also to Young in a greater degree than to any poet *since* his time. As where he exclaims—

“Much wealth how little wordlings can enjoy;
At best it *babies* us with endless toys.”

And again — a finer instance —

“Mine” (*joys*) “died with thee, Philander; thy last sigh
Dissolved the charm; the disenchanted earth
Lost all her lustre. Where her glittering towers,
Her golden mountains where? all darkened down
To naked waste—a dreary vale of years —
The great *Magician’s* dead!”

Here the whole contents of the preceding lines — the whole power of friendship—the whole victory of death, are summed up at once in the words

“The great *MAGICIAN’S* dead!”

Nothing, indeed, throughout the whole poem is more remarkable in Young than his power of condensation. He gathers up a vast store of thought, and coins the whole into one inestimable sentence. He compresses the porosities of language, and embodies a world of meaning in a single line. And it is indeed remarkable, that a writer possessing this power to so unrivalled a degree, should ever subject himself with justice to the charge of tumidity.

But what place in our literature is to be assigned to

Young? At present, his position is vague and uncertain. Like many other of our poets, his merits are acknowledged, but his station undecided. Shall we place him before Pope? Pope's admirers would be startled at the presumption. Below Goldsmith? Few would assert the "Deserted Village" to be a greater poem than the "Night Thoughts." What is his exact rank? I confess that I should incline to place him on a very lofty eminence. In a word, I should consider the "Night Thoughts," altogether, the finest didactic poem in the language. The greatest orders of poetry, we all allow, are the epic and the dramatic. I am at a loss to say whether, *in general*, lyrical or didactic poetry should be placed next; but I am sure that, *in our country*, didactic poetry takes the precedence. None of our lyrists have equalled our great didactic writers; and with us, the order itself of lyrical writing seldom aspires beyond the graceful. But it must be understood that there is sometimes a great difference between the rank of the poem and that of the poet; many writings of great excellence can pile up a higher reputation than one work of the greatest. Both Voltaire and Scott depend, not only on the quality but the quantity of their productions, for their fame. When the public were crying out that the author of "Waverley" was writing too much and too fast, they did not perceive that even his inferior works contributed to swell the sum of his glory, by proving the fertility of his genius. And to him may be well applied the words applied to another—"he would have effected such great things, if his errors had been less numerous." So, although I consider the "Night Thoughts" a poem entitled to rank immediately below the "Paradise Lost," I am far from contending that Young should rank as a poet immediately next to Milton.

I think the "Night Thoughts" a more sustained, solemn, and mighty poem than the "Childe Harold;" but when I recall all the works that accompany the latter—produce of the same fiery and teeming mind—the dark tale of "Lara"—the sweetness of the "Prisoner of Chillon"—the daring grandeur of "Cain," and, above all, the rich, nervous humour—the deep mastery of the living world that breathes a corporal life into the shadows of the "Don Juan," I willingly allow Byron to be a greater genius, and a greater poet, than Young.

A. But you really think the "Night Thoughts" finer than "Childe Harold?"

L. So much so, that I doubt if the finest parts of "Childe Harold"—the most majestic of its reflections, and the most energetic of its declamations—are not found in those passages which have been (perhaps indistinctly and unconsciously) borrowed from Young. The fault of the "Childe Harold" is as a whole. There is no grandeur in its conception. Every novel in the Minerva Press furnishes a similar idea of the hero and the plan. A discontented young nobleman, sated and jaded, setting out on his travels—turn the conception as you will, it comes always to that, in plain and sober reality. But this poor and hacknied conception the Poet has hid in so magnificent a robe, and decorated with such a costly profusion of gems, that it matters little to the delight and interest of the reader. Still, in judging of it as a great poem, we must remember, that in the most important part of a great poem, it is deficient. But the conception of the "Night Thoughts," for a didactic poem, is unutterably grand. An aged and bereaved mourner stands alone with the dead—the grave his scene—the night his canopy—and time, death, eternity—the darkest, the loftiest

objects of human hope and human intellect, supply his only themes. Here, in this spot, and at this hour, commencing his strain with a majesty worthy of its aims and end, he calls upon

“Silence and Darkness, solemn sisters, twins
From ancient Night, who nurse the tender thought
To Reason, and on Reason build Resolve,
That column of true majesty in man!
Assist me: I will thank you in the grave —
The grave, your kingdom——”

Following the course of the sombre inspiration that he adjures, he then passes in a vast review before him, in the presence of the Stars, and above the slumbers of the dead, the pomps and glories of the world—the veiled and shadowy forms of Hope—the dim hosts of Memory—

“The Spirit walks of each departed Hour,
And smiles an angel, or a fury frowns—”

Standing upon the grave—the creations of two worlds are round him, and the grey hairs of the mourner become touched with the halo of the prophet. It is the time and spot he has chosen wherein to teach us, that dignify and consecrate the lesson: it is not the mere human and earthly moral that gathers on his tongue. The conception hallows the work, and sustains its own majesty in every change and wandering of the verse. And there is this greatness in his theme—dark, terrible, severe—Hope never deserts it! It is a deep and gloomy wave, but the stars are glassed upon its bosom. The more sternly he questions the World, the more solemnly he refers its answer to Heaven. Our bane and antidote are both before him; and he only arraigns the things of Time before the

tribunal of Eternity. It is this, which, to men whom grief or approaching death can divest of the love and hankerings of the world, leaves the great monitor his majesty, but deprives him of his gloom. Convinced with him of the vanities of life, it is not an ungracious or unsoothing melancholy which confirms us in our conviction, and points with a steady hand to the divine SOMETHING that awaits us beyond;

“The darkness aiding intellectual light,
And sacred silence whispering truths divine
And truths divine converting pain to peace.”

I know not whether I should say too much of this great poem if I should call it a fit Appendix to the “Paradise Lost.” It is the Consolation to that Complaint. Imagine the ages to have rolled by since our first parents gave earth to their offspring; who sealed the gift with blood, and bequeathed it to us with toil: — imagine, after all that experience can teach—after the hoarded wisdom and the increasing pomp of countless generations—an old man, one of that exiled and fallen race, standing among the tombs of his ancestors, telling us their whole history, in his appeals to the living heart, and holding out to us, with trembling hands, the only comfort which Earth has yet discovered for its cares and sores—the anticipation of Heaven! To me, that picture completes all that Milton began. It sums up the Human History, whose first chapter he had chronicled; it preacheth the great issues of the Fall; it shows that the burning light then breathed into the soul, lives there still; it consummates the mysterious record of our mortal sadness and our everlasting hope. But if the conception of the “Night Thoughts” be great, it is also uniform and sustained. The vast

wings of the Inspiration never slacken or grow fatigued. Even the humours and conceits are of a piece with the solemnity of the poem—like the grotesque masks carved on the walls of a Cathedral, which defy the strict laws of taste, and almost inexplicably harmonize with the whole. The sorrow, too, of the poet is not egotistical, or weak in its repining. It is the Great One Sorrow common to all human nature—the deep and wise regret that springs from an intimate knowledge of our being and the scene in which it has been cast. That same knowledge, operating on various minds, produces various results. In Voltaire it sparkled into wit: in Goëthe, it deepened into a humour that belongs to the sublime; in Young, it generated the same high and profound melancholy as that which excited the inspirations of the Son of Sirach, and the soundest portion of the philosophy of Plato. It is, then, the conception of the poem, and its sustained flight, which entitle it to so high a rank in our literature. Turn from it to any other didactic poem, and you are struck at once by the contrast—you are amazed at once by its greatness. “The Seasons” shrink into a mere pastoral; “The Essay on Man” becomes French and artificial; even the “Excursion” of Wordsworth has, I know not what, of childish and garrulous, the moment they are forced into a comparison with the solemn and stern majesty of the “Night Thoughts.”

There is another merit in the “Night Thoughts;” apart from its one great lesson, it abounds in a thousand minor ones. Forget its conception—open it at random, and its reflections, its thoughts, its worldly wisdom alone may instruct the most worldly. It is strange, indeed, to find united in one page the sublimity of Milton and the point of La Bruyère. I know of no poem, except

the *Odyssey*, which in this excels the one before us. Of isolated beauties, what rich redundance! The similes and the graces of expression with which the poem is sown are full of all the lesser wealth of invention. How beautiful, in mere diction, is that address to the flowers:—

“Queen lilies, and ye painted populace,
Who dwell in fields and lead ambrosial lives—”

So, too, how expressive the short simile,

—— —like our shadows,
Our wishes lengthen as our sun declines.

What—but here I must pause abruptly, or I should go on for ever; for the poem is one which strikes the superficial even more on opening a single page at random than in reviewing the whole in order. Only one word, then, upon the Author himself. Ambition he certainly possessed; and, in spite of all things, it continued with him to the last. His love of ambition, perhaps deepened, in his wiser moments, his contempt of the world; for we are generally disappointed before we despise. But the purer source of his inspiration seems to have been solemnly and fervently felt throughout life. At college, he was distinguished for his successful zeal in opposing the unbelief of Tindal. In literature some of his earliest offerings were laid upon the altar of God. In the pulpit, where he was usually a powerful and victorious preacher, he is recorded once to have burst into tears on seeing that he could not breathe his own intense emotion into the hearts of a worldly audience. Naturally vain, he renounced the drama, in which he had gained so great a reputation, when he entered the church; and though called covetous, he gave—when his play of “*The Brothers*” was acted,

not the real proceeds of the play (for it was not successful), but what he had imagined might be the proceeds — (a thousand pounds) — to the propagation of the Gospel abroad. A religious vein distinguished his private conversation in health and manhood, no less than his reflections in sorrow, and his thoughts at the approach of death. May we hope with him that the cravings of his heart were the proof of an Hereafter —

“That grief is but our grandeur in disguise,
And discontent is immortality.”

While we admire his genius, let us benefit from his wisdom; while we bow in homage before the spirit that “stole the music from the spheres to soothe their goddess;” while we behold aghast the dread portrait he has drawn of Death, noting from his grim and secret stand the follies of a wild and revelling horde of bacchanals; while we shudder with him when he conjures up the arch-fiend from his lair; while we stand awed and breathless beneath his adjuration to Night,

“Nature’s great ancestor, Day’s elder born,
And fated to survive the transient sun;”

let us always come back at last to his serene and holy consolation: —

“Through many a field of moral and divine
The muse has strayed, and much of sorrow seen
In human ways, and much of false and vain,
Which none who travel this bad road can miss;
O’er friends deceased full heartily she wept,
Of love divine the wonders she displayed:
Proved man immortal; showed the source of joy;
The grand tribunal raised; assigned the bounds
Of human grief. In few, to close the whole,
The moral muse has shadowed out a sketch
Of most our weakness needs believe, or do,
In this our land of travail and of hope,
For peace on earth, or prospect of the skies.”

I have given the substance—and, as far as I could remember, the words of my friend's remarks—the last conversation I ever held with him on his favourite poet—and although the reader, attached to more worldly literature, may not agree with L— as to the high and settled rank in which the poem thus criticised should be placed—I do not think he will be displeased to have his attention drawn for a few moments towards one, at least, among the highest, but not the most popular, of his country's poets. And as for the rest—it is not perhaps amiss to refresh ever and anon our critical susceptibilities to genius—its defects and its beauties, by recurring to those departed writers, who—being past the reach of our petty jealousies—may keep us, as it were, in the custom to praise without envy, and blame without injustice. And I must confess, moreover—that it appears to me a sort of duty we owe to the illustrious dead—to turn at times from the busier and more urgent pursuits of the world—and to water from a liberal urn the flowers or the laurels which former gratitude planted around their tombs.

CONVERSATION THE NINTH.

The memory becomes more acute as we approach death—L—'s observations on the saying that 'Life is a jest'—The vanity of ambition—Our errors arise from our desire to be greater than we are—Thoughts on superstition—The early astrologers—Philanthropy—The fear of assisting in changes of which the good to a future generation may not compensate the evil to the present—Contrast between the tranquil lives of men of genius and the revolutions their works effect—The hope of intercourse with great minds in a future state—The sanctity of the grave—The Phædo of Plato—The picture of the last moments of Socrates—The unsatisfactory arguments of the Heathen for the immortality of the soul—Revealed religion has led men more logically to the arguments for natural theology—Disbelief involves us in greater difficulties than faith—Our doubts do not dishearten us if we once believe in God—L—'s last hours—his farewell to nature—His death.

THE day was calm and cloudless as, towards the end of August, I rode leisurely to L—'s solitary house; his strength had so materially declined during the few days past, that I felt a gloomy presentiment that I was about to see him for the last time. He had always resolved, and I believe this is not uncommon with persons in his disease, not to take to his bed until absolutely compelled. His habitual amusements, few and tranquil, were such that he could happily continue them to the last, and his powers of conversation, naturally so rich and various, were not diminished by the approach of death; perhaps they were only rendered more impressive by the lowered tones of the sweetest of human voices, or the occasional cough that mingled his theories on this world with a warning of the next. I have observed that as in old people the memory usually becomes the strong-

est of the faculties,* so it also does with those whom mortal sickness, equally with age, detaches from the lengthened prospects of the future. Forbidden the objects from without, the mind turns within for its occupation, and the thoughts, formerly impelled towards hope, nourish themselves on retrospection. Once I had not noted in L — — that extraordinary strength of memory — the ready copiousness of its stores — that he now seemed to display. His imagination had been more perceptible than his learning—*now*, every subject on which we conversed elicited hoards of knowledge, always extensive and often minute—of which perhaps he himself had been previously unconscious. It is a beautiful sight, even in the midst of its melancholy, the gradual passing away of one of the better order of souls — the passions lulled as the mind awakens, and a thousand graces of fortitude and gentleness called forth by the infirmities of the declining frame. The character assumes a more intellectual, a more ethereal complexion; and our love is made a loftier quality by our admiration, while it is softened by our pity.

Full of these reflections I arrived at the house of my dying friend. “My master, sir,” said the old servant, “has passed but a poor night, he seems in low spirits this morning, and I think he will be glad to see you, for he has inquired repeatedly what o’clock it was, as if time passed heavily with him.” The old man wiped his eyes as he spoke, and I followed him into L — —’s study. The countenance of the invalid was greatly

* That is, properly speaking, the memory so far as it embraces early acquisitions or transactions—old people remember what happened fifty years ago, and forget what happened yesterday. Their souls have gone back to youth as the fitting port for the voyage to Immortality.

changed even since I last saw him. The eyes seemed more sunken and the usual flush of his complaint had subsided into a deep but transparent paleness. I took his hand, and he shook his head gently as I did so. "The goal is nearly won!" said he faintly, but with a slight smile. I did not answer, and he proceeded after a short pause — "It has been said that 'life is a jest;' it is a very sorry one, and like bad jests in general, its dullness is the greater as we get to the close. At the end of a long illness it is only the dregs of a man's spirit that are left him. People talk of the moral pangs that attend the death-bed of a sinner—as well might they talk of the physical weakness of a dying wrestler. The mental and the physical powers are too nearly allied for us fairly to speculate on the fidelity of the one while the other declines. Happy in my case that the endurance if not the elasticity of my mind lingers with me to the last! I was looking over some papers this morning which were full of my early visions, aspirations of fame, and longings after earthly immortality. I am fortunate that time is not allowed me to sacrifice happiness to these fancies. A man's heart must be very frivolous if the possession of fame rewards the labour to attain it. For the worst of reputation is that it is not palpable or present—we do not feel, or see, or taste it. People praise us behind our backs, but we hear them not; few before our faces, and who is not suspicious of the truth of such praise? What *does* come before us perpetually in our career of honours is the blame, not praise—the envy, not esteem. We ask the disciple and we find the persecutor."

"Ay," said I, "but after a little while the great man learns to despise the abuse which is not acknowledged to be just."

“In proportion as *he despises blame*,” answered L—, “*he will despise praise*—if the one give no pain, the other will give no pleasure; and thus the hunt after honours will be but a life of toil without a reward, and entail the apathy of obscurity without its content.”

A. “But consider, there is the reward of our own heart which none can take away—our proud self-esteem, and, if you will, our fond appeal to the justice of an after-age.”

