STANLEY;

OR THE

RECOLLECTIONS OF A MAN OF THE WORLD.

Nathan. Allow me to relate a tale.
Saladin. Why not?
I always was a friend to tales well told.
Nathan. "Well told"—that's not precisely my affair.
Lessing.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION.

It was the remark of an eminent moralist,—one of that high order of spirits which cannot err without instructing, —that there was scarce any man existing, from an account of whose life some valuable information might not be obtained. And, in truth, it is not easy to believe that any one has been so listless a hearer of the instructions of experience as not to have treasured up some golden sentence which the world might stoop to hear. The path of life is thickly strewn with moral precepts, and blinder than the blind old King of Corinth must he be, who has not read some wisdom as he passed along. The observing will find it in the fate of others, and they that will not observe, will feel it in their own. Whether we be those whom others have thought happy, or those who have thought themselves miserable, whether our life has been spent in the shadow of retirement, or the sunshine of public business, we may all, at its close, make some contribution to the grand magazine of prudential experience, whereby the young are instructed and the old comforted.

The scenes of retrospection differ from those of anticipation, in coming to us heightened by the sense of their reality: and the feeling which they excite, whether of gladness or regret, is one which fancy and hope cannot brighten, fear or despondency depress. Happy then are those to whom the retrospect of life presents a scene of virtue; for whom, in a different sense from the poet's, "the thought of their past years doth breed perpetual benediction." For them, the morning-star of memory twinkles gladly, in its pure and holy lustre, and leads, like the star of old, to joys that cannot be measured. "Respice, Aspice, Prospice," said holy St. Bernard;—and to them it is a precept of happiness. They contemplate

with serene satisfaction life's vessel gliding down the stream of the past, and even in the clouds of the future, they behold the picture of their little bark sailing securely onward. But few, indeed, are those to whom such pleasure is allotted:—few are those who will not feel in all its pathos, the saying of Ali, that "the remembrance of youth is a sigh."

Many years have past by me in their silent march to eternity, but I regret not their departure. If they have taken with them beloved friends and mirthful feelings, the buoyancy of hope and the eagerness of enjoyment, they have, happily, also taken the violence of the passions. If they have brought me neglect, and weakness, and uselessness, and something of apathy, which I would not have, they have also brought me,—which is a blessing that annuls the evil,—a quietude of mind, a serenity of feeling, which is the richest treasure that man can possess. There is a joy in the free wild pulse of youth,—there is a pleasure in the strong and steady beat of manhood's feel ng, but there is deeper pleasure, there is a profounder joy in the calm and lake-like tranquillity of senescence.

From the bosom of retirement, with a mind yet clear, and a memory retentive beyond the common, while age has shed around me its stillness, but not its sluggishness, and ere the concerns of preparing for a greater journey to be undertaken, have driven from my thoughts the remembrance of the lesser one I have completed, I take up my pen to trace the record of some of the scenes that I have witnessed, and some of the acts that I have done.

STANLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Dreams, books, are each a world; and books we know
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
WORDSWORTH.

I WAS born near the village of Merton, a small town in one of the Atlantic States, not far distant from the metropolis of the east. I had the misfortune to lose my mother, at an earlier period than I can remember. My father resided alone with myself, who was his only son, in a small house which stood by itself at a short distance from the neighbouring village. He had inherited a large fortune, and had formerly lived in one of the cities, with some degree of splendour, and not altogether undistinguished for rank and talent. By one of those sudden reverses, to which in a mercantile country even those not engaged in commerce are liable, he at length found himself deprived of a large estate, and reduced from affluence to a scanty competence. He continued for some time in his former situation, enduring the misery of one of the bitterest struggles to which a man can be subject, that of endeavouring to maintain the standing to which his rank entitles him, but to which his income is unequal, and being constantly tempted to a hopeless rivalry, and exposed to the mortification of being excelled by his equals. Before many years, however, his better understanding, and the pressure of difficulties which had grown too strong to be resisted, induced him to give up his city residence and

seek a dwelling in some humbler town. Shortly after his removal to Merton my mother died, and the contracted expenses of his diminished establishment, and the income from a small office which he held, enabled him to support himself in comfort.

My father was exceedingly reserved in his temper, and generally left my conduct to my own control, and my inclinations and feelings to their natural course. Though not particularly literary in his taste, he had a fine library which contained good editions of all the best classics of ancient and modern literature. This room was my favourite resort from my earliest years. The loneliness of my situation compelled me to seek some employment to divert my time, and I found abundance there. I read whatever fell in my way without much reference to system or utility. I found literature the best refuge from the fatigue of thought and the yet greater fatigue of idleness. My constant devotion generated a love for reading which, after a long lapse of years, still remains in all its force.

My books became my constant companions, for I found in the silent instructors that were ranged around my walls, calmer disputants and wiser counsellors than the living circle of acquaintance could exhibit. Making study both a business and an amusement, I drew from the same sources the topic of my toil and the light of my leisure;—perceiving, with D'Aguesseau, that the best relaxation was change. My most habitual delight, however, was in the productions of the muse; to them I turned as to a shady valley, for refreshment after every weariness and repose from every anxiety. The effusions of the highest sort of poetry, which are Wisdom speaking in the voice of Pleasure, are the best diversion in hours of gayety, and the best solace in times of trouble.

I, at this time, went rarely into company of any sort; for the meditations which engaged my mind, and the sentiments which employed my feelings, had neither their origin nor their sphere in the outer world around me, and in the sensitive temper of my natural disposition, I found much to detach me from society and much to induce me to my study. I call to mind one occasion on which I accepted an invitation to tea at the house of one of my

acquaintances. It was in August, and the broad summer sun was yet gleaming through the trees, as I ascended the steps of the little portico in front of the dwelling, and descried, by ear and eye, the youthful company assembled in the drawing-room. As I entered the apartment, and approached the gaily-dressed group which was collected near the windows in animated conversation, my eye fell upon one female countenance which was not familiar to me, and whose deep, dark glance, as with one flash it met my own, roused a feeling in my breast, before unknown, and seemed in an instant to create a sense within me and an atmosphere around me, which gave me consciousness as of another being. I inquired from the lady of the house, the name of her stranger guest. She told me that she was a resident of the same village with myself, who had been absent for several years and had recently returned; and taking me up to her, presented me to her as Emily Wilson. As I came nearer to her, I thought that I had never seen features at once so exquisite in form, and so interesting in expression. There was in her eye a passion combined with timidness, which agitated and attracted; and while its fearfulness forbade its trembling glance to fix for more than an instant on what it gazed at, its fervour fitted it in that instant to pierce and penetrate to the depths of the bosom.

A proposal was presently made that the party should walk out into the adjoining grounds to look at the beauty of the sunset. Lingering behind the rest, Emily and myself followed, until a diverging path, striking off through the thick shrubbery, enabled us to take a course which led to a sequestered part of the lawn, where our conversation might not be overheard. From the first moment that I had spoken to her, my sense had been wrapped in an intensity of interest that scarcely left me capacity to note what I was saying. The lapse of moments, and the diversion of the splendid scene on high, which brought the brightest magnificence of heaven to abate the engrossment of the best lustre of earth, conveyed a more intelligent appreciation of the new feeling which possessed me. While we talked of the scene before us, yet having an earnest reference to unspoken sentiments within, and

while the similarity of the unseen light, in which external objects were regarded, proved an inward sympathy which was yet unuttered, there thrilled through my veins the depths of a joy which had hitherto been a stranger to what I knew of bliss, and I recognised as among the conditions of life a broad and full and fervent gladness, to whose robustness of delight my past experience brought no parallel. In the impression of that moment, I apprehended how tenuous, shadowy, and like the stuff of dreams, is the gratification of that airy company of borrowed thoughts, which till then, had been my sole delight: and I learned that the mental life which is founded on what is alien and fed on what is foreign, is but half vital. That ideal world which our own passions create around us, and which is peopled with interests drawn from the recesses of our own breasts, has a tone of strength which is unknown to the visions of fancy. I found that the sphere with which my lonely meditations had encircled me, was animated with only the moving shadows of those feelings whose substances were now around me, and that the forms which there were only modelled in design, were here carved in reality.

Our conversation was protracted in forgetfulness of the advancing evening; and it was not until the opposite quarter of the heaven was glittering with its stars that we rejoined the party which had returned to the house. I left the company early; but it was with an ardour of soul and a strength of aspiration which made me far other than I was before, that I trod the path which led me home. I was even as if a new spirit had entered into me,—a "mounting spirit," that filled me with ambition, and impelled me to pass from meditation to action. I felt that it was to Emily that I was indebted for the new power with which I was filled, and that in her society alone could I look for that energy of interest without which henceforth existence would be a dull and dreary thing. In the heart of every man that loves, there is an instinctive impulse that urges him to covet glory in the eyes of her whom he would attach, and I now felt that to attain an eminence which would excite the admiration of Emily would be both delightful in labour and plenteous

in reward. She was wealthy and distinguished, while I was poor and unconsidered, and the native pride which there is in all the passions, forbade me to approach her, except in the character of one who could offer in position as much as she asked in person. To work out so rich a gain, and dwell ever after in the fulness of the gladness I had won, seemed to insure an exhaustless bliss for all my coming life. For any purpose and on any spur I felt that I had energies to grapple with all disasters and difficulties; and with so bright a star to gild my course, high shining from its bright conclusion, there was nothing which could parallel the pleasure of my toils.

I called to mind the names and deeds of those who had succeeded in life as statesmen and men of action; and I found within my bosom a courage which might buffet such seas of danger as they contended with. I pondered earnestly the means of acquiring what I so much desired, and canvassed all the paths which the progress of the world throws open to the daring and the active. I perceived that the time had gone by in which a man may acquire by action, the sudden and romantic fame for which I panted. Modern tactics have reduced the wonders of the warrior to a mere calculation of figures upon paper. The employments of the state, either political or diplomatic, demand the devotion of a life-time, and the period of happiness is passed ere the sources of happiness are reached. It seemed to me, in reference as well to the advantages of the time, as to my own peculiar wishes, that the trophies of intellect that are acquired by the author's toil were more worthy of endeavour than any other species of renown. To the power which is exhibited in literature, there is attributed an undefined and mysterious depth and extent, which are not suggested by the vouchers, on which in other departments, genius founds its claim to greatness. A given amount of ability, exhibited in the composition of a volume, impresses us more strongly than the same degree of talent evinced in the taking of a city or the settlement of a treaty; for these occur to us as single achievements of greatness which many circumstances have united to accomplish, and which some accidents may directly have produced, while the

other gives evidence of the possession of a power which may be exerted upon all other subjects with equal certainty of success. In literary creation, it is less the act than the ability which it implies, that attracts our admiration. A triumph in the field, or in the cabinet, implies only a victory over persons, and the advantage may have been gained as much by the errors of the vanquished, as by the skill of the conqueror; but the reputation of the poet is the test of inherent and essential strength, for he deals with subjects that are constant in the character of their difficulty, and what he has done once he may do always.

While I was thus occupied in conceiving and digesting my designs of life, an occurrence took place which was peculiarly opportune for the fulfilment of my schemes. My father received, through the influence of some of his friends, an appointment from the government, which promised him a handsome annual income, but required him to fix his residence in the south. In communicating to me information of this change in his arrangements, he stated that it was his intention to leave me at college in the north, and afterwards to allow me to make choice of what mode of life I thought most desirable. This intelligence gave me high satisfaction, for the course of living which it laid open was precisely suited to the accomplishment of my wishes. It afforded me unfettered opportunity to exert my talents as I chose, and left me afterwards to follow up my success as I saw fit. Viewing the field which was thus laid before me, and satisfying myself of the powers on which I could depend to sustain me, I resolved to bury myself for three years in the retirement of devoted study, till I had won some honour for my name, and then to return to Merton and claim the hand of Emily as my reward.

The few days which intervened between the intention and the time of departure, were spent by my father and myself in active preparations for our respective journeys. I had met Emily frequently, and without a direct avowal of the sentiments which burned so strongly within me, the tenor of conduct and conversation had abundantly conveyed a knowledge of what were my own impres-

sions, and brought assurance that they were neither despised nor disliked. I deferred till the last evening the task of taking leave of her, and of communicating the intention of those labours by which I hoped to make my name, in some measure, a worthy exchange for her hand. It was late in the evening of a fine autumnal day that I set out for her father's house, which stood at no great distance from my own. The moon had been long risen, and was looking down through the marble ruins of its temple of the clouds, as I entered the door. It was a noble old mansion, flanked by a large cultivated garden of flowers, and surrounded towards the rear by an extensive lawn, tastefully enriched with various sorts of forest trees and divided gracefully, by winding walks of peculiar beauty and neatness. I found Emily sitting by the window, and I thought that she welcomed me with more cordiality than she had ever exhibited before. After some conversation we walked out into the park, and passed along through the paths which twisted about the grounds until we reached the summer-house in the centre. It was a spot of singular loveliness, planted with almost every species of odorous flower, and encircled at a small distance by tall shrubbery, through the opening in whose circling branches the cold, clear moon was pouring down the enchantment of its rays. We paused together and gazed in silence upon the deep, bright orb. There is always an intenseness of feeling attending on the evening hour; and there is a nameless magic in that look of inanimate intelligence with which the moon gazes upon us from off her moving throne, that proclaims her to be queen, not only of the ocean of deep waters that embrace the earth, but also of the sea of passions that flow deeper and mightier, in the human breast. In this moment, while the interest of nature added fervour to the emotions of man, and while the gentle face I gazed on, and the touch of the hand which I held in mine, assured me of the sympathy which awaited the utterance of what I felt, I poured out in hurried eloquence the story of my passionate love, and laid open the secret of the high ambition of the course to which my coming days were to be dedicated. While I painted the fulness of the passion

which possessed me, and depicted the honours for which, for her sake, I would task my utmost powers by night and day, her bosom beat with a generous delight as sanguine as my own, and with the faith of an affection which doubted nothing, she consented to all the ardour of my hopes. And when under the witness of the gazing moon, I printed a kiss upon her snow-white forehead, I felt as if the seal of our union were already affixed. In the vehemence of joy that swelled through all my frame I tasted a deep assurance of capacity to fulfil all that I had determined. Giving in her smiles the one best omen of success, and promising as long a constancy as I might require, we walked again towards the house and I took my leave. I returned to my chamber, and spent the night in completing the preparations for my journey.

CHAPTER II.

In youth by science nursed,
And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favour'd being, knowing no desire
Which Genius did not hallow,—'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn,—against all enemies prepared.

WORDSWORTH.

Ay, father!—I have had those earthly visions,
And noble aspirations in my youth,
To make my mind the mind of other men,
The enlightener of nations; and to rise
I know not whither,—it might be to fall.

MANFRED.

THE college to which I was destined, was situated in a neighbouring city,—a position vastly better adapted for such an institution, in this country, than the more customary one of a village. It had been long established, was well endowed, and boasted a character and eminence

which were rivalled by few establishments of the kind in the land. The buildings were spacious and venerable, many of the professors illustrious for their talents and acquirements, the libraries large and judiciously selected, and the students whom I found, generally respectable for their standing and manners. In such a situation, I hoped to pass the years which I should dedicate to study, with much profit and some pleasure.

As my purposes were deeply laid, and my resolutions were not taken without a knowledge that I could keep them, I allowed nothing to occupy my thoughts or affect my plans, which had not a strict connexion with the objects of my efforts. Aware of the importance of assuming at once the ground which I meant to maintain, I determined to start such as I designed to continue. My views and feelings were different and apart from those of the persons whom I met, and neither in temper nor intention was there any community between us; and I was accordingly disposed to stand aloof as much as possible. Most of the members of the college had their residence under the same roof, and their meals were in common. Such a commixture, I quickly perceived, would be as little agreeable to my taste as to my pursuits, and I therefore deviated from the usual custom by occupying rooms where I could be alone. The sum which my father allowed me for my expenses was sufficiently liberal, and I hired for myself a small single house of which I was the sole proprietor, and in which I could be secure from all interruption.

I thus avoided the ordinary error of young men,—that of having a numerous acquaintance,—and the still more frequent and more hurtful one, of having a single friend. It is doubtless a true sentiment of the moralists, that there are few pleasures in life more elevated or more precious, than that resulting from the wise security of friendship. I would not contradict either the many wise saws, or the few modern instances, which may be found recorded in praise of this sacred tie; but the ordinary attachments of young men, which pass, in these days, under that honoured name, are the sources of more mischief than a dozen enmities. The best that one can ex-

pect of a *friend*, in these degenerate times, is that he will be a person who will waste one's time, ruffle one's temper, betray one's secrets, and assist in spending one's money.

After all, to all men and at all times, the best friend is virtue, and the best companions are high endeavours and honourable sentiments.

I thus withdrew myself from all that might distract my thoughts or squander my time, and devoted my days and my nights to ardent and persevering study. I had selected and brought with me the best books from my father's collection, and had the command of the library of the college. Hitherto my connexion with literature had been almost entirely in the character of a recipient. At home, I had no motive of duty to incite me to composition, and the stimulus of ambition was not yet roused in my breast. Indolence and the pursuit of mental gratification had therefore kept me content with reading what others had written, rather than spurred me to write what others might read. My sole object, now, was to obtain fame as an author, and I accordingly made writing my chief occupation.

As soon as I had fixed myself in my solitary rooms, I began my labours. My first performance was slow and doubtful. I sat for the whole morning, before my table, and at the end of it had written but little. I still persevered, and by the evening had the satisfaction of finding that though my progress was still to be estimated by lines rather than by pages, yet that I had become master of my subject, and could see my way clearly before me. I resumed my pen with undiminished ardour on the following day, and soon found that what I had taken up as a painful task, was become a pleasing occupation. My work proceeded rapidly, and I became happy in the employment.

I continued my habits of composition steadily and devotedly, relieving my mind occasionally by the perusal of the best English classics. I read none but the best, and I read them with the utmost attention. I studied them closely, penetrated their merits, and saw wherein their greatness consisted. I had formerly approached them with the coldness of an admirer; I now followed their

steps with something of the daring of a rival. I wrote on for a long time, developing my thoughts on various subjects, and acquiring power and ease in the use of language, but without any direct reference to publication. Writing is as much a craft as any of the mechanic arts; and in it as in them, one must learn the use of his tools before he can work with advantage. He must learn by practice to arrest a passing sentiment, and teach the feelings to become vocal gracefully. For weeks and months I went on in perfect enthusiasm, familiarizing to my mind the elevated conceptions of the old masters of the lyre, and instructing it by severe but grateful discipline to produce the harvest of its own cultivation. I lived in a dreamy whirl of excitement. My intellect seemed to expand, and I grasped confidently things which formerly I would not have ventured to approach.

Walpole said of Gray that during certain years of his life, his mind was "in flower;" a happy illustration of the warm, and genial, and expanded state in which the understanding sometimes finds itself. I may with propriety apply the expression to myself during this part of my time. I could take up every subject with equal facility, and to each in succession I came with a mind acute in its perceptions and ardent in its feelings. My existence was a state of the highest happiness. Sensations of undefined pleasure occupied my mind, and in the intervals of employment, the thought of her for whom I wrought, stood by me, like a presence, lending interest to all my meditations and beauty to all my dreams. Not a moment was lost in vacancy or idleness; for, spurred on by ambition, and lured on by love, how could I choose but be always busy?

Many writers, having reference to the instinctive mirthfulness, the lively joy,

> "The thoughtless day, the easy night,
> The spirits pure, the slumbers light,"

which mark that period of life, have spoken of youth as the happiest portion of human existence. My own experience is different, and though my own morbidness of feeling, and the peculiarity of my situation, may have

rendered my case an unfit test of the general truth, yet I am inclined to think that the experience of most persons will contradict the opinion. For myself I must confess that my mind recurs to the days of my boyhood, not without a sensation of pain. The happiest period in the life of any man, is, in my judgment, that to which my narrative now refers. In original composition there is always an intoxicating delight, and to a young man it comes coupled with the fresh pleasure of novelty, and heightened by the wildness of fancy and enthusiasm: the fates have not yet begun to weave dark threads in the web of his life; care has not spread her damp and heavy mantle over his hopes, and experience has not yet availed to make the golden clouds of glory fade into "the light of common day." I recur to these passages of my existence, whose days in passing seemed like long paradisal years, but whose years now past, seem like a short summer day, with an emotion which I cannot describe. Memory pictures to Fancy, my former self, seated by my lonely fire, ardent in study, glowing in hope, untiring in exertion; the earth of my reality glad with a thousand gardens, the heaven of my anticipations bright with a thousand stars.

My thoughts now began to look toward publication. My whole being was at this time, poetry, and I naturally thought of making my first trial in this department. I finished with the utmost rapidity a poem which I had long meditated, and by adding a few minor pieces which I had thrown off in moments of peculiar enthusiasm, I had matter enough for a respectable volume. I easily procured a publisher, and the book appeared anonymously. My success was immediate and great: the poem was read every where, and from every quarter I heard my praises: my fondest wishes and wildest dream of popularity were scarcely unrealized by the actual reception of the book.

When Mozart had finished his mortal career, and was just wavering on the brink of life, he is reported to have said to his attendants that he began to see what might be done in music. A similar feeling attaches to every one when he has completed a design upon which he has been

engaged. When a literary man has just got his work concluded, he begins to see what he might have made out of his subject, and the desire of commencing another to which he can do more justice, becomes irresistibly strong. So I found it with myself: like the woodman, who in felling an oak, gives the second stroke without waiting for the echoes of the first, I paused not to listen to the remarks upon this work before commencing a second.

After little delay I again appeared before the public. My second publication was a work of fiction, which was followed speedily by another poem. I then directed the channel of my ideas into another direction. I could turn with entire ease and pleasure to the driest and most technical subject. It is a common mistake of authors to confine their efforts to a single branch of literature, to poetry, philosophy, or prose fiction separately. The mind by devotion to one pursuit becomes stiff, ungraceful and onesided. From every change of employment we return with renewed and freshened vigour. It was the great and constant endeavour of Goethe, to keep his intellect in such a state as to be ready to exert itself upon any description of literary or scientific subject, and this was a source of his peculiar greatness. He attained higher eminence in all the subjects which he treated than he could have done in any one department by unrelieved application to it.

Week after week, and month after month, I went on in my enthusiastic labours. Men often are not aware of what severe and untiring labour they are capable, until they have made trial of their strength. I proceeded without a moment's rest, and on every successive day found myself better fitted for study and composition. Far from feeling any exhaustion of intellect, or any impoverishment of ideas, I found my mind growing more and more inventive, more ready in the application of its stores, and richer and more novel in thought than before. I took up in succession every subject which can engage attention—poetry, criticism, philology, history and mathematics, in short, every topic which ancient and modern learning could suggest.

The period which I had fixed on for returning to Merton was now fast approaching. The class to which I belonged—I had entered the second—was graduated.

I was constrained, however, to remain in the city for a few weeks after the termination of the course, and I then began my arrangements for visiting Merton. On the evening of the day when all my preparations were completed, I went out to a jeweller's and purchased two rings, one plain and the other richly set with diamonds. The latter I intended for a present to Emily, when I reached her.

I returned again to my room; every thing was packed and placed in readiness about me, and having no occupation to employ the night, I sat down by the fire to think over my affairs. During the whole of my absence I had not addressed a single word to Emily, nor had I heard any thing from her. I had wished to bury myself in absolute retirement, and in silence and obscurity work out my triumph. I felt assured that she never could change, and I could foresee no possible circumstance which could interfere with my happiness.