L. “But our self-esteem—our self-applause may be equally, perhaps more securely, won in obscurity than in fame; and as to posterity, what philosophical, what moderately wise man can seriously find pleasure for the present in reflecting on the praises he can never hear? No, say what we will, you may be sure that ambition is an error:—its wear and tear of heart are never recompensed—it steals away the freshness of life—it deadens its vivid and social enjoyments—it shouts our soul to our own youth—and we are old ere we find that we have made a fever and a labour of our raciest years. There is, and we cannot deny it, a certain weary, stale, unprofitable flatness in all things appertaining to life; and what is worse, the more we endeavour to lift ourselves from the beaten level, the keener is our disappointment. It is thus that true philosophers have done wisely when they have told us to cultivate our reason rather than our feelings—for reason reconciles us to the daily things of existence—our feelings teach us to yearn after the Far, the Difficult, the Unseen,

‘Clothing the palpable and the familiar
With golden exhalations from the dawn.’

But ‘the golden exhalations’ vanish as noon advances;—

our fancies are the opium of our life, the rapture and the vision -- the languor and the anguish. But what, when we come deeply to consider of it—what a singular fatality is that which makes it unwise to cultivate our divinest emotions! We bear within us the seeds of greatness; but suffer them to spring up, and they overshadow both our sense and our happiness! Note the errors of mankind; how mysteriously have they arisen from the desire to be higher than we are. As the banyan tree soars aloft only to return to the mire—we would climb to the heaven, and find ourselves once more in the dust. Thus, looking up to the starred and solemn heavens, girt with the vast solitudes of unpeopled Nature—hearkening to the ‘live thunder,’ or suffering the mighty winds to fill their hearts with a thousand mysterious voices—mankind in the early time felt the inspiration of something above them; they bowed to the dark *afflatus*; they nourished the unearthly dream; and they produced—what? — SUPERSTITION! The darkest and foulest of moral Demons sprang from their desire to shape forth a God, and their successors made earth a Hell by their efforts to preserve the mysteries and repeat the commands of Heaven!

“How beautiful, how high were those desires in man’s heart which lifted it up to the old Chaldæan falsehoods of Astrology. Who can read at this day of those ancient seers, striving to win from the loveliest and most glorious objects given to our survey, the secrets of empires, the prodigies of Time, the destinies of the Universe, without a solemn and kindling awe, an admiration at the vast conception even of so unwise a dream? Who first thought of conning the great page of Heaven?—who first thought that in those still, and cold, and melancholy orbs—our chronicles were writ? Whoever it was,

his must have been a daring and unearthly soul; but the very loftiness of its faculties produced ages of delusion, and priestcraft, and error to the world. Leave for one moment the chain of the petty KNOWN—give wings to the mind—let the Aspiring loose—and what may be the result? How rarely gain!—how rarely aught but a splendid folly! As the fireworks that children send forth against a dark sky—our ambition burns, and mounts, and illumines for one moment the dim vault of the uncomprehended space, but falls to the earth spoiled of its lustre—brilliant, but useless—ascending, but exploring not—a toy to all, but a light to none.”

“There is one ambition,” said I, “which you do not mean thus to characterise—the ambition of philanthropy—the desire more

‘To raise the wretched than to rise;’

and you, I know, who believe in human perfectibility, can appreciate at its proper value that order of ambition,”

“You kindly remind me,” said L—, “of one of the greatest consolations with which a man, who has any warmth or benevolence of heart, can depart this world—the persuasion that he leaves his species gradually progressing towards that full virtue and generalized happiness which his noblest ambition could desire for them. Night, according to the old Egyptian creed, is the dark mother of all things; as ages leave her, they approach the light. That which the superficial dread, is in reality the Vivifier of the World—I mean the everlasting Spirit of Change. And, figuring forth unconsciously to themselves this truth, the Egyptians, we are told by Por-

phyry, represented their demons as floating upon the waters — for ever restless and evoking the great series of Mutabilities. Yet who lightly cares to take upon himself the fearful responsibility of shaking the throned Opinions of his generation, knowing that centuries may pass before the good that is worked shall compensate for the evil done? This fear, this timidity of conscience it is, that makes us cowards to the Present, and leaves the great souls that should lead on Reform inert and sluggish, while the smaller spirits, the journeymen of Time, just creep up inch by inch to what Necessity demands, leaving the world ages and ages behind that far goal which the few, in heart, and eye, and speculation, have already reached.”

A. One of the strange things that happen daily is this — men who the most stir the lives of others — lead themselves the most silent and balanced life. It is curious to read how Kant, who set the mind of Germany on fire with the dim light of mysticism, himself lived on from day to day, the mere creature of his habits, and performing somewhat of the operations of the horologe, that in its calm regularity, leads the blind million — to portion out in new and wild dreams the short span of existence. So with philosophers, and poets generally — how wonderful the contrast between the quiet of their existence and the turbid effects they produce! This, perhaps secretly to ourselves, makes the great charm in visiting the tranquil and still retreats from whence the oracles of the world have issued — the hermitage of Ermenonville — the fortress of Wartemburg; the one where Rousseau fed his immortal fancies — the other whence burst, from the fiery soul of Luther, the light that yet lives along the world: — what reflections

must the silence and the mouldering stone awaken, as we remember the vivid and overflowing hearts of the old inhabitants! Plato and his Cave are, to all ages, the type and prophecy of the Philosopher and his Life.

L. Few, my friend, think of all the lofty and divine hopes that the belief in immortality opens to us. One of the purest of these is the expectation of a more entire intelligence — of the great gift of conversing with all those who have lived before us — of questioning the past ages and unravelling their dark wisdom. How much in every man's heart dies away unuttered! How little of what the sage knows does the sage promulgate! How many chords of the lyre within the poet's heart, have been dumb to the world's ear! All this untold, uncommunicated, undreamt-of store of wisdom and of harmony, it may be the privilege of our immortality to learn. The best part of genius, the world often knows not — the Plato buries much of his lore within his Cave — and this, the High Unknown, is our heritage. "With these thoughts," continued L—, "you see how easy it is for the parting soul to beautify and adorn Death! With how many garlands we can hang the tomb! Nay, if we begin betimes, we can learn to make the prospect of the grave the most seductive of human visions — by little and little we wean from its contemplation all that is gloomy and abhorrent—by little and little we hive therein all the most pleasing of our dreams. As the neglected genius whispers to his muse, 'Posterity shall know thee, and *thou* shalt live when I am no more,' we find in this hallowed and all-promising future a recompense for every mortification, for every disappointment in the present. It is the belief of the Arabs, that to the earliest places of human worship there clings a guardian sanctity —

there the wild bird rests not, there the wild beast may not wander; it is the blessed spot on which the eye of God dwells, and which man's best memories preserve. As with the earliest place of worship, so is it with the latest haven of repose — as with the spot where our first imperfect adoration was offered up, our first glimpses of divinity indulged, so should it be with that where our full knowledge of the Arch-Cause begins, and we can pour forth a gratitude no longer checked and darkened by the troubles and cares of earth. Surely if any spot in the world be sacred, it is that small green mound in which grief ceases, and from which, if the harmonies of creation, if the voice within our hearts, if the impulse which makes man so easy a believer in revelation, — if these mock and fool us not with an everlasting lie; we spring up on the untiring wings of a pangless and seraphic life — those whom we loved, around us; the aspirings that we nursed, fulfilled; our nature, universal intelligence; our atmosphere, eternal love!"

Sometime afterwards, observing a volume of Plato on the table, our conversation fell upon that divine philosopher, and on his dialogue of the Phædo in particular.

"Of all the Dialogues of Plato," said L — —, "the Phædo has been perhaps the most read, and may be considered the most interesting. It is the most interesting partly from its accurate account of the last hours of Socrates, and partly from the absorbing curiosity which we entertain to know the opinions of the wisest of the ancients respecting the immortality of the soul. Perhaps there is no part of our studies which bequeath a more delightful and enduring memory. It lives within us like the recollection of some

southern landscape, 'in which the colouring of the heavens forms the prominent beauty — which we were too intoxicated to examine in detail, but in which every separate feature is confused and blended into one dim and delicious whole. Each of Plato's Dialogues has more or less of the dramatic — but the Phædo is the most dramatic of all. It is a picture of extraordinary sweetness and grandeur, in which the figures are distinct and lifelike. We see the crowd of disciples, some Athenian, some foreigners, waiting in the early morning of their master's last day by the gates of the prison — the ship of Theseus* having now returned — its stern crowned with flowers — as in token at once of sacrifice and festival. Within, while they wait, the magistrates are freeing Socrates from his bonds. There they stand, mournful but not despondent — exalted by the former teachings of their guide — influenced by 'that wonderful passion'—'not of pity,' which Plato has so beautifully described — in which grief at his death is mingled with all the sweet and musical consolings inspired by his past converse. The gaoler appears — the door opens — they are with Socrates. The manner in which, after dismissing the loud sorrow of Xantippe, the conversation glides into its glorious topics, is singularly natural and simple. We see Socrates 'sitting upright on his bed,' and moralizing gaily on the relief from his fetters — till one thought begetting another, he comes to his celebrated explanation of the causes why one 'who has rightly studied philosophy should be bold when about to die.' The little incidental and graphic touches with which, here and there, Plato breaks the dialogue, render it peculiarly living and effective; and the individuality of Socrates, in that mixture of easy

* No criminal could be executed until its return.

gaiety and lofty thought, which divides his listeners between weeping and laughter — that patient confidence with which he is wont to hear objections — and the art with which he draws on the speaker to answer himself, make the character as distinctly and appropriately marked a character as in one of Shakspeare's plays. The utter want of any rhetorical attempt to move an unworthy compassion — the plain and homely simplicity with which the whole tragedy is told from the time, when stroking the limb which the fetters had galled, he observes smilingly how the painful had been supplied by pleasurable sensations — or his caressingly touching the long hair of the supposed narrator, who sate on a low stool beside him — to the close, when, returned from the bath — after embracing for the last time his children, he sits down again amongst his friends, and 'did not speak much afterwards:' 'and it was now near the setting of the sun;*' the weeping servant of the magistrate, coming to bid him farewell — the request of Socrates to bid them bring the poison — the answer of Crito, 'Nay, the sun yet lingers on the mountains' — the undaunted gaze of Socrates on the countenance of his executioner (so untranslatablely expressed in the

* "How watched his better sons the farewell ray,
That closed their murdered sage's latest day!
Not yet — not yet — Sol pauses on the hill,
The precious hour of parting lingers still," &c.

It is a pity that Byron injured the whole of this beautiful allusion by the epithet in the following line —

"But sad his light to *agonizing* eyes.

There was no agony in the tears that his pupils wept for Socrates. "The sadness was," as Plato says, "not wholly unpleasing." The death of a man thoroughly great and good does not allow the terror and the prostration of agony.

Greek) as he took the fatal draught; — the sudden burst of sorrow from his disciples, which a few words from the dying man causes them to blush for; — the melancholy walk to and fro that narrow cell, for the better operation of the poison — the homely expression, and ‘when he felt his limbs grow heavy, he laid himself down’ — to die; — the portrait of the executioner pressing his foot strongly and asking if he felt the pressure, of which, alas! he was unconscious; — the gradual progress of the numbing potion — from the feet to the nobler parts, as Socrates himself points out to those around his bed, how the limbs stiffen and grow cold — adding, in that phrase of unconscious pathos, ‘When it reaches *my heart* I shall leave you;’ — that last and mystic command (which the later Platonists have endeavoured to explain as an emblematic desire of purification and healing) to sacrifice to Æsculapius; — the inquiry of Crito, ‘Hast thou no other bidding?’ — the quiet sorrow of what follows — ‘To this he made no reply, but after he had been a short time still, he moved, and the man covered him, and his eyes grew fixed. And Crito perceived it, and closed his eyes and mouth. — This, Eche- crates, was the end of our companion;’ — the whole of this picture is, I say, so great a masterpiece of truth and tenderness — the presentation of so sublime a spectacle, that in itself it would render the Phædo one of the most valuable of the possessions we derive from the Golden Past. But how much more thrilling and divine it becomes, when this, the last scene of such a life, is coloured with all the hopes and auguries of the departing soul — when the cessation from this world is smoothed away by august conjectures on the world to be — and

the Sage lavishes his wisdom on the glorious aphorism that to die is to be immortal!

“We do not wish to disturb the thoughts which this Dialogue bequeaths us, by criticising the details — we would rather number its recollections amongst our feelings, than submit it coldly to the test of our reasonings. Alas! if we do the latter, the effect begins gloomily to fade away. For I must own that, amidst all the poetry of the allusions — amidst all the ingenuity of the arguments — I feel, when I fix the mind rather than the imagination or the heart upon the conclusions of the Great Heathen, that they fail to convince. Almost every argument he uses for the immortality of man is equally applicable to the humblest of brutes — the least visible of the animalculæ in a drop of water. Such, for instance, as this, which is the least obscure, perhaps, of all his proportions, and which, nevertheless, is almost a scholastic frivolity. ‘A contrary cannot receive a contrary, nor the contrary of that which it introduces. What is that which, when in the body, renders the body living? The soul. Soul therefore introduces life to that which it occupies. What is the contrary of life? Death. But the soul cannot receive the contrary of what it introduces — it cannot therefore receive death. But what do we call that which does not receive death? Immortal.’ Such is one among the most intelligible arguments of the wisest of the heathens. Can we wonder when we are told that Socrates and Plato made but few converts in Athens to the immortality of the soul? Adopt the argument, and the fly at the window, the spider which is now watching it — nay, the very tree waving before us green and living, have equally with myself that which introduces life, and can-

not receive the contrary to that which it introduces — its soul is therefore immortal as my own.

“But a graver objection to the whole reasoning is, that the question is begged, when Socrates affirms that that which gives life is the soul. This is the exact point at issue between the materialists and ourselves. What can be so bewildering as the more subtle refinements about ‘harmony,’ and ‘parity,’ and the previous existence of the soul — on which last however the Sage’s arguments are less vague than they are with respect to its existence hereafter, and which yet, if true, would destroy the whole blessing of Immortality — for if the soul has existed before it entered our body — and if our seeming acquisitions are rather dim reminiscences of what we knew before — if, as the intoxicating poetry of the Platonists has supposed, the delight that follows upon our discovery of a truth is nothing more than the recognition — the re-finding, as it were, something formerly familiar and allied to us — where is that perfect identity which can alone render a new existence a blessing that we ourselves can feel? What comfort is it to me to think that my soul may live again under other shapes — but *I* — my sentient faculty — my memory and my perception, not feel the renewed existence? This would not be a continuance of myself, but a lapse into another as distinct from myself — as Socrates from Newton. No — there is nothing in the Phædo that could convince a modern unbeliever; but there is every thing that can charm and delight one who already believes — who desires only to embellish his belief with beautiful thoughts,* — and who from the Pisgah of his

* One source of great interest in the Phædo, as indeed in all the writings of Plato, is to trace the germs of modern articles of philo-

conviction looks down on those who have strayed, erring but with faith, over the glimmering and uncertain wastes of the past Desert. All our later upholders of Natural Religion have, even to the sceptics in Revealed, been more successful in their reasonings than this lofty Ancient. It has been among the peculiar blessings of Revealed Religion, that it has led men more logically and deliberately to the arguments for Natural Theology. Its very enemies have, in dissenting from its principles, confirmed its most grand conclusions. It made the eternity of the soul a grave and settled doctrine which scholars could not bandy about according to their fantasies. It attracted the solemn attention of sages to all the arguments for and against it. And out of a thousand disputes have proceeded the reasonings upon which it has found its basis. When Christ said, 'I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD,' he uttered one of the sublimest of his prophecies. His faith has called forth the countless luminaries of Truth; not only the Reformers, who in examining Religion established Liberty, but the Philosophers who,

sophic or Christian faith in the theories it creates. For instance, Reid's assertion of the inherent disposition to Truth, or "instinctive prescience of human actions which makes us rely on the testimony of our fellow creatures," has been preceded by the Phædo — though the remark is intended to apply to the pre-existence of the soul: † and the fantastic notion that learning is but reminiscence — "The truth of this," says Cebes, "is manifested by a most beautiful argument. Men, when interrogated properly, will speak of every thing just as it is — could they do this unless science and right reason resided (or were inherent) in them?" In another part of Phædo you may trace the outline of the Catholic purgatory — though an earlier origin for that belief is perhaps to be found in the mysteries borrowed from Egypt.

† A doctrine as old, at least, as Pherecydes, who, first of the Greeks, taught that the soul pre-existed from eternity — Socrates taught little or nothing that was absolutely new. Alas! who has?

in advancing to the realm of Doubt, have extended the empire of Thought — they penetrated lands which we have since converted — they discovered the shadowy regions of Uncertainty since colonized with Truth: and Darkness has produced our guides and constellations, as Night awakes the Stars. Instead of checking Philosophy, Faith has made it yet more searching and severe. If speculations indeed remain which our understanding cannot solve — if the origin of evil yet perplex and sadden us — if we cannot guess how the soul enters nor why departs — nor know the secret of ‘the harmony of the lyre;’* — we can still fall back upon the resting-places we have gained, and not suffer our ignorance to be the judge because it fails to become the witness. — Satisfied that if Faith has its enigmas, Disbelief is yet more obscure, we learn the Philosophy of Hope, — and when the soul shrinks back, bewildered and appalled, from the wilderness of space around it, and the dazzle of the sun, we may trust yet that He who gifted it with its wings, may hereafter increase its strength, and guide its wanderings, and enable it to face the intolerable lustre which now blinds its gaze. Once convinced that there is a God, and we annihilate Despair! — we may still have our doubtings and our desires — our sorrows and our cares — but it is enough to know that we are destined to survive them. And when we are weary of our vain wanderings, we remember that Thought can find its home with God — and that it is on a Father’s bosom that we hush ourselves to rest!”

In discourses of this sort, the day wore to its close, and when will the remembrance of that day ever depart

* The beautiful simile in the Phædo.

from me! It seemed to me, as we sat by the window, the sun sinking through the still summer air, the leaves at rest, but how full of life, the motes dancing in the beam, the birds with their hymns of love, and every now and then the chirp of the grasshopper —

“That evening reveller who makes
His life an infancy and sings his fill;” —

it seemed to me, as we so sat, and, looking upon the husband face of our mother Nature, I listened to the accents of that wild and impassioned wisdom, so full of high conjecture and burning vision, and golden illustration, which belonged to him for whom life was closing, as if I could have fancied that the world was younger by some two thousand years, and that it was not one of this trite and dull age's children that was taking his farewell of life, but rather one of the enthusiasts of that day when knowledge was both a passion and a dream, when the mysteries of the universe and the life-to-come were thought the most alluring of human themes, and when in the beautiful climates of the West, the sons of wisdom crept out to die, among the trees they had peopled with divinities, and yielded their own spirits to the Great Soul of which they were a part, and which their mysterious faith had made the Life and Ruler of the world.* For I think, nay, I feel assured, that those, the high sons of the past philosophy, have neither in their conduct nor their manner of thought been fully ap-

* But Phornutus, by Jupiter, understands the Soul of the world, he writing thus concerning him, *ὡσπερ δὲ ἡεῖς*, &c. “As we ourselves are governed by a soul, so hath the world, in like manner, a soul that containeth it, and this is called Zeus, being the cause of life to all things that live,” &c. — *Cudworth*, vol. i. p. 529.

preciated by the posterity that treads lightly over the dust of what once was life. They wandered wildly, but their wanderings were 'not of the earth, earthy;' and they possessed more of that power, and beauty, and majesty, and aspirations, which *are* the soul; they had less of the body and more of the spirit, than many of the mitred Priests who have railed against the earthliness of Paganism, from the cherubic paradise of Tithes.

And now the sun sank, and

'Maro's shepherd star
Watched the soft silence with a loving eye.'*

"Do you remember," said L——, "a story in one of the old English Chronicles, how a bird flew into the King's chamber, when the King was conversing with some sage upon the nature of the soul? 'Behold!' said the sage, it is like that bird while within this room; you can note its flight and motions, but 'you know not whence it came ere it entered, nor can ye guess whither it shall fly when it leaves this momentary lodging.'"

It chanced, somewhat curiously, that as L—— spoke, a small bird — I know not of what name or tribe — suddenly alighted on the turf beneath the window, and though all its fellow-songsters were already hushed, poured forth a long, loud, sweet lay, that came, in the general silence, almost startlingly on the ear. "Poor bird!" said L——, musingly, "it is thy farewell to one who, perhaps, has given thee food for thy little ones, and whose hand is well-nigh closed. And," continued he, after a short pause — and lifting up his eyes, he gazed long and earnestly around the scene, now bathed in all the darkening but tender hues of the summer night

* Milton, a poem, by the Author.

— “and shall I be ungrateful to that power which has, since my boyhood, fed my thoughts — the wanderers of the heart — have *I* no farewell for that Nature whom, perhaps, I behold for the last time? O, unseen Spirit of Creation! that watchest over all things — the desert and the rock, no less than the fresh water bounding on like a hunter on his path, when his heart is in his step — or the valley girded by the glad woods, and living with the yellow corn — to me, thus sad and baffled, thou hast ministered as to the happiest of thy children! — thou hast whispered tidings of unutterable comfort to a heart which the World sated while it deceived! Thou gavest me a music, sweeter than that of palaces, in the mountain wind! — thou badest the flowers and the common grass smile up to me as children to the face of their father! — Like the eye of a woman first loved to the soul of the poet, was the face of every soft and never-silent star to me! Nature, my mother nature! as the infant in the harsh slavery of schools pines for home, I yearned within the dark walls of cities, and amidst the hum of unfamiliar men, for thy sweet embrace — and thy bosom whereon to lay my head, and weep wild tears at my will! I thank thee, Nature, that thou art round and with me to the last! Not in the close thoroughfares of toil and traffic — not tethered to a couch, whence my eyes asking for thee, would behold only those dim walls which are the dying man’s worst dungeon, or catch through the lattice the busy signs and crowded tenements of the unsympathizing herd — not *thus* shall my last sigh be rendered up to the Great Fount of Life! To the mystic moment when the breath flutters and departs, thy presence will be round me, and the sentiment of thy freedom bathe my soul like a fresh

air! Farewell thou, and thy thousand ministrants and children!— every leaf that quivers on the bough — every dew-drop that sparkles from the grass — every breeze that animates the veins of earth, are as friends, that I would rather feel around my death-bed than the hollow hearts and ungenial sympathies of my kind! O Nature, farewell! if we are re-united, can I feel in a future being thy power, and thy beauty, and thy presence, more intensely than I have done in this?”

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When I was about to take leave of L—— for the night, he asked me, in a meaning voice, to stay with him a little longer: “The fact is,” said he, “that Dr.—— implies a doubt whether I shall see another day; so be with me, at least till I fall asleep. I mean,” added he, smiling, “not in the metaphoric, but the literal sense of the word.”

Accordingly, when he retired for the night, I sat by his bed-side, and we continued to converse, for he wished it, though by fits and starts: he gave me several instructions as to his burial, and as to various little bequests, not mentioned in his formal testament. While indifferent to the companionship of men, he had never been ungrateful for their affection: the least kindness affected him sensibly, and he was willing in death to show that he had not forgotten it. Indeed I have observed, that the more we live out of the world, the more little courtesies, such as in the crowd are unheeded, are magnified into favours — true that the same process of exaggeration occurs in respect to petty affronts or inconsiderate slights. The Heart never attains the independence of the Mind.

Before the window, which looked out into the garden, the dark tops of the trees waved mournfully to and fro; and above, in deep relief, was the sky, utterly cloudless, and all alive with stars. "My eyes are very heavy," said L——; "close the curtains round my head." I did so, and crept softly into the next room, where the Nurse sate dozing in a large chair by the fire-side.

"Does he sleep, sir?" said she, waking up as I approached.

"He will shortly," said I: "he seems inclined to it."

"Poor gentleman! he will soon be out of his sufferings," said the Nurse; and she herewith took a huge pinch of snuff.

Yes! this is the world's notion. With what wondrous ingenuity they shift off the pain of regret! A friend, a brother, a husband, nay a son dies — they thank God he is out of his afflictions! In one sense they are right. They make the best of their own short summer, and do not ask the cloud to stay longer than sufficient to call up the flowers or refresh the soil. Yet this is a narrow view of the subject of death. A bright genius disappears — a warm heart is stilled, and we think only (when we console ourselves) of the escape of the individual from his bed of pain. But ought we not to think of the loss that the world — that our whole race sustains? I believe so. How many thoughts which might have preached conviction to the universe will be stricken for ever dumb by the early death of one being! What services to earth might the high purity, the deep knowledge, the ardent spirit of L—— have affected! But this

we never think of. "Poor gentleman!" quoth the Nurse, "he will soon be out of his sufferings!" and therewith she took a huge pinch of snuff. — My God! what self-comforters we are!

"He is a good gentleman!" said she again, turning round to the fire; "and so fond of dumb animals. Cæsar, sir, the dog Cæsar, is at the foot of the bed as usual? — ay, I warrant he lies there, sir, as still as a mouse. I am sure these creatures know when we are sick or not. Ah! sir, how the dog will take on when——" and the Nurse, breaking off, applied again to her snuff-box.

I did not feel at home in this conversation, and I soon stole again into the next room. What a stillness there was in it! It seemed palpable. Stillness is not silent, at least to the heart. I walked straight up to the bed. L——'s hand was flung over the pillow. I felt it gently; the pulse was almost imperceptibly low — but it fluttered nevertheless. I was about to drop the hand, when L—— turned half round, and that hand gently pressed my own. I heard a slight sigh, and fancying he was awake, I bent over to look into his face. The light from the window came full upon it, and I was struck — appalled, by the exceeding beauty of the smile that rested on the lips. But those lips had fallen from each other! I pressed the pulse again. No — the fluttering was gone. I started away with an unutterable tightness at my heart. I moved to the door, and called (but under breath) to the Nurse. She came quickly; yet I thought an hour had passed before she crossed the threshold. We went once more to the bed — and there, by his master's face, sat the poor dog. He had

crept softly up from his usual resting-place; and when he saw us draw aside the curtain, he looked at us so wistfully that, — no, I cannot go on! — There is a religion in a good man's death that we cannot babble to all the world!

THE END.

O ' N E I L L ,

O R

T H E R E B E L .

DEDICATION.

To * * * * *

In premising that I have laid in Ireland the scene of the following poem, I give at once the motive and excuse for inscribing my undertaking to you. Do not deceive yourself by imagining that, in so doing, I intend solely to convey a token of respect and admiration for a single individual. Pardon my want of gallantry in owning a desire to render this idle tribute a testimony of less exclusive devotion. In the singular fascination of your beauty, which knows neither an equal nor a fault — in the vivid and various graces of

your mind, and in the higher qualities of your heart, (that unceasing source of pure, and warm, and generous affections) — you have combined and blended the most prominent characteristics of your countrywomen; and, like those who looked upon the masterpiece of Apelles, I feel that I am yielding my offering of homage to the Beauties of a whole nation, by rendering it now to the concentrated perfection of ONE.

P R E F A C E.

WHEN this Poem was commenced, it was with the intention of taking for its Hero one whose singular and romantic fate is connected with an æra eventful in the History of a Sister Country. This idea the Author subsequently resolved, from various motives, not to pursue; and perhaps the turbulent times alluded to, are too little removed from the present to make either the individual or the Conspiracy with which he was connected a legitimate subject for an Imaginative Work.

The Period of the Tale has therefore been left undetermined: the Hero derives from the penal disabilities to which his religion subjects him, the strongest excuse for his infringement of the laws; and the Author has endeavoured to draw from Fiction the interest he formerly intended to have borrowed from fact.

London, June 4, 1827.

O'NEILL, OR THE REBEL.

CANTO THE FIRST.

ARGUMENT.

Description of the Night. The Scene. Of the State of the Peasantry. Of the Rebellious Meetings, and Depredatory Incursions. Of their late suspension, and its possible cause. The general Gladness. The festival Rejoicings at Lord Ullin's. Description of his Daughter Ellen, and her Lover Desmond. The interruption of the Lovers. The news Desmond receives. The Farewell Meeting of the Lovers in the Garden, &c. Desmond's mysterious disappearance. The renewed Depredations of the Rebels. Marlow becomes a Suitor to Ellen. The Inscription on Ullin's Gate. Ullin's reason for favouring Marlow's suit. Ellen's ultimate and extorted consent. The decay of her Health.

I.

THE winds were hush'd — and not a cloud was driven
Along the fair face of the sleeping heaven;
On yonder vale the breathing sweets of June
Bask'd in the kisses of the maiden Moon:
And stillest Night — the beautiful — the bland —
Walk'd like a Spirit o'er the lovely land.
And ever, where the mellow starlight slept
On greenest banks, the wave its vigil kept,
Where flower and tree reflected seem'd to show
The home which woo'd the Water-nymph below.

Oh! from the *outward* scene that we could win
 Some spell to soothe the restless world *within!*
 Had we below what makes the bliss above,
 The boon would be — not loveliness — but love;
 And were we borne upon the Prophet's car
 At once to Heaven, all mortal as we are,
 Heaven would be Earth — our human hearts would fling
 Gloom o'er the light and Winter o'er the Spring.

II.

Around that vale lies scatter'd many a shed
 Where Guilt blasphemes, and Hunger shrieks for bread;
 Where the gaunt Serf untam'd *because untaught*
 Sees pain in toil and hopelessness in thought: —
 Gazing on ghastly Famine with dull eye
 He sits, and drinks his children's bitter cry,
 Till fierce Despair hath made the dreamer brave,
 And *grasp'd* the pittance it was wont to *crave*.

III.

The want which links the Wretched to his kind
 Shakes all control save Nature's from the mind
 Wild from the laws whose mercy only gave,
 Rest in the gaol and shelter in the grave —
 There met a rude, unarm'd, unmarshall'd band,
 The scorn, but yet the scourges, of the land.
 Still, when the midnight cloaked the heavy air,
 Came those fierce sons of Darkness and Despair;
 Sweet was to them the rapture of the strife
 Where death had less of bitterness than life;
 With nought to peril, and with all to win,
 And deeming Faith found pardon for their sin.

Bound in one cause, cemented by one oath,
 They grew in guilt, and gloried in the growth.
 Drunk with the wrath of Slaves but newly free,
 They rais'd the arm where once they bent the knee,
 Where writh'd the Worm, the Serpent rear'd its head,
 And Vengeance trampled where Submission bled.

IV.

Such was the Band that where the happy gale
 Breath'd o'er the flowers that gemm'd the glowing vale,
 Where old Tradition filled each haunted glade
 Through which sweet waves their moon-lov'd music
 made —

Such was the Band, that there dark orgies kept
 From which to havoc like a storm they swept;
 Mocking the Justice which in vain pursued,
 Or vaguely threaten'd what it ne'er subdued.
 If vain the sword, still vainer was the bribe
 To bare the haunts of that unhallow'd tribe;
 Though for the Chief, whose bolder sin had won
 The rule the many ever yield to one,
 Tho' for that Chieftain's doom was pledg'd a meed
 Might buy betrayal of a purer creed,
 Yet Treachery fled from caves to courts, and time
 Increas'd his safety while it swell'd his crime.

V.

But lately hush'd to rest — some secret cause
 Had given to guilt a momentary pause —
 Awhile the fearful Satellites of Law
 Grew fierce at feasts, and laugh'd away their awe;

Awhile the wealthy tranquilly forgot
 The serpent couch'd beneath their flowery lot;
 The English Lord — secure at bed and board
 Carous'd and slept — as fits an English lord;
 No more the maiden mark'd, with boding breast,
 Eve's earliest lamp — the love-star of the west: —
 But rather hail'd, with no unwelcome thrill,
 The shade and stillness deepening o'er the hill,
 Stole with soft footstep to the quiet glade,
 Nor fear'd to meet a ruffian in the shade.

VI.

Whate'er this late suspense of Crime had wrought,
 In vain Conjecture had the secret sought.
 Meanwhile through those fam'd halls where we respect
 The chosen Sages we do *not* elect,
 Where reverend Justice fondly we behold
 Muttering strange saws — wich pass'd for truths of old;
 And framing — Fate's disparities to cure; —
 Laws for the rich, and game laws for the poor; —
 Thro' that fam'd Senate fierce contention ran,
 And gathering Até shook the sage Divan;
 For those who now the emerald island sway'd,
 Were pledged to heal the wounds their sires had made;
 With eyes less blinded to the Past — they saw
 How ill Oppression wore the garb of Law.
 Perchance they thought permission might be given
 For souls to choose less favoured roads to Heaven;
 Perchance they thought the million should not bleed,
 Because the thousand chose a holier creed.

And hence Hope shone like sunshine o'er the isle,
 And Woe's wan aspect wore an alien smile,

And aye as each succeeding rumour grew,
 Conjecture gladdened to a happier hue.
 Light was each heart, exulting was each voice,
 And he who met his neighbour said, "Rejoice!"
Hence too perchance — if guess might aught supply
 The truth which shunn'd inquiry's curious eye —
 Hence too perchance the Midnight mark'd no more
 The blood-stain'd hearth and violated door: —
 For 'tis but Woe which drinks a fierce delight,
 From those dark deeds which ask the secret night;
 Guilt lends excitement to the lost alone,
 And Hope befriends no guile — *except her own*.
 If they who most endure the most will dare,
 I crine's worst source be seated in despair,
 Yet oh! when golden Happiness is by,
 Like baffled fiends the stormier passions fly;
 O'er earth the softness of the Heaven will fall,
 And Love look down to brighten over all.