It was a proud hour that I there spent in lonely meditation. The labour of three long years was brought to a conclusion, a conclusion even more successful than hope had promised. I had written books which I had only to avow, in order to obtain the highest reputation. I anticipated the gratification which I should have in telling Emily the secret of my glory. I amused myself in imagining how she had passed the long hours of our separation. I pictured her to myself as enduring patiently, with high hopes, but somewhat of apprehension and doubt, the time which she must pass ere we should meet again. By day she could build her happiness "on woman's quiet hours;" by night she could find a gentle solace in the tender memory of my departure. I asked myself—it was a fond but enticing thought—whether it were not possible that she had suspected or discovered by some secret sympathy, the author of the works which had excited so much notice. At least, thought I, she has seen and admired the po[illegible] I have published, and it remains for me, [illegible] the purpose the moonlit bower, to enjoy the de[illegible] disclosing to her the fact, and placing upon her

finger this jewelled expression of my love. I retired to bed with the assurance of a bright and unclouded future.

CHAPTER III.

Uberem vallem, salubrem venam,
Cursu fluminis amœnam,
Lætam sylvis, et frondosam,
Heræ vultu speciosam.
RICHARD BRATHWAIT.

I ROSE early on the following morning and set out upon my journey. The day was fine, and the air delightfully fresh and inspiriting; a gentle breeze from the west served to enliven, without agitating, the feelings, and produce that excited influence on the frame which thrills through the mind with a glad disturbance. Gray, always happy in epithets, never applied one more expressive or appropriate than when he called the morning "incense-breathing." We are pleased with the term when we read it in our chamber, but when we stand on some lofty headland, looking toward the newly-risen sun, and the uncertain zephyr grows fresher and fuller in swelling strength, we search the mind for some phrase that can denote the delight, and the word "incense" flashes on the understanding as a discovery of the instant, and a moment elapses before we discover that the word is another's and not our own. As light which contains all colours is colourless, and as the perfection and completeness of sound, according to Pythagoras, is silence, so the primary, single and undefective perfume, is the inodorous breath of day.

One who,—like the general race of men,—has gone from youth to manhood, through common life, a common man, can form no notion of the state of feeling in which I existed at this time,—a state which was but one of the

many phases of the human character when it grows up alone, and aloof from precedent, fellowship, or example, acted upon by nothing save the grand impulses of nature. The infinite little distractions of a quiet employment, the hourly greetings in the street, the momentary expectation of an incident, the sowing of to-day for the reaping of to-morrow, the constant sense of an external relation, all form, as it were, a lute-like music to the heart of the dweller in the high-way of life, which charms the passions to sleep, and harmonizes the opposing infinities of the soul into the zero that lies between: and man enveloping within him capacities for good that might dwarf an angel, and energies of evil that might startle a demon, goes through the world a harmless, worthless being, as little conscious of what lies within him as the hirsute rind of the oyster knows of the jewel that it houses. To the thousands who have never made acquaintance with their own souls, what I shall relate of myself at this time may seem incredible because it is unusual; wanting sympathy with the feeling, they may lack intelligence of the condition. As little resemblance have the habits of the children of society to the impulses of the children of nature, as the spark on an electric point upon the earth has to the mighty spirit which the thunder-cloud has nursed, bosomed in its depths as it sails the air; as little as the stunted hemlock of a grove to the heaven-stretching cedars of Mount Libanus. Yet be there many doubtless in whom the germ has sprouted, though it grew not to a flower; men who have in youth dreamed wildly for a moment, till the appointed destiny drew them back to business. Such may from the actual infer the possible, and will know from a glimpse, once granted, ever garnered, that my description exceeds not the truth.

For three years I had lived in utter solitude, my mind having no other companion than my heart. With all curious speculations, mysterious imaginings, and profound impressions I was intimately familiar: to all, in the things of nature and the thoughts of man, that could awake affection, wonder and meditation I was exquisitely susceptible. Morbid in feeling and impracticable in expectation, I was as little adapted to join actively in the

business of the world, as a tottering hermit is fitted to rise from the lonely musings of half a century, and marshal an army on the plain of combat. I was about to mingle with men again, and to rest on them the foundation of my romantic schemes; and it never occurred to me that those who lived under the influence of agencies the polar opposites of mine, might in any respect be different from me. I was about to transplant a dream from air to earth, thinking that a sky-bud would flower in the soil. In the universe of fancy I had created a world of my own, and living daily in that world, knew not that it was not the common globe; I thought that the azure veil on high which not hid angels from my sight, was the same sky that looked down on the labours and the pleasures of the whole earth; that the same Nature which looked, laughed, spoke to me in vale and hill and shady grove, spoke, looked and laughed also to woman and to man wherever dwelling;—not reflecting that to the enthusiast's eye life is profoundly masked in error; not considering that the vapours of hope must be chilled and condensed ere they passed into solid reality. My dreams were to the world's deeds as

——noontide dew
Or fountain in a noonday grove,

is to the strumpet highway common unto all, which sends to the sky no tribute but the arid dust the earth throws off.

As I went on amid sights of landscape varying but to please, and under scenes of heaven changeless but to enchant, I gazed in a revery of rapture upon the lovely prospect,

——till it became
Far lovelier, and my soul could not contain
The beauty still more beauteous!

A wave of deep emotion swelled through my bosom, as I looked into the clear blue sky, and influences of sacred joy floated to me through the crystal air.

That grand old man, Lord Bacon, was wont when he rode in the country, especially if a slight soft rain was falling, to uncover his head, saying that "he loved that the Spirit of the Universe should rest upon his temples."

That such a spirit is, and makes itself to be perceived, is an impression which feeling suggests and philosophy sanctions. And if the stern and the worldly, if the commonplace and the trivial perceive this emanation,—and the squalid infant who knows no more of nature than the still cape of sky that roofs its native alley, has pondered its meaning with a heart of reverence,—if they whose hearts are encrusted by sensuality have, in despite of their hardness, been awed, it may be imagined how susceptible was I who had so nursed my soul to tenderness that, often, as if it had been a harp-string of living nerve, the faintest breath of passion could delight it almost to agony.

In a tremor of gladness, my frame quivering with emotion, I looked back on the years that were passed, and forward to the days that were coming. I had been successful,—even to the craving fulness of romance, successful,—in all my plans and undertakings. I was returning as a triumphant hero, with the proudest trophies of victory in my hand; my veins tingling with that sense of glorious success which makes the eye quiver and the lip tremble. "Hope elevated and joy brightened my crest." When I looked forward, vision rose piled upon vision in unexhausted profusion, and dreams of happiness, each brighter than its predecessor, flitted unceasingly over the scenes of fancy. Of this world of suggestive bliss Emily should be queen! I would enthrone her mistress over all that was mine, whether treasured in the heart or built in the fancy. To her I would subject all my thoughts, my plans, my splendid wishes.

Referring to this period of my life, from the totally different state in which I now find myself, I feel it difficult to do more than hint at the high-wrought madness which then possessed me. It is rather by memory acting upon the result, than by relating consciousness that I am able to realize to myself that strange condition. No more than a far abler artist can I "paint what then I was." But from sketches, broken and imperfect, the reader may apprehend in some degree, how false and unsound was the position into which solitude and a heated mind had brought me, and may anticipate the revulsion which

reality would work in one of such jealous sensibility and longings as limitless as the universe.

I reached the village of my destination about noon, and alighting at the edge of it, went on foot over the fields, intending to pass through the garden, and enter by the back way the house in which Emily resided. Connected with her father's house was a tolerably extensive park or lawn, tastefully disposed, and agreeably furnished with trees and flowers. It was the place in which I had parted from Emily three years before; and as I walked through it now, almost entranced in visionary enthusiasm, I verily expected to find her there waiting for me, as if by some secret sympathy she had known of my arrival. I looked that she should have started up in love's own ecstasy, and flown to my arms in the thoughtless innocence of nature. But she did not.

I reached the house, and ascending the steps which led by a window to the parlour, I raised the sash and entered the room. The object of my search was before me; she sat alone, fully dressed, upon a sofa, reading a newspaper. She raised her eye, and as she recognized me, smiled, and with a very composed air advanced towards me.

"Mr. Stanley!" giving me her hand, "I am extremely happy to see you. Pray sit down. When did you arrive in town?"

"Lately,—immediately," said I.

"You found the roads very dusty, I am afraid. We are very much in want of rain."

"Very,—extremely so, indeed:" I replied, absolutely stunned by the calm immobility of the speaker. In an instant after, the sense of my ridiculous notions, of my idiotical folly of expectation flashed upon me. This sudden bolting of the actual upon the visionary startled me as the sudden awaking of a sleeper who unknowingly has wandered to a dizzy precipice. My thoughts whirled round to a consciousness of the reality, like a windlass furiously uncoiling when, with its heavy weight almost at the top, the handle is forced off. My dreams could never be fulfilled! My affections never satisfied! Mingled with rage I felt a hopeless sinking of the heart. Great God!

the being whom I had enshrined in the seventh heaven of idolatry, whom I had adored into an ambrosia-breathing goddess, was here before me a neat young lady thinking how a shower would allay the dust. I knew not whether to laugh or to cry.

"The crops, I am told," continued Emily, "are suffering very much. A gentleman said yesterday that the wheat was nearly destroyed by the drought: the grass appears to be exceedingly parched."

With such observations was I entertained by the woman whose lightest tone I thought could have thrilled me with ecstasy. Though keenly vexed I sat in mute composure, while every moment "the cold reality" became more intensely real. Presently I rose, and bidding her good morning, staggered rather than walked out of the room, entertained by the pleasing conviction of having made a desperate fool of myself.

The reader, in the calmness of ordinary feeling, may laugh at so absurd a state of things.

I can laugh *now;* nay, more, I can *smile,* as the scene rises before me. But far different was it at the time. The grief and the fury wherewith the disappointment stung me, I cannot undertake to describe.

I rushed from the house, blind with anguish, and finding a coach setting off for the city, threw myself into it, almost insensible with sad amazement.

CHAPTER IV.

Let us cast ourselves into the rushing of time, into the rolling of accident. There, pain and pleasure, success and disappointment may succeed each other as they will.

FAUST.

I HARDLY know how I got through that journey,—at least, at this distance of time, I cannot distinctly recall what succession of emotions started up and chased one another through my mind, during that first agony of my

desolation. Sensations of deep shame and mortification, of inward rage and vexation, and of prostrate hopeless grief, for some time followed each other in hurried confusion. But it was not long ere I mastered the emotion. At those seasons in which the mind is in a desponding mood, and the vigour of the heart slumbers in inaction, the intelligence of a great misfortune so conquers the spirit that it submits to the infliction without a struggle, and the only relief which can be hoped for, is that relief which is the offspring of Time. So did not I yield. Calamity, when it visited me, found one as salient in his energies as he was keen in his sensibilities, and disposed to regard grief, when it assumed the character of a settled enemy to his happiness, with a militancy of inclination and a "resolution never to submit." My passions had been sounded deeply and variously in the solitude of my study, when, for ambition's sake, I girded myself to wrestle with the stern difficulties of science, and to grapple with the elusive mysteries of poetry. Those passions which had thus been roused and drilled, as it were, for action, this blow tried to the utmost; the struggle was intense, but the result was victory. From the jarring chaos came manliness and strength. I arose from the conflict another being. The event was a climacteric in my life. The visions of boyhood vanished; the pictures of youth faded: the energies of the man were roused. I cast the grief from me. I threw from my thoughts all remembrance of Emily and of my ancient hope. I resolved that former feelings should no more be tenants of my heart; that sensibility should clasp other objects,—that ambition, warming in pursuit of other quarries, should feel no defeat,—that the heart, filled by other and far distant employments, should find no void.

Night was setting in when I reached the city. The events of the morning and the occurrences of days just passed, seemed at that time removed by a century's distance. When they occurred to my mind it was in glimpses as over a long tract of years. Change of circumstance anticipates lapse of time; there is no interval like the interval of feeling.

As I could not have endured to visit the house which I had formerly occupied,—the theatre of a drama past by,

—without disgust, I betook myself to a hotel. Amid the exciting bustle of such a place, I recovered a calm and commonplace tone of feeling which it is among the marvels of our being that we can wander into, even in the midst of the greatest excitement. In the evening, however, when I was left alone, the sense of my solitude and of my mournful disappointment came upon me with a cheerless weight, and filled me with the deepest melancholy. I felt as if I had sustained some loss by death; in fact, the being whom I had loved and worshipped *was* no more. *My* Emily was gone for ever, and it mattered little to my heart or my hopes whether her place was filled by another, or was void. Not that the occurrence left me desperate, or prevented my indulging in prospects of future action; but still I could not help recurring to it with bitter regret; lamenting that my prospects were dashed to the ground, and that all my labours were labours in vain, and laying the fault rather on the unworthiness of the object I had trusted, than the madness of the fancy which had made me trust. To the occupations of the future I looked rather as a means of forgetting the past, than of affording any pleasures of its own. I felt that sort of cheerful misery and contented despair which the poet has so touchingly and so delicately exhibited in a single soliloquy of Jaffier, and I was ready to exclaim with him, reversing the conditions,

> "I will bear my wayward fate *alone*,
> But ne'er know comfort more."

On the following morning I sat down to decide upon my future course of life. I felt that one act of my existence was concluded,—that I was going to begin another era; and I wished it to be as opposite to the former as possible. I looked upon my past years as a bright field of joy separated from the present by a dark chill cloud. To the little den in which I had spent three years of strange, unusual bliss, I would not return; my intention was to profess for awhile the business of pleasure, and to taste the flowing waters of life, as I had before drunk of them. at rest; to occupy myself as much as possible with society, and endeavour to divert the sense of that distress the reality of which I could not obviate.

It was the middle of summer, and none of the few acquaintances whom I had, were in town; and although as a residence in the warmest weather, the empty city must be infinitely preferable to the confined quarters of a country inn, yet my wish at this time was to seek those places where company most abounded, and to amuse myself with the artificial interests of the drawing-room. I therefore sat out at once for the sea-shore, and after a day's ride found myself the inhabitant of a house into which three hundred persons had crowded themselves to be comfortable and cool.

I do not know any spot where a good-humoured philosopher could find more to feed his mirth, than he may meet with at a fashionable watering-place. We are told that Democritus used to walk daily to the sea-side to enjoy a laugh at the oddities in human character and conduct that were there presented to his view. Doubtless antiquity was as rich in absurdity as are our own times; but if he found by the sea half as much to amuse him as we may now discover in the same place, he did well to visit it. Still it would have been worth a wish to the merry-hearted sage that he could have lived to shake his sides in the dining-room of a modern resort. To witness the ridiculous displays of vanity and pretension that there occur, would have afforded him a perpetual feast of jollity; and it might have roused a deeper feeling of scorn, and a sense of something like humiliation for his race, to behold the contrast here displayed between the majesty of nature and the littleness of man; where, within sight of the boundless sea, and within hearing of his eternal roar,—on the spot where wisdom might retire to muse and poetry to feel the inspiration which it loves,—a herd of mortals collect to play the antics of a farce, and to show the motley meanness of "the noblest work of God."

On the morning after my arrival, when I had completed the ceremony of dressing for dinner, I descended to the large public room, where all were assembled that none might have an unfair advantage in the attack which was shortly to take place. As I passed in, two or three shameless gourmands were standing near the door of the dining-room ready to rush to the assault upon the first opening of the doors. One young gentleman was sitting in the

hall, in that inclined position the discovery of which the English do us the honour of ascribing to our nation. He was reclining in the most careless manner in the world, apparently courting the breeze, and intent only on a newspaper; but a certain restless fidgeting, and the hurried glance which he cast toward the door when any noise within indicated to his imagination that the important moment had arrived, manifested that he had pretty successfully simplified his wants into one comprehensive craving. As I went by, one of the servants within, whether from accident or design, placed his hand on the knob of the door, when the expectant's chair dashed to the floor, and he was about to spring forward, but discovering his mistake, retreated again in some confusion.

Leaving these hopeful youths in the pious performance of the command to watch and prey, I won the entrance of a huge place yclept the parlour, and proceeded through it to see if there were any within whom I knew. The regions near the door were occupied by a host of coarse-looking people,—fat round-shouldered men, with long white waistcoats extending far below their buttoned blue coats, and fatter women, with white pocket-handkerchiefs in their hands and flaunting caps with red ribands streaming,—looking, on the whole, extremely like filleted oxen going up to be sacrificed at the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

I had heard that a friend of mine, a delightful person to meet with any where, was at this time at the shore; and while my eye was wandering in search of him it fell upon a German with whom I had some acquaintance. I went up to him, and demanded if he knew or had seen the gentleman I was looking for. Mr. Heineman was a naturalist; and from long devotion to facts and their dry classification his mind had become a mere catalogue of particulars; he would have formed at this time as singular a curiosity in a cabinet of moral rarities as any specimen in his physical collection.

"Sir," said I, "do you know Mr. Seward?"

"Seward!" pronounced the philosopher, casting his eyes to the ceiling and assuming a most abstracted air,—"of Sewards I have known three. Philip Seward, restaurateur, at Calcutta,—John Seward, barber, at Buenos

Ayres, and Jehosaphat Seward, cook in the Danish ship Tiger."

"The person I allude to," said I, "is probably no connexion of either the restaurateur at Calcutta, the barber of Buenos Ayres, or the cook on board of the Danish ship Tiger. He is a man of good family, and his mother was the celebrated beauty, Miss Brown."

"Of Browns," said the German eagerly, protruding his chin, staring intently on vacancy, and counting at the same time upon his fingers; "of Browns I have known just forty-six—no, forty-seven—Eliphalet Brown, of—"

The important communication was here interrupted by the approach of a well-looking young man, and the names of the forty-seven Mr. Browns whom Heineman had chronicled in his memory were lost to me for ever. My German presented me to the new-comer. He was one of those harmless simpletons who look upon talk as a certain formal exercise, who will say any thing "in the way of conversation," and are satisfied with themselves if they can but make a remark. The youth extended his long neck, and bowing between his ear and his shoulders, said, in a grave tone but with an extremely insinuating air, "There was a Stanley died recently of the cholera."

"Same man, of course," said I, and turning upon my heel, left him to practise compliments upon the German.

"'That sea-ing they might not see!'" said a voice at my shoulder. "Are your eyes so 'shore-n of their beams' that you cannot discover an old friend?"

I turned and recognized Seward; though, had I only "seen with my ears" I might have known the speaker by the vileness of his puns. He was one who although his mercurial temper and fondness for social notoriety led him constantly to sacrifice dignity to diversion, yet rendered himself universally acceptable by the unflagging liveliness and spirit of his conversation. He was often extravagant and sometimes fatiguing, but never dull. To keep himself excited and others interested was the whole business of his life: and to this end, the purest wit and the most despicable quibbles, a keen vigour of reason and inexhaustible powers of buffoonery united in an odd but delightful confusion. He could be serious on occasion, and with great effect: when the taste of his companion

made it desirable, he was always ready to take part in argument, and he never took part in vain. But still if the cap was not on his head it was at least in his hand, and at the slightest signal the grave debater was a dancing harlequin. I have seen him at one moment discussing "Edwards on the Will" with a learned professor, and at the next crowing like a cock for the amusement of a child. In this last accomplishment his powers were *unique;* he would have dwarfed Braham, and even the lord-lieutenant for Ireland could not have stood near him. I hardly know whether it was a greater treat to hear him expound the "Aids to Reflection," or repeat "Christabel" with a long-drawn-out accompaniment of the "tu-whit, tu-whoos." For a mind like his wherein choice witticisms, learned quotations and stories of humorous anecdotes, lay piled together as under a mosaic dispensation, there could be no antitypes in nature but the gizzard of an ostrich in which pen-knives, bits of glass, old nails, and fragments of leather repose, an *indigesta moles;* or the Index of a magazine, where "Hell" follows "Heaven," "Omnipotence" is backed with "Oysters," and "Freedom" and "Fudge," "Washer-woman" and "Washington," "Boiled-eggs" and "Bonaparte," "Divinity" and "Door-nails" stand in apt conjunction. In short, there were *nearly* as many different elements in his character as there are distinct orders of architecture in an American bank. He was quite young, and although he prided himself on his powers of intrigue, was in reality profoundly ignorant of the world, and more often imposed upon than any one I ever knew. His visage was as odd as his character; pale, lanthorn-jawed, worthy a man of eighty: his brow knotted and wrinkled, and a couple of deep lines running horizontally across the top of his nose,—an infallible sign, by the way, of humour.

The heart of Seward was as true as his head was various, and a firmer friend, when his esteem had been gained, existed not.

"You seem to be somewhat crowded here, *mon ami*," said I.

"This crowd," said Seward, "like Hamlet's grief and the new-fashioned coats, 'knows not *seems*.' It is as *real* as any action known to the law of England."

"*Mixed*, rather, I should think," said I. "But pray tell me who some of these people are: and, to begin with the least, who is that little creature, that homuncle, that differential of a man, who is illustrating himself to those ladies with such consummate self-satisfaction?"

"True," said Seward, "*Sapiens incipit a fine*, we will proceed from the lowest of creation, upward. That man is the well-known Mr. Arish; who in talking of celebrated authors, says, 'we literary men.' He is a critic, which means an author run to seed; and has been, in his time, a great bug-bear to young writers, but to my thinking the bug so predominates over the bear, that I am surprised that he is not rather an object of contempt than of fear. He was bred up to no profession, and being obliged by the narrowness of his income to seek labour of some kind, he resorted to that last refuge of unprovided genius; the unapprenticed trade of authorship. His productions however, did not happen to strike the public mind: in short he failed. But the versatility of his genius was not without a resource. 'Every man,' says Shaftesbury, 'thinks he can drive a whiskey, and manage a small farm.' Every educated man thinks he can teach a school, and edit a newspaper. Arish resorted to the latter; a choice which I so highly commend, that I shall some day or other adopt it myself. He had by nature, undoubtedly, very peculiar talents for the post, especially, of a political editor. No man could *turn* a paragraph better, or succeed more infallibly in rendering a sheet ephemeral. It was beautiful to see a man so much elevated above principle, and indulging such sublime contempt for decency. He is understood to have commenced his course of preparation for politics by a diligent study of Turner's History, and Mrs. Trimmer's Abridgements. He determined to execute the advice of the philosopher in Rasselas, and live according to nature. He fixed his eyes upon the moon, and resolved to emulate her changes. He saw the osier, and excelled it in pliancy. He imitated the seasons, too, with most happy resemblances; and often when his friends expected from the mild and spring-like approbation of his manner, that the warmth of summer patronage was to ensue, he would come out upon them with the freezing gusts of a March wind. With such exquisite

sang-froid did he pass to and fro from one party to another, that it might seem as if he had merely done it to benefit his health by a change of air. He exhibited in his oft repeated and most graceful 'forward and back, cross over and turn round,' a dance of tergiversation, which Almacks might have copied with applause. So thought the world, but in truth the man had no party but himself, and no principle but to advance himself; and he never deserted the one nor forgot the other."

"It might be an interesting problem for the Board of Longitude," said I, "to discover at what point of the compass he might be found at any given period in advance."

Our conversation was here interrupted by the approach of a fat and very vulgar woman, with a very patronizing air to my companion: *young* men of good blood are always particularly protected by rich *parvenues*. "La! Mr. Seward!" cried the vulgarian, "what terrible places these is for *gen*tility! (placing the accent on the first syllable of the word.) One don't find nothing here as one is 'customed to, at home: nothing but steel *fawks*, which, you know, is quite exploded now. We *brung* down a dozen silver fawks with us; and as you have always been 'customed to 'em, I know, we'll lend one of 'em to you: 'cause I know you can't eat your dinner without 'em."