VII.

From hut to hall the general gladness flew,
 And laughing Revel wak'd her wassail crew;
 E'en now from yonder domes the latticed light,
 Streams far and frequent o'er the startled night,
 And all which birth holds high, or beauty fair,
 Have met to hail that bright'ning æra there.
 Proud of his country's hospitable boast,
 Gay speeds the mirth where Ullin is the host.
 Age from the goblet draws the angel-wing
 Which wafts it back to youth's unclouded spring,
 And Youth's gay heart bounds eager to the dance,
 Light as its step and careless as its glance;

While blandest Music with its silver voice,
Bids thought be mute, or lures it to rejoice.

Betroth'd to one long worshipp'd and enshrined
In the veiled altars of that vestal mind,
Dreaming of years unreck'd, and fate defied,
With one dear treasure ever by her side —
Pure — gentle — tender as the evening air,
When something holy blends with Beauty there —
While vague and voiceless through the light above,
Moves the impassion'd spirit of deep love,
Lord Ullin's daughter sate! — and in her ear
Came those low tones which maidens deem most dear,
And o'er her young cheek's softest beauty stole
And went, the blushes speeding from the soul —
And oft from earth, all guilelessly she rais'd
The eye e'en Love had ne'er too wildly praised —
The eye which woo'd you like a star to gaze,
And dream that worlds lay couch'd beneath its rays;
And *as* you gazed your soft'ning spirit drew
As from some holy fount *a virtue* from its hue.

What tho' stern fate which rarely scathes the young,
Had o'er her path no lightest sorrow flung;
Yet that soft heart from childhood's earliest years,
Had looked *abroad* and found the source of tears;
The ravaged country and the cheerless shed,
Want's breadless board and Death's despairing bed —
These had she known, — for she had balm for grief
And taught e'en Guilt the rapture of belief.
And as through caves the sunbeam finds its way,
And pours o'er gloom the glory of the day;

So to those secret sufferings of the poor,
Which Wealth and Pride so rarely stoop to cure
— She came, and Anguish, of its shade beguiled,
Caught the bright influence of her soul, and — smiled.

VIII.

Such scenes had temper'd with a pensive grace
The maiden lustre of that faultless face,
Had hung a sad and dreamlike spell upon
The gliding music of her silver tone;
And shaded the soft soul which loved to lie
In the deep pathos of that volum'd eye.
Lone — thoughtful — tender — ever from her birth,
Her heart had been too gentle for light mirth.
Such are the thrones where Love too surely reigns,
And turns his slightest chaplets into chains:
To them the World of others is as nought;
They shrink from earth, and banquet on sweet thought—
And Passion grows their life; alas, for those
Whom Rapture leaves too restless for repose, —
Who bind on reeds their hopes — their joys — their all,
And idly chide the wild winds when they fall.

Oh, happier far the wandering hearts which range
From flower to flower with sweets in every change,
Than they who link their very selves to one,
Watch — hope — adore! — despair — and are undone!

IX.

And *she did* love — and he she loved was by —
And her cheek flush'd to his impassion'd eye;

And many an envious tone and jealous glance
 Went round — but broke not their unheeding trance.
 'Twas said her lover had, till Faith had seen
 A holier shrine, Love's wandering Pilgrim been —
 That his the truant faith, the broken vow,
 The laws man made, in man alone allow.
 But little knew that curious crowd, in truth,
 The earlier annals of his restless youth.
 Born the last scion of a race whose sway
 Had ruled the Green Isle in her olden day;
 Rear'd 'mid the falling tower and mould'ring arch,
 Which years had spared to chronicle their march,
 And treasuring each lone relic as the shrine
 Which held the memory of his royal line,
 From earliest childhood fatherless and lone,
 To good or ill Lord Desmond's youth had grown,
 And with each passion of his fiery blood
 Without one check to curb or guide the flood —
 He pass'd a wanderer o'er that land which seems
 No feign'd Elysium to our boyish dreams:
 And dreams had fed *his* boyhood — he had trod
 Where Bards and Warriors slept beneath the sod: —
 Had heard the low winds murmur on the steep
 When midnight rested on the sullen deep,
 And strange sounds floated from the gloomy caves,
 And dim and fitful forms along the waves,
 Borne on the brooding wings of Darkness, roll'd —
 The Spirits of the wizard sons of old,
 Who from th' unsolid air and wandering cloud
 Call'd Shapes and Shadows to their bidding, bow'd.
 For whom the Night held secrets, and her drear
 Recess a vision, and a voice of fear —
 And the rent earth restored her dead, and gave

From fleshless lips revealings of the Grave —
 What time *the living slept*, and from her noon,
 On the lone mountain look'd the mystic Moon,
 And trembled — to her tented cloud retreating,
 With the deep awe of that unearthly meeting.

His Fathers were the Monarchs of that day
 When rung yon hills to Ossian's lofty lay,
 Ere yet the Norman bandits who proclaim
 Their olden line had bought their sons a name.
 And thoughts of fame which should recall his sires
 Came to his heart and fann'd themselves to fires,
 With hopes of holier honours unallied
 To selfish power or solitary pride —
 Of years — ambition — labour — life employ'd
 To raise the land oppression had destroy'd,
 Bid faction rest, intestine discord cease,
 And soothe e'en hostile priestcrafts into peace.
 Such were his hopes — but he was doom'd to mark
 Their gradual fading till his soul grew dark;
 For he was born to that false faith the true
 Should meekly crush, and piously subdue:
 And doom'd to suffer, though forbid to groan,
 Youth's just ambition blighted and o'erthrown,
 Fetter'd and fated — ask ye if he burn'd
 With loyal love when hopelessly he turn'd
 To bear and bury in an alien state
 The Exile's restlessness — the Bondsman's hate?

x.

Years past — methinks there is a time for all
 Which the weak spirit gladly would recall:

The Epoch of our years which mars or makes,
 And sheds o'er life the colours which it takes;
 Slight in its seeming — oft by all unseen
 Save him who feels too deeply it has been —
 And marks its influence spread o'er all below
 As points his path to happiness or woe;
 Our fate lies then before us, and the soul
 Goes darkly forward to its destin'd goal —
 Our choice, but nought beyond, is in our power,
Eternity may rest upon an hour :
 And on we speed, ere yet that hour be flown,
 To fame — disgrace — the scaffold — or the throne.
 On — on through death — to *what* beyond the tomb?
 Oh! where shall end the darkness of our doom?

XI.

Years past — the wanderer had return'd again,
 And Gladness met him in his old domain.
 Sweet to the man the greeting and the joy,
 Which prove how fresh the memory of the boy;
 And hearts too cold to share that welcome zeal,
 Will feign a rapture which they may not feel.
 Loved by the low, and honour'd by the proud,
 He stood no Lara in the living crowd;
 Smooth was his brow, and joyous was his glance,
 And light his footstep in the linked dance;
 His voice, the blithest at the festive hour,
 Had still the sweetest tones for lady's bower;
 And his the unfrequent air which few withstand,
 That blends so well the brilliant and the bland;
 The nameless magic sparkling over all,
 Like fairy spells unfelt by those they thrall.

The pride so veil'd that it was only seen
 In the high carriage and the lordly mien ;
 The words, where wit, the while it beam'd, refined,
 To all so courteous, to the few so kind : —
 Such were the arts with which the crowd he sway'd,
 And chain'd and charm'd the captives which he made.

XII.

Not rude the form where youth began to assume
 The tints of man, and darken from its bloom ;
 His the slight frame the Grecian loved to trace,
 Where strength sate light and soften'd into grace ;
 The chisell'd features, and the forehead where
 O'er the broad temples wreath'd the glossy hair ;
 The eye which said so eloquently well
 Whate'er the lip, less dangerous, fail'd to tell ;
 Albeit at times some veil'd remembrance came
 To damp its ray, or rouse it into flame.
 But, calm or careless in his general air,
 Thought seem'd unfrequent, and emotion rare,
 Though wont the sacred faith once held so dear,
 Revil'd — belied — and oft blasphemed to hear,
 Though the lost land his Fathers had possest,
 Like all things wretched, bore the vulgar jest ;
 Yet rarely Passion flush'd his brow, or wrung
 Scorn from his glance or insult from his tongue ;
 And they who knew his boyhood, wondering deem'd
 His soul had grown as callous as it seem'd.

Perchance they err'd not ! — with each year's decay
 Fades leaf by leaf the Heart's young bloom away —
 The thoughts most cherish'd darken from the breast,

And Virtue grows less beautiful; — we rest
 Not on ourselves but others — and we shroud
 The lofty thoughts too sacred for the crowd,
 And bend to their low level — till the long
 And gathering custom knits us with the throng.
 Passion — nor Feeling — nor the purer springs
 Which move Mankind to warm imaginings,
 Have aught in common with the World: we grow
 Too cold for rapture — too obtuse for woe;
 And still as years come o'er us, vainer seem
 Love's boyish hope and Manhood's patriot dream;
 And still each day the spirit turns the more
 From thoughts and ties itself had sought before,
 Till to all other interest callous grown,
 It shrinks, and cramps, and crapples to its own.

XIII.

Whate'er the whisper'd frailties of his youth,
 The changeful passion, or the broken truth;
 Whate'er his failings or his follies past,
 Well had Lord Desmond fix'd his faith at last.
 And oh, if ever love did truly speak
 In the fond gaze, the ever-varying check,
 The faltering accent, and the flushing brow,
 At least his homage will not water *now*.

XIV.

Whose yon dark eye upon the lovers bent,
 Whose yon keen look so lowering and intent;
 Whose yon stern form with rugged garb and air,
 Which suit so ill the courtly revel there?
 Lightly he mark'd the whisper of amaze,

The gathering gazers, and the haughty gaze;
 But just observed within that mirthful hall,
 He stood, though noticed, yet unknown, by all.
 Slowly he strode to Desmond — fix'd his view,
 Then paused, and made his rude salute — and drew
 A letter from his bosom: Desmond's look
 Wax'd pale and eager as the scroll he took.
 As o'er the words he bent him, you might mark
 The wrung lip quiver, and the brow grow dark;
 And when he raised his looks again — an air
 So sad, so sunken from their pride, was there;
 You might have deem'd that every word had grown
 A spell to freeze all feeling into stone.

He rose at last, and silently drew near,
 Where Ullin stood — and whisper'd in his ear,
 "From Cromla news that ere the dawning hour
 Come guests from England to my neighbouring tower;
 And I must hence — my favourite steed will bear
 Myself to Cromla, ere the sun be there.
 Nor Ullin, thou who act'st so well the host,
 Canst urge my absence from the self-same post.
 But hear! — our hopes, our country's fond belief,
 The hugg'd and plighted promise of relief,
 The meteor beam we deem'd a star is o'er —
 And Erin's night is rayless as before!"

xv.

He turn'd — nor paused the aged Chief's reply, —
 He turn'd, and met his Ellen's tearful eye,
 Which fix'd and following on his footsteps sought
 The answering gaze it shrunk from when it caught.

He pass'd the spot she hallow'd — paused to tell
 The bitter tidings and the brief farewell:
 And when he mark'd the quivering lip — the sigh —
 And the quick tear which dimm'd the downcast eye,
 He murmur'd hopes of parting more unseen,
 And named with whisper'd voice the trysting-scene;
 Then turn'd — and with him sullenly along
 Went that rude stranger through the curious throng,
 Addressing — answering — heeding none, he past
 Through yon dark door which veil'd his form at last.

XVI.

She listen'd not; — she *felt* his steps depart —
 Then rose and follow'd with a beating heart:
 She pass'd the hall — the gate — the garden — where
 Cool on her burning temples came the air.
 The banks were steep'd in moonlight; the sweet flowers
 Breathed with the first kiss of the morning hours,
 And far and faintly you might hear the voice
 Of the wild brooks along the vale rejoice; —
 But Nature's smiles are only for the blest,
 And Fear sate heavy on her boding breast.
 And on she went — nor saw nor reck'd of aught,
 Save the hot pressure of one fev'rish thought —
 As they who walk in noonday's fullest beam,
 Girt with the shadow of a troubled dream.

XVII.

Beside a shatter'd oak Lord Desmond leant,
 Still as a shape of stone — the brow (which bent
 Along the deep and dreaming eye that fed
 Its gaze on Heaven) — was hueless as the dead.

She laid her hand upon his arm; and yearn'd
 To kiss the lip which trembled as it turn'd.
 "My own sweet Ellen, this is kind — and yet
 For once my spirit meets thee with regret.
 To meet — see — but to leave thee, wrings my heart."
 "Alas! my Desmond, wherefore should we part? —
 Thy friends await thee? — well, if thou wilt roam,
 When comes again my wanderer to his home?
 Nay! — look not thus: when oft before as now,
 Farewell was blent with Faith's consoling vow,
 Thine was the voice of comfort — thine the dear
 And bright'ning looks which smiled away my fear —
 And oh! — when thou had'st left me, and when all
 Seem'd dark — those words, those looks I would recall —
 Shed o'er each doubt their treasured thoughts, and see
 The hope thou left'st me, light each dream of thee.
 Oh, if we part so sadly — Desmond, say
 What beam shall bless me from thine eyes away?
 Where shall I turn when thou art gone, and nought
 But grief unmingled haunts each bitter thought? —
 Look on me, Desmond! — surely there is more
 In this farewell than parting knew before; —
 Speak — answer — give me one dear smile to shew
 These are but woman's tears and vainly flow,
 Thou turn'st not — yes — too well forbodes my heart —
 And thou —"

"Forgive me, dearest as thou art! —
 My baffled hopes — my Erin's deep despair,
 Thy strength'ning love shall teach my soul to bear.
 Oh! rather would I ask my heart to glow,
 And woo wild mirth amid my country's woe,
 Smile, though all round me shame such joy, than see
 A Patriot's anguish wring one tear from thee.

But since our passion, never did I part
 With such a deep foreboding at my heart.
 Look up and hear me!"

From his breast she raised
 Her weeping eyes, and on his features gazed:
 The pale and ghastly moon shone coldly o'er
 The hush'd yet haughty sorrow which they wore —
 From the wan marble of his brow, the air
 All faintly stirr'd the long dishevell'd hair —
 The parted lip was hueless — and the eye
 Unmoving dwelt upon the quiet sky.

Oft in the looks of Woe's o'ercharg'd excess,
 The reigning passion *seems* most passionless,
 As if our grief grew tranquil at the thought
 That all which tortures was *already* wrought,
 As if the spirit rising from the load
 Which crush'd till then — look'd forth from its abode,
 And o'er the paugs and passions of the Earth
 Shed the deep calm of its immortal birth.
 And as the pale and trembling maiden eyed
 That form and mien so mournful in their pride —
 And mutely gazed, she felt her blood grow chill
 Before that air so desolate and still.

XVIII.

"I am not wholly what the world may deem —
 For I can mask my brow in smiles, and seem
 Blent with the herd around me! — Who can mount
 Where eagles hold their unseen nest? or count
 The winged and aspiring thoughts which rest
 Within the clouds and darkness of the breast?"

But I have knit my spirit to a doom
 Which hath no certain limits — and the gloom
 Knows but a single Star — *thy love!* — where'er
 I walk, the Earth is girded with a snare;
 And in the revel there goes forth a voice
 Which whispers fear, and dares me to rejoice;
 Ev'n in the silent night, when men escape
 From human thought, there is a Demon shape —
 And in the winds there is a Spirit's breath,
 Freighting the free and happy air with Death.
 But I can feed on poisons — and my soul
 Walks lone'but dauntless onwards to its goal.
 They who, like me, have set upon a die
 A nobler fate than theirs — their own defy;
 And while each hope and blessing round them fall,
 Clasp to their hearts a recompense for all.

But this is vain! — if in this changeful scene
 We meet no more; if all that once hath been
 Between our souls is sever'd — and our lot
 Mourns for a broken charm and finds it not;
 Then still through change—time—distance—fate—as now
 My heart will echo to our parting vow.
 Though sin pollute what yet is left of pure,
 And the soul darken while the life endure;
 Though foes surround me — though condemned to learn
 How friendship falters, and how truth can turn,
 Fate the last seal of suffering cannot set,
 For *thy* remembrance shall be left me yet!
 My soul, at each new evil years have wrought,
 Shall shrink within and rivet round thy thought;
 Nor feel whate'er the winds and storms have rest,
 While on the stem one green leaf shall be left.