Seward who was thoroughly patrician in his feelings, shrank from the coarse appeal, as if it had been a north-easter, and replied with great coldness, "I thank you, madam; *I* can eat very well with steel."

"Oh!" renewed the other. "I am sure you can't; no one can. I will tell our servant to put a silver fawk by your plate."

"You are excessively condescending, madam!" replied Seward, who was beginning to be vexed as he saw the attention of the by-standers directed towards him, and who was as little fond of being victimized as he was fond of victimizing: "I must beg, madam, that you will not give yourself any trouble of the kind: on this occasion, I prefer steel."

The patroness was effectually discomfited by the tone of dignity with which this was uttered, and withdrew without returning to the charge.

I had observed for some time a sickly, peevish-looking

woman at no great distance from us, apparently engaged in pressing upon her husband some proposal to which he did not seem much inclined to consent, and of the suggestion of which he seemed to be somewhat ashamed. From the earnestness of the speaker's manner, her remarks seemed to have reference to some affair of not less than vital importance; and during a pause which presently ensued in our conversation, some part of the dialogue reached our ears.

"It is really too bad," said the woman, whose voice seemed to have become monotoned to querulousness, "too bad that they should take their places above us at the dinner-table. I wish, my dear, that you would speak to the keeper of the house. They have no right there. You must prevent it."

"Oh! my dear!" said the husband, who appeared to be a man of blunt good sense, "it is not a matter of the smallest consequence. One seat is just as good as another."

"But," reiterated the other, "we must have our rights. The places belong to us. I will not see such people going above us. It is too bad;" and they went on wrangling.

"Pray," said I to Seward, who like myself had been listening to this conjugal colloquy, "can you tell me what duchess this is, who has thus been defrauded of her rights, and who are the plebeians who are so shameless in their encroachments upon rank?"

"I happened," he replied, "to be present at the breakfast-table this morning, when a personal encounter took place between the parties, or rather when the other party took possession of the disputed seat, and the present complainant made an unsuccessful attempt to regain it. The usurper is the wife of a rich broker whose connexions are mean; this woman is the wife of a poor broker, but happens to have a thirty-third cousin who married a gentleman. Upon the strength of the connexion, she assumes a coat-armour, and demands precedence accordingly. The loss of the seat which should belong to her, as having arrived here before the other, is the momentous argument of this contest."

The dinner-bell presently rang, and we all went for-

ward. The rich expostulator for place, preceded us in entering the room, and I could hear her again whispering to her consort, "Do speak to the landlord; it is too bad." Seward's place, by the by, as he afterwards told me, was equally interfered with by the tormentor of this poor sufferer, but he quietly seated himself without any outcry. His interest with the government procured me a seat near. Opposite was a Dutch baron, as he called himself, who understood English badly, and spoke it worse. He was perpetually falling into blunders, into which Seward acting upon Addison's humane rule, was perpetually plunging him deeper.

CHAPTER V.

As budding branches round a tree,—
Thoughts cling, with feelings fraught,
Around the silence of the sea,
Itself a feeling thought.

MEADE.

THE sun had just set, and the evening breeze was freshening from the waters, when I went out to pay my respects to the ocean. Upon the whole, perhaps, I would as lief have gone alone, but encountering accidentally on my way a person whom I had formerly known well and esteemed very highly, I proposed to him to join my ramble. He assented and we went forward together.

William Herand, was one of my earliest acquaintances at school, and without any very tender feelings upon either side, there existed a tolerably warm friendship between us during the whole period of our connexion as fellow-students. From some poetical compositions of his which I had seen, the production of his youngest years, I had formed a high opinion of his genius; and I was accustomed to think of him, when in subsequent days my memory recurred to our former acquaintance, as one, who if occasion were propitious, would probably be distinguished in after life. He was one of those persons that

we occasionally meet with, who seem formed for pre-eminence, and to have that pre-eminence yielded by all; one whose frank and cordial character excited so warm a personal regard and interest, that in admitting or asserting his claims to superiority, each seemed to be gratifying his own private pride. He was undoubtedly the most admired of all who were at the school while I remained there; and his perfectly good temper and constant readiness to engage in amusement rendered him also the most popular. To tasks requiring either original genius, or acquired learning, he seemed equally fitted; he appeared to reach by a certain instinct of mind, that familiarity with difficult and unusual subjects, which others by the most plodding diligence, less successfully attained. With decided and unquestionable poetical powers, he united none of that moodiness of feeling and that lawlessness of passion, which the history of Lord Byron, and the theories of Mr. Moore, have taught the world to consider indispensable attributes of the poetical character. If the practice of one member of a profession could have justified a doubt of the necessity of those qualities which are usually demanded from the rest, I might have believed from the evidence which he afforded me, that one might still be a bard without ceasing to be a man of honour, of principle, and of decency, and that, after all, there was no such inevitable divorcement between the writing of verses and the performance of the reasonable duties of life.

As we walked on to the shore, we passed a large party of men and women, who were loudly pronouncing the sea and the sky to be "very fine," while a female of the company was repeating with an air of Pythonessan inspiration, what she called "those sweet lines of *Buyron*,"

"Oh! *that* the desert were *my* dwelling-place!"

"O that it were, indeed!" cried Herand; "you cannot wish it more devoutly than I do. Gracious Heaven! If these vulgar and illiterate admirers of Lord Byron could imagine the ineffable disgust with which that haughty poet would regard them, were he again alive, I think that their enthusiasm would be somewhat cooled. Pish! let us escape from these romantic fools, who realize the Per-

sian description of a sacred animal of that country, whose ears are so long that when he lies upon his side, one of them serves for a mattress, and the other for a coverlet."

"He must indeed be greedy of admiration," said I, "who can relish the morsel from so foul a plate. One is almost reconciled to insignificance when it is among the penalties of distinction to excite such applause. A man may be content to allow his skiff to lie dry upon the beach, when he sees what wretched parasital shell-fish cling about the keel of those vessels which have ventured on the ocean, in numbers sometimes great enough to break up the voyage."

We presently reached a retired part of the beach, where the broad expanse of the waters extended before the eye in all their silent majesty. The sentinel surges gleamed far along the shore like a white-plumed triple line of soldiers, to guard the rest of the deep.

"It is a glad and glorious pastime to the spirit," said my companion, "to look upon this type and token of Almighty power—to wrestle with the living thoughts which dwell like things amid the stir and strife of these eternal waters—to encounter the strong breathlessness of awe which is dashed upon the soul as we inhale at a glance the vastness of the scene. Upon the face of the deep, the spirit of eternity still is brooding: as we pause before this wide unbarriered space, and our naked mind stands bold against the unveiled, eternal universe, a silent thought of homage swells through the endless space; and that thought is God. The ocean is the material image of the Almighty: what attribute of Deity is not here substantial? Power, of an infinite fulness;—beauty, of that particular pervadingness of essence, that rain and tempest, and the beaks of winds evolve and not efface it;—life, abstract and indestructible, that never wearies and that never wastes—whose days know not repose, and upon whose bosom the cloud of nightly slumber never weighs. If the dancing water brook should cease to chant his praises who inspired its gladness,—or if the infuriate storm-blast as it gnashes through the forest, should burst from its bands, and disown its Maker;—if men should ever gaze upon the western sun, and forget whose countenance its brightness mirrors, or

rest upon the mountain turf, nor own from whose omnipotence the strength of the hills has sprung;—if the knowledge of the Infinite One shall ever pass away from the earth, the roar of the ocean will thunder it back. It was the sublime intention of Nicholas Ferrar that a perpetual chant or solemn service of music should be established at Little Gidding, to be sustained by generation after generation, and continued to the end of time without the interruption of a moment. He wished that, whatever might be the condition of men or the character of the times, the voice of praise might ever be ascending; that it should rise amid the roar of contest, like a smiling lotus through a tangled ruin, and be the blended harmony of all the thoughts of peace; that the ancestor and his descendant might unite in the same song of thanksgiving, and century be bound to century by an all-embracing stream of worship. What the saint designed, the sea performs. There are times perhaps in which from human lips throughout the broad extent of the earth, no sound of prayer or praise is heard; but the listening seraph who looks out from the windows of heaven, hears the organ of the waters peal everlastingly. It is not without an influence which may be termed holy,—for its beginning is fear and its effect is cleansing,—that we muse within this great cathedral of the sky-roofed deep. When first seen by man, it gives him a thought and a disturbance, which though nothing can have ever before started such emotions within him, seem strangely familiar to his feelings. And when we claim instinctive brotherhood with that which stretches back, like a broad sheet of light, to the first moment that the gush of sun-beams flowed down upon the waves, and forwards till the depth of the heavens shall be opened, we realize one of those moments of existence in which man feels his immortality and trembles at it. There are thoughts of mystery and dreams of magic floating around this scene; and there are those who have feasted on them till they have become maddened, and their life has turned to parching thirst for the fulness of these unearthly sentiments. But such thoughts are the food of heaven; and while I would labour for their recognition as the proof of heaven, I would postpone their en-

joyment to another life, and abide in hope till the veil of the flesh which dims them, is withdrawn."

"There are," said I, "many faculties of the heart whose true sphere of exercise is not in this world, and which bear in the fact of their being, unequivocal testimony that the intellectual frame wherein they are lodged, is destined for employment in another field of existence. And you have indicated truly the use which should be made of them: we should question them of their secret, elicit from them the truth which they have to impart, and then dismiss them to be more fully developed in the due revolution of time. And I cannot help thinking that much of the scheme of practical Christianity has the same prospective reference. We do wrong in supposing that to the earth, only, or even chiefly, is confined the application of the requisitions of the Scriptures; that this globe is the only acting theatre of man, and that the future is but a scene of calm and impassive enjoyment. Our preachers err in limiting to this small arena a struggle and an endeavour which will last through eternity,—in confining within mundane limits, a mystery which fills immensity. Instead of a benignant blessing to man it were a bitter mockery of his helplessness, to expect him to attain the full measure of that perfection, than which no more belongs to consummate purity: to demand of him to familiarize to his bosom and to expound by his conduct a system before whose unfathomable obscurity angel and archangel bow in humility; to comprehend which, cherubic wisdom must pray for added intelligence; to fulfil which, seraphic ardour is not too sufficient. My opinion is, that those commands which are enjoined upon us here, are intended in their completeness to apply to our conduct in future worlds, when by cumulative energy through successive stages we shall arrive at a moral vigour in some measure adequate to the task. And in the very mode of the exposition of these matters in the Scriptures, I read a confirmation of this opinion; for the doctrine of faith is therein fully and satisfactorily laid open, but the precepts of practice are imperfectly and in many cases impracticably developed; giving glimpses, as it were, of that complete scheme, whose revelation is reserved for other spheres. For spiritual existence in the great archipelago

of worlds that fills the ocean of infinity is not independent, but successive,—death being but 'a sleep and a forgetting,'—birth, an awaking with extended power. The great sacrifice which was exhibited, in our own globe two thousand years ago, believe me, was not confined to it. It was a divine immolation for total sin on the great altar of the universe, and its manifestation was simultaneous throughout the whole array of planets; to each there was a darkening of the sun; in each a rending of the veil in an old temple of superstition. Those who have been cast on these shores prior to the revelation of atonement, will learn the healing truth in some future abode of their souls. It would require a mighty argument to convince me, that I have not lived before this; it would require an almighty one to persuade me, that I shall not live hereafter. Meanwhile, whatever may be our future lot, there are incumbent upon us, here, momentous duties as members of society. Let us, therefore, secure of the developements of future time, lay aside the pursuit of these unprofitable speculations which the contemplation of nature forces on our mind, and girding ourselves to the task before us, actively meet the exigencies of life, and calmly 'wait the great teacher, Death.'"

"I have always consented," said Herand, "to the maxim of the great moral poet, that the proper study of mankind, is man: and I hold that communion with nature is only valuable to freshen and relieve the spirit, and to strengthen the heart to pursue the study. Deeply, as from long acquaintance, I am attached to the solitary haunts where nature reveals herself to her votaries in all her majestic loveliness, and, familiar as I am with the strong charms of those fair spirits who preside over lake and stream and mountain, I must still, in the sobriety of reasoning judgment, confess that those poets, who, like Shelley and Hemans, linger for ever beneath the cope of air, and weave not one valuable moral reflection, not one maxim of prudence, among their verses, are not my most cherished favourites. The light which they dispense may be 'light from Heaven,' but it is not *for* Earth: it is all thrown upon the by-paths of romance and the groves of sentiment, not a ray illuminating the high road of human conduct,—that path of action which, while we are men,

must be the chief field of our footsteps. They render *that* the essence, which, in reason, is but the accident of life; they make that the substance of our business, which should, in truth, be but the gilding of our leisure. It is indeed of advantage to retire occasionally from pursuing the reality of virtue to dally with its romance; but these writers make the argument of the volume of what affords but matter for a parenthesis. When the recess of evening brings repose from labour, the reveries of the fireside are in place; but it is worse than idle to linger dreaming in the twilight of the valleys, when midday duties await us on the plain."

"You are of course, then," said I, "an admirer of Pope?"

"So much so, that, with the exception of a few of his avowed followers, who have caught something of his spirit, I question whether there has been any true poetry since his days. Ah! my friend, when I see the age about to crown with the title of Immortal, a poet whose greatest productions are Hymns to a Butterfly, and whose most elevated occupation is the 'sentimental ogling of a tulip,' I fear that we are in the sad condition of the degenerate Israelites, having abandoned the God of our fathers, and gone a-hunting after strange idols. The old Egyptian plague is renewed among us, and grasshoppers and locusts have gotten into the king's chamber. The community of letters has indeed become a republic; all are now equal in insignificance. And the extinction of monarchy in song, like that of the political monarchy of France, is followed by a rabble of daily aspirants, whose fame is as brief as their popularity was vehement."

"I am afraid," said I, "that your simile extends its application to your disadvantage. If the judges will not admit Byron into the line of legitimate 'kings,' the people will crown him by the title of 'emperor.'"

"I would rather," replied Herand, "subscribe to Byron's opinion of Pope, than the people's opinion of Byron. Of the poets now in vogue you must unman yourself to read one-half, and unchristianise yourself to admire the other. Aristides, being guilty of no other crime than the crime of being just, was banished upon that charge; and Pope, in the dearth of fault, is condemned because he is

'moral.' The ostracists of Pope talk much of the necessity of 'invention' to constitute a true poet, and descant much on the importance of 'imaginative' topics; but it is yet to be proved that a subject rises in poetical value in proportion as it sinks in every other value. How can it affect the beauty of the structure that its foundations rest upon a rock? Are the garlands of Fancy the less lovely, or is their odour the less fragrant, because they are entwined around the sceptre of Truth? Is the splendid Pharos that sublimely silent gazes o'er the deep, the less picturesque, because its main purpose is utility? Is the architecture of the Doric portico at Athens the less exquisite in its impression, because it was built for a market-place? Those critics must be arrant poetical Calvinists, who deem so vilely of their own species as to deny it to be a worthy topic of the poet's pen. What subject can be more interesting than the conduct of man? more various than the nature of man? more sublime than the duties of man? I admit then to Byron the title of Poet of the Ocean,—to Hemans, of Poet of the Lily; I admit not—I demand for Pope the title of the Poet of MAN."

"It was the stern sincerity of an honest freedom," said I; "the consciousness that he battled singly for the right—that with a magic transformation made the pen of Pope, as Paulus Jovius said of his own, sometimes a pen of gold and sometimes a pen of iron, and caused his couplets to flow around the land with a might of sarcasm unwithstood. Conservative in all his feelings, he yet hated cant with a fierce defiance; anxious to impress his age, he yet conciliated no sect and truckled to no party. Buying no voices and leaguing with no confederates, he stretched forth his hand in the name of Truth, and in that name he wrought his miracles;—'alone he did it.' Such a man has no need to concern himself about popularity; he creates it, as the sun creates the day."

"While Pope, in action, wandered into no enormous vices," said Herand, "he proposed in theory no extravagant standard of virtue: his precepts were guarded, as Mackintosh finely says of Paley, 'by a constant reference to convenience and practice.' How opposite to this is the modern school of teachers! Look at Shelley complaining of wrong and tyranny, and eulogising purity and heavenly

love, and then marrying two wives and leaving one of them to die of a broken heart. Look at Coleridge,—who together with Wordsworth is essentially of the same tribe,—writing songs 'that bid the heavens be mute,' and leaving his wife to the charity of Mr. Southey, who is about the only literary man of our time who is not ashamed to do his duty, and is upon the whole the most perfect character of his age. This poetical *fanfaronnade* about virtue and affection, is disgusting in the mouths of these worthless vagabonds:

> 'Remember
> How easier far devout enthusiasm is
> Than a good action; and how willingly
> Our indolence takes up with pious rapture,
> Though at the time unconscious of its end,
> Only to save the toil of useful deeds.'"

"Pope," said I, "has certainly done as much to exalt the dignity of humanity by his life, as to improve the behaviour of men by his writings,—an article of commendation which can be extended to but few of his brethren. That tissue of putative meanness which was woven by the unnumbered foes which his genius had created, and which Johnson was not unwilling to extend, Roscoe has blown away like the filmy gossamer of the morning; and presented us instead, with a story as touching to our feelings and as honourable to our common nature as any other with which I am acquainted."

"Sir," cried my companion, warming with enthusiasm as his mind dwelt upon the character of his favourite poet, "the hand of Biography does not present us with a finer, or more generous instance of a man giving himself up solely and without reserve, to high literary ambition;—with the solemnity of an Hamilcar dedication, consecrating himself at the altar of Fame; bringing to it the tender blossoms of his early boyhood,—to it, the ripened fruitage of his elder years. Withdrawing himself from the world, and nursing in solitude the fire of his heart, *that* youthful ardour, which in most cases is suffered to play objectless like the ground-fire of the tropics, was by him concentered on a single object. With no vices, with few foibles; free from domestic cares, and safe from all political dis-

turbance; wasting not a moment on the transitory,—he dwelt apart in his beautiful villa, looking out upon man as from the window of a castle, and sketching his character and his destiny with the calmness and fidelity of a superior nature; in youth creating richly, in manhood, refining slowly; living out his sad and shattered age with no other purpose before him than

> To better his life and better his lay,
> To virtue's improvement and vice's decay.'

Justly might he have exclaimed, '*quantum alii tribuunt tempestivis conviviis, quantum aleæ, quantum pilæ; tantum mihi egomet ad hæc studia recolenda sumpsi.*'"

"But might not the individual to whom those words were self-applied, contest the claim of Pope to superior devotion to lofty fame?"

"I think not. The part which Cicero took in public life; his military longings; his labours as an advocate and prosecutor; his occupations as quæstor and consul, to all of which he looked for merely temporary distinction, would remove him from the comparison. Besides, you see clearly that to present duties, Cicero gave the preference in his own mind, and the time which he dedicated to labour for immortality was fragmentary, not continuous; snatched, not assigned. It is true that in the midst of popular applause and judicial approbation; amid the tumults of official triumph and the distractions of private luxury—the still small voice of eternal aspiration reached and stung his inmost soul: but it was occasional, like the dim vistas which ever and anon open and close upon the eye of one who wanders through a forest. But Pope stood with his face full-turned upon the future, his eye resting nowhere short of the remotest posterity; knowing well that the incense of Fame is the smoke of sacrifice, and that the diadem of genius is the martyr's crown. His was the sole glorious task to conquer immortality; unambitious to light an earthly lamp which might attract the sidelong glance of the passing traveller, or kindle a transitory fire which might draw together the idle and the vain, but emulous to plant a star in the eternal heavens, which though so distant that the first rays which reached the world might shine upon his grave, yet which,

when seen, should be seen for ever, and living on in still-abiding lustre, become a fadeless portion of the very frame of nature."

"The change," said I, "which has come over the whole character of English poetry within half a century and has extended so deeply as to have transformed the principles of criticism, has not yet met with satisfactory analysis. 'Poetry,' says Johnson, 'has rarely been worse employed than in dignifying the amorous ravings of a lovesick girl:' what a revolution in taste and opinion does the date of that remark exhibit!"

"And stranger than all," said Herand, "the verses upon which that bitter sentence was pronounced, have been repeatedly quoted as the sole evidence that Pope was a true poet. If the definition of poetry by the king of poets be adopted, Byron and Wordsworth and Hemans would fare badly. 'A poem,' says Milton, speaking by the mouth of his nephew, Phillips, 'is an illustration or embodiment of some important *moral* truth, *not drawn from individuality*, but created by the imagination, by combining, with taste and judgment, ingredients selected from the stores of Fancy.' Had a description been framed with the express object of commending Pope and excluding Byron, it could not have been more scrupulously pointed. You cannot discover in the noble poet, a single notion or feeling which is general in its nature, or true upon universal application. The ability to rise above idiosyncrasy—to project general consciousness into imagined circumstance—so to expand the particular, and peculiarise the common, that any given sentiment shall be universal in reach and individual in impression—to widen views into principles, and point axioms into personalities, so that all shall embrace and each identify—this, the keystone of poetic power, was utterly wanting in him. If Byron seems to have penetrated more deeply into the human heart than Pope, it is because the one digged so narrowly that the smallness of the extent assisted the depth, and the other opened so expansively that the wideness of the labour seemed to level the profundity. The brilliance of Byron's flashes proceeds from the ray being broken: Pope's light is the white light of unrefracted truth. To present a thought which shall be purely, pre-

cisely, and perfectly just, requires so many modifications, flattenings and smoothings down, of the first bold impression, that most artists have been deterred from the undertaking; and in the hands of the few who have attempted it, the work has commonly slid into the vague and the commonplace. Pope with unequalled felicity has united truth and power. Search the rolls of poetry from Orpheus to the newest-born, and of philosophy from the first who ever guessed to the latest who has ever reasoned; explore the enigmatic revelations of the dark-thoughted Brooke, and the lucid demonstrations of the mastiff-minded Hobbes, and find if you can, a passage so profoundly affecting and so exquisitely unerroneous; so full of dignified pathos, and so instinct with majestic wisdom—as his description of the state of man:

> 'Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;
> Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
> *Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd;*
> The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!'

Think of these words amid the din of worldly business; think of them in the ardour of studious toil; think of them in the silence of your midnight chamber—and they shall seem to you the utterings of a prophet's voice."

"Bolingbroke," said I, "somewhere remarks, that we might give to certain learned plodders, as chronologists and annalists, the praise which their eminence challenges, if we could persuade ourselves that they could have succeeded as well in any thing else; and the thought, though false, is natural and common. If Pope's claim to reward for the philosophic be contested, as it often is, on the ground that he wanted powers for the pathetic, the confutation of the doubt is complete in a single stanza. There is not in the wide compass of our literature a more moving passage than that in which this poet, so morbidly unegotistic, turns from the attack on the miserable detractors of his time to make one allusion to his cherished mother. The man who could write thus avoided the pathetic for a reason."