And this, thine earliest gift — which I have prest
 Here, till it almost grew unto my breast —
When this, all broken, shall to thee return,
Then — nor till then — my last doom thou shalt learn.
 Then will my memory with my life be past.
 And this wild heart forget to love at last!"

XIX.

He turn'd — he ceased — and in that strain'd embrace
 What years were crowd'd in an instant's space!
 In the deep passion of that mournful mood,
 What hopes — fears — feelings — mingled, yet subdued!
 Chill came the morning on their brows, and threw
 O'er their blent locks the dampness of its dew —
 And the weak waning moon stood sad and still
 As when she linger'd o'er the Latmos hill.
 They were so young — so beautiful in youth!
 And in their love was such a world of truth!
 Alas! that such should meet, or meeting part!
 Or — that we know no Lethé for the heart!

* * * * *

XX.

Days faded, but *he* came not; — and the sun
 Brought that at last which was their bridal one —
 That which had long been mark'd for joy; but now
 Where are the garlands for that maiden brow?
 Where are the song, the revel, and the lute,
 Music and mirth; O wherefore are ye mute?
 None — since that night of fatal merriment,
 When forth from Ullin's halls Lord Desmond went —

None had beheld him: round his ancient gate
 Still with fond gaze his anxious clansmen wait.
 Still does Enquiry vainly strive to draw
 Some trace to aid the baffled steps of law;
 But bootless all; and every idle guess
 But made the semblance to the truth seem less.
 Meanwhile, months past in unrelax'd alarms,
 Men dreamt of blood, and grasp'd in sleep their arms:
 For that wild band, which slept until was o'er
 The hope which gleam'd on Erin, waked once more.
 Far o'er the waste, when night was at her noon,
 Burst the red flames which mock'd the placid moon,
 And rose the shriek of those who woke to feel
 The murderer's gripe, and wrestle with his steel.

XXI.

But still the Lost return'd not: feeble grew
 All hope and question e'en amid the few:
 The courtly Marlow woo'd his destin'd bride,
 With name less noble but with lands more wide;
 And Ullin, looking through the vale of years,
 Beheld meet matter for a Father's fears;
 Himself at rest within that sullen grave,
 Where thought can aid not nor affection save;
 And she, his lone and leveliest flow'ret, reft
 Of all which shelter'd, to the bleak winds left.
 With this, perchance, a secret fear combined,
 Unown'd, yet all unconquer'd by his mind.
 The Warder's gun some daring hand had braved,
 And thrice upon his gate these words engraved:
*"Think well, Lord Ullin, ere thy daughter's hand
 Be pledged to Marlow in the marriage band:*

*To him — to any , if such boon be given,
 That very hour the unhallow'd link is riven —
 That very hour a voice the mirth shall mar,
 That very hour a hand the deed shall bar,
 That very hour for ever lost shall be
 His bride to Marlow , and thy child to thee ;
 For if to man she ever be allied,
 We claim thy Daughter for our Chieftain's bride."*

XXII.

Idle and vain these words in truth appear'd,
 And Reason scorn'd them; but Affection fear'd;
 And o'er the Father, as his health decay'd,
 Each anxious doubt a deeper influence made.
 He seem'd to mock the empty vaunt, and yet
 He fain had seen how idle was the threat,
 And died — rejoicing Fate at least would fall
 On one protected in a husband's hall.

Such were the feelings which as time went by,
 For Marlow's suit won favour in his eye;
 And well he urged, through love itself severe,
 That hateful cause on Ellen's shrinking ear.

XXIII.

Who hath not felt that tyranny of mind,
 Which chafes if rugged, but subdues if kind?
 Slow but secure — which arms our inmost strength,
 Yet wrings its purpose from the soul at length!
 For who can aye resist, when those who press
 Are all we wish in this wide world to bless?
Words may be met, but how canst thou reply

To the mute lip and all-imploing eye?
How aye resist the tenderness of tone,
Which veils that wish to very custom grown,
Which drops so faintly, yet with every day,
Must wear some marble from the heart away?
Or who can mark the never-chiding grief
Refusal gives — yet aye deny relief?
Who can? — not thine — though faithful passion still
Clasp'd thy young heart — not thine so stern a will!
Sweet Ellen, no! — though doubly blank and drear,
Consent might make this barren world appear.
Though Hope long cherish'd — for it feeds on air —
At such espousals wither'd to despair;
Though dead to earth and rooted to the past,
Her soul resisted long — it sunk at last;
And strove to soothe remembrance into rest,
By one pure hope to see a father blest.
But day by day more feeble wax'd her frame,
And o'er her cheek the changeful hectic came;
And though she strove beneath her father's eye
To smile — the effort saddened to a sigh;
And lone she sate long hours, and gazed at nought,
Tracing past dreams and nursing fev'rish thought;
And when she rose all lifelessly she went,
Gone the light step that scarce the wild flower bent:
And sleep stole rarely to her couch; — or gave
Wild shapes of terror — visions of the grave.
And sickness, weakness, death came o'er the breast
Which hail'd their omens, for they spake of rest.
And though she claim'd, when those new rites were named,
A longer date — she blush'd not as she claim'd.
She felt no maiden-shame nor woman-fear,
Nor heard the comfort whisper'd in her ear.

Alas! her only reason was the thought
From which the food of bitter Hope was wrought,
That the same feelings which in slow decay
Prey'd at her heart and wither'd life away,
Would guard the vows still link'd around the past,
And keep her soul all faithful to the last.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

O'NEILL, OR THE REBEL.

CANTO THE SECOND.

ARGUMENT.

Twilight. The Ruined Tower. Introduction of the Stranger — who enters the Tower. Description of the Interior. The secret Passages. The Meeting-place of the Rebels. O'Neill's Speech. Description of the effect it produces, &c. The Chieftain's Chamber. His conference with Norman. Sketch of O'Neill — of the causes which led to his present Criminality, &c. Description of the Night, and Scene from the Casement of his Chamber. The comparison of the Soul to the Element of Fire. The Rebel's Recollections, &c. The sound at the Casement. The Apparition.

I.

Eve darken'd slowly; — on the moor, which far
Spread bleak and barren, look'd the twilight star,
Mouldering and grey — no tree or flow'ret near
To make decay and loneliness less drear —
Amid the wrecks of its departed power
Frown'd o'er the waste one solitary tower;
O'er the worn portals hung the livid dew,
And there the dank moss desolately grew;
Column and stone spread widely o'er the sod,
Foul with the damps, and trembling where you trod;
Through the rent wall, and gothic casement riven,
Shone coldly forth the melancholy Heaven,

And that lone star so clear and chilling made
The light itself more cheerless than the shade.
All was so still, so saddening, that an awe
Crept to the heart — you shiver'd as you saw,
And felt the breathing desolation freeze
The balm and blandness of the evening breeze.

II.

A step — a form — you would have turn'd, I ween,
To greet aught living in so lone a scene;
But yonder form which stole so darkly by,
With that swift step which fell so silently,
So well accorded with the landscape near,
Your pulse had quicken'd with a wilder fear;
That fear which sometimes in the midnight awes
The shuddering soul *without a human cause*,
When we have sprung from sleep! — to listen — start —
And only catch the beating of our heart —
That strange unfathom'd feeling which would seem
As if the spirit, wandering in its dream
Through graves and charnels, or the depths below,
Had met and grappled with some demon foe,
And wild — bewilder'd — madd'ning at escape,
Rush'd back all trembling to its earthly shape.

III.

The stranger reach'd the tower, and gazed around
Keenly and long — and listen'd for a sound,
With that strain'd tension of the eye and ear,
Which speaks of mystery hid, or danger near.
All seem'd secure: and with unechoing tread
He pass'd the porch; along the hall he sped,

Strode through the desert chambers where the rent
And mouldering floor beneath his footing bent —
And reach'd a room more desolate than all.
There couch'd the foul toad by the black'ning wall,
Turning on that strange-guest his lured eye,
And the wild bat swept ominously by,
Through the rent lattice, where the ivy stray'd,
And cast beneath a dim unsteady shade.
Dark hangings wrought with uncouth images
Bent down, and flutter'd in the fitful breeze,
Which from the roof above and galleries round
Came chill — and murmur'd with a moaning sound.
The angry tempests o'er the floor had thrown,
In many a wreck, the green time-tinted stone;
And that step, swift before, moved slow at last,
As o'er the rugged way with pain it past.
Again the stranger gazed around; then where
The arras seem'd less shaken by the air,
Raised its rent folds, and prest a secret screw,
Back at his touch the yawning wainscot flew,
And left a fearful opening, where the ray
Shot through — and glimmer'd in the gloomy way:
There damp and steep and narrowing as they go
More deep, rude steps wind serpent-like below;
And when the stranger entering closed the wall,
Darkness and Night fell round him like a pall.

Oft must his eye have sought the shade, I ween,
And oft his footstep echoed in that scene;
Safe through the gloom he trod, till through the damp,
Fitful and flickering, gleamed a lonely lamp.
There paused his feet — again a secret door
Flew back — then closed on darkness as before.

Again his path renew'd, till, towards the right,
 Stream'd from a door half-closed the chequ'ring light:
 His steps glide swift — the threshold floor they win,
 Dark was the group and wild the scene within.

IV.

Gather'd around a massive table, yet
 With the feast's relics strew'd, fierce forms were met;
 (Such as *Salvator* drew — a rugged horde;)
 Bowls large and frequent strew'd th' unhallow'd board,
 Mix'd with rude weapons which, unsheath'd, declare
 How link'd with danger the carousal there.

But when the door flew open — and the mien
 Of that tall stranger broke upon the scene,
 As, flinging back his mantle, he unveil'd
 The form and face in which their Chief they hail'd;
 Up sprang the whole array; a sudden shout
 Of joyous welcome rang confus'dly out;
 And driv'n and flickering, at that rushing stream
 Of sound — grew pale the lone lamp's ghastly beam.
 To where a seat with gaudier trappings graced
 At the far end of that rude board was placed,
 He strode — then paused, while hush'd and heavy fell
 On all deep silence like a sudden spell;
 And each his seat as by an instinct took,
 And fix'd upon the Chief his glowing look.

One minute's stillness — that brief burning pause
 Which keener strains the senses which it awes;
 Then spoke the Chieftain, and his voice instill'd
 The thoughts it breathed into the hearts it thrill'd.

He spoke of Erin's fate so wrapt in shade,
 That night whose stars were meteors which betray'd.
 He spoke of rule which through the waste of years
 Had traced its laws in terror and in tears,
 And then, with bright'ning eye and deep'ning tone,
 Of that false hope which had so *lately* shone,
 Bade them recall that ever while it lured,
 They hush'd their groans and famish'd—but endured,
 Till Treachery, darkening o'er that hope it nurst,
 Made their last state seem gloomier than the first.

Still as his words more ardently rung forth,
 His list'ners kindled to an equal wrath;
 And there with eyes that flash'd and brows that bent,
 Keen—burning—breathless o'er the board they leant.

V.

Though stern yet thrilling was that eloquence,
 Which seized the passions to beguile the sense;
 And the fierce features of the speaker caught
 Light from his words, and kindled with his thought.

“Yes, by your famish'd babes ye sate and saw
 Death at your hearth—but did ye break the law?
 Yes, ye beheld the riches which would spare
 Not one poor mite to save you from despair
 And left them scatheless, and but idly curst
 The cankering shackles which ye once had burst;
 Yes, ye beheld the English stranger seize
 Its last most wretched pallet from Disease;
 Tear from your very sires, with brutal strength,
 The bed where Suffering look'd for rest at length;
 Heard the faint groan, and mark'd the stiffening clasp,

Nor raised one hand against the ruffian grasp.
 Yes! though long wont as now by sword and strife
 To buy that vengeance link'd in truth with life—
 Yet have ye sate for months, and tamely borne
 The wrongs ye scorn'd—the want ye could not scorn.
 Dark was the present—darker was the past,
 But light seem'd coming—and ye hoped at last.
 Ye sate, ye murmur'd not, ye look'd afar,
 Saw—hail'd—adored that glimmering as the star
 Which shone on *Bethlem*, and ye dreamt to find
 Good will to earth and mercy to mankind.
 Had we then lost remembrance?—did we dare
 To hope that *ought* could make Oppression spare?
 Hope from that Land which had from eldest time
 Link'd wrong with insult, faithlessness with crime;
 Hope from her boasted liberty to gain
 Ease from her yoke—and respite from her chain;
 Right from her laws, or from her justice ruth—
 Was ours such fancy?—*We deserved the truth!*"

VI.

"Well! we have known our wrongs at her behest
 Tried—doubted—mock'd. Ay!—all things hut *redrest*;
 Known the same charge renew'd, though still o'erthrown,
 And aye by conquest more unconquer'd grown;
 Th' ignorant babbling of that brainless race,
 Bred in the stall, enlighten'd at the chace;
 The meek petitions of assembled priests,
 Mild as their bowls, and sparing as their feasts;
 The bolster'd tale, the gravely-quoted lie,
 The sneers at Truth, the cheers at Calumny—
 These have we known: they trick'd our woes in state,

That Slaves might scoff, and Orators debate;
 That Lords might learn how Christian love attunes
 The gentle souls of Senator-dragoons;
 That meek-lipp'd Saints might mouth the blessed theme,
 And nitred Casuists triumph and—blaspheme.”
 “ *This* was your fate—so sunk all hope and fear;
 Ye saw—ye felt—ye answer'd—ye are here!
 Just was our vengeance—we have swept, 'tis true,
 Death on our foes—but they were Erin's too.
 The English Tyrant, and his savage Slave,
 Th' extorting Minion, and the legal Knave,
 The stern who starve, the gentle who betray,
 Do ye repent?—these—*these* have been your prey!
 Woe to the fools whose wisdom is to heap
 Wrongs, yet repose—and tyrannies, yet sleep!
 Theirs is the couch of thorns, the chamber theirs
 Where Murder hides—and Vengeance veils her snares.
 Yea, by the hoarded hate—the hidden sword—
 The curse which rests not—have they their reward!

VII.

“This night, Avengers, brings th' accustom'd hour,
 To pledge anew the oath which knits our power;
 And ne'er before with fiercer zeal than now,
 I call'd and bound ye by that awful vow.
 By the dread memory of your wrongs—your fanes
 Despoil'd and trampled; by your chiefs in chains,
 Yourselves in Want's worst agony—your race
 A wand'ring tribe of Hunger and Disgrace;
 By the stern laws which have for *you* no hope,
 Save their last gift—the gibbet and the rope;
 By this bowl brimming with one tyrant's blood,

And this right hand—made sacred by that flood;
 By the high purpose which convenes you now,
 By every grappled blade and darkening brow,
 Arise! —I pledge you in the AVENGERS'S VOW.

VIII.

The Rebel ceased: before his flashing eye
 Uprose that savage band with one wild cry,
 Each with his right hand raised—as swiftly round
 Went the red cup which that carousal crown'd.
 Up to the echoing vault of that grim cell
 Rung the dark oath no pious lip may tell;
 Words of more fearful import ne'er went forth
 In the hag-haunted caverns of the North,
 When the Norwegian witches held their screen'd
 And sinful orgies with the Master Fiend,
 While the harsh winds, and Night's ill-omen'd birds,
 Scream'd their shrill echo to the guilty words!
 Over that band the lamp look'd dim and lone,
 And made more fierce the forms on which it shone
 As Passion lent to each its varying mark,
 Blanching the cheek and livid lip—or dark
 And gathering o'er the brow, beneath whose shroud
 Flash'd the red eye like lightning from its cloud.
 Dread scene!—that chamber where the vapours damp
 Clung to the walls and struggled with the lamp;
 The board o'erspread with arms—the rugged men,
 Whose wild dark forms seemed kindred to the den;
 And that fierce Leader, with his wreathing hair
 Flung from the flushing cheek and temples bare,
 With lip still breathing wrath, and glowing eye
 And right hand dabbled with a crimson dye.

Scarce less unearthly in the solitude
 Where o'er their courts the Forest Demons brood,
 And the stars, paled by spells, all faintly shine
 O'er the swift waters of the rushing Rhine,—
 Seem the dim shapes beheld by fires that throw
 O'er the tall pines a red and swarthy glow,
 When round the embers, met in mystic mirth,
They cast no shadow on the with'ring earth,
Which dares not echo to the sounds that rise
 In ghastly revel to the sick'ning skies.