"A far deeper pathos than the pathos of sentiment," said Herand, "is the pathos of wisdom. Lord Byron's appeals to the heart are about as elevated in their charac-

ter and managed with about as much artistic skill as those which form the tale of the last beggar who was wrecked on the coast of Barbary. There is more of the very heart and soul of genuine pathos in one of Sir Thomas Browne's magnificent sneers, or in Goldsmith's anticipation of the fate of England, than in a thousand dyspectic Laras and costive Giaours. But whatever may be the defects of Byron's poetry, considered merely as poetry, his real faults are of another description: it is not the want of genius that I discern, but the want of generosity that I lament. Who is there that, fascinated as he might be by the novelty of the thoughts; the beauty of the images; and the splendour of the diction, is not utterly disgusted by the peevish and unmanly complaint; the paltry protrusion of self; the miserable vanity and personality; and the total want of dignity, elevation, and independence? A misanthrope must be a man of a narrow soul: it must be a small mind, which when irritated by ill-treatment, finds a satisfaction in the impotent revenge of hate. No admiration to which the genius of Byron might prompt me, could ever check the repulsive scorn which is stirred within me by the sight of one thus having 'his eyes for ever on himself,' and coming before the world only to tell it how keen are his sensibilities and how painful his indigestions; that he has not loved the world, and that Wordsworth is his aversion: never will I so far debase my own inward dignity as to listen to these wretched egotisms of another, much less will I dwell upon and applaud the miserable petulant out-breakings of a disappointed and jealous lordling. I respect myself too highly to treasure up what despicable inuendoes against others, or ridiculous mystifications about himself, any other may descend to, to gratify diseased ambition, or sooth his fretted vanity. No! let *me* dwell among *manly* poets; among those exalted older spirits from whose hymnings one rises rebuked, chastened and purified, and learns to 'venerate himself as MAN:' messengers who forgot not their mission, but made their heaven-descended genius parent of heaven-ascending graces; whom you read with a free soul, and an expansion of mind like that bred by the wide ocean-scene we now survey, and whom we lay down in a better frame of feeling than we took

up; in better obedience of God's great laws; in better love of our fellows; and far better appreciation of our own state and value. The transition from the morbid and self-dissecting poets of our times; the stove-room and hot-house species—to the clear and trumpet-voiced minstrels of an age gone by; Spenser, Dryden and Thomson —is like the passage from yonder heated and dizzy billiard-room to this clear, freshening, bracing air. To them and to it we turn as to exhaustless sources of high impression: from it, and from them we return as from baths of the soul, nerved with gladness and springing with enthusiasm. For to nature and to those kings of song only, it belongs to ever fascinate with never changing: we look to the moon with not the less joy, because we know that we shall see but what we have seen from infancy, and read Milton with interest undiminished by life-long familiarity. Those great intelligences of young time, are commensurate with nature and similar to her; their uniformity is like the uniformity of the heavens, the necessary oneness of complete perfection; for when part has reached the summit, how can the rest differ but by descending? What variation can there be, but the variation of inferiority? The sun varies not, nor does Homer: his monotony is the level line which is pencilled on the sky, by the highest ridge of the high-looming hills. As the soul cast alone into the gulfs of space, delights to fix upon some starry object unshifting amid a universe of shifting shadows, that it may feel firm on some part, and know surely of its whereabout; so does the mind love to seize on some great watch-towers upon the shores of thought, and brace itself against a mental rock in the absorbing ocean. Surely, the intellect would craze with illimitation, if there were not in the wide view some eternal bounds of power, like Dante and Shakspeare."

Thus talked we by the banks of the sea, through the calmness of twilight, till the moon shone clearly and the power of its light proved the presence of darkness. "Well," said Herand, turning to me after a pause, "if you wish to catch inspiration or a cold any longer from this scene, I see no reason why you may not; but I, you know, am a poet, and it will never do for me to study nature too long."

"But is not that your very business and profession?"

"Fudge! Take my word for it, that those who have best described nature have known least about her, and the noblest sonnets to the moon have been penned in the presence of a sea-coal fire, with shutters closed and curtains drawn. When we gaze corporeally upon the earth or sky, feeling chokes intellect, and sense stifles imagination; and thus the right hand and the left of the poet are paralyzed. Nature presents a thought too big to pass through the channel of expression, and the reason must grasp and wring it, e'er the drops of Castalia will trickle from the cloud; yet the reason is dashed by the tyranny of vision. It is this overpowering incumbency of one vast idea which renders the inhabitants of mountainous countries, idiots. We become great, not by putting impressions into the mind, but by drawing them out; for they are all in there. For the infant soul was nursed in the bosom of God; and the point where all the converging and diverging rays of thought and feeling meet, is God; she therefore containeth in herself all consciousness of truth and all sentiment of nature in like manner as the centre containeth the circumference. But timid are these inward emotions, and slighter than the crisped amethystine air-curls of the spirit that sleeps on the rose-leaf in the shade of the rose-down; and therefore when the armed ideas of externality troop rudely near, they lurk within and pretend themselves dead; but when the moon-crowned midnight of mental quietude circles the soul with its still white drapery, then step they forth, lightly, slowly, falteringly, like the fear-vestured lady from a sentinelled camp to meet her hostile lover; and ever by the day, sleeping in their caverns, lulled by the music of the heart, dream they audibly, and if we can but still the humming cares and chattering excitements of life, we may hear them dream, and 'tis that hearing which doth make us poets. Come, won't you take a game of billiards?"

"Certainly," said I; "we should take the poetry and prose of life together, like bread and cheese."

CHAPTER VI.

He was a man to look upon, and turn, and look upon again.
MISS BAILLIE.

Two or three days after the conversation which I have recorded in the last chapter, I happened to stroll into the drawing-room of the public house, in the evening, and there, to my astonishment, I beheld Emily Wilson and her father. Her presence surprised but did not agitate me. As I looked at her from the other side of the room, I felt no other emotion than the sight of a perfect stranger would have caused; perhaps even less, because one whom I should see for the first time might excite curiosity and even interest, but her I regarded with complete indifference. The sentiment which I had once cherished towards her, which was a minglement of fancy and feeling, had passed away like a vapour from the valleys,

Which moveth all together, if it move at all.

She, to speak accurately, was never, personally, the object of my love, but another and ideal being, fashioned by visionary conception, standing in her place and bearing her name, but having no greater identity or even correspondence with the real person, than that representative phantasm which our mind conjures up, when we hear the name of some distinguished man, and invests with character and circumstance, and loves and hates by accident, bears to him whose title it usurps. I, in respect of the point whence I regarded the world, and the medium through which I looked, was as an alien and a stranger to my former self. A frame and a system of feeling, created by the imagination may change at the bidding of imagination. However wide it be extended, deeply seated and long established, it will always change when the view changes; and man, who in regard to his inward nature

and self-relation, never varies, may, as to his plans and external sentiments, be transformed for ever in an instant. Such difference had occurred to me; I had come out into the active world, and become a man among men; the visionary eye had turned to a calm scrutinizing look; the "glory and the dream" had passed into common light. So completely finished and rounded off were those former dreams that I could turn them over in my memory and feel how fully they were past and gone. Of my love there remained naught but a great recollection; and as I gazed upon the being before me, I could recur to my former feelings and their object as to matters, whence to the form I viewed there ran no chain of sympathy. I had left, as I thought, those yearnings with the years which owned them, and henceforth another race was to be run. Alas! I was unaware that the soul knows not to forget, and that feeling which once has flowed, though it may ebb, and its ebb may be for years, yet ceases, as little as the sea.

I paused for a moment to review the relation in which we stood and had stood. Whatever I might be or have been, Emily it was quite manifest had no regard for me; and this conclusion I reached by a knowledge of the ordinary state and course of feeling among the ordinary tenants of the world. She had smiled at our youthful attachment,—perhaps forgotten it altogether: and now I was to her but an unnoticed point in the circle around her. Whatever shadows might lie upon her heart, none could be cast there by the thought of me; whatever lights might sun her vision, none could be brought to image my form. I could not err in a conclusion which was founded on the opinion that a three years' silent absence was on the calendar of a woman's heart, an absence for ever. I felt well assured that my presence would be observed with perhaps greater insensibility by her than hers had been regarded by me.

As I approached her, I saw a person of very striking appearance sitting near her and conversing with her in that low and winning voice which is so irresistible in its influence on woman; which, though the remarks may be ever so impersonal, yet,—like sitting in a low chair at a respectful distance, or any other of the thousand tricks of

an ingenious lover, *suggests*, where suggestion is everything. She seemed to be listening to him with great interest, and plainly exhibited in her manner that emotion of regard which, when it exists strongly, it is scarcely possible for woman to conceal.

"Ah! Mr. Stanley!" said she, as I saluted her, "I understood that you were here, and I am glad to see you, for the last time I met you, you disappeared so suddenly and so oddly that I had scarcely time to renew my old acquaintance with you. Pray, what became of you that day that you came into our house like a shadow and departed like its shade?"

"'The dust' drove me to the sea," said I; "and I cannot but applaud the happy instinct which led me to the place which you were about to visit."

She presented the stranger to me as Mr. Tyler. The gentleman rose with dignity, and as he came more fully under my notice, I thought that I had scarcely ever seen a more remarkable countenance. There was upon it that stamp of individuality which would have arrested observation under almost any circumstances. His face indicated a man of about twenty-eight years, and yet his hair was a good deal tinged with gray. His complexion was clear but something pale; if I may use the expression, singularly *clean*. His keen but steady gray eye, very slightly closed,—a circumstance rather visible in a wrinkle on the cheek than by any diminution of the orb,—met an observer with iron resolution. His mouth, a little compressed, as with musing, had an air of pleasantness which was on the point of being a faint smile. The whole air of his face, though beaming with intelligence and marks of *soul*, was wonderfully cold and composed, and gave him the appearance of one constantly on his guard against all excitement. His brow,—a peculiarly broad and noble one,—was constantly lined by a faint and not displeasing frown,—a circumstance which afforded a remarkable contrast to the calmness of his lip and gave his countenance an expression at once pensive and firm. One would have felt a liking for such a man on the shortest acquaintance; but would not, I suspect, have ventured to take a liberty with him even after the longest intimacy. I have been somewhat particular in my de-

scription of this person, for I had subsequently occasion to compare the appearance with the reality. His conversation was rich and various; he never introduced the topic of discourse, and never appeared inclined to take the lead and control of the company; but upon every subject that was brought forward, he spoke so and so much as less to display the positive wealth of his mind, than to leave upon you the impression of an intellect vigorous toward every quarter, and of resources limited by no common bounds. There was no effort to please, apparent in his conduct, but rather a tone of reserve, and carelessness of the effect of his conversation; in fact, in the manner of his remarks there seemed to be a want of sympathy with others, though there was none whatever in the matter of them.

There was a fine damask rose lying upon the table, and to interrupt the awkward silence which is apt to occur upon the meeting of entire strangers, Miss Wilson took it up with a trifling observation.

"My cousin," said she, "brought it to me to-day, and I have rarely seen a finer one. We were talking, Mr. Tyler, of some of the productions of the pencil, but what has art to show in any department comparable to this simple production of nature? After all, that which we can do, is but a soiled image of that which we can find."

"Permit me," said Mr. Tyler, in a fine, educated tone, "to correct your observation as to the fact, and to qualify the inference which you deduce from it. It is to human skill that you owe the chief beauty of the rose; culture has, indeed, added nothing new, but it has so multiplied the leaves, and so enriched the tints, that the improvement looks like a new creation. Man is as useful in ripening nature's beauty, as nature is useful in refreshing man's taste."

"Are you any thing of a botanist?" said I.

"I know the science, generally," replied Tyler, "but not minutely—the extent and variety of its objects, but not their technical system and classification. I am, like the poet,

> Contented if I may enjoy
> The things which others understand:

and while I have observed with pleasure that there is herein matter for a science, I have resolutely ignored all its details. To appreciate fully any one of the fine arts,—and the remark is especially true of what may be called nature's fine arts,—all that is required is a superficial acquaintance with the method of composition, and an information of the difficulties which have been overcome in the construction; any knowledge, farther than that, creates a taste mechanical rather than æsthetical. We look upon a flower, a picture, or a temple, not to discover in what new form the spirit of beauty has been evolved, but to inquire with what number of petals, what mixture of colours, and what principles of proportion the production has been fashioned. As knowledge advances, love retreats. There are no mortal minds capacious enough, at once, to know accurately and to love warmly: none in which intelligence and feeling advance together. In man's mental character a single feature must predominate; the frame of his spirit, must be one, the direction of his tastes, exclusive. And it is in this that lies his inferiority to the highest intelligence—that the march of his intellectual progress is linear, not circular; his capacity for every end is perhaps unlimited, but his destiny is, to *choose* In the notion which I form of almighty mind, I do not contemplate merely one faculty infinitely advanced, and separately exercised, but all modes, forms and branches of spiritual manifestation co-existently infinite;—a sensibility of feeling to which the highest ardours of the lyre shall be coldness—a stern omnipotence of power which can transform while it gazes—and a comprehensive reach of knowledge which can count the downy features of a rose-leaf, even while it is exploring the fertile machinations of a demon: all harmonising in perfect and equal developement If man, however, be confined to select between knowledge, and love, whose base note also is religion, there can be little doubt as to the choice, if its guide shall be the happiness and elevation of humanity. Knowledge raises us above the brutes, but love erec's us above ourselves. Still botany is a gentle science, and, I doubt not, as lovely as the objects which it contemplates, and the sex which generally affects it."

"It is the only science," said Emily, "with which I

have any acquaintance; but I dislike the name of a proficient, for a learned lady is a kind of monster."

"So is the garden rose," replied Tyler, "the queen of flowers, the flower of Venus,—a monster by the laws of the science;—but a lovely one."

"I love flowers excessively," said Emily, "and I do not like to be without one at any season of the year. A work just finished is always engaging: they are the only things in nature which are always young—whose time of life is ever in the dawn. There is in them neither senescence nor decay, but death arrives without a precursor."

"There is certainly," said Tyler, addressing himself solely to the lady, and speaking with more enthusiasm than from his ordinary manner I should have anticipated, "nothing more interesting than the world of flowers. With what careless prodigality earth throws them out, masterpieces of infinite finish; all different, each perfect. Their very frailty and evanescence is argument of nature's power; for how unbounded must be the resources of that artist who can lavish such ornaments upon the playthings of an hour. Perhaps nothing has afforded so much delight to so many, as these simple objects: nothing has gladdened so many bosoms, brightened so many eyes, cheered so many hearts; nothing has enlivened philosophy by so many allusions and enlightened truth by so many illustrations. Lord Bacon loved to have flowers near him when he wrote, saying they refreshed his spirits and memory, and in one of his essays he has expressed his fondness for seeing them growing together on their banks; with that infantile gentleness of taste which ever belongs to genius, he writes to one of his friends, in the darkest hour of his misfortunes, "I hope to be with you in a few days, and to gather some violets in your garden;" a beautiful and wise affection. Much as I always preferred Erasmus to any of his contemporaries, I have loved him better since I saw in Durer's portrait of the scholar, a small vase of fresh flowers standing on his desk."

"I never so fully realised," said I, "how essentially stern and fierce was the temperament of Lord Byron, as when it once occurred to me, that saving one allusion to the rose for the purpose of mentioning the passion of the

nightingale, he has no reference whatever in his poetry to flowers. When we remember in the case of Wordsworth, how inwoven with every suggestion of his heart, and every conclusion of his intellect is the worshipping love of flowers, the circumstance affords an interesting evidence of the relation of these two poets to one another by showing their *bearing* and *distance* in reference to a common point."

"Yes," said Tyler, "Wordsworth's genius has been fed upon daisies; nor has the aliment been unsufficient. For, though to the unpurged mortal ears, there be neither voice nor language among them, yet to the soul how audible, how significant is their speech. Gay as their robes, they can discourse a deep divinity preaching in their silent seats; but the language which they best know, is the gushing language of love. How often have the tender stalk and frail cup of the lily borne the weight of a heart's deep affection, and delivered their burden safely! How often has the rose-bud expounded what the tongue could not tell, and interpreted between a beating heart and a downcast eye! Verily, it likes me not to see these bosom-cherished, world-worshipped treasures, these chaste pledges, which have been the honoured memorials of a Queen's affection, the hallowed testimony of a peasant's love, falling into the hands of a 'fingering slave,' who tears them to pieces, numbers their stamina, and flings them into the dust beneath his feet."

"I can scarcely bring myself," said I, "to believe that knowledge has this benumbing influence on feeling. The fault seems to be less the fault of learning than of its followers. It is not science which injures the nature of its cultivators, but its cultivators who injure the character of science. A professor's heart is the very altar of creation's choicest marvels. I cannot understand the coldness of one always 'i'the sun.'"

"Yet an altar may be of marble, and the sun may breed agues," replied Tyler. "Natural want of sensibility is never so militant in its aversion as that disgust which succeeds the exhaustion of sensibility. When subjects of feeling become matters of business, a habit of ruthlessness is induced, by nature's instinct against pain, of which the mildest degree is apathy. Man does not seem

capable of deriving two distinct sorts of gratification from the same object at the same time; and when we begin to draw pleasure, which we soon do, from the mere perception of beauty in the order of a system, we cease to regard the independent attractions of the objects of that system. Scientific coolness is not less inevitable and scarcely less shocking than professional coolness. As there is no wickedness so remorseless as that which has marched over the ruins of virtue, so there is no insensibility so rampant as that which scowls above the wreck of tenderness. Who is the person that cares least for the sufferings of the sick? Precisely he who most frequently witnesses them; not the one from whom sympathy has never been evoked, but the one in whom it has been crushed by use. If inquiry were made for that person who should feel least emotion at the sight of any given scene of interest, a statue or a battle-field, it would be found to be he whose office it is to exhibit and describe its beauties. Ignorance may prevent the birth of sensibility, but familiarity strangles it when full-grown; and from that grave there is no resurrection It is for this reason that I am inclined to doubt whether an intimate acquaintance with science will ever produce a favourable effect upon the moral system of even the most happily constituted natures, and whether the modern technical and artistic education of young ladies is likely to excite that generous enthusiasm, which, when rightly directed, is the mother of so many virtues. That which we understand, we are, unless we exert great caution and self-control, apt to deem commonplace; and inexhaustible in their impressiveness, as are the miracles of nature, I doubt whether, constituted as we now are, that appreciation which springs from intelligent comprehension will ever keep pace with that admiration which is the offspring of wonder. Hence the richer poetry and deeper piety of the popular mind of antiquity. And, let me tell you, the virgin instinct of downy feeling is the potentest guard of virtue, and the most inerrant guide of intellect."

Mr. Wilson, who had joined his daughter a few moments before, now entered into the conversation. He was something of a politician by nature,—men "are born so,"—and a good deal of a monarchist by education. An

ardent admirer of the Anglican form of government, he rarely suffered an opportunity to pass without contrasting its several merits with what he deemed the antagonist faults in the system of his own country.

"The study of which you speak," said he, "in common with all the sciences and nearly all the arts, needs for its support in this country, all the assistance which ever misguided enthusiasm can lend to it. Under a policy which directly encourages study by providing its ancillaries, where the honours of its professors give dignity to the profession, men may speak with moderation of the advantages of mental effort without fear of degrading it in the eyes of the multitude; but under our unfortunate ungovernment it must be permitted to studious men to exaggerate the benefits of their occupation, if we would have it attract regard amid the din of "noiseful gain" and the distractions of commercial pursuit. To expect that the government of a large republic like ours, should be the foster-father of an abstract study, is idle. Such studies are countenanced, not by calculation, which is general, but by sentiment, which is individual; and monarchies always exhibit a personal form of feeling, republics a corporate want of it."

"You are a hopeless tory, Mr. Wilson," said Tyler, "and I feel that you are much beholden to my good nature for answering your objection quietly, which I am going to do, and not handing you over to the tender mercies of Sir Mob. The argument in the precise form in which you present it,—I regard merely the political face of it, as the purport of your remark is manifestly to shift the conversation from a defence of science to an attack on the republic,—admits of no reply. That the American *government* will never show itself so generous a patron of all that is merely honourable and of good report, as the English government, is most true. But let us not be deceived by the misuse of terms, and infer from this any thing discreditable to the nation or discouraging to science. The word *government* has widely diverse meaning as applied in these two cases. The government of England does not signify a temporary assembly of two companies, variously gathered and slightly conjoined, for the purpose of passing a few general regulations:

it reaches more deeply, and numbers among its constituents *all* the interests of the people upon all subjects. The whole municipal, educational, and religious systems of the country, the wealth and the blood of the land, are integral parts and members of it, and not, as among us, things apart. It is so interwoven with the nation, that it expresses the whole feelings of the nation, and is the nation's own form and image,—its very body. The English people act on all occasions through the channel of government. In short, the British government is but the synonyme of the British nation. But the American constitution is a very different matter; it represents only so much of the general interest as shall remain in the crucible, after all individual feelings have been evaporated, and all partial predilections molten down. The great mass of the popular action remains with the people; it has never been put into representation. To demand, then, that the government should embody interests which have been formally discorporated from it, is to demand what it was not intended should be found. In England the public acts by the government; in America it acts apart from it. In one country the government purchases a museum; in the other an individual or a private corporation does it; in both, it is the public which does it, by authorizing the one and supporting the other. That patronage and countenance for which in England you look to the government, must in this country flow from societies, companies, or the general public. Hitherto the example of England has impeded the developement of the true character of the American system, by leading us to look for similarities, and even occasionally to force them, in the details of a policy, the principle of which is utterly distinct: but when, in the course of time, the true nature of our constitution shall have been generally apprehended, and popular feeling and effort learn to flow through the proper and intended conduits, the result will be as honourable as in the rival land. A bird may reach the same end that its human owner does, but it cannot be expected to do it by the same means;—the principle of progression is different."

"Your notion," said Mr. Wilson, "is certainly deserving of consideration. I understand you to mean that, in

one case, government is actually the associated nation, in the other, only the ligament which affects the association; that in England the state is to the people what the body is to the soul, the one instantaneously acting the volitions of the other, and both so intimate in their junction that a political Hobbist might presume them identical: that in America the government is to the people what the feet are to the rest of the body, merely carrying the person along, while the head and hands act distinctly. This severance of the institutions of the country from the politics of the country is assuredly most wise for the interests of the latter; for it, together with the slightness of the political bond, which is not a *hard knot*, but a system of compensating slip-knots, well nigh renders 'revolution' a word of none effect. In England, if you prostrate the universities, the church, or the gentry, you revolutionise the government; here, you may lay every thing low, and that abstract thing, the government, lives on. But the evil is on the other side. Is there not danger that public impulse, wanting appointed channels, may for ever 'lose the name of action,'—that the soul, unvested in a body, may be 'an airy nothing.'"

"There is no moral phrenology, Mr. Wilson," said Tyler, "by which to read in the forehead of the infant people, the career of the adult nation. All that we can do is to note the advantages and the means, and trust to the innate virtue of humanity, that the means will be adopted and the advantages improved. For my part, though no patriot, and having neither feeling nor profit at stake, I am interested as a philosopher in the game that is playing. I assemble around me a family of bright-eyed hopes, and when fortune seems to frown, I say calmly with the knight in the enchanted cavern of Montesinos, 'Patience! and shuffle the cards.'"

"As to the stability of the government," said I, "I have no fears; for what has it to fall from? The only cause which ever occurred to me as likely to interfere fatally with the administration of power, and disarrange permanently the organisation of the system, is the want of sinecures and rewards, and offices of dignity. When a general or an admiral returns victorious in England, the nation's obligations are expressed by a pension or a title,

offices of recompense and honour; here there exists no mode of displaying gratitude but by the bestowal of an office of trust. This notion of regarding a public office of trust as a reward to the occupant is so false as to be almost ludicrous; and if there be any fatal error in the American policy it lies at that point; and the nation will perish by its own disinterestedness. Over the water 'heroes' are disposed of in another way, and those whose very eminence in war is merely proof of their incompetency as statesmen, are not allowed to fire the ship within, by way of reward for having saved it from the external danger of the waves."