But when the oath was pledged by all the band,
 And that dread bowl had purpled ev'ry hand;
 At their Chief's signal once more to the board
 With joyous clamour turn'd the rebel horde;
 Gleam'd the full cups—loud laughter echoed round,
 And those old crumbling walls shook blithely to the sound.

IX.

Gayer than all was heard the Chieftain's voice,
 Scarce suited more to rouse than to rejoice;
 For he was versed in all the pliant skill,
 Which moulds the vulgar to a leader's will.
 Well did he know how wit the soul can seize,
 That dangerous art to govern while you please;
 How sin's quick seeds once sown within the breast,
 Spring at the laugh and ripen with the jest.
 He leant along the board with joyous air,
 And plied the bowl and sped the revel there:
 Bright from his eye and bursting from his tongue,
 To life wild humour's warm creations sprung;
 And as their cups the fierce carousers quaff'd,
 Remorse forgot her sting and Murder laugh'd.

x.

But as *the hour wax'd later and the sound*
Of noisier mirth more swiftly rung around,
The Chieftain paused, and whisp'ring in the ear
Of him whose office made his seat most near,
Rose from the board which now no more required
His genial care, and silently retired.

Such was his wont—the first in hours of mirth,
To waken joy, and watch upon its birth,
The first to part—meet bounds his prudence set,
Command grows feeble if its tools forget;—
And they who sway the common herd should heed
How far they share the passions they should lead.

O'er stairs more rugged still than those which led
Before to that dark spot, the Chieftain sped;
Hewn in the massive wall they wound their flight
From thence, and reach'd the turret's loftiest height,
Where gloom'd his lonely chamber, bleak and bare,
So worthier him who held dominion there.
Few moments past, ere on his solitude
His first and favourite follower's steps intrude.

“Norman, what tidings?”—“Brave O'Neill, prepare!
Our spy brings news which ask thine instant care;
To-night at twelve the bridal hour is set,
And Marlow”—“Ha! well, vengeance waits him yet;
Long have I wish'd this burning hour so near,
Yet now—why seems it less for hope than fear?”
Sudden he paused, and turn'd as if to hide
His clouded brow from him who stood beside.
His large eye droop'd in musing, and his cheek

Grew pale, then deepen'd to that hectic streak
 The mark of passions struggling though suppress—
 The flush which speaks the fever of the breast—
 “To-night, at twelve—hark! ere this hour's last sand
 Be spent, call forth the chosen of the band;
 Our plot needs those unwont to fail or fear,
 Myself will lead, and shall await you here.
 Modred the spy shall on our steps attend,
 Mark well if aught thy watchful eye offend;
 If so, thy hand strikes home—I love not much
 To trust a Faith corruption once can touch;
 Now leave me till the hour.”—The door of stone
 Swung on its hinge—the Rebel was alone.

XI.

And this was then that Chief, whose name of dread
 Had pass'd into a proverb, who had fed
 The tongue of Fear with legends vague and wild,
 As aught which e'er our boyhood's ear beguiled.
 Round the yule-hearth no gossip Seer hath told
 More wondrous tales of stalwart knight of old,
 Than those which blanch the lips that would reveal
 The deeds and darings of the rude O'Neill.
 Fit chief, in truth, for such confederates; cold
 In plot and purpose as in action bold;
 A very Proteus in his powers, endued
 With spells which enter'd in the subtlest mood;—
 'Twas not the hand so much as heart he gain'd,
 He won to wield, and while he pleased he chain'd.

XII.

In form as manner varying—versed in all
 Which strengthens crime, or veils it, if it fall;

A thousand shapes and tones his practised skill
 Could seize at pleasure and reject at will
 His favourite haunts were not the cave and cell,
 Where Darkness broods and Guilt is wont to dwell,
 When most against him was the clamour loud,
 He pass'd in safety through the City's crowd;—
 When outraged Justice most he had defied,
 He sate all scatheless by her sworded side;—
 The deep disguise, foes, friends alike deceived,
 Revenge was blinded and Distrust believed:
 Perchance such arts might, in a happier clime,
 Have guarded Glory—*here* they sheltered Crime.

XIII.

Amidst his followers—rugged as they seem'd—
 Mix'd those of whom conjecture never dream'd;
 Some to whom lineage (barr'd its rights) but lent
 A juster plea to deepen discontent;
 And some whom vex'd Ambition, which the laws
 Denied all effort in a holier cause,
 Lured to those secret schemes—for they who nurse
 Ambition's hope are goaded by a curse
 Which "*murders sleep!*"—or if to good or ill
 The curse excites them onward—onward still!—
 Like the vain Titan, madly do they clasp
 A cloud, yet deem a Goddess in their grasp,
 And bear the Titan's bitter doom, in breasts
 Link'd to the torturing wheel *which never rests*.
 And oft and aye the green Atlantic bore
 Well veil'd assistance from th' opposing shore,
 That state in which the Argus of intrigue
 Ne'er sleeps, nor scorns with England's foes to league.

For oh! the holiest cause knows no ally,
Like that where Hatred forms the common tie.

XIV.

Where'er O'Neill's more early fate was cast,
Ill seem'd the present suited to the past.
In his deep eye a melancholy shade
Belied the mirth the lip so wildly made;
And o'er his brow unsleeping Memory set
A seal as sad, though haughtier than regret.
Still at the board more joyous than the rest,
The beam which lit ne'er thaw'd that frozen breast;
And in his mien there reign'd that lordly air,
Which aught but Birth so rarely learns to wear;
Yet to the low so artfully he bow'd
His manner glass'd the nature of the crowd,
Far from the tone which, insolently kind,
Revolts the soul it *plainly* seeks to bind,
Unseen—unfelt—*his* spells,—as if they wreathed
Their magic only in the air he breathed.

XV.

In truth he seem'd not of a mind which laid
Its hopes and honour in a traitor's trade.
Vex'd from his childhood with the restless aim
To wring from Fate the "nothing of a name;"
And year by year more fondly wed to all
The dreams which lure Ambition to its fall,
The dreams so welcome to the heart of youth,
Where fancy less seems fiction than the truth;
Which Age nor Grief can learn us to despise,
Those sole philosophers that make men wise;—

Perchance the aspiring hopes his fancy fed
 To holier paths his daring steps had led—
 Perchance, for in his wildest moments, still
 Spake out a heart, though warp'd, too soft for ill —
 Perchance his powers—if happier turn'd at first,
 Had blest in sunshine what in storm they curst.
 But on each ebb and current of his soul
 A bar was set to baffle—not *controul*—
 For in the mind there is a ceaseless source
 Which *will* have way, however checked the *course*,
 And bann'd all outward let, the passions bear
 Back to the heart to waste their vengeance there.

XVI.

Thrust by a creed on which an Alien's name
 Was set—from aught which loftier birth might claim,
 His was the curse which pride most keenly gnaws,
 Doubt without proof—suspicion without cause;
 A claim to trust rejected—not denied—
 An honour questioned, and a faith belied.
 Yet did he feed in silence on the thought,
 Which was as poison to his soul, and wrought
 Hope from each treacherous spring that year by year
 Burst forth to leave the desert heart more drear.
 And, as the sailor cast on unknown shores
 With aching eyes the waste of waves explores,
 And sees the faint far vessels gliding on,
 And hails—and hopes—until the last is gone;
 So with each pledge forgetful of the past,
 He watch'd—rejoiced—believed—and *woke* at last
 To find the rocks around him wide and dark,
 And the wave widow'd of its latest bark.

XVII.

Where then the wonder, if at length he turn'd
And cursed the falsehood which had lured and *spurn'd*?
Where is the wonder—if that eager, wild
Impassion'd heart, so baffled and beguiled,
Roused into war by feelings scathed and strong—
The stings of pride—the rankling sense of wrong—
With all which Nature in the meanest breast
Stirs up if both insulted and opprest—
Urged him to madness, till the ling'ring band
That bound the faith was sever'd by the brand;
Till loyal love *already* in distrust
Turn'd to revenge and deem'd its treason just?
While headlong zeal and party hate, which blind
Its clearest sense when once they touch the mind,
Bade him in guilt the shape of glory see,
And mock'd rebellion with the name of free.
Oh! while we censure, is there at our hearts
No warning voice at which our conscience starts?
Have *we* religion's holiest laws obey'd,
If aught which fetters has for faith been made;
Have *we* refused no present proof to cast
Perverted eyes upon the doubtful past?
Have *we* permitted nought of partial zeal
To feign the fear our judgment could not feel?
Have *we* for seven long ages of abuse,
Left wrath no plea—resistance no excuse?
Have *we*—but vainly in this idle song
Would Question task the insanity of wrong.
The dotard bigot gropes along his way,
And veils the eyes too weak to bear the day,
And deems the sunshine, lightning—yet would see

Storms in the calm air should it come more free.
 Onward his blind soul creeps, and like the snail
 Drags on, or shrinks to, its perpetual gaol,
 That dungeon of dark thoughts—in which it feeds,
 The mingled monsters of a thousand creeds—
 Blackening each truth to error—nor would hear
 An angel's voice in answer to its fear;
 But mouth the more the same unvaried theme,
 And hug the nothings of its ideot dream.
 But once more to my tale.—

The nightbeam fell

O'er the lone inmate of that narrow cell,
 And play'd upon his sullen brow, and threw
 A seeming quiet o'er its pallid hue.
 With changeful step he paced the floor, as one
 Who strives his burning thoughts to soothe or shun,
 And hopes the action from without may win
 The fitful, feverish, restlessness within.

XVIII.

The moonlight kiss'd his lattice; pausing there
 He leant, and woo'd the freshness of the air;
 He look'd above, and mark'd with listless eye,
 The dim clouds sweeping o'er the solemn sky;
 Swift, shadowy, wan, the Æther spirits' cars,
 They veil'd and vanish'd from the changeless stars.
 Beneath him lay the wrecks of other days,
 Hush'd in the moon and hallow'd by its rays;
 While o'er the melancholy ruins round
 Waved the rank berbage with a rustling sound.
 Beyond for miles, amid the faithless swamp,
 The meteor-Fairy lit his wandering lamp;

While mutter'd o'er the mountains stretch'd behind
The gathering anger of the giant wind.

He look'd in silence, striving to control—
The thoughts of sadness darkening on his soul:
He turn'd, he sat beside his hearth, and view'd
The fitful fire, that friend of Solitude;—
That strange and mystic spirit, where is shown,
Perchance some type or shadow of our own—
Our own internal agent, which requires
Like that from earth, the fuel for its fires;
Which pours its powers into the meekest things,—
Quickens the senseless block to which it clings—
Now low, now soaring, now but form'd to bless
With temper'd light, now blasting with excess,
Which warms, pervades, ennobles while it preys
On the dull substance which supplies its blaze,
And when that substance is consumed, oh! where
Speeds the wild spirit?—*Answer me, thou Air!*

XIX.

Still bent the Rebel o'er the hearth, and woo'd
Departed thoughts to haunt his lonely mood;
Thoughts of those happier days, ere golden youth
Gloom'd into man, or fancy into truth.
He felt—the lost, the harden'd still can feel!
Into his eyes unwonted softness steal,
And shamed and starting raised them;—on the board
Unsheath'd and shining lay his Father's sword.
Oh! dreamt his boyhood that that warrior brand
Would strike for rapine in a Rebel's hand?
Swiftly he turn'd,—such thoughts he could not bear;

Away, away! — his mother's gift is there,
 Time's warning witness modell'd to pourtray
 Death's steeds — the hours which urge us to decay.
 Alas! how *his* had wasted since the morn
 When first that boon his youthful pride had borne,
 When, as she yielded to his young request,
 His mother drew her darling to her breast,
 And smooth'd the light locks from his forehead fair,
 Press'd the fond kiss, and breathed the anxious prayer,
 Smiled at his joy, and check'd the boding sigh;
 But when again she caught that daring eye
 And parting step already train'd to court
 Whate'er of peril mingled with his sport,
 Hope, gladness, pride — all dark'ning into fears,
 She caught, and clasp'd, and bathed him with her tears.

Oh! in our sterner manhood when no ray
 Of earlier sunshine glimmers on our way,
 When girt with sins and sorrows and the toil
 Of cares which sear the bosom that they soil;
 Oh! if there be in Retrospection's chain
 One link which knits us with young dreams again,
 One thought so sweet we scarcely dare to muse
 On all the hoarded raptures it reviews,
 Which seems each instant in its backward range
 The heart to soften, and its ties to change;
 And every spring, untouch'd for years, to move —
It is the memory of a Mother's love.
 And thus, though lost, degraded, and undone,
 Felt the dark spirit of that guilty son;
 He leant his face upon his hands, and let
 The past come o'er him in its full regret,
 And through his fingers (guests unknown for years,

But oh! how welcome) ooz'd the burning tears;
 And there he sat, nor struggled to repress
 That warm and more than woman-tenderness.

XX.

What sound is there? he heard, nor turn'd him round;
 Again — again — a low, deep, steady sound
 Thrice at the casement which the builder's hand
 Had raised so proudly o'er the level land,
 That if aught *living* moved there — 'twas the wing
 That wafts on high the weird owl's wandering.
 Slowly he turn'd, and felt one glance suffice
 To chill the curdling life-blood into ice.
 Hueless and motionless in that repose
 The sleep that never breaks alone bestows,
 With glassy eye that almost froze to stone,
 So fix'd its look the horror of his own,
 With livid lip *from which there came no breath*
 Glared on his gaze the lineaments of Death.
 The form was robed as risen from the grave,
 Save the long locks the breezes *did not* wave: —
 Wildly they fell — but not a single hair
 Stir'd to the rushing of the restless air.
 The blessed starlight shone not on the shroud,
 And the fair sky seem'd pall'd as with a cloud,
 Which deeper terror by its contrast gave
 To those most fearful features of the grave.
 Voiceless the Rebel gazed — an icy thrill
 Crept to his heart, and on his brow the chill
 Large dew drops gathered heavily and slow —
 And the clogg'd life-streams curdled in their flow;
 Yet knit, though blanch'd, his features! and his look,

A haughtier daring with each instant took
Till the cold spell was broke, and with a start,
Which sent the blood unfetter'd from his heart,
He seized his sword, and to the casement sprung.
Wildly its fleshless hands the Spectre wrung;
And deepest woe — intense — ineffable —
O'er the wan brow and lifeless aspect fell;
And from those lips, *which never stirr'd*, a cry
Went shrill and moaning up the quiet sky.
Rung not that sound familiar to his ear?
When last it rose 'twas o'er his *Mother's bier!*
He heard the Death-cry of his house — he saw
The ghastly Agent of unearthly law;
He knew the warning Spirit of the tomb,
And felt how fix'd the fiat of his doom!
The shape was gone — the stars shone calmly there,
And o'er his hot brow came the reckless air,
And nought but Night was round him — there he stood
ALONE WITH CONSCIENCE IN THE SOLITUDE!

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

O'NEILL, OR THE REBEL.

CANTO THE THIRD.

ARGUMENT.

Opening invocation. The preparations for the Nuptials of Ellen and Marlow. Marlow's words to his dependant Carlton, in reference to the arrangement for the Scene that shortly follows. Description of Marlow. The interruption in the Chapel &c. The conflict. Morning. The contrast of Nature with our passions. O'Neill's wound. Ellen's illness. Marlow's feelings — and his fears lest O'Neill should divulge his former Intercourse with that Chief. The Scene in the Prison — and the Conference between Marlow and O'Neill. The Judgment Day. The Condemnation of the Rebel. His return to Prison. The Stranger who visits him, &c. The Day of Execution. Description of the solitary House, facing the Scaffold, and the two forms at watch within it. O'Neill's appearance on the Scaffold. His Speech. He speaks to Marlow, (as agreed on before in their conference in the Prison. The unlooked-for termination of the Scene. The Story returns to Ellen, and concludes.

I.