"Yet, on the other hand," said Tyler, "this popular predisposition in favour of military men may be of high service by way of antagonist tendency in a system of compensation of evil. For the master danger in our state seems to me to be of another complexion. The fear of what is called a 'military despotism,' you as well as I know to be one of those idle weeds which has been transported from the old world, and which has no possible existence in this country. The only probable source of monarchical power,—and that is a very probable one,—is in the effect of interested and diplomatic arrangement, in the organisation of party. The elements of pacific despotism are now more numerous and combinable in America than they have ever before been in any country. The possibility of despotism is always in proportion to the existing means and facilities of abstract *influence*. No means of influence is so great as the press. There are offices enough in the disposal of government to buy the whole press; and a party combined by the possession of office and its expectation, may quietly hold predominence by a bare majority, and perpetuate itself. Here, then, is the advantage of 'heroes,' that when matters are in this condition, one of them may be brought forward on the other side, and by force of enthusiasm, beat down calculation; and thus, as occasion shall demand, the tiger may be brought against the crocodile, and the two monsters may, Munchausen-wise, devour one another."

"But," said Mr. Wilson, "these incessant conflicts and struggles will surely wrack the system to pieces; there is nothing can stand such knocking about."

"Our government," replied Mr. Tyler, "is framed for the very purpose of being kicked about; and, like the Giaour in Vathek, its being occasionally used as a foot-ball, does not prevent its resuming at any time its original character of erectness. It is like a ship-compass, hung for sea-service: wherever it may be pitched it never loses its centre of gravity. It may however be doubted whether our system, admitting its continuance, is likely to advance the character of community over which it presides in the same degree with other forms of government. The great defect in our nation lies in the want of an aristocracy. Without it no people can make certain progress in refinement and elevation of character. An aristocracy represents the past; it treasures up the experience and improvements of ages: it furnishes a touchstone to the hasty changes of the present, and reminds men of the judgments of memory, and of their connexion with posterity. But we must wait for time to establish those advantages which time only produce. The fewness of the benefits held out by the American experiment strikes me as a most favourable indication of the success of the undertaking. It began with no such high auguries as have presided over the commencements of other commonwealths; its aim was vastly lower,—its inception vastly more restrained; and the omen of moderation has attended the birth of no other republic. The anticipated advantages which led to it were not conceived in the teeming brain of a poet; but coldly calculated in a ledger-book. It was a hard, dry, prosaic scheme,—an arithmetical revolution; resting not on a motto from Plato, but on a small refractory balance of dollars and cents on the 'debtor' side of a Quaker's account-book. It was calmly suggested by the cool-hearted Washington, and deliberately planned by the dry-headed Franklin,—a man whose mind was a cyphering machine, by which he could in an instant calculate the par value of an idea,—who was a walking square and compass, and might almost be said to have thought in figures. So far forth, our republic has, for practical purposes, the advantage over all which have gone before it. Its local superiority is also great; it has no one vast city upon which all depends; and its capital is a place which never can be large. This protects the

political structure from the danger of perishing in municipal broils. Rome was the Roman Empire, and the want of 'Panem et Circences' in the metropolis might destroy the government. This state of things among us, though favourable to the exercise of a despotic spirit by our rulers, is a happy circumstance for our tranquillity, and the day of the removal of our seat of government to a populous city will be the last day of our union. The extent of our country, which creates a dispersion of passion and an equilibrium of divellants, is also fortunate. Local interests are large enough to absorb the floating factiousness of the people, and prevent its settling on any one vital question. Even if the topic of the union ever becomes paramount, and the four great sections of the country all pull asunder, there are always three against any one: so that the union is like a pillar which stands erect by being drawn equally towards the four quarters of the compass. The progressive extension of the States towards the south-west is to be regarded with especial complacency: for that part being southern by climate, society and soil, and western by its trade along the river, becomes the clasp of those two great chains; and our whole circle will be a double arch, with one key-stone at New York and the other at New Orleans. But the great ark of our safety is the spirit of trade. Commerce as a conservative or destructive element in modern states, has never yet been fully estimated. It strikes me as by far the most potent of all the influences now in operation; and it alone is revolutionising Europe. To us, however, it is an unalloyed blessing; for it is daily wearing away those local prejudices and that stiff regard to principle which was most likely to pull our house over our ears. You observe that its tendency is to break down passion and substitute a calculation of interest as the mainspring of action. A rail-road from Charleston to Philadelphia would knock nullification in the head for ever. America is by far the most interesting spot in the world to a philosopher. Here is a people growing up as free as the oak on the summit of a mountain; with no control,—no precedent,—no history,—no past. It is a splendid sight, and I am glad that I live to behold it. We shall see what man will become when

there is nothing within him but a heart of oak,—nothing around him but the open race-ground,—nothing above him but the God of Heaven:

> All starting fairly, all equipped alike,
> Gifted alike, and eagle-eyed, true-hearted.
> See if we cannot beat the angels yet!"

In a few minutes Mr. Tyler withdrew and I remained alone with Emily and her father.

"A person of bold opinions," said Mr. Wilson.

"A very agreeable person!" said his daughter.

A strange thing is the vocabulary of woman! Incommunicable and often unimaginable are the notions which they attach to words! I have long since learned that where they are concerned, a thing can never be understood with certainty from a word, and a word not often be understood by inference from the thing. But of all the mystical words which a woman uses, the most mysterious is the word "agreeable." They apply it alike to the grave and the gay, the pious and the profane, to the rattling wit who is never silent, and to the dull dunce whose existence is only testified by an occasional nod. What the lady, in the present case, could have meant by saying that a person who had discoursed for half an hour upon politics, was agreeable, it might be difficult to ascertain with precision. Probably the speaker's ardent sympathy in a taste for flowers had gratified the feelings of his auditor, to which his subsequent grave conversation had added an impression of respect, and from the two conjoined sprang that indefinite liking, which was embodied in this cabalistic word "agreeable."

I turned to Mr. Wilson to inquire who Mr. Tyler was.

"I know nothing of his history," he replied. "I have met him occasionally in society, but scarcely ever conversed with him before. He is a student, I believe, more than any thing else." There was a calm resolution in his eye, and a rich confidence in his flexible lip, which indicated to me, one who had gazed upon scenes more brilliant and exciting, than the cold, still page of the learned tome.

CHAPTER VII.

Si fractus illabatur orbis
Impavidum facient ruinæ.
HORAT.

WHETHER I was excited by the conversation to which I had been listening, or whether the bright moonlight made me restless, by an influence which I have so often felt that I attribute it to a kind of lunar magnetism, I know not; but I found it impossible to sleep that night. The heavens were as clear and serene as the intelligence of an angel, and the moon was looking down in queenly splendour. To court repose was useless; so after tossing wakefully for several hours I rose, and descending quietly, made my way into the open air. The portico of the house was shaded by a small roof; and I paused under it a moment to look out upon the scene. There ran from the sea towards the house at a little distance a thick row of large trees, whose deep covering completely intercepted the light of the moon. While I lingered on the porch I perceived the faint image of two men standing under these trees, apparently engaged in earnest conversation, for occasionally a low and suppressed sound of words reached my ear, though no part of their remarks could be distinctly heard. Unwilling to be even the accidental witness of a communication in which I had no concern, and which was plainly intended to be private, I gave an indication of my whereabout, by walking with some noise, along the portico in the opposite direction. On turning round after a little while, the men were no longer to be seen, and I dismissed the circumstance entirely from my mind.

While I strolled along the beach meditating various fancies, I saw at some distance upon the bank above me, two men coming upward in the direction in which I was. As far as I could judge from their appearance, they were the same persons whom I had seen before conversing in the shade. There happened to be a large rock near me on the shore, and willing to avoid the awkwardness of

meeting persons at such an hour, I withdrew behind its shadow, intending to remain there till they were past. As they came opposite to me, their conversation was so loud that in the stillness of the night I could not help hearing it.

"The boy," said one of the men in a calm clear tone, and as he spoke I was sure that I had heard the voice, but when and where I could not by any effort call to remembrance, "the boy, Seward, though treating me with great civility, has, I perceive, taken a dislike to me. I require two days to remove the impression; on the second night after this I will send him to you. You will of course receive him kindly."

"Never fear for that," said the other, with a low, chuckling laugh.

"As for Stanley," resumed the first speaker, "we will leave him till his return to town.

"He will"—and here the increasing distance prevented my hearing any more.

The fear of being seen and being thought an intentional auditor of a private discourse, compelled me to remain till they were out of sight; and I lost the opportunity of discovering who they were.

The remarks which I had heard, filled me with a good deal of surprise and curiosity. I had heard my own name and that of Seward mentioned by these men in a connection, and for a purpose which I did not understand. Who they were, and what was their plot, I could not imagine. Excepting the persons whom I have before mentioned, there was no one at the shore who knew me; and why I should be selected as the victim of any scheme was what I could not well discover. The voice of one of the speakers was certainly familiar to my ear; and this circumstance increased my perplexity.

I remained beside the rock for a considerable length of time, reflecting upon the extraordinary conversation which I had heard. Presently the sound of footsteps struck upon my ear, indicating the approach of some one along the beach from the quarter toward which the others had gone. I waited unconsciously in the shade until he was quite near me, when, as I did not wish to be detected in a hiding-place, for he was coming directly towards

me, I stepped out a little distance into the moonlight. I perceived after a moment's observation that it was Mr. Tyler, the person to whom I had been presented on the preceding evening.

He came up to me with frankness and an air of pleasure, and said in a very hoarse tone of voice, "Good evening, sir, or rather, perhaps, good morning! for I think that the noon of night must be passed. I owe it to my character to tell you why I am found here at this hour, and to relieve myself from the charge of romanticising by the sea at midnight. The mere truth is that the moon stared so fiercely into my windows that I found it impossible to sleep, and so I came forth to refresh myself in the air. The splendour of the night has tempted me to walk farther I fear than I ought to have done, and the dampness of the sand has given me a severe hoarseness."

"I am rather surprised at that," said I, "considering the extreme warmth of the day and the dryness of the night. Although in general very susceptible of cold, I have not perceived any moisture in the soil."

"Have you been long here?" said Tyler, looking up at the moon and gaping, as he swung his cane round his hand.

"For some time;" I replied, "and we are not the only watchers, for there past me just now two persons in the direction from which you came. I am surprised that you did not meet them."

"I did not see them," said he; "they probably turned off to a gambling-house which is just above us, before I met them. Let the virtuous and the studious labour late as they may, the vigil of passion will outlast their waking."

"I know not why you should apologise," said I, "for being met on a spot like this: for there is to the man and the philosopher, as well as to the poet 'excellent voice' in the silence of this air. The contemplation of a scene so pure and vivid is like a new creation of the celestial spirit. We long retain the influence of such communion, in the calmness of the temper and the dignity of the mind, in the concord of the energies and the repose and harmony of the passions: and it has power as teacher of a higher and more sanctified conclusion. Few will fail to

trace the form of Deity in the o'er-mastering tempest and the impetuous whirlwind—the storm, and the struggle of the elements—but to me there is in this ominous stillness —this expectant silence—more emphatic mark of an Almighty presence."

Tyler listened motionless to my remarks, and when I had finished, replied with resolute accent. "There is but one God, and his name is, PRUDENCE. His seat is the human intellect; his minister, the right hand of man. Suffer not yourself, sir, to be the slave of your own fancy, or, worse, of your own fears. You stand here amusing your understanding with notions of an external and all-pervading power, and beguiling the time, harmlessly, as you think, by the strong visions of the mind; not perceiving how poisonous is the air you breathe—not knowing that your folly is forging adamantine fetters for your wisdom. It is by this fatal indulgence, from youth to manhood, of the creative powers of imagination that the original vigour of man is enchained and crippled; that the lord totters to a slave and the weakness of nature prevails over its strength. In another sense than the poet's—intellectually and morally—the 'child is father of the man;' and he mostly rules him with the sway of a Jewish sire. Man goes through life, terrified by the demon apprehensions which scared his unformed youth. The foolish suggestions of an idle nurse are the tyrant terrors of his manly being. Notions planted by the cradle, overshadow and darken his mature existence, and the ripened intellect is the vassal of the ungrown fancy. Men thus prepare their own subjection—rough hew the sceptre of a liege. They wander on crouchingly, with faces bent towards the earth, till anon there arises one who knows to think, and dares to act his thoughts, and he, mounting upon this trellis-work of superstition and mental tyranny, rears an empire over the weakness of his fellows. Such men become the demigods of a nation and give name to eras. Were these men stronger than their fellows? No, but they were freer! Were they clearer-minded, or farther-sighted? No, they were only freer! Were they wiser, better, more laborious, more enduring? None of these things: their freedom was the magic of their might! It was not that they could think

deeper; it was that they did think! it was not that they could act more vigorously; it was that they did act! Resolution was their guide, and confidence their strength. When danger, or the dread of it, encompasses the soul—when timidity fluctuates and excitement roars—who then controls? Not he, whose intellect is most logically practised—whose memory is richest stored—whose tongue is brightliest eloquent: but he whose eye blenches least—whose heart beats the calmest: he, it is, is master of the hour. Reason, learning, and words perish in such moments, and the hand of iron turns the scale. Feeling and fancy are the creeping plants that rise and rend the foundations of the mind. They are cumbrous garments which the athlete of ambition must fling to the ground: he must strip for the contest, and come naked to the encounter. If you would place yourself at the summit of your most daring wish, *trust your own intellect;* hold it equal to all things, and rest assured that by the law of the universe, matter yields to mind, and the feeble will is governed by the stronger. Inscribe upon your portfolio in the time of peace—engrave upon your breastplate in the hour of battle—'Who trusts himself, is master of mankind.' Upon this alone," placing his finger upon his forehead, "upon this alone have I depended in life, and amid all the trials of a most tempestuous life, it has never failed me. It has protected me amid the clash of swords, when I stood unarmed—amid the wily machinations of diplomatists, when I stood unsupported, and amid the confusion of human passions, when I stood, the central aim of circling hate."

"But surely," said I, "sentiments so exalted in their origin, cannot be so degrading in their influence. Religion came from heaven."

"And so did Satan."

"But what is more noble and more ennobling," said I, "than the great scheme of Divine superintendence; and as such it has been accepted by the most elevated mind. There is a stooping which exalts."

"Religion," replied Tyler, "is sometimes the resort of virtue, but oftener the refuge of cowardice. The idea of a God and of moral responsibility was invented by the strong to establish their dominion, and accepted by the

feeble to excuse their weakness. By the doctrine of a hopeless perdition by nature, man is kept everlastingly in a state of tutelage; by the notion that atonement for the past is to occupy the whole life, man can never look forward to enterprises for the future, and his whole strength and resources are applied under direction to the removal of an imaginary evil. No one can believe what he has not seen, except by the force of imagination; and in proportion to the vigour of that faculty will be the fulness of his faith. The evils of religion, then, I charge directly upon the culture, developement, and indulgence of imagination; for without the visionary faculty, no scheme of religion could exist."

"You forget," I answered, "that Christianity was framed for this very purpose, to withdraw men from this world and to lead them to another: if then by the practical workings of the scheme men are unfitted for life, the result but forcibly conspires with the design."

"I cannot understand," replied he, "the justice of that view which overlooks the duties of one great portion of our eternal existence; which expunges all the natural and necessary obligations of our human condition. God who works never without design, surely intended great results from our mortal state, planned a great and independent system of worldly destiny to join and fit in with the whole continuous scheme of everlasting human action, and meant 'our noisy years' to be a distinct and important element in 'the being of the eternal silence.' That system of which one of the particulars is that the world and all that it inherits is a zero in value, a ruin to the soul, and a blemish in creation, is nothing else than a system of practical blasphemy."

"What permanent, external obligations," said I, "can reasonably exist in a world so fleeting as this? Or what settled plan of present and isolated performance can possibly be intended for a life which we hold by so precarious a tenure? Talk you of the value of worldly schemes when the proudest schemers are dropping constantly around you in the very centre and crisis of momentous action? When the planter in one field is struck down with the seeds in his hand, and the reaper in another lies dead with the sickle at his feet? Shall man 'whose breath

is in his *nostrils*,' build himself the habitation of a god? His palace shall be his sepulchre, and his hopes his winding-sheet. Before you ask me why we are placed here, answer me why we are taken hence; the death of a single infant confutes your theory. When Ferdinand visited Ximenes at his new University, he objected to the frailty of the structure, that it was built but of wood and plaister: 'Thus, O king!' replied the prelate, 'does it become man to labour, who lives in continual expectation of death, and may be covered with marble hereafter.' The world was made for man: Man *and* the world were made for God. Sir, you have a wisdom which is not wise."

"You, I perceive," said Tyler, after a pause, "are a Christian. So am not I."

"I believe in Christianity," said I, "as I believe in my own existence: with the same certainty, and on the same ground—consciousness. But the course of the modern professors, in attempting to establish it by *arguments* has been so monstrously absurd, that I am not surprised that infidelity is every where abounding: I am only astonished that any Christians are left on the earth. The Gospel will never triumph until the whole rubbish of 'evidences' be swept away, and until the great truth be recognised in action, that 'with the *heart* the man believeth.' A revelation that needs to be *proved* is no *revelation* at all. Let the truth which Christ told of our nature and destiny, be separated from the accidental concomitancy of miracles, and the superfluous appendage of precepts; let that naked truth be *stated*, and, my life upon it, not a soul beneath the cope of heaven shall reject."

"By what new and extravagant theories," replied Tyler, "you may in your own mind, reconcile Christianity with truth, I know not. Taking the matter, however, as it is received; and the general gloss is as likely to be divinely suggested as the particular text to be divinely uttered; I reject the facts which support it, and scorn the doctrines which attach to it. 'I cannot brook the accent of reproof:' God made me so, and I must be so. I will not cast off my manliness now and put on the vestures of a god hereafter: I am contented to be a MAN. Give me free room, with hand unbound and hair unshorn; 'tis

all I ask. Energy will never but be blessed, for it brings us nearest to the source of all energy. I will meet the humming drones of religion, at the throne of God, and there debate my claims, and receive my reward,

> Pardon from Him, who calls me to Himself
> To teach me better and exalt me higher!
> He might laugh as I laugh.

But I interrupt your meditations; and for myself, it is time to retire."

He left me, and I remained alone upon the shore. I followed him with my eye till I saw him enter the door and close it behind him. Short as was the period for which I had known this person, and our acquaintance was not a day old, I had seen enough to excite in my mind respecting him, the most intense interest. There was in his manner, his voice, his language, a power which awed the listener, and seemed to proclaim a mighty spirit within. There is a magnetic quality in genius which influences those who approach its possessor, rather by an impression on the consciousness than on the understanding. Intellect slowly vindicates its due respect by the exhibition of irrefragable proofs and we bow the knee but not the heart; but genius leaps at the foregone conclusion of triumph; its very presence rebukes the by-stander, and the instinct of submission anticipates the compulsion of defeat. It was a sensation of this kind, more than by any striking exhibition of superior mental power I recognised in Tyler an object of interest; and the apparent contradiction in his character increased my curiosity. He here professed bold and even coarse principles, and seemed to be a man of daring action; but when I call to mind the refinement of his manner in the drawing-room but a short time before; his gentle wit; his deep, digested, various learning; the thought-worn, meditative look that spake the man of study rather than of deeds, I was extremely puzzled. To me, though little experienced among men, and guided, as the young mostly are, by some inward conviction more than by any external observation, it seemed that an intelligence so strong, so refined, so calmly reigning in its masterdom, gave evidence of a life of serene meditation and sufficient assurance that its

possessor did not struggle with the dominion of evil passions, and did not writhe under the memory of evil deeds. It was the union of ever-burning ardour of soul with never-shaken calmness of mind which made the marvel of this man's nature; for, with rare exceptions, the seething of a fiery spirit sends up fumes which dim the reason. To the mind of the ordinary man of action there may come grand suggestions of truth, strong apprehensions, and brilliant guesses, but the unimpulsive progress to a wary conclusion, the composed meditation of a just result, seem impossible in that nervous haste which the excitement of enterprise usually generates. The agitated waters may flash the light more bravely; but to reflect an undistorted image of the orb of day belongs only to the settled lake. The restless spirit argues; the peaceful mind judges. The strong arm may load the scales, but only the quiet hand can hold the balance. This cautious and qualified manner, as of one who coolly weighed his deductions and patiently reconsidered his opinions, I had noted strikingly in Mr. Tyler's conversation. Few could have even looked upon his clear, intellectual features, rigid, yet glowing with fervour, like a mask of animated steel, without inferring from his face that he was an extraordinary man. His large gray eye combined an iron strength with a gently-musing thoughtfulness; his compressed under-lip seemed the index of an inward energy that never relaxed; and every feature of his face was informed with a breathing meaning, and partook separately of that individual character and impressiveness which in an ordinary countenance belong only to the eye.

I lingered long upon the shore pondering these and similar thoughts. Despite of myself I could not help saying of Tyler, "I fear thee, Ancient Mariner!" and yet reason as well as my experience assured me, that genius is ever essentially magnanimous, and that to highly-cultured and strongly-exercised intellect, generous and elevated feelings attach themselves as essential concomitants. The speculative daring of his doubts and the bold unmasking of his proud sentiments drove away suspicion before them; for though there be a diabolic majesty in the wickedness of a Carathis or a Lady Macbeth, yet common villany is inherently mean, and social vice is always

cowardly. I could at least entertain no personal distrust of one who, by the studied exhibition of his scepticism, gave me notice of his principles, and put me on my guard in any intercourse I might have with him.

The hour was late, but it had been a fruitless effort to attempt to sleep in the state of mind in which I then was. I was too much excited to be capable of repose, and the interest which I felt in unravelling some of the mysteries that lay around me, drove all thoughts of retiring out of my mind. The conversation of the persons whom I had seen upon the bank again occurred to me. The voice, the figure and the language of the one who spoke of me, were too striking not to be noted, and they seemed to be familiar to my mind. There was just enough peculiarity to suggest a doubt, but not to embody a distinct suspicion.

It seemed probable that the men had gone on directly to the gaming-house of which Tyler spoke to me, and I determined to go there at once with the hope of meeting them. I walked, therefore, along the shore in the direction in which they had passed. I had not gone far before it occurred to me, that it might not be prudent to walk in a place so entirely exposed; my movements might be observed, and the lowness of my path below the adjacent bank and the daylight-like light which the moon shed upon it, rendered it visible to a great distance. I looked round for some more circuitous and concealed way of approaching the spot.

I must here explain more distinctly the situation of the ground, and the position in which I stood. At a small distance to the right of the lodging-house, between it and the opposite shore, there extended a double row of large shady trees, forming a complete interruption to the view, and a sufficient concealment to any one passing under them. Beyond these was a field enclosed on all sides by a high fence, which I had observed during the day, not to extend farther than the termination of the row of trees. At this time I was considerably beyond the trees and beyond the outer fence which ran near them; I walked back, therefore, with the intention of ascending the high bank and going under cover of the shade completely round the field, so as to approach the gaming-house on the rear. A

rude pair of steps brought me to the plain above, and from that point the house which I sought was visible at no great distance. I listened for a moment to catch the sound of any footsteps in the vicinity, but nothing was audible save the low plash of the waves beating on the shore. Moving silently along, I went up the avenue.