ETERNAL Air — and thou, my mother Earth,
Hallow'd by shade and silence — and the birth
Of the young moon, (now watching o'er the sleep
Of the dim mountains and the dreaming deep);
And by yon Star, Heaven's eldest born — whose light
Calls the first smile upon the cheek of Night;
And beams and bodes, like Faith beyond the tomb,
Life through the calm, and glory through the gloom; —

My mother Earth — and ye her loftier race,
Midst whom my soul hath held its dwelling-place;
Rivers and Rocks, and Valleys, and ye Shades
Which sleep at noon-day o'er the haunted glades
Made musical by waters, and the breeze
All idly dallying with the glowing trees;
And songs of birds which, ever as they fly,
Breathe soul and gladness to the summer sky;
Ye courts of Nature where aloof and lone
She sits and reigns with darkness for her throne;
Mysterious temples of the breathing God,
If mid your might my earliest steps have trod;
If, in mine inmost spirit still are stored
The wild deep memories childhood most adored;
If still amid the drought and waste of years,
Ye hold the source of smiles and pangless tears;
Will ye not yet inspire me? — for my heart
Beats low and languid — and this idle art
Which I have summon'd for an idle end,
Forsakes and flies me like a faithless friend —
Are all your voices silent? I have made
My home as erst amid your thickest shade:
And even now your soft air from above,
Breathes on my temples like a sister's love.
Ah! could it bring the freshness of the day,
When first my young heart linger'd o'er its lay;
Fain would this wintry soul and frozen string
Recall one wind — one whisper from the Spring!

Will ye not yet inspire me? for I know
Ye are not long for me! All feebly flow
The life-streams in my bosom, and no more
Can bound with joy to hail you as of yore;

And in this stillest solitude, I hear
 The rushing of wild wings — *the Dead are near!*
 For I so long have call'd them from their home,
 My spells have won their secret — *and they come!*
 Nor yet without a token: — they depart,
 But *here* their trace clings, tight'ning round my heart.
 But ye whom I have honour'd wheresoe'er
 Your empire spreads with the unbounded air,
 To you the soul ye nurtured shall bequeathe
 The last gift of these ashes — ye shall wreath
 The green boughs of the summer, and the bloom
 Of flowers most loved and earliest, on my tomb.
 Your free breath shall not languish o'er my grave,
 Clogg'd by the rank vault and the charnel cave;
 But come as fresh as to its wing were given
 Pledge from your life, and promise from your heaven!

II.

But let me onward; nor invoke in vain
 A vanish'd spirit to this wayward strain:
 Alas! no seal upon the past is set,
 Save *one*, *Remembrance* — wiser named, *Regret!*
 Not stillest grove, lone mountain, nor deep dell,
 Where Thought once wander'd, and the golden well
 Of Poesy sprung forth, and flow'd on flowers,
 Have aught but languor for our later hours; —
 Or aught *but echo* for the heart and lute,
 Whose strings are broken; — when will they be mute?
 'Tis not the years which wither nor return —
 The youth alone for which we wildly yearn;
 'Tis not Time's wings — it is the wrecks they strew,
 The thoughts, hopes, feelings, *all* which wither too!

But let me onward: — I have paused too long,
 And turn once more my spirit to my song.
 Light heed have I for honour, and its praise
 Is scarce for minstrels in “these later days;”
 And haply all unheard the Wanderer’s hand
 Hath waked the wild harp of an alien land,
 And well he bodes — if *not* unheard the lyre —
 The critic’s cavil and the zealot’s ire.
 Yet hath he loved his task, because it brings
 At times free thoughts to consecrate his strings,
 (And his first youth was taught by air and sea,
 And *its own soul* — to worship all things free;)
 But *mostly* loved — because its visions bear
 His own dark spirit from its sullen lair,
 And lead it through the labyrinth of a dream,
 To lose this weary being! — —

To my theme!

III.

Bright shone the lustres from the tapestried wall,
 Where Ellen sat in Marlow’s princely hall;
 The garlands wreathed her forehead, and her breast
 Heaved, like soft waves, beneath her snowy vest,
 And gems and whitest roses glittered fair
 Through the long tendrils of her ebon hair.
 She sat unheeding all; her eyes unmix’d
 With fear or hope, upon the floor were fix’d,
 The hand that clasp’d her sire’s was wan of hue,
 And slow and languid flow’d the life blood through.
 Her lips were closed — yet did not all depart
 The smile that spoke the softness of her heart;
 Grief had not dimm’d that rainbow of gone years,
 But left its light to tell of clouds and tears.

The stern old father sat beside, nor took
 From that pale cheek the fondness of his look,
 And ever as he gazed, and saw the gloom
 So deeply brooding o'er her blighted bloom,
 He felt his heart, which to that coming vow
 Had pledged the victim — vainly smite him now.

IV.

But more apart stood Marlow, and the guile
 Of his dark soul shed venom on his smile,
 He held a paper where the words, though few,
 Still bore enough to change his wonted hue.
 He turn'd — his favourite menial stood beside,
 And his brow settled to its sullen pride.
 "Carlton, perchance ere morn yon maid may hear
 But rugged music for a bridal ear:
 But they who cope with Marlow must prepare
 A stronger warfare, or a deeper snare.
 The soldiers, Carlton?—"

"All prepared."

"Enough!"

If rude our guests, the greeting shall be rough.
 But screen our ambush well, nor let the band,
 Till sounds my signal, leave its latent stand.
 They dreamt not of this mine themselves shall spring,
 But *Fate is Retribution* — and we wing —
 As in the fable did the eagle's plume,
 From our own breast the arrow of our doom."

V.

Of cold and cautious temper, of a mind
 Where Virtue check'd not aught that Art design'd,

Of all that talent of the toiling brain
 Which wastes young years — if tamely — not in vain;
 Of all that magic of perverted speech,
 Which touches more because it seems to teach;
 Form'd from his birth each dictate to despise
 Save that which taught (no matter how!) to rise,
 Scorning no grovelling if it led to gain,
 Though 'mid the foulest mazes of chicane,
 False Marlow pass'd through all the steps which climb
 Ambition's height — the Cromwell of his time.
 But Envy, aye too prying into truth,
 At times would prate of Marlow's earlier youth,
 And hint those accents now so sagely raised
 For all who rule — far falser precepts praised;
 That he so foremost in the courtly cause
 Had pandered once for meaner crowds' applause;
 Nor preached as now that Justice never fails,
 Arm'd with her sword though cheated of her scales,
 But foam'd with fancies for the public weal,
 And call'd for Freedom with a Roman's zeal.
 Nay, some there were who in more veil'd surmise
 Had to the Past attach'd a traitor's ties,
 And mutter'd much of secrets unreveal'd
 Of which the slightest would his fate have seal'd.
 But these seem'd idle, and with every day
 Beneath his growing glory died away.
 If true, what boots it? — in the game of earth
 Who wins, takes all, fame, honour, wisdom, worth: —
 And from the wings of Time our fortune shakes
 Whate'er would vary from the name she makes.

VI.

The clock had toll'd the midnight — side by side
 Went that glad bridegroom and the joyless bride,
 And old Lord Ullin with his step of pride;
 Follow'd the courtly priest with measured pace
 Wooing the meet decorum to his face,
 And the few ancient friends invited there
 The fancied mirth to sanction and to share. —

They wound the stairs, and reach'd the chapel-door,
 Where fell the moonbeams o'er the marble floor,
 And the high lamps at distant intervals
 Stream'd calm and coldly from the cheerless walls.
 They near'd the altar! — Indistinct and wan,
 Lo! whose the form on which that grey light shone?
 Mantled and silent o'er the shrine it bow'd
 Fearful and dark — and shapeless as a cloud.
 There was a pause abrupt and still as death!
 The heart made mute its beating — and the breath
 Died on the changing lip! — the scene — the night —
 The pale hues borrow'd from that scanty light —
 Gave to the mystic shape they dimly saw
 Each ghastlier aid which fancy adds to awe.

VII.

Slowly the form arose — and sternly there
 His voice went forth upon the breathless air.
 “Why come ye here, false bridegroom and sad spouse,
 To mock your Maker with your heartless vows?
 And thou, old Lord, methinks long years should fade,
 Ere thou forget the oath thou once hast made:

Yet scarce twelve moons have faded since the one
 Which saw thee smile upon a nobler son.
 Say, hath young Desmond's death absolved thee yet,
 Or Marlow taught Lord Ullin to forget." —
 Lowering and wrathful grew that noble's brow,
 And his lip trembled as he answer'd — "Thou
 Most rude and rash intruder, do'st thou fear
 For this no vengeance? — wherefore art thou here?"
 Calmly replied the stranger — "Haughty Lord!
 Is all forgot as lightly as thy word?
 Before thy gate I bade my subjects trace
 The rank their sovereign destined to thy race;
 Wrote they not there, meet triumph for thy pride,
 '*We claim thy daughter for our Chieftain's bride?*'
 In vain to Desmond was the maiden plight,
 In vain yon traitor names the nuptial night.
 Amidst ye all — before this solemn shrine,
 I call Earth, Heaven, to witness — she is mine!"

VIII.

He said — he sprung — one instant, and she lay
 Mute on his arm — for life had past away,
 And wan and voiceless, in oblivion blest
 She leant, nor shudder'd at her place of rest.
 Dark Marlow turn'd —

"Most noble Chieftain! where
 The faithful band which should thy triumph share?
 I deem thy valour more than wisdom shown,
 If on this high exploit thou com'st alone."
 Loud laugh'd the Rebel, and the walls around,
 From arch to aisle, gave back that fearful sound.

He pointed towards the lattice deeply placed
 Within the stone, and on the greensward based —
 What gleams so redly? can the solemn stars
 So wildly glitter through the casement bars?
 What stirs so rudely? hath the Night-wind's wrath
 Burst from its chamber in the gloomy North?
 No — no! the torches which their right hands bear,
 Fling on dark, dream-like forms that swarthy glare:
 And the light breeze but faintly waves the glow
 That sheds its light on such fierce brows below.
 All stood aghast — when moving from the shrine,
 The Chieftain shouted the expected sign:
 And shrill and loud rude voices answer'd; — flash'd
 Torch upon torch, the riven lattice crash'd;
 And through the opening, swift and hurrying pour'd
 And closed in circling ranks the rebel horde.

“Behold my Bridesmen, Marlow! — could their power
 Thy coffers lighten of a maiden's dower?
 Bethink thee well, sage Reasoner! and rejoice
 Thy dearer treasures did not claim our choice.
 Dream on awhile o'er faith and country sold,
 We spare to-night the Apostate and his gold;
 But mark, thy days are number'd — dread to feel
 The sworn revenge of Erin and O'Neill.”
 He said, and lightly from the altar sprung,
 Along the aisle his echoing footsteps rung;
 On his left arm his beauteous burthen lay,
 His right hand dash'd Lord Ullin's grasp away,
 His foot already reach'd the lattice: — lo!
 He turns to meet — the bullet of his foe;
 He met, — paused, — stagger'd, — and with one faint
 groan

Reel'd round — and sank upon the floor of stone.
 Then dread was Marlow's danger: he had dared
 Death from those hands which never yet had spared,
 And tow'rd's his form with a fierce cry, which rung
 Like fate's own knell, those savage followers sprung.

IX.

They sprung — but not to see their victim fall;
 Flash'd, as they moved, the flame — and hiss'd the ball,
 For Marlow's pistol had the signal made,
 And well that fiery watchword was obey'd; —
 On, on, with breathless lips and hurrying march; —
 On, through the sounding aisle and echoing arch; —
 On, o'er the slain whom with each step they bore
 Down — down — crush'd — trampled — gasping, on
 the floor; —

On, on — oh! where a refuge from their swords?
 Sweep line by line the Battle's practised hordes.
 Then rose the shout, the curse, the desperate yell,
 Wrung from those breasts which fear'd not as they fell,
 And burst the wrath of men, for years embued
 In blood, who smote the smiter unsubdued,
 And felt that thirst for slaughter which had made
 Their very nature wedded to their trade;
 Become like Leopards routed in their lair,
 More fierce in death, more frantic through despair.

X.

Balm on its breeze, and glory on its light,
 Morn came exulting on that fearful night;

XII.

But o'er a *holier* couch with tenderest care
Hung the fond form and rose the anxious prayer,
There plied the Leech the learning of his art
To heal the frame, — ah! wherefore not the heart?
Where is the comfort when from Death we rise
To find the light grown weary to our eyes?
When Earth hath lost its charm — and over all
The sullen spirit throws its gloomy pall?
The glorious sky, the rapture of the air,
Have nought but clouds and coldness for despair,
And life to those whose Sun of Hope is set,
Seems Death without its blessing — *to forget!*
Was it for this — that from the Rebel's side
They bore and saved that young devoted bride,
When couch'd unconscious on so rude a breast
Wet with his blood she found her nuptial rest?
She woke to life, but not to health — the storm
Of that wild night had scathed her feeble form,
And left its token in the trembling frame
And pulse, which weaker with each day became.
The nerves were shatter'd, and the blight conceal'd
Long at her heart grew visibly reveal'd.
Her mind had lost the *youth* — the exulting spring
Which gifts the body with an angel's wing;
The elastic freshness of our golden years
Ere sorrow breaks or disappointment sears;
Which makes young sufferings trivial, and can seize
Its sting from pain, its lingering from disease,
And ere we feel the loss — restore the same
Bloom to the cheek and vigour to the frame!

This was no more! — She faded like a tree,
 Shading a tomb, and withering silently.
 The beam, the breeze, may come there and depart,
 But death is round it, death is at its heart;
 Drooping and sad, its buds — its branches — all
 Bend o'er the tomb on which it soon must fall.

XIII.

True sung the bard — “For love *men* have not died,”
 For man's wild passion is subdued by pride;
 But *woman's* nature is more soft and deep,
 And Care is cankering while it seems to sleep.
 Thought shrinks and centres in one poison'd source
 And veil'd Decay steals darkly on its course,
 Fades the fair form, the bright cheek waxes pale,
 And hearts grow still *which never told their tale.*

XIV.

If deep the woe with which the sire survey'd
 His life's last sunbeam sinking into shade,
 Scarce less the grief with which false Marlow eyed
 The daily fading of his destined bride,
 And saw at once the alliance and the land
 Grasp'd in his visions, melting from his hand.
 With this came doubt and terror on his breast,
 He strove in vain to reason into rest;
 For there were secrets he would not have known,
 Which knit O'Neill's past history with his own;
 And as the Rebel's wound (how Marlow cursed
 The aim which spared him, and the hand which nursed)

Wax'd well and healthful, and the day at last
 Was fix'd for judgment's record to be past,
 Remembrance waked remorse, and fear's control
 Shook to its inmost seat that stubborn soul.

xv.

It was the night before that dreaded day,
 Dark in his rugged cell the Rebel lay.
 Feeble and faint the sullen light which shone
 O'er that grim chamber and its walls of stone,
 And its faint glimmerings indistinctly shed
 Where Crime couch'd sleepless on its wretched bed.
 Beside that bed, with ear and heart intent
 On that strange midnight conference, Marlow bent.
 Thick were those ancient walls, and none were near,
 Yet scarce their low tones caught the other's ear.
 "O'Neill, I tell thee," whispered Marlow's voice,
 "Thy life may yet be centered in thy choice,
 Albeit thou deem'st the latest dye is cast,
 And the gull'd rope must have its food at last.
 When *we* confer there needs not the disguise
 Which cloaks the heart from less experienced eyes:
 Hear me then plainly; thou may'st think to buy,
 And sweet the thought, Revenge by Treachery;
 And show, — at least so haply Hatred deems, —
 Mine old alliance with thy daring schemes.
 But listen, — Death has now from earth removed
 The one who only could thy charge have proved:
 Modred, that double traitor, he who brought
 To each the tidings which the other taught;
 Who made to thee mine inmost secrets known,
 But bared in turn, the mysteries of thine own;

Who, on that stormy night when last we met,
Betray'd the moment for my nuptials set;
Yet, mine no less, thy ruffian scheme confest,
And help'd to mar — but thou recall'st the rest.
Fool more than knave, that night he join'd thy band:
Enough! thou know'st how certain is my hand.
The false are ever dangerous — death is sure,
Thy witness sleeps, and Marlow is secure.
So that if now thy word condemn me, who
Will prove thy charges, or believe them true?
Oh! slight I ween the accusation's weight
Which comes from Fortune's outcast on the great;
But though thy malice could not scathe or shame,
Yet smallest doubts will oft-times dim the fame,
And e'en that smallest doubt my soul would shun —
Suppress its utterance, and thy life is won.
Thou know'st my power — deserve it — from the state
My voice shall wring reprieve of thy fate:
And ere a month be past myself will be
Throned with that state — and then O'Neill is free.
Now speak — thine answer — art thou friend or foe?"
Stern from his couch where listlessly and low
Till then, as if half heedless, he had bow'd,
Rose the dark chief and sate erect and proud.
"Marlow, the storm long seen at length has burst,
But he who braves must learn to bear the worst.
Thy words are vain, not all thy boasted power
Could buy this life the length'ning of an hour.
My doom is fix'd, already dug my grave;
Whom England dreads — all Erin could not save.
But deem'st thou truly, that thy tongue can cheat
A heart so long inured to thy deceit?
Wert thou my judge, meet grace thou would'st afford!