The tangled grass and the high roots of the old trees obliged me to walk very cautiously. The shade was deep and concealed me perfectly, while the objects beyond were exhibited with meridian clearness. The white light of the moon lay upon the opposite house like day, and so extraordinary was the distinctness with which every object was visible to the sight, that I could not help pausing to look at the prospect; a distinctness even greater than the day, for the glare of the sun forms a sort of concealment. While I was looking at the house, I saw the door of it slowly opened. I instantly drew back and concealing myself behind a tree awaited the result. After a short pause a man came out and closed the door carefully behind him. He was enveloped in a long cloak, with a broad hat over his eyes and very large whiskers and moustaches. He walked noiselessly along the porch and then leaving it, came towards the trees, apparently to go, as I was going, by the back way to the gaming-house. When he reached the shade, instead of taking the direction I had expected, he turned down the avenue, and to my dismay came directly towards me. I remained breathless in my concealment.

The stranger came silently on, not through the middle of the path, but very closely to that row of trees under which I was resting. He walked very slowly, his motion apparently impeded by his cloak, and looking round him with great caution. The trunk which sheltered me was large, but I felt almost certain that I should be discovered by him as he passed; and a detection, besides being awkward, might defeat the object which I had in view. As he came near, I stooped down and crept silently round the tree so as to escape his eye if possible as he went by. He was at this time almost upon me, and as I moved he stopped, and then came directly towards my hiding-place. He paused again and I could hear him breathing. I gave myself up for lost. Without a hope of escape I remained

motionless; and he passed on, apparently without having seen me. When he reached the bank he stopped a moment, and looked carefully along the shore and then descended the steps. When he was gone I came from behind my shield, and proceeded cautiously to the end of the trees. I then ran rapidly round the field and reached the gaming-house. The back door stood a-jar, and I entered.

CHAPTER VIII.

> You paid me but a hungry compliment
> To think I should be looked for, there.—
> I am right glad it was a folly.
>
> BEN JONSON.

THE gaming-room was quite full. Several tables for whist and *ecarté* were ranged along the sides, and a billiard-table stood in the centre. The apartment was a large one and did not connect with any other, excepting by a single door on each side, which was closed. At a glance, I perceived that the hero of the cloak was not among the company, but I determined to await his arrival, having already taken it for granted, that it was to this place that he was coming. At the card-tables along the sides, there presided silence deep as "ere the winds were born:" the space to the middle was filled with persons moving noisily about and conversing about the billiards. The contrast between the excitement of a moderate interest and the composure of an intense agitation, was highly impressive. I walked round the room to make my observations on men and things, and to observe the strange varieties of that landscape of infernal passions—that demon-hoofed highway of hellish contest —which is called the "human face divine."

Glorious art thou, O man! and more glorious nowhere than in the depth of thy abasement. As Satan was never more superb in attitude than when he defied the Almighty, from where in the lowest deep he lay confounded, "low, but mighty still," so from amid the thick darkness of degrading vice, thy nature rays forth its heavenliest splendours, and thy visible immortality sits nowhere more divine than behind the veil of thy vilest acts. The interest which thou canst lend to a paltry trial of chances, so that the result shall engross and satisfy the aspiration of heaven's heir, proclaims the all-boundless and exalting

nature of thy inward resources; and the springing passion, and the sweeping fury, wherewith thou followest the basest ends, sound, thunder-tongued, thy splendid spirit and thy godlike destiny!

Other conclusions equally edifying I might have drawn from the scene before me, had not my meditations been interrupted by the opening of the front-door of the building, opposite to the one by which I had entered. By the side of this door and bending round in front of it was a movable screen of green lattice-work, behind which I was standing, and which entirely concealed me from the observation of any one coming in. There appeared to be two persons at the door, and though they still lingered outside of the room, their conversation reached my ear very distinctly.

"He certainly could not have come in by this door," said one of them, "for I have been standing out here for some time."

"If he is not here now, he will be soon," replied the other, and I recognised the remarkable voice of the speaker on the bank, which it now flashed upon me was that of Tyler, as I remembered it from our conversation in the drawing-room; "if he comes, you may as well take advantage of the occasion. Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur,—if the fellow will be fleeced, let him be fleeced;" and the speaker came into the room.

To whom this obliging speech applied there could be little doubt, and I came from behind the screen to see to whom I was indebted for these charitable intentions. To my astonishment it was the man in the cloak! He had moved some distance off and was looking round the room: in the course of his survey his eye fell upon me. I looked keenly at him, but he did not testify either by start or look any surprise or embarrassment. His eye fell coldly upon me for a moment and then wandered carelessly to some other object; the next instant he walked slowly into the adjoining room and closed the door behind him.

I remained for a moment irresolute as to the course which I should pursue. I was determined at all hazards to penetrate this mystery, and to discover who was the per-

son that had thus selected me for the victim of a gaming-table plot. Though all the probabilities were against it, the voice of the man gave me strong suspicions that it might be Tyler. But I could not think of any way by which I could certainly meet him. The room into which he had gone was manifestly not intended for the public, and the consequences of attempting to enter it might be unpleasant. I had, however, just made up my mind to do so, when the door opened and the cloaked personage himself came out. The whole time of his absence had probably not been half a minute. Cautiously concealed as he was, by cloak, hat, false hair, and other methods of disguise, it was quite impossible to discover his real features: I was resolved therefore to hear his voice again. As he was walking through the room with a careless air and looking on the tables, I went up and spoke to him.

"This room," said I, "is extremely warm; I should think you would find your cloak uncomfortable."

"It is rather heavy," said he with frankness, throwing it on his arm: "I have just come in, and I had drawn it about me on account of the night air."

As he removed his cloak I could see his figure, and upon looking closely I could discover his real features. It was *not* Tyler, but a person altogether different in face though about the same height. His voice, too, upon hearing it more attentively, was quite different in expression, though it had something of the same clearness of tone. When I coupled with this the entire calmness of his manner when he had first seen me in the room, I perceived that I had fallen into a groundless error. It was evident that I was in the company of an ordinary sharper, of whose intentions I was fortunately aware. To increase the mystery however he made no attempt to induce me to play, but proposed that we should leave the room.

"I came from the hotel," said he, "to see if Mr.—I forget the name—was here, but I find that he has just gone. Perhaps you are ready to go home, and if so, we may go in company."

Perceiving no advantage in remaining, and feeling some curiosity to see more of this person, I assented to his proposal, and we left the room together. On our way home

I asked him if he knew Tyler. He said that he had heard of him as a man of fortune and fashion, but did not know him. We parted on the second floor of the lodging-house, as his room, he said, was in that story. Mine was in the fourth.

Upon reaching my chamber I was anxious to light a candle, but had no apparatus for the purpose. I had observed one room, as I came through the passage, in which a light was burning, and I went out to beg permission to light my own.

It was Tyler's room. He was in bed, reading. As I looked at his refined and thoughtful face, I could scarcely help smiling at the absurdity of which I had been guilty in supposing him in any way connected with the gamblers, while at the same time I reproached myself for the injustice I had done the studious and philosophic thinker.

As I returned to my room, I saw the man in the cloak coming up the stairs.

CHAPTER IX.

If I but knew my foe, the victory half
Were gained. Doubts trouble more than ills.
Time must unfold the mystery.

MARLOWE.

WHEN I awoke the next morning it was far into the day; and I was not sorry to have drawn unconsciously on the waking hours to make up the deficiencies of the night. While I was seated at my solitary breakfast, a servant put into my hands a note which he said had been left for me by a gentleman who had gone out on an excursion for the day. The note was from a person whom I remembered as a friend of my father, and with whom I was myself slightly acquainted: its contents were as follows:

"Mr. Roberts presents his compliments to Mr. Henry Stanley, and lets him know that he arrived from town last evening, and has the honour to be the bearer of a verbal communication from Mr. Stanley's father. The latter had come from the south just before Mr. Roberts' leaving the city, for the purpose of arranging some affairs which required the presence of his son at the earliest convenient time. He desired Mr. R. to say that the period of his stay in the north was limited, and that he awaited the coming of his son at —— Hotel. Mr. R. would have had the pleasure of presenting his communication in person, but an engagement formed last night compels him to join a party of pleasure at an early hour of the day,—a circumstance which he farther regrets, as it prevents his renewing an acquaintance which he flatters himself is not forgotten.

"*The Shore, Thursday morning.*"

This was something of a *contre temps*, for it prevented my pursuing any farther the developement of the mysterious plot which I had accidentally detected, and in which I was now a good deal interested. However, my filial obedience prevailed over all other considerations, and I made up my mind to set out at once.

Seward indeed, as I had gathered from the conversation which I had overheard the evening before, appeared to be the more immediate object of the intended attack, and by communicating to him what I had heard, and putting him on his guard against any temptation, I might accomplish as much as I could do by remaining. I had a warm regard for Seward,—one always has for a wit without malice, especially if he loves us,—and I was anxious to save so well-natured and unsuspicious a person from the unpleasant predicament of losing his cash. I therefore applied at once to the landlord to know if he was in the house.

"Gone out, sir," said the landlord, squeezing a lemon.

"And when will he be in?"

"About five o'clock in the evening, sir. He went out about two hours ago with Mr. Wilson and his daughter, and Mr. Tyler."

"You could deliver him a note, I suppose, as soon as he comes in."

"Certainly, sir," replied the landlord.

I immediately sat down and wrote a short letter to Seward stating all that I had heard and seen, and what suspicions I had, and having sealed it I delivered it with particular injunctions into the hands of the master of the house, and sat off immediately for the city.

On reaching town I drove at once to the hotel which had been indicated in the note of Mr. Roberts as the place where my father was staying. I was surprised to learn that no Mr. Stanley was at that time lodging there, nor had been recently. Thinking that some mistake had been made as to the particular house, I went to another in the neighbourhood, and successively to every respectable lodging-house in the city, but with no better success; none of them remembered that any person of that name had ever stayed there. To add to my astonishment I re-

ceived that evening a letter from my father in the south, dating a few days before, and making no mention whatever of any intended visit to the north. Happening to be acquainted with the handwriting of Mr. Roberts, I again consulted the note which I had in my pocket, and after a close examination I felt satisfied that it had been written by him. As he lived, however, in the vicinity I enclosed it in a letter to him and begged to know whether it had really proceeded from him. He assured me in reply that the letter was certainly not written by him, though it was so close an imitation of his hand as at first almost to have deceived himself. I was profoundly amazed at this, and could not for a long time form any plausible conjecture to account for the occurrence. At length it occurred to me that the whole affair might be a contrivance of those gamblers at the shore to get rid of me, and prevent any communication between myself and Seward. The note, if originating with them, must have been written by some one who had a very intimate acquaintance with the concerns of my family, and who that person could be was more than I could imagine. There was a mystery in the whole affair which I could not fathom.

The autumn was so far advanced that I resolved to remain in the city and refer the resolution of my wonders to the "coming on of time." As I was intending to devote the following winter entirely to the amusements of society, I hired a decent house in a "fashionable" quarter of the town and occupied myself for a good while in furnishing it according to my taste. There is no business, by the by, that I am acquainted with, more entertaining than that of furnishing a house, especially if you are a poor man; for it calls forth the greatest pleasure of which man is capable—the pleasure of running in debt. Shenstone somewhere remarks—and it is the only striking remark which I have met with in the whole compass of his prose writings—that we always feel a gratification in paying a bill, and he proceeds to infer from it the innate goodness of the human heart; whatever may be the truth of the theory, the fact, though ingenious, scarcely supports it, for great as may be the delight of paying

debts, the delight of incurring them is, to my mind vastly greater.

The sense of boundless domination with which one enters a shop—be it book-store, or other, where one's credit is yet good—limited by no mean bounds of actual pocket-money, yet tempered throughout and so far forth heightened in zest by the feeling *circum præcordia* of the future inevitable consequence—the heroic and soul-ennobling resolutions and cheering schemes for getting the money by the time it is due, which one makes stronger and wider as one goes deeper and madlier into the depths of credit—the delight of breaking from the customary bonds of poverty and ruling for a while with Crassus' sceptre—all form a rare and admirable combination of pleasures. When one pays *down* for a purchase, one has a sense of the same loss in money that there is gain in goods—there's the minus of a veritable *pro quo* as an offset to the valuable *quid;* but the debtor has, till payment, the pure gain without any loss at all—his purchase is as good as a gift or a treasure trove. Then, when a man buys a thing and settles for it, it is *his* out and out, and there's an end on't; it sinks into a common undisputed possession: but the taker up of goods on *tic* (or *tick*), while he has the dear and full enjoyment of the affair, as much as the other,—yet has besides,—which the other lacks,—that high appreciation of the article, which we always attach to property that is not ours,—he has, during the whole time that the credit runs, the two distinct delights of a calm possession and a *ticklish* title. Then, again, there is the mild interest of difficulty, and the healthy excitement and agitation of raising the "ways and means;" life grows spirited; one has something to think of, o'nights: as Carlyle says of the French Revolution, "there's a comfortable appearance of work going on." Moreover since it is "*solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris*," and agreeable also to have something that links us sympathetically with departed greatness, we may amuse misfortune, as Bolingbroke did his exile, by recounting those that have been in like predicament: we may remember how Mirabeau was "*obéré de dettes*,"—how Talleyrand could not pay for his white carriage, the

tastefullest in all Paris,—how poor Savage sold at the stalls the books which Lord Somebody (Grosvenor, was'nt it?) had given him,—how Parr had to part with his Stephens's Greek Thesaurus at Norwich, "from sheer distress."—how Goldy was in for £4000, as the story goes, when he died,—how Byron had an execution in his house eight times during the first year of his marriage, and how his beds were taken, and how he stamped on his grandmother's watch, and ground it to atoms in a fit of despair, —how Swift, or Shenstone, or somebody else, expatiates, with the eloquence of anguish, on the misery of compelling one hundred pounds to do the work of two; how Lord Cutts had to get a *writ of protection* from king William, (the Dutch partner of the firm of William and Mary) to prevent his being outlawed by his tailor; how Johnson wrote to Richardson from a spunging-house to borrow two guineas; how Fox lost his last farthing at a hell and then lay on his back and read Thucydides; how the nation had to pay the debts of Pilot Pitt and the heir apparent; how Sheridan—"but here my heart begins to bleed." Besides there is a certain dignity in being in debt; of having distresses and cares which every body has not the honour of having; one becomes a subject of friendly concern. May lose one's appetite on sufficient cause, and look absent and frown in the street for a reason. Then one feels a personal importance; there is a responsibility resting upon one: you have stakes somewhere; somebody cares for you, thinks of you often; you are not utterly alone and lost in the world. Perhaps if you don't pay your creditor, he may fail; others may "go" in consequence; and thus upon your conduct hangs matter that may make a talk on 'change: All which is extremely pleasant and amusing to a gentleman of leisure and a quiet book-builder like myself. Other conveniences of "blest *book* credit" there are, which nothing could worthily portray save that silver ever-pointed pencil which Lamb carried off with him in his waistcoat pocket. Upon the whole therefore I differ with Shenstone and rather side with the wisdom of that French proverb which assimilates debts to children; if the reader knows what it is, very good; if not, all the better. One of the most

cheerless sensations I ever remember to have experienced, was that which stole over me when I awoke one morning, "many a year has past and gone" since then, and remembered that I was out of debt. My "occupation" was gone; I had nothing to trouble me, nothing to work for, nothing to swear at. I was condemned to "meditate and gaze," and suffer from "the waste of feelings unemployed;" and I did not recover my usual spirits till I had gone out and ordered a cart of bricks into the cellar; not that I wanted the dusty things, but for the mere pleasure of having a creditor. Since then, I have never suffered the evil to arise again, as my good friends Mr. ——, and Mr. ——, and Mr. ——, feelingly know. They should thank me, (though I fear they do not, ungrateful dogs!) for I cause them that would never pray, to pray for my life. As they are well aware that when I die, I won't cut up worth a ——.

About three weeks after my arrival in town, as I was strolling through the street, I encountered Seward gazing with ludicrous gravity at a caricature in the window of a print shop.

"So," said I, "you are studying humorous pictures for the illustration of malicious *bon-mot*."

"Sir," said he, mechanically, without moving his eyes, "the charge is as baseless as a Grecian Doric column:" then recognising me, "my dear Stanley! I am most happy in having a St. Thomas proof of your existence, for you vanished so mysteriously from the shore,

> 'Like snow-falls on the river,
> A moment white, then gone for ever.'

that you had either been alienated or escheated to the Lord."

"There were some gentry down there," said I, "who I suspect would willingly forward any such scheme, whether of cheating or escheating. I hope you received the note I left for you?"

"I received no note," replied Seward. "Although I parted with a good many. Do you mean that you left a note for me when you went away from the shore?"

"Even so. I happened to overhear a conversation which

informed me of a plot by some gamblers to relieve you of some of your loose cash. When I was compelled to leave there on business I left a written account of it to be given to you, and I am amazed that you did not receive it, for I put it into the hands of the landlord himself."

"It is certainly very strange," said Seward, "and as lamentable; for that person's neglect, or roguery, and I am somewhat inclined to suspect the latter, occasioned rather disastrous consequences to me. To give you the history in brief, you must know that on the same day on which you left us, I went out with Tyler; who by the way is a charming and an honest fellow, though at first I did not like him; and two or three other persons on an excursion of some distance. In the course of it we fell in with two very gentlemanlike persons who were presented to us by Mr. Wilson who was of the party and happened to know them; though as he afterwards told us his acquaintance with them was of no longer standing than since his visit to the shore. In the evening, these persons who had during the day much commended themselves to both of us, were sitting with us in a private room, and one of them proposed cards. Tyler chose me for his partner and we sat down. Tyler played extremely well, and I am something of an adept myself; but we rose in a few hours with the loss of a very large sum of money. I as you may imagine was half ruined, and the loss to Tyler, though he bore it like a philosopher, was I suspect extremely inconvenient. We were both convinced upon talking the matter over, that the cards had been marked."

Remembering Tyler's proud boasts of the superiority of cool-headed men, which he professed to be, I mentioned his remarks to Seward with a smile at his being outwitted.

"Poor fellow!" said Seward, "he seemed, in truth, to be more vexed at his defeat than his loss. He has a splendid intellect, and is a monarch in theory, but has not enough alloy in his nature to circulate to advantage among men. Though deeply read in books, he is green in the world's ways. He behaved so well, however, under his misfortune, though ill with a cold, that I quite love

him. He told me he knew you, and that you were a person of fine understanding."

"That observation certainly shows judgment."

We talked a good while about the mysteries of these gaming plots, putting together the different facts which each was acquainted with: but the more we pondered the matter, the more mysterious it became, and we finally parted after attaining what my lord Coke would call "the exclusion of a conclusion."

CHAPTER X.

For gentle girls the country's fit,
The town was made for man. HERRICK.

Feasting hereon, we will philosophise.
SHELLEY.

THE summer was over and the town was again full. I went constantly into society, and no man can do that long without having the form, if not the character of his feelings changed. The maxim which tells us that man can never alter his character, is practically rather a quibble than a truth; for though, perhaps, and I speak doubtfully even of this, every one of strongly defined qualities in youth, may be seen to exhibit on striking occasions in life, these peculiarities, and may be found at the close of his career to possess inherently the same dispositions which marked his boyhood; yet the influence of these inclinations may be so long suspended by the power of circumstances, or so often interrupted by the power of passion, that in view of the brevity of man's existence, the notion may probably be deemed false in theory, and in view of the results in action, may certainly be pronounced useless in practice. My sentiments and my estimation of things became greatly modified. I lost the morbid and self-centered view which I had formerly taken of the world. My passions became healthy, and cleared of the blind and dazzling fervour that once made every hope a certainty and every doubt despair. I learned to know that there were thousands of men in the world of like passions with myself, and that I was not alone among my fellows in the nature of my endowments and my feelings,—a simple truth, but one which solitude can never teach us; for, whatever may be the wisdom of the cloister, the truths which concern man as he is, are not among its learning; for the relations of man to himself and the

world, it teaches but by halves, and the relations of man to his fellows it teaches not at all. Extensive and familiar usage in society is as necessary to complete one's psychological education as one's social. The metaphysical and moral systems of those bookmen who have gone from the college to the hermitage, are necessarily scarcely more true than a description of the ocean would be by one who had only seen it in calm weather. But it is the misfortune of the broken state of man that every thing is ruptured and detached; the experiments are in one place, and the results stated in another, one who has not seen the premise makes the conclusion, and causes and consequences lie in different hands. What a magnificent creature would be one man made out of all men! little less than God: if the partial knowledge of one could be added to that of another, the suggestion of one brought to enlighten the learned doubts of another, if one could reason on what another has felt and seen, and all the trials, conjectures, observations and surmises of all men brought to one focus, what a world-lightening star that focus would be! Light is combination, and so is truth.

A few weeks after the conversation alluded to in the last chapter, I had accepted an invitation to dine with a gentleman who held among his equals meridian distinction in that meridian art. Mr. Benton was one who had meditated with that earnest and chastised devotion which so great and elevated a subject demands, on the best mode of dining; and it is paying but a merited compliment to the genius and study of this good man, to declare that he understood the subject better, and practised it with more success than any person I have ever met with. At various times I have been favoured with his views upon this interesting subject; for, though not obtrusive in his proselytism as most discoverers are, Mr. Benton was always glad when an opportunity occurred of disseminating correct notions on this important topic, and he had none of that selfishness which might impel him to conceal from mankind what is necessarily never alien to humanity. But that timidity which is the fatal Cleopatra of genius, that proud resilience from the homage of the vulgar, which makes greatness splendid and impractica-

ble, kept him always from appearing before the public. "He died and made no sign;" and the sauntering traveller as he steps carelessly over his modest grave, little knows that he treads above the remains of one whose genius the shade of Lucullus might venerate, and before whose labours the star of Orleans might dim its glories.

When I have sometimes expressed to him the sense which I entertained of his valuable researches, and the hope which I cherished that he would not suffer his discoveries to perish with him, "I confess that I have sometimes thought," he would reply, "that what you are pleased to call my discoveries are not altogether without value, nor without interest; as indeed nothing can be that regards a science which, to say the least of it, is indispensable. My regard for the welfare and melioration of my fellow-creatures, has sometimes impelled me to wish that an easy and safe method presented itself of conveying to the world at large, some suggestions which the kindness of my friends has induced me to fancy not entirely valueless, and to perform that duty which every one owes to his race, by handing down to posterity what might be a 'possession for everlasting' of culinary metaphysics. I have sometimes thought of publication, and indeed, I have employed some occasional hours in a few past years in the composition of a small volume on the subject of cookery; but independently on the reluctance which I feel to intrude upon the grave world a book which must necessarily be ungraceful in style, and insufficiently supplied with learning,—which, at least, from my want of familiarity with the pen, would lack that melody of words and harmony of sentences, that Ciceronian charm of aptly balanced language, which would be required in treating of this, the first and most finished of the fine arts,—independently on this personal objection, which my vanity will not attempt to deem slight, there is a greater one inherent in the attempt itself; I mean the combat which in its tender veal-like infancy it must sustain with those butchering critics and reviewers who ever stand at the gate of knowledge, pen (knife) in hand; for these gentlemen rudely, gracelessly, and unreasonably oppugning and running counter to the precept of the im-

mortal Louis Eustache Ude, to whom be honour, long life, and the gratitude of grateful men!"

"Amen, and amen!" cried I.