Wert thou my hangman, strong would be the cord!
 Oh! could'st thou e'er forget *that Death is sure*
When sleeps the witness — Marlow is secure.

Bound by one oath, one object, one design,
 Thy scheming spirit link'd its lot to mine;
 Hope shone — those links though secret bound us both;
 Hope set — they shivered! — what to thee thine oath?
Thine was the choice on perjured faith to steer
 From wreck to fortune — *mine* — behold it *here!*
 Now hear me, Marlow — though I fain would cast
 Food to revenge and light upon the past,
 And send thy branded name to latest time
 In all its foul deformity of crime;
 Yet not one word shall harm thee: we have met
 Link'd in one cause, one oath unites us yet —
 That oath has past not with its cause away,
 But still forbids my spirit to betray.

My lot has fall'n on darkness and on strife,
 And sin hath stain'd and misery mark'd my life;
 And o'er my corpse shall whitening lips reveal,
 Tales of wild deeds — the darings of O'Neill.
 Whate'er its guilt, the erring life they scan,
 May mark the ruffian, not disown the man.
 O'Neill ne'er wrested from the poor their gain,
 Ne'er heard the voice of woman plead in vain;
 Ne'er stirr'd one step from man's most hostile blow,
 Nor broke one plighted word to friend or foe!

But — (nearer, Marlow!) in my power are stored,
 Proofs that would give thee to the hangman's cord;

Proofs that thy loyal love too well proclaim,
Writ by thy hand and sanction'd by thy name.
These, the sole tokens of our olden plot,
Are hid, sage Marlow, in a secret spot:
And — nay, reply not — shall be in thy power,
If on the scaffold at Life's latest hour
Thou by my side wilt stand, then ere the breath
Which yet can save or slay thee yield to death,
Approach, and to thy ear shall be reveal'd
The archives where that witness is conceal'd.
Now take thy choice, for by *our* oath I swear
The secret shall be shown but then and there.
Thou wilt — enough: now home with joyous heart,
Night wanes and sleep is on my soul — depart!"

XVI.

Lone in his cell the musing Rebel lay,
And watch'd the dull hours lead the ling'ring day.
Crime gives men courage — with its wintry years
The heart congeals, and freezes o'er its fears.
They who lose hope, lose terror, and the course
Of sane emotion withers at its source.
The worst once borne, it boots not what we bear,
And man's best virtue grows but Sin's despair:
Yet cold the thoughts which found their bitter food
In that most still and midnight solitude.
To die was nothing — they whose years are strife,
Will welcome death in weariness of life.
But 'mid the rabble crowd, obscene and low
Thus to be set — the marvel of the show;
To wake dull wonder in each idle eye,
And grow the monster of the Newsman's lie;

To bear the threat — to wince beneath the gibe
 Of Law's pert sons — the soul-contracted tribe,
 Who feed on crimes and fatten on distress,
 And wring vile mirth from Suffering's last excess;
 To stand alone and friendless — and begirt
 With eagerest foes all panting to pervert,
 And shape by some strange alchymy of sense
 His worst accuser from his own defence:
 And then that humbling pity of the crowd,
 Which more than all is poison to the proud;—
 This well might wring that spirit, well might bring
 To thought its torture and to death its sting.

XVII.

The morn — the moment came: the Court was set,
 The accusers summon'd and the gazers met,
 And all his heart foreboded doom'd to feel,
 Stood calm and changeless to the last — O'Neill!

The mind which vaguely on its dreamings feeds,
 Delights to suit men's features to their deeds.
 Rude was the colouring which the public dread
 Had o'er the image of the Rebel shed;
 And sped the circling murmurs of surprise,
 When, there first seen, he met those eager eyes.
 Albeit the deep and wearing wound which still
 Prey'd on the iron frame it could not kill;
 Albeit that cankering chain and narrowest lair,
 To him whose nature was the mountain air,
 Join'd to the aids his practised art supplied,
 E'en in his cell his lineaments to hide,
 Had dimm'd and changed his form; yet linger'd there

What maids who dream of beauty paint most fair —
 The light yet sinewy frame where youth appears,
 Robed in the grace of manhood's freshest years;
 The bold yet tender eloquence of eye,
 Clear — dazzling — deep — like midnight's starlit sky;
 And the rich locks which seem'd for soft hands made,
 To play the wanton with their clustering shade;
 But wild, dishevell'd, stream'd the ringlets now
 Back from the daring of that dauntless brow.

XVIII.

He took no venal succour from the laws,
 Alone he stood upon that hopeless cause —
 Alone he met the question, and if high
 Its tone — full galling was the keen reply.
 Alone he question'd in his turn — pursued
 The wearied witness through each winding mood.
 He had not walk'd this world without the art
 Which threads the mazes of the hidden heart;
 Each weaken'd proof, each varying evidence,
 Each truth made dark or turn'd to his defence,
 Each nicest subtlety which doubt can draw
 From those link'd quibbles which we nickname law,
 He seiz'd and show'd so wisely, that ev'n they
 Grown in the school of modern sophists grey,
 Drew back, and marvell'd at the skill which made
 Chicane perplex'd and Truth itself dismay'd.
 But vain was aught that genius prompted there,
 Too strong the charges and the guilt too bare;
 And though, when lastly all his powers were thrown
 In one warm close, his deep and thrilling tone
 Betray'd its magic on the listeners' ears

In eyes all streaming with reluctant tears,
And hopes and eagerest wishes more intense,
For Nature's struggles with the harsher sense,
Yet well he knew each art he had assumed
Was vain, his fate unalterably doom'd,
That doom was past — he heard with steady breath
And changeless cheek — and yet that doom was death.

XIX.

They led him through the Court, and as he past
On Marlow's brow his eye was calmly cast;
And as th' Apostate stood beside the door
Through which th' attendant train the Rebel bore,
He said with whisper'd tone and smiling air,
"We meet again — Remember when and where!"

XX.

They bore him back, and as the twilight fell
There came a stranger to his lonely cell,
And seem'd, so warm the greeting, to impart
Unlook'd-for sunshine to that sullen heart.
To him — when, far as that close chamber could
Allow such grace, th' impatient gaoler stood:
To him the Rebel whisper'd long and low,
And still each word more weighty seem'd to grow,
For still the listener wax'd devoutlier hush'd,
And still his swarthy cheek the warmer flush'd;
And oft he check'd the lip — but clench'd the hand —
And starting oft as oft resumed his stand.
And when O'Neill had ceased, he turn'd his eye
Full on the Chief and *look'd* his brief reply.

No need of words! — in that one look were told
 Fierce thoughts for which all language had been cold.
 Oh! when the swelling heart to heart would speak,
 In vain the weak lips would its silence break,
 It *shows* — not *tells* its mysteries — it displays
 Its deep abysses in a glance — the blaze
 Of lightning not more rapidly unfolds
 The world of cloud in which its home it holds,
 And bares before us with an instant's light,
 The scenes and secrets of the broken night.

XXI.

There was a pause — till with a sudden start
 They heard the Gaoler's summons to depart,
 As on its hinge the door turn'd heavily,
 And strove the harsh lock with the grating key.
 Then o'er the Rebel's features with the spell
 Of buried thoughts, a softening shadow fell;
 Is it the Gaoler's lamp perchance too near
 Which dims that eye, or can it be a tear?
 Out on the heart's perversity, so oft
 To *Guilt* as callous as to *Feeling* soft!
 So madly reckless where the *Future's* cast,
 And yet so fond a craven to the *Past*!
 Again with voice, though faint and stifled, clear
 He pour'd new mandates on that trusted ear.
 And as he spoke and deathlier wax'd his hue,
 A hidden treasure from his breast he drew —
 Oh, through all change how cherish'd by that heart,
And now — from life 'twere not such pang to part!
 With trembling fingers, with that hurried air
 Which shows the wish by one brief wrench to tear

Its last loved thing from life, and cannot brook
 The bitterest penance of a *latest* look,
 Nor trust the thought to pause the while it dooms,
 Lest it bely the courage it assumes,
 He placed that token in the stranger's hand,
 And breaking off as if at once unmann'd,
 Turn'd to the wall and waved his last adieu,
 Nor heard the steps which heavily withdrew;
 Nor mark'd the gloom which once more round him fell,—
 Alas! where fled his spirit from that cell?

XXII.

Day rose in sorrow! — from the clouds which dun
 And dim lay round him gleam'd the heavy Sun,
 And then retired, for the great winds which swept
 The rolling vapours hush'd themselves, and crept
 As Noon advanced, with a low moaning sigh,
 Into the dull womb of the haggard sky;
 And all was rayless; heaviness and cloud
 Sate on that death of Nature — like its shroud;
 Day wore the garb of Night, and darkness curl'd
 Around, and canopied the gloomy world.

XXIII.

Before the lofty scaffold widely bow'd,
 Dense, wedged, and gathering roll'd the mighty crowd,
 Link'd in one shapeless mass, and fearfully
 Swaying and murmuring like a troubled sea;
 There stood one house advanced before the rest,
 And there the space grew narrow and comprest,
 And the high garden boundaries stretch'd along

Inclosed its confines from the rushing throng.
 In that secluded mansion's loftiest room
 Were met two forms, who on the place of doom
 Look'd forth and spake not, — breathless and apart
 Each sate and fed the fever of his heart.
 Norman — methinks that link'd with deeds like thine,
 Dark is the comrade, desperate the design.
 Well was that dwelling known to those whose zeal
 Had knit their fate to darkness and O'Neill;
 And fitting seem'd such spot to those who meet
 On plans where wisdom would not scorn retreat;
 For wrought beneath were winding caverns made
 To shield the stores of wealth's most precious trade;
 Those ruby spells by which the Teian sung
 To sweeter chords than *youth* has ever strung.
 Those vaults had other entrance where the way
 Through streets remote and rarely haunted lay;
 And one led idly through that lonely place
 Two harness'd steeds of England's hardiest race.

XXIV.

Hark! through that wide throng went a low and deep
 And mingling sound, like winds which break from sleep,
 To meet and mutter on the giant hill —
 A press, a rushing, and then all was still;
 Still as the sky which lay in heavy rest,
 Hushing the tempest couch'd within its breast.
 And on that scaffold stood erect and proud
 Its victim glancing on the gloomy crowd.
 Saddening and strange the contrast of the fair
 And faultless features with their haughty air,
 And of the youth so touching in its bloom,

With the black memory of its guilt and doom.
 Behind him stood the priest, and close beside
 Reluctant Marlow in his solemn pride,
 And well the fear and fever which prevail'd
 O'er his false heart those sullen features veil'd.
 When with one circling glance O'Neill had view'd
 The vast and still and moveless multitude,
 He spake, and deeply roll'd his voice along
 Into the rapt souls of the breathless throng: —

XXV.

“I speak not for your pity — nor to win
 Tears for my lot, or tolerance from my sin,
 My guilt against the oppressors hath been great,
 And now it meets, nor murmurs at, its fate;
 But vainly dooms are fix'd and blood is spilt,
While lives the oppression there must last the guilt,
 And every rebel drop they shed returns
 Again to life, and in our offspring burns:
 Yet let my fate forewarn you, ye may drain
 Your very hearts in struggling, but in vain.
 Groan but endure — if Hope be sown in tears,
 Its fruit shall ripen in the smile of years.
 Though through the gloom of Time no star hath shone,
 Though worn and weak ye wander darkling on,
 The word has gone which to the womb of night
 Proclaim'd, ‘Let light be;’ and there *shall* be light.
 Ye who behold me, when in after years
 My name comes clothed with curses on your ears,
 When each who reck'd not of its secret springs,
 O'er my dark life the darker scandal flings,
 Say to your sons that, though the tale be true,

The life was spent — the guilt incurr'd for *you* :
 Say that the Rebel's erring heart and hand,
 False to his King, was loyal to his land :
 Say this, and add, that when his doom was past
 His soul was yours, and fearless to the last ;
 And if one murmur past his lips, its tone
 Rose for his Country's sufferings, *not his own!*"

XXVI.

Why as he moves away, so wistfully
 Turns to that nearest house his wand'ring eye?
 Why, through the half-shut lattice, as they catch
 That glance and gesture from their lonely watch?
 Why grow that pair so deadly pale and still?
 Why curdles o'er their blood so damp a chill?
 Alas! whate'er the cause, it cannot bear
 A hope for him whose latest scene is there.
 He turn'd — on Marlow meaningly he glanced,
 Whose pale cheek flush'd as slowly he advanced.
 They met: the Rebel closing still more near
 Bent down, and whisper'd in his eager ear.
 Whate'er the import of those words, no sound
 Broke on the heavy silence brooding round ;
 And list'ning Marlow scarcely seem'd to breathe,
 So rapt his interest in their sense. Beneath
 The scaffold there were hearts which *still'd* the sigh,
 And tears which roll'd *unfelt* from every eye ;
 And, over all, the aching heaviness
 Of Feeling wrought unto its strain'd excess,
 Sate like an Incubus, and hotly prest,
 Mastering, and weighing on, the labouring breast

XXVII.

A shot, a flash upon the stillness broke,
Along the scaffold roll'd the wreathing smoke
Hark! hark again! — a sharp and sudden cry
Along the gloomy air burst piercingly.
Slow rose the smoke — and there dark Marlow lay,
Steep'd in his blood and gasping life away;
Pass'd o'er his changing cheek the with'ring air
Which knits the body's with the soul's despair;
Pass'd o'er his limbs the shudder and the strife
Of Death's stern angel with reluctant life;
The lips shrink parting from the teeth, — and now
Darker and darker glooms the livid brow:
And from the lids start forth the straining balls,
Where the dull film more glazed and ghastly falls;
Then comes the choked and gurgling groan — the last,
Most brief — most bitter struggle — *it is past!*
Beside, with eyes upon his victim bent,
Full of fierce joy, the stricken Rebel leant
On the priest's ready arm — and from his side
Oozed, drop by drop, the faint yet fatal tide;
But not one trace of suffering came to break
The haughty stillness of the marble cheek;
To wring the muscle or distort the limb: —
The death he fear'd not, brought no pang for him;
And, as the priest bent o'er him, low but clear
His broken accents reach'd the father's ear.

“Bless thee, my Norman! — welcome is the blow,
Mine eyes have seen my vengeance on my foe!
Last of my race, I drew from Kings my breath,

I die a warrior's — not a felon's death!
 Whose grasp is that — off, off! ye slaves, and see
 How souls can scorn your fetters and be — *free!*"

XXVIII.

The clouds with day had faded — soft and fair
 Lay the still evening in the silver air.
 Beside her lattice, where the flowers carest
 That gentlest breeze — the wanderer of the west,
 (While with its sighs wild birds their music blent,)
 Lone on her couch the dying Ellen leant.

XXIX.

Her soul was absent — wandering far away
 O'er the bright memories of a happier day,
 And aye across her cheek's transparent hue
 The blush broke faint yet all unconquer'd through.
 In that dark eye — if you had gazed more near —
 The light shone sad, and trembled through a tear;
 And o'er her beauty — for death's hastening doom
 But gave to softness what it marr'd in bloom —
 There reign'd that dreamlike and divine repose,
 Which Life's most solemn hour alone bestows;
 For ere we pierce the vague unfathom'd gloom
 Which veils the mightiest mystery of our doom,
 There seems some prescience of a bright'ning goal
 To cheer the toil and darkness of the soul.
 And — like the moment when the sunbeams leave
 Their parting glory to the deep'ning eve,
 Whate'er is earth's grows mingled with the sky,
 And awes the spirit while it woos the eye.

There came the soft mute step we vainly curb
For those whom shortly nothing will disturb;
And the fond menial, when she nearer drew,
Turn'd her full eyes to shun the maiden's view,
And smooth'd the voice in which the rebel grief
Strove in each tone to find itself relief.
She gave a small slight casket quaintly wrought,
A stranger peasant had that instant brought:
Oh, as that dying hand the token took,
What flush'd the cheek — the frame so wildly shook?
The spring obey'd the touch — within was lain
Love's earliest gift — a locket — broke in twain:
She saw, nor shrunk — that gift to her return'd
Broke life's last tie — her lover's fate she learn'd:
She saw, nor shrunk — *one* look had power to kill;
The worst was wrought — the broken heart was still!

THE END.