"Opposing, I say, that precept of His, which forbids us to slay a calf in its tender youth, but to sheathe the knife till his beef-hood shall be attained; they rush savagely upon a scarce-fledged writer, and kill, serve him up with a *garni* of *sauce*, before he has grown robust by age. Whether it be, as Goethe conjectured, that by some personal misconstruction of mind; by a peculiar obliquity in their moral constitution; by the frame of their mental powers; by the very condition of their existence—these people are prevented from telling the truth, certain it is that such a thing as a generous and genial criticism is as rare as half-boiled beef. To me, much reflecting upon these matters, it has appeared that the evil arises from the unfortunate position of these anti-authors: for authors and professional critics hold much the same relation to one another that England does to France; a relation, according to Mr. Fox, of national enmity. They have adapted the lying maxim, that ridicule is the test of truth, where in fact, it is the greatest enemy truth has ever had; being much such a test as proving a sword upon a stone, trying a liquid by evaporation, or searching for vitality with a scalpel; whatever may be the result, the object examined is destroyed for ever. They have let in the laughers into the gardens of Philosophy; the baying hounds into the still coverts of the ruminating stag. And they are sure to be supported by the populace, for the poulace loves to demolish; I never heard of a mob assembled to construct. The more I consider this affair of laughing, the more absurd and unworthy it appears to me. But the reviewers can do nothing else, being like those tormented spirits, the ghosts of scoffers, described in an ancient legend, who are condemned to expiate their sins by grinning painfully through all eternity. Similar is the critic's destiny; for, humanity and the fresh feelings of unshackled sympathy being dead within them, they become even as dead men, and like skeletons deriding humanity; and they thrust forward their ever-

grinning visages into the Egyptian feast of literature, and humble their author by the claim of fraternity."

Unfortunately, Mr. Benton could not look with such tranquil philosophy on these things, as Sterne* did, and the world lost for ever the benefit of his meditations. His best and most honourable "works," however, were such as could not well be communicated to the world, in substance, nor could the world give them a tribute meet for their desert. One of these I was about to allude to, when interrupted by this digression.

I arrived at the house before any of the company were assembled. Soon after I had reached the drawing-room, a venerable but most cheerful-looking man, whom I knew at once to be an ecclesiastic, entered, and with an uncertain step, something between a trip and a totter, made his way to the host and bowed with entire simplicity, but with the air of a man perfectly accustomed to the great world. He was short in stature and his feet were the smallest I ever saw; his person was firm, and face unwrinkled, although to judge by his total baldness, "his eightieth year was nigh." His figure was a good deal bent, but apparently more from study than age; and his head generally rested on his breast, but was very frequently thrown up with a mild impatience, or forward with a kind of restless nod. He had a habit of drawing in the air between his teeth every few moments with a curious noise; an action which he incessantly displayed when another was speaking, together with many other of the innumerable tricks of a nervous man. Mr. Benton named him to me as Dr. Gauden.

"Sir," growled the doctor, with great urbanity, mumbling and biting his words as he spoke, "I'm very happy to make your acquaintance. I knew your grandfather very well, very well, indeed; poor man," throwing up his head and muttering almost to himself, "ah! ah! so it is! dead and gone!" then turning his back on me and limping off to a chair, he continued soliloquising with an

* "As we rode along the valley," says Sterne in one of his letters from France, "we saw a herd of asses on the top of one of the mountains. How they viewed and *reviewed* us!"

alternate nod and toss of the head: "ah! as Varro says, 'vetustas non pauca depravat, multa tollit. Quem puerum vidisti formosum nunc vides deformem senectu. Tertium seculum non vidit eum hominum, quem vidit primum.'"

Dr. Gauden had been educated for the Catholic priesthood at one of the old colleges of France, which have formed for many years the noble nursing-mothers of the Romish clergy, of protestant countries. There he had been thoroughly imbued with ancient lore, and taught to know the ancient writers and the fathers as familiarly as the divines and classics of his native tongue. When, in later years, he departed from the church of his fathers, he took with him all the tastes and habits which he had formed in its bosom; and though becoming an active Protestant clergyman, "the scent of the *cloister* had clung to him still."

Testa recens
Quo semel est imbuta, diu servabit odorem.

He lived entirely among the old, illustrious authors; for modern books, he said, only repeated one another. He fed his mind upon the golden pages of Tertullian and Chrysostom, of Cicero and Plato, for it was the aliment to which it had been accustomed. His memory was "rich with the spoils of time;" and his conversation abounded with choice fragments of Pagan and Christian eloquence. His quotations had nothing of pedantic in their frequency, but seemed to be the natural overflowing of a full mind. If he wove into his common discourse, a "thread or two drawn from the coat of an apostle," or gave his hearers "a smack of Augustin or a sprig of Basil," all knew that the display was not an exhibition of vanity: ignorance was not alarmed, and taste was not offended.

A few minutes after, Mr. Rolle entered the room; a man of singularly feeble and delicate frame, and a countenance full of feeling and poetry; a vague, uncertain smile played constantly about his mouth indicating one whose thoughts mostly floated in some inner sphere of sentiment and rarely appreciated the reality of the real things around him; an impression which was assisted by the dreamy stare of his large, moist, gray eye. He en-

tered the room in an amusing state of excitement, and trembling with emotion, addressed his host in broken and almost tearful accents.

"My dear Mr. Benton, could not you have dinner postponed for a little while until I recover my composure? You see how excessively I am excited: I cannot appear at the table with any propriety."

"Do not concern yourself about that, my dear sir," said Mr. Benton. "The company consists of your own particular friends, and I am sure that they will excuse any disorder in your manner."

"Oh!" replied the other, "it is not for them that I care; it is for myself. How can I enjoy my dinner in such a state of embarrassment? How can I come with agitated nerves and an excited mind to a task which above all others requires 'the conscience pure, the easy mind,'—a reason undisturbed by passion, senses cool, critical and keen in nice detection,—a body and a spirit perfectly at rest, like the stone beneath the Ægis of wisdom? Could'nt you put off your dinner till to-morrow? I am sure these gentlemen would as leave come to-morrow."

"My dear friend," said Benton, laughing heartily, while Rolle stood the picture of humorous perplexity, "you shall dine with me both to-day and to-morrow; and to secure you the degree of coolness necessary to the free and full exercise of your unrivalled powers of analysis, you shall be brought here to-morrow, like a salmon, in an ice-basket. Meanwhile, as a dinner is not like a debate, a matter which may be adjourned, I hope that if you sit down in that corner and unbutton your wrist-bands, and suffer me to fan you gently you may at length be recovered into a tolerable condition for dining. But what has been the cause of this terrible disturbance? Have you been waylaid? Have you been fired at? Have you been robbed?"

"Worse, worse!" replied the other. "Sit down and I will tell you about it: but do not look so strongly at me, for it excites me more; look naturally. The event which has so much discomposed me, is this: I was coming here when I met, two corners off, a servant-boy, with two

magnificent rock-fishes—a rarity in these times, more golden than gold. They were fishes like those described in Athenæus, ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι φυὴν καὶ εἶδος ὅμοιαι, 'in shape and nature like the immortal gods.' The wretch, to whose care some malignant demon had entrusted these spoils of Neptune, instead of carrying them with cautious solemnity, as the charge demanded, went swinging them both in one hand, with utter carelessness and bruising them by striking them against one another. Instantly I perceived this barbarous and atrocious conduct, I rushed across the street, and seizing the boy, demanded to know by what infatuation he was possessed to treat those fishes in such a manner. He replied, insolently, that the fishes were his master's, and that if the latter knew how he carried them he would have no objection. Knowing well that a man may, like a corporeal hereditament, *lie in livery*, I told him that I should go with him to his master and see whether he allowed such animals to be destroyed in that manner, and that if *he* did not resent it, I should punish him myself for such a public outrage. Here the boy fled, leaving me alone with the precious prize upon examining them I found one of them utterly ruined by the bruises it had got. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ:* and judge thou if there be not cause. The other, I thank God, is safe."

"And where is it?" cried Benton, with some curiosity.

"In my hat in the entry," replied Rolle, in a whisper. "Come and dine with me alone to-morrow at ten, and we will eat it."

This conversation, which gave me a glimpse of that most curious of all characters, a sentimental *gourmand*, was interrupted by the entrance of a gentleman of Herculean proportions, oddly habited in a scarlet hunting-jacket, loose pantaloons, and a coloured neckcloth loosely tied about his neck. His face had a fine, frank, but firm expression; and his large keen eye denoted high intelligence. His manners were natural and unrestrained—the behaviour of a man who lived, not against, but above, the usage of the world; and was directed to such conduct by his strong love of perfect freedom, and supported

in it by the calm consciousness of powers and a reputation which would protect him against remark. Such a style of address adopted by a man of fresh and rich intellect and tempered by native delicacy and refined taste, renders intercourse delightful. It is a high relief to escape from the wearisome mistrust and the unworthy egotism of artificial manners, and from the confinement of small talk which good breeding imposes, because all may not be capable of *large talk:* you have the keen pleasure of freely coping a generous intellect, together with the gentle gratification of being, as habitual vanity suggests, in one respect *above* your companion. There was an odd mixture of rudeness and refinement in the character of Mr. Wilkins: he was at once a scholar and a boxer, a poet and a good fellow.

After the entrance of two or three other persons dinner was announced.

"What is the reason," said Mr. Wilkins, as the tureens were taken off, "that we always find soup served before our meats? Vermicelli is at best a tasteless affair, and only takes away that appetite which should be reserved for worthier viands."

"Sir," replied Mr. Benton, "you have hit upon the very reason. Soup is provided for the purpose of removing that keen animal appetite whose violence disturbs the mind in the nice perception of the harmony of tastes. Criticism is feeling; and it is too delicate to distinguish finely when the senses are craving the strong physical gratification which nature and habit have made necessary to them. There are two distinct pleasures in eating: the first consists in simply appeasing the appetite,—the second in calmly exercising the sense of taste. The latter is the natural delight springing from the action of one of the physical sources of enjoyment; the former is the independent pleasure caused by supplying or removing a painful want, on the general principle

> That every want which stimulates the breast
> Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest.

You are a snuff-taker, Mr. Wilkins, and you know that every pinch of snuff gives you two distinct delights,—

that of pleasing the smell, and that of gratifying an animal want which custom has created. You as a sportsman also know how inconsistent is the exercise of taste with strong appetite; for at the end of a day's hunt you find cold beef as agreeable as terrapins, and perhaps more so; because the more delicate pleasure is absorbed in the stronger, and what most gratifies the latter is most acceptable. As but one of these pleasures is worthy of a sentient being, we provide soups to extinguish the other; that is, we destroy hunger to create taste."

"That is reasonable enough," said Rolle; "but surely no man of sense ever allows himself to get hungry. From the first moment that I could reflect justly on the 'end and aim' of human existence, I do not think that I have ever been hungry."

"It is curious, by the way, to observe," continued Benton, "that the wise ancients had the same custom. Their supper, which corresponds to our dinner, was preceded by an *ante-cœnum*, which consisted chiefly of wine thickened with honey. The commentators say that this was to quicken the appetite; but honeyed wine must certainly have had an opposite effect."

"The succession of dishes," said Rolle, "is a subject worthy of the most profound consideration. I regard the architecture of an entertainment as one of the highest of the fine arts. When, at the close of a well-cooked and well-arranged dinner,—such a dinner as Mr. Benton would choose to give, and I would choose to eat,—I review the whole, it rises upon my mind like a symphony of Beethoven's,—a succession of elements harmoniously combined and exquisitely diversified. The *beaux arts*, by-the-by, are vastly more numerous than is commonly suspected. Dancing is unquestionably one of them and eating is another. The latter is a science, which, as Sieyes said of politics, *je crois avoir achevée;* I have brought it to perfection. But there is another of the senses to which there is no corresponding fine art; for while the hearing has music, and the sight has architecture, the objects which address the smell have never been reduced to a system. I have been engaged in investigating the matter æsthetically, and have nearly succeeded in constructing

a gamut of odours, and I hope soon to present to my friends an overture of flowers. But let us postpone this discussion till dinner is over."

"The notion of Mr. Rolle is true," said Wilkins. "The great principle of the universe, moral and physical, is relation; and the sole business of the mind,—the only thing about which it can possibly employ itself,—the primary point at which its operation begins, and the terminating bound at which it stops,—the first step it takes from the domains of the sensible, and the last progress it achieves in the regions of the intellectual,—is the perception of relation. The soul, says Plato, is a harmony; and by the soul he means that mass of organised thought and feeling which belongs to, and is our moral existence; and by harmony he means just relation; these hoarded perceptions of just relation throughout all things, make the soul. There is a mental and a physical perception of relations; that is, a perception by the mind and by the senses. The former gives rise to sciences and the latter to fine arts. The fine arts therefore may be defined the evolution of harmony in the objects of the senses. Metaphysically they are but one; physically they are indefinite in number. Wherever there is a harmony in sound, motion, size, form, smell, taste or touch, *there*, there is room for a fine art. This notion which I but obscurely hint at now, gives rise to a new metaphysical system. I am a materialist, and regard thinking as one of the fine arts. I shall some day or other publish a quarto volume on the subject, with an appendix of maps."

"I hope," said Dr. Gauden, "the chapter on the æsthetics of eating will be illustrated by plates."

"It is curious to observe," continued Wilkins, "how often poets and others, writing not from *a priori* reasoning, but from the natural instinct of impression, have alluded to harmony in matters of form. The word music which they employ denotes mere harmony; and both of these words have been restricted to or derived from matters of sound, probably because the mind being greatly under the tyranny of vision, deemed the relation of what was perceived by another sense, more abstract and unmaterial than the perceptions of the sight, and so gave to

that science or drew from it the generic name of the whole operation. Sir Thomas Browne says, 'There is a music even in beauty, and the silent note which Cupid strikes, far sweeter than the sound of an instrument.' Byron, in 'The Bride of Abydos,' speaks of 'the mind, the music, breathing from the face.' Milton says, 'The hand *sang* with the voice, and this the argument.' An old reporter dwells with delight on 'the music of a well-written act of parliament.' From a feeling of the same sort the Greeks gave to coloured stones arranged in varied order the name of 'mousaic,' which modern speech has corrupted into 'mosaic.' When the old philosopher spoke of the music of the spheres, he meant the harmony of form and motion, and had no allusion whatever to sound: neither had Wordsworth when he heard 'the still, sad music of humanity, nor harsh, nor grating,' —he was referring only to the melody of virtuous conduct in the midst of suffering. Bacon, in a similar spirit, speaks of 'the breath of flowers' coming and going in the air, 'like the warbling of music.'—There is another consideration connected with this which affords scope for talent. If these arts are the relations of homogeneous elements, mathematics, which is the science of pure and abstract relation, is certainly capable of being applied to them. There can be no question that algebra or the calculus possess within themselves the capacity of expressing composite sounds and solid forms, and all other matters, as well as numerical quantities and linear shapes. I do not yet despair of seeing the formula of a temple or an overture. Indeed I am persuaded that even thought is reducible to definite primary elements, and that an equation might be constructed which should express all the possible combinations of these elements, and so contain all that man can think on all subjects. No human head perhaps could do it, and no human sheet of paper contain the equation; but still theoretically the thing is possible."

During the delivery of this harangue, Mr. Rolle had been diligently engaged in "unlocking the hidden soul" of flavour from a *cancre commun*, and I had overheard him ejaculating audibly, "Lord! how good!"—"Oh!

how delicious!"—"O—oh Lord, O—oh Lord;" and occasionally exclaiming fretfully, "I wish that Wilkins would hold his tongue; how can a man eat when there is so much talking?"

"Besides this," continued Mr. Wilkins, resuming his argument,—

Mr. Rolle rose upon his feet: "Mr. Wilkins, it is my duty to inform you, that unless you cease making a noise I shall leave the room; yes, sir, unless your discourses are deferred I shall dine in the entry, with my plate on a chair. It is impossible that, amid the distraction and mental harassment which listening and thinking occasions, any man should bring to the dishes that calmness of soul and concentration of mind which such a profession as eating demands."

"Mr. Rolle," said Wilkins, "will you allow me the honour of a glass of wine with you?"

"With great pleasure, Mr. Wilkins," said Rolle, relapsing into his chair.

"The ancients, Mr. Rolle," resumed Wilkins, "thought it well that something should amuse the mind during the moments of dining, so that the senses might be at liberty to gambol in delight 'at their own sweet will.' They therefore provided music at their entertainments, to absorb the spiritual part of man. Talking, if *you* would talk, might serve the same purpose. Is not my authority correct, Dr. Gauden?"

"But Euripides," growled the doctor, "objects to music at feasts, as being a superfœtation of enjoyment, and directs the song to be reserved for dolorous occasions. 'A concert of music in a banquet of wine,' says the author of Ecclesiasticus, 'is as a signet of carbuncle set in gold.' In general, I think, the custom has prevailed among barbarous, rather than cultivated nations. Indeed, Sam Johnson says the Greeks were barbarians: Sed quære de hoc."

"The Greek mind," said Rolle, "was essentially encyclopædic; it craved totality; its perpetual strife was to embrace all; it mistook universality for perfection, and sought not the all-complete so much as the naught-defective. This glorious error led them to paint their temples,

to colour their statues, to dance as well as sing their odes, and to bring musicians into the dining-room. They desiderated all that the genius could do in creation, rather than all that the taste would admire in contemplation; and in pursuit of the *might be* sometimes missed the *ought to be*,—not always acting on that fine critical principle of 'Jack Birkenhead's,' which Bishop Sprat has preserved, 'that a great wit's great work is to refuse.' The modern capacity may have contracted, but certain it is that no man, as men now are, can fully taste one kind of pleasure while another is at hand to distract the perception. Architecture is the beauty of form; if colouring is superadded, it will defeat the impression of the former just in proportion to its excellence. When you are conversing and I am eating, two high delights are presented at once, and one injures the enjoyment of the other. Conscious that I must lose something, that loss fills me with regret, and that regret unfits me for eliciting gratification. Besides you forget, most eloquent Wilkins, that as eating is in good part a mental enjoyment, listening to you more directly conflicts with a diner's duty, by withdrawing the necessary instruments of his profession. The philosopher should imitate the bee, which sucks honey from the dust as well as from the flower; from the Pythagorean school then, though we ought not to learn to confine our food to beans, we ought at least to learn silence. What opinion, Dr. Gauden, does your classical mind form upon the subject? Is conversation an advantage in dining, or not?"

"Why, I think of it, what Cicero has said of eloquence in a philosopher," replied the other: "'Si afferatur, non repudianda; si absit, non magnopere desideranda.' But the same Cicero says somewhere, that the Roman feasts were called *convivial* banquets, because the conversation and society constituted their chief pleasure, and that the Greeks gave the ceremony only such names as contemplated eating and drinking."

"Did they?" said Rolle; "Sage dogs! I'll forgive them the music. Ay! they were right; the knife talking with the meat is conversation enough, and there is no society like the society of the viands. Your Greek after all is

your only true philosopher: honour, and long life to the Greeks! They called dinner by a word which signifies 'the best!' Judicious philologists!"

"Still it must be confessed," said Dr. Gauden, "that the Romans sometimes did these things very handsomely. They rarely gave a shabby dinner. It showed that there was a very just appreciation of the case, when a single mullet sold for 250 dollars, and another for 320, and fish-ponds like those of Hirtius and Lucullus commanded 160,000 dollars."

"The ancients," said Rolle, "sought to render eating more of a mental delight than we can afford to do, and introduced refinements unknown to us. They served at their table viands whose chief delicacy lay in their intellectual elegance and poetical beauty. A dinner given by Vitellius to his brother, had, says Suetonius, portions of seven thousand most choice birds in one dish, and of two thousand equally choice fishes in another. There stood in the centre a dish, called, from its enormous size, Minerva's buckler; and of what composed, think ye? of the livers of scari, the brains of pheasants and peacocks, the tongues of parrots, and the bellies of lamprey eels, brought from Carpathia and the remotest parts of Spain in ships of war sent out expressly for the purpose. Claudian and Statius inveigh against this extravagance; but their wisdom had shown itself more rich, if, when the feast was set before them, they had, like Jacques, given Heaven thanks and made no boast of it; but these poets are raffish fellows. I know nothing more ridiculous than the sight of little fat-paunched Flaccus condemning the pleasures of the table, and exhorting to temperance and philosophic sobriety. Another dyspeptic satirist of the times slanders the emperor, because he assembled the senate to discuss the best manner of boiling a turbot; and what more important business could they have had, I should like to know? It would be as well if the topics of senatorial debate were always as honourable, or the counsel of senators always as useful. But satire is a low-born trade, and the professors of it are base-minded growlers; they go about snuffing, smelling, and whining in every direction, and wherever they find an open door, puppy-like, in

they go. Juvenal was very little of a gentleman. How different was Virgil! the most thorough-bred man of antiquity! His mind and thoughts had a pearly purity and refinement; in our days he would have been a parish priest, and have died of bronchitis."

"Aristotle," said Dr. Gauden, "wrote a code of laws for the table, and it is recorded that he was particularly fond of fish. The most remarkable glutton of Greece appears to have been Philoxenus of Cythera, who never dined out without carrying his own castors, and being attended by several of his own pages to wait upon him. He prayed for the neck of a crane that he might prolong the sensation of taste. It is to be hoped that Pluto has changed him into a boa-constrictor."

"I will venture to say," said Rolle, "that there has never been a man of *genius* who has not been a lover of good eating; naturally, I mean; for many have been abstinent from piety or principle, as Ximenes and Warburton. Look with what gust old Homer describes the carousals of his gods. Duly as the day, they met in council; and after squabbling all the morning, they all trot off together down to Jupiter's brazen-floored palace to eat and drink, which was probably the only point on which they ever cordially agreed. Scott, too, has scarcely a novel without a good trencher-man in it; and they are dealt with so considerately; there is such a pleasant humorousness thrown over the exploits of Athelstan and Dalgetty, that you see very plainly it was a 'fellow-feeling' made him so 'wondrous kind.' Whenever his heroes stop for the night, the first thing that concerns him is to feed them."

"Another maxim may be safely laid down," said Mr. Benton, "that it requires a certain degree of virtue to dine well,—at least, that bad men are never devoted to the table. I hold Lafontaine's principle, 'that to get along well in the world, one must have a good stomach and a bad heart,' to be a contradiction in itself; the two things are inconsistent. A bad heart implies a callousness of susceptibility of all sorts, and that is destructive of pleasure from eating. Johnson, who was the relentless enemy of cant, set this matter on a just footing; 'some peo-

ple,' said he 'profess not to care for their stomachs: for my part, I attend particularly to mine; and look upon it that the man who does not care for his stomach, will not care for matters more important.' That noble thinker had a mind great enough to perceive the value of little things. Cæsar showed his sagacity when he chose to have fat and sleek men about him, and distrusted lean ones. The master-passions of ambition and hate, swallow up all minor likings. Some one offered Wilks a pinch of snuff; 'Thank you!' said the radical, 'I have no small vices.' It was taken notice of at Rome, that those who neglected regularity of attendance at the dinner-party hour (six o'clock in that city) were loose in their general conduct, and profligate in all their manners. Plutarch tells a story of one Polycharmus who, when accused of various vices, solemnly appealed to the people to know whether he had ever violated the rules of the table, or been deficient in the devotion that was due to a supper. The sage Athenians perceived in this, so just a sense of propriety, and such an habitual rectitude of principle, that they acquitted the fellow by acclamation."

"Yet there are some instances on record," said Wilkins, "which show that deep depravity may be united with a fine Apician taste. A gentleman who had a plum-tree, on which two plums were just perfectly ripe, invited Darteneuf, the great epicure of the last century, half of whose name lives immortal in the verse of Pope, to dine with him, intending that each of them should, after the dessert, pluck one of the plums from the tree, that they might not be injured by being carried to the parlour. Darteneuf, as the dinner was waxing to a close, begged to be excused for a moment, left the room, went secretly into the garden and plucked, and ate both the plums! A baser act of villany, a darker, or more remorseless want of feeling, was never exhibited. The man who could do such an act, would fatten his mushrooms with the blood of his brother."

"Yet, my good Wilkins, the story is *bipennis*, and points both ways," said Rolle. "The man who invited any one to share such a Pomonan banquet must have had a heart to which Howard's was Pharaonic."

"The circumstance that men dine in company and not alone," said Mr. Benton, "is proof of the moral excellence of the occupation; for the virtues are all social; the vices all solitary."

"To settle the precise number," said Rolle "at which the pleasures of eating, and of enjoying society, are in aptest proportion, and neither predominates unduly, has always been a difficult problem in epicureanism. Our companies are generally too large. Among the Greeks and Romans, the usual orthodox number was between four and eleven. Ausonius says seven is the best, including the master: if there be more, he remarks, punningly, it ceases to be *convivium* and becomes *convicium*. A supper of Augustus to twelve was so unusual, as to have been deemed worthy of commemoration."

"Varro," remarked Dr. Gauden, "seems to have been the first who gave the rule of not more than the muses, nor less than the graces."

"Cardinal De Retz declares," said Wilkins, "that whenever a company amounts to one hundred, it is a mob, and few men have had more acquaintance with mobs, or have written their natural history better, than Cardinal De Retz. But this limit, if the true one, applies only to politics; for the standard varies with the intention and purpose of the assembly, and a far smaller number constitutes a literary mob than is required for a political one. I take this to be the just criterion in the case; that whenever the spirit of individuality passes out of the persons assembled, and some aggregate spirit, whether patriotic, destructive, or panic; whether the *genius loci*, or the *afflatus* of occasion enters into them; whenever private sympathy ceases and collective impression begins, so that men are influenced not *personatim*, but *gregatim*, not by peculiar, but by general appeals; whenever, in public companies, men harangue and not debate, and in private ones, discourse and not converse; in a word, whenever externality prevails over personality; at that point the assembly becomes a mob according to its kind and sort. As every gentleman has a hatred of mobs, this consideration, rather than any numeral principle, should regulate the amount of the persons he calls together to

dine. I should consider twelve educated and spirited men at a dinner-table a decided mob; while to make a rebellious mob in a garrisoned city several hundreds might be requisite; such a number at all events as would allow collective enthusiasm to master personal fear. Under the empire three was pronounced a mob; which may be vindicated on Tertullian's authority, 'ubi tres, ecclesia est.' I think it will bear an argument whether a single individual may not in some circumstances be a mob: I should be strongly inclined to maintain that George Sandt when he murdered Kotzebue, the man who mutilated André's tomb in Westminster Abbey, and most of the assailants of royal personages, are not to be considered as individuals, but as mobs sole."

"Benton," said Rolle, "why the devil do you suffer your cook to put mustard in the macaroni? cooked mustard is horrible."

"Why," replied the other, "my cook has a great many sorts of ability, and among the rest a good deal of irritability; and if I were to act upon the democratic maxim and assume the 'right of instruction,' I fear he would not 'obey' but 'resign.' But there is so little of the obnoxious article, that I am surprised that you perceive it."

"Perceive it? If it were inserted in Homœopathic doses I should perceive it. But why don't you turn such a man out of the house? I wouldn't retain such a man in my service a moment. How old is he?"

"Thirty-two."

"Too young, too young. His aspirations are yet too tumultuous, and his energies too undisciplined. He cannot have attained that splendid repose of passion amid the ardour of vigorous power, which is demanded by nature for the ruling of an empire and the cooking of a dinner."

"Ude fixes at thirty the period of life at which a man may be pronounced a perfect cook. That seems to be the climacteric of the intellect."

"Sir, you are to take a distinction. There are two climacterics of the intellect, one between twenty-six and thirty, the other at forty; the period of the first is the zenith of energy; the second, of ability. For any enter-

prise requiring hardy zeal and intrepidity; for the resolute execution of a daring project; for all that demands nerve and force; the powers of man are in their perfection at about twenty-seven or nine. Alexander, Charles the Twelfth, and Lord Byron who wrote his poems in the same spirit that the others fought their battles, performed at this age their finest achievements, and all of them coincided in dying at thirty-six. Shakspeare, the all-knowing, has observed this psychological truth: Iago tells us when he commences his diabolics 'I have looked upon the world for four times seven years.' On the other hand, no man can be prepared for the performance of a truly great and elevated work; one enacting the full developement and exercised freedom of every mental faculty, and the long-trained and dependible strength of every power, before the age of forty. At that age Wieland fixed the time when a man is best fitted for a high literary work, and sat down to the composition of Oberon. At that age, which Dryden calls 'the full summer tropic of his genius,' Virgil wrote his best work. After that age Burgh, who had surveyed mankind with accuracy, forbade any one to enter on any new undertaking, perceiving that that was the æra of execution, not enterprise. I should therefore conclude that while an *artiste* of thirty-two is admirably fitted for grand and gigantic experiments in his profession, he is yet unsuited for that last and noblest effort of human genius; that loftiest exhibition of serene might; that most worthy task of Olympian powers; the cooking of a dinner."

"We are told in the Acts of the Apostles, that Moses was full forty years old when he began his mission; Mahomet was thirty-nine. Forty, also, was the consular age among the Romans."

Leaving this conversation to proceed as it pleased, I turned to Dr. Gauden, who was sitting on the other side of me, and had fallen into a kind of revery. There was a fine landscape by Gouldsborough hanging on the opposite wall, in front of him, at which he was looking intently, and muttering to himself some verses of Flaminius, with the usual intermixture of fretful nods.

"Umbræ frigidulæ! arborum susurri!
Antra roscida! discolore picta
Tellus gramine! fontium loquaces
Lymphæ! garrula aves! amica Musis
Otia!—O mihi si volare vestrum
In sinum superi annuant benigni!

That must be when I come back."

"It is to be regretted, I think, Doctor," said I, falling in with the current of his thoughts, "that the Latin writings of the Italian scholars who clustered about the morning light of modern letters, are not more known and studied than they are. There is some exquisite poetry among them."

"Beautiful, sir, beautiful. In descriptions of nature they are unrivalled. The history of the literature which Le Clerc happily calls demi-ancient, remains to be written. Rosco's books are beneath contempt."

"I am glad to hear *you* say so, for I have always held the opinion that they were infinitely overrated. I never could get through them: they would not take hold of me."

"His popularity," replied the Doctor, "illustrates a sagacious remark of Horace Walpole; a fine thinker, now too much neglected; that *grace* will save any book, and without it none can live long. The gracefulness of his style and the elegance of his manner have given him an acceptance with 'the general,' who hate to think and are careless of knowing. But he is always superficial and often mistaken; he says more in a sentence than he could stand by in a volume. He sketches, but does not portray, and guesses where he ought to investigate; 'il effleure lorsqu'il devrait percer.' His taste was delicate rather than just: and his mind, though polished, was feeble and one-sided. He could argue agreeably, but could not judge accurately. He lacked that strong grasp of mind, that stern watchfulness against prejudice, and that self-denying disinterestedness of sentiment, which are essential in exploring the mines of history."

"Among the many services," said I, "which Pope rendered to literature, his edition of some of these poets should not be forgotten; if it showed no learning, it

proved at least his taste, and his interest in letters. I have sometimes regretted that Johnson did not prosecute his intention of editing Politian."

"No doubt he would have done it well; he edited Browne's 'Morals' with consummate ability. But to tell you the truth, Politian is no favourite of mine. His prose is certainly elaborately classical; but his poetry is irreclaimably dull. His personal character is any thing but agreeable; he was intensely and meanly selfish; always cringing and begging. He was insatiable of favours and never seems to have had the least gratitude for them. The wife of Lorenzo, you know, turned him out of the house. It is odd that Mrs. Parr did the same thing to that splendid brute, Porson. I should have been glad if Johnson had edited Petrarch, or Vida, or had written a history of that age. That is a work which is yet to be done; the men of that time are still doubtful in reputation; posterity has formed no definite conclusion about them. Such a man would have settled opinion once and for ever. Let theorists sneer as they may, there is not a critical notion of Johnson's which the nation has not accepted. Brydges and Bowles have written their volumes, and Coleridge has lectured his worst, exhausting logic and his hearers; but not a decision in the lives of the Poets has been shaken: that book stands in the history of literature like a rock in the ocean; the waves and waters of opinion may beat around it and beat against it, but it stands, 'and as it stands, for ever shall stand on.'"

"I have sometimes speculated, Doctor, on the effect which he would have produced on English literature, if with the reputation which he had at his death, he had lived on till our own times. Modern poetry and fiction would have no existence. Byron, and Wordsworth, and Bulwer, would have been crushed like peascods. I suspect that the whole radical system with its liberty and utility, would have been scattered to the winds; for his actual power was immense and his possible power scarcely calculable. For cogency of reason; for simple ability to *convince*; no man that ever existed may be compared with him. He was a wonderful great man."

"Sir, his greatness cannot be overstated. Form the

highest notion that you can have of powerful reasoning or of brilliant wit, and then turn to some of his political pamphlets, or to certain conversations which I could name in Boswell, and you will find that the reality excels your wish. His conversations are to my judgment even more wonderful than his writings. He might have said of Boswell what Mahomet said of Ali, 'I am the city of knowledge; and he is my gate.' Boswell deserves to be remembered, for his appreciation of Johnson showed a fine spirit, and the meannesses he submitted to, were the sacrifice of dignity to wisdom. And he *will* be remembered with an immortal insignificance, for he is like the beccafica which the stork takes upon his back and carries to heights which its feeble wing could not attain. His powers were undoubtedly most respectable; for I take it to be the, not so facile, business of a biographer, simply to give you a clear and satisfactory impression of the subject of his book, and this he has done; you see Johnson as he lived; in the rude grandeur of his noble nature: 'nihil hic elegans aut venustum, sed ingens et magnificum, et quod placet magnitudine suâ et quâdam specie immensitatis,' as Burnet says of a view from the shores of the Mediterranean."

"Johnson's independence or defiance of the restraints of refined life," said I, "though it exposed him to cavil, was certainly of service to the freedom of his mind, for it enabled him to appreciate the world with stern and conscientious truth. Every gentleman, even the most strong-minded, is habitually under the influence of cant; and when the judgment is once resigned to prescription and usage, the limits of the thraldom cannot easily be defined. Johnson stood *alone;* early a widower,—with no children and no relations near him,—an acknowledged exception to all society,—he was free from the faintest fetter of custom,—'Custom, that result of the prejudices and passions of many, and the designs of a few, that ape of reason, who usurps her seat, exercises her power, and is obeyed by mankind in her stead.' He was thus enabled to look down upon the establishments of the world with an independence which few others could hope to attain, and

where he bore testimony to their value and justice, his evidence had incalculable force."

"It is a pity," said Dr. Gauden, "that Parr and others who imitated the great moralist, should have copied the 'brute part of him' so closely. You see clearly that Johnson's rudeness was like the horns of the Fauns and Satyrs, a natural excrescence; while Parr's, like those of Bacchus, was an ornament which he could remove. In his Salmoneus' wieldings of the thunderbolt, he gave too much of the thunder and too little of the bolt. He was a man of small stature; still, when he 'summoned all the energies of his reason, and put forth the whole power of his mind,' he could 'do considerable.' His dedication of the Warburtonian's Tracts is the most splendid effort of elaborate malignity that the world has ever seen. But he had always the cramped movement of one acting a part, and was still farther dwarfed by acting a part too high for him. Johnson strode with the step of a giant; Parr stalked like one accoutred in the seven-leagued boots of a dwarf. Parr *built* up his mind on a great model; Johnson's mind grew up, and he swayed it as we sway the limbs of our body. Parr struggles to get up to his subject, as a clumsy swimmer to get upon the ice: Johnson has always conquered his topics, and holds them up with the air of a man going to grate a nutmeg. You find, too, about the latter that natural humour and honest *bonhommie* which results from the self-composure incident to a thoroughly great mind. It may seem an odd fancy, but there is something in Falstaff which puts me in mind of Johnson."

"Warburton was more his fellow than any other eminent man of his country. But he differed in many qualities, and where he differed there he descended."

"Warburton had logic rather than reason, and had more of mechanical intellect than moral power; he was forcible rather than strong, and energetic rather than robust. He used the sling; Johnson, the mace. Johnson was like a man who, walking through a forest, meets a lion there and slays him: Warburton was like one who, happening to pass an amphitheatre as he is going through a city on important business, throws

down his bundle in the street and steps in among the beasts, from pure love of a broil: as much praise must be given to the unostentatious manliness of the one as to the gladiatorial vehemence of the other. A great mind is stable by its very weight; Warburton floated about like gossamer,—over men's heads and in their faces. No truly great mind ever tampered with error; it has a strong love of truth,—an intellectual affection, 'qui s'attache au vrai par une espece de sympathie,' as Fontenelle says, 'et sente le faux sans le discuter.' Notwithstanding the high and rich delight which the study of his works has afforded me,—for, like Lelius in 'The Arcadia,' he showed more skill in missing than others did in hitting,—yet my own opinion of him is much what Voltaire has expressed about Charles of Sweden, 'homme unique plutôt, que grand homme, admirable plutôt qui' à imiter.' Bentley, I think, had more of the great Cham's unminted wealth and sinewy vigour than any of these men: but the most Johnsonian mortal now alive, and out of sight the first man that wears calf-skin is Mr. Webster. He is a glorious creature. What a pity he is honest. Sir, we'll drink his health!"

"With all my heart!"

"Mr. Webster has the misfortune of being too great for his condition. There is in the American system no niche for such a statue. Such a man must be often disappointed, and die at last of a broken heart. Byron, in Manfred, has sketched the bitter degradation to which a noble mind must submit, that would mingle in the strife of public life."

"Byron doubtless described what his own brief experiences in parliament had taught him. He seems to have been ambitious to bear a part in the politics of his country, and I suspect that to his failure in that enterprise is to be attributed much of the bitter hate and defiance which has been popularly attributed to domestic misfortunes. That his nature sympathised with the daring in action rather than the tender in sentiment, is manifest from his Alp, his Corsair, and indeed the whole circle of his heroes. There was rankling in his bosom some great and independent irritation;—the

stings of an ambition which the honours of poetry could not gratify. His expedition to Greece is indication of the same thing. But his character is, and will remain, a riddle. Dark and demoniac as were some of his qualities, he had many traits of a noble nature. His spirit was like the form of Eblis, in Beckford's marvellous creation; 'sa figure était celle d'un jeune homme, dont les traits nobles et réguliers, semblaient avoir été flétris par des vapeurs malignes. Le désespoir et l'orgeuil étaient peints dans ses grands yeux, et sa chevelure ondoyante tenait encore un peu de celle d'un ange de lumière; . . . une main delicate, mais noircie par la foudre, . . . une voix plux douce qu'on aurait pu la supposer, mais qui portait la noire melancholie dans l'ame.' Virtue and vice contended for his soul, as Michael and Satan for the body of Moses."

"Byron's poetry was never to my taste. He and his set are a kind of poetical Brahmins, teaching universal hatred and contempt towards all their fellow-creatures, and nourishing in themselves, as a religious duty, pride, selfishness and all uncharitableness. The 'impar sibi' is a charge which lies not against him, for his morals were as bad as his manners. I do not deny his talents but I have no sympathy with his subjects. 'He that striketh an instrument with skill,' says Hooker, 'may cause, notwithstanding, a very unpleasant sound, if the string whereon he striketh chance to be incapable of harmony.' As long as Spenser and Dryden survive I shall have little inclination to read a Newgate Calendar in verse, with a running accompaniment of Satanic applause, and an occasional episode of beautiful blasphemies."

"But Byron," said I, "exhibits his heroes in colours so little agreeable, and paints the sufferings of remorse so darkly strong, that few, I imagine, would be seduced by the examples which he lays before them."

"Sir, you mistake. 'The fly,' says Herbert, 'that feeds on dung is coloured thereby.' What we read becomes a part of our mind, and, even if we condemn, the thought is there, and is working its evil. But in fact no one reads this poet without admiring him, for

the feelings which he excites are so strong that the book must be thrown down in disgust or devoured with transport. The natural element and protection of the virtues is calmness and sobriety; all excitement endangers innocence; all familiarity with stimulating feelings and engrossing interests, perils the heart's uprightness. Ignorance of vice is the safest virtue; to shun temptation is the best deliverance from evil. The passions are like those demons with whom Afrasiab sailed down the river Oxus; our safety consists in keeping them asleep; if they wake we are lost. Byron rouses a whirlwind of emotion in the mind; and it is much if the moral integrity is not wrecked in the tempest.

> Wo to the wayward heart,
> That gladlier turns to eye the shuddering start
> Of Passion in her might,
> Than marks the silent growth of grace and light:—
> Pleased in the cheerless tomb
> To linger, while the morning rays illume
> Green lake, and cedar tuft, and spicy glade,
> Shaking their dewy tresses, now the storm is laid.

Navagero, a noble Venitian, burnt a copy of Martial once every year: Childe Harold deserves the same apotheosis. If the size of Lord Byron's form be measured by the shadow which it has cast over the land, immense must be his mental proportions. He has done incalculable evil to the young, and more mischief, I suspect, to the world than any other single cause now in action. Moore may foster some of the details of vice, but Byron implants the master-sin,—the demon-father of a countless brood,—Pride. At a period when the independent spirit of the times requires the bridle far more than the spur, he teaches his young disciples to follow their own headstrong will, and to defy all moral restraint,—thus feeding the most fatal serpent that lurks in the breast, and for which there is sustenance enough, in all conscience, supplied by the rebellious suggestions of the native disposition. 'Lust seizeth us in youth,' says one whose thoughts are 'quaint and solid as the best yew-hedge,' 'ambition in mid-life, avarice in old

age; but vanity and pride are the besetting sins that drive the angels from our cradle, ride our first stick with us, mount our first horse with us, dream with us at night, wake with us in the morning, and never at any time abandon us. There is in the moral straits a current from right to wrong, but no reflux from wrong to right; for which destination we must hoist our sails aloft and ply our oars incessantly, or night and the tempest will overtake us, and we shall shriek out in vain from the billows, and irrecoverably sink.' Believe me, we need no incentives to the developement of this inherent evil of our nature. We are well assured that dark results are reaped from such a planting. The Bible says so, and the Bible is apt to be true about those things. For my part, as Gray says of Rousseau and his guild, 'I can be miserable enough without their assistance,' and there I leave these *heautoustimoroumenoi* to those who can read them without being worsened."

"At all events," said I, "if Byron must suffer the 'suspexerunt viri probi' of Pontanus's epitaph, he is fully entitled to the 'amaverunt bonæ musæ.' No man can read Manfred or Don Juan, and withhold from the poet all that his admirers claim for him on the score of genius. Manfred's being caught by the Chamois Hunter as he attempted to throw himself over the precipice, and afterwards, when describing to the witch his unsuccessful efforts at self-destruction, mingling this reality with the fancies of a mind 'peopled with furies,' and saying that 'an all-pitiless demon held him back,—back by a single hair which would not break,' is worthy of the hand which drew King Lear."

"The worst consequence of authors who are popular from some great peculiarity," said Wilkins, striking into the conversation, "is that they raise a host of followers, who wear the badge, but lack the blood which gives that badge a meaning. Bulwer in this manner is the literary offspring of Lord Byron, as the Mahometans believe the pig to have been generated from the excrement of the elephant. Clemens Alexandrinus tells us that Alexander the Great desired his sculptor to represent him with horns, willing to bear a deformity which

associated him with the gods. Bulwer mimics Byron's depravity in the hope of enjoying Byron's notoriety, forgetting that an ass wears a cloven foot as well as a devil."

"Byron, to be sure, has a wilder energy and a manlier sweep," said Dr. Gauden, "but the matter of their works is much the same:

> Poor floating dreams, and miserable lies,
> The empty bubbles of a pensive mind,
> And spleen's sad effort to debase mankind.

My notion of both of them is that

> Emendare liturse
> Multæ non possunt; una litura potest.

I have no fondness for this philosophic radicalism; this moral system which sets out with denying all that the world has accepted, and opposing all that the world has established. 'Si proficere cupis,' says the great African bishop, 'primo firme id verum puta quod sana mens omnium hominum attestatur.' Bacon concludes his great work by repudiating all charge of wilful eccentricity and opposition: 'if I have in any point receded from that which is commonly received,' says he, 'it hath been with the purpose of proceeding melius and not in aliud; a mind of amendment and proficience, and not of change and difference;' and Johnson makes it the worthiest praise of Newton that he stood apart from the multitude, not by deviating from the path, but by outstripping them in the march. The world may be wrong, and yet we may mistake 'reverse of wrong for right:'

> 'Tis, by comparison, an easy task
> Earth to despise: but to converse with Heaven—
> This is not easy.

It seems to me, that the principle of these men, if they had any principle, was, eternally to differ for the sake of distinction. 'A good wife,' says Damis in Lessing's Young Author, 'I do not expect. And if I cannot have a very good, I would rather have a very bad one. An every-day woman, neither cold nor warm, neither this

nor that, is not fit for a man of letters. If I cannot have a wife who will assert a place in a future dissertation *De bonis eruditorum uxoribus*, let me at least have one that will not escape a writer *De malis eruditorum uxoribus*. Any thing but obscurity; any thing but mediocrity.' In the same spirit, these writers seem to say: 'if we cannot be mentioned as those who have written in the best taste, we will be named as those who have written in the worst; if we cannot have the purest sentiments, we will have the vilest; any thing but obscurity—any thing but mediocrity.'"

"Bulwer—to use a happy phrase of Walpole," said Wilkins, "always writes in *issimo*. He uses the dialect of Brobdignag. If a man's mind is uncomfortable, it is with him—a hell! If one sustains a loss which will probably never be made good, it is, in his language, a curse and an immortality! His exaggerations would make Heraclitus laugh through his tears. The passion which is stamped on his pages exists always rather in the words than in the sentiment. It is not that excited feeling finds vent in burning eloquence which swells and glows like glass under the breath of the blower, but he seems in the dearth of energy to pour forth these blustering syllables for the purpose of being himself roused by them to ecstasy; to work himself up like a bully by beating the air. This style is in description what *rant* is in acting—always growing mightier, as true passion wanes. There is a certain calmness about the acme of feeling—a security which seems to indicate that the suffering transcends the powers of language to utter it, or the strength of the sensibilities to cope with it—a composure in the midst of the *most* awful scenes—which it is the highest effort of art to portray; the rage and the violence belong to inferior grades of sensation, and are the exhibition of meaner artists. When Shylock, in fear of a loss, lances wild threats upon the city's charter, you see that he is strongly excited: when the whole prostrating truth bursts upon him, he says, 'send the deed after me: I am not well.' Compare this with Croly's Cataline, with the manner of Maturin, Godwin and Bulwer, and you will perceive the differ-

ence between the master and the man. As a general remark, by-the-by, our elder classics exhibit the best specimens of energetic feeling temperately expressed. Lord Byron may be taken as a specimen of power united with fury—the might *and* vehemence of the whirlwind. Bulwer has copied all his disorder and only forgotten his strength; he is a prose Lord Byron—without his genius."

"In looking at the productions of all first-rate artists," said Gauden, "Shakspeare, Homer, and Scott, for example—it is clear that in every case they are *above* their subject—they are never overmastered by a passion which they would develope. In the midst of the contest, in the height of the agony, the narrator is cool and judging; his own sympathies absolutely sleep, and his creations are altogether impersonal. That the excitement shall be in the action and not in the author—that the moving representative shall be the calm exhibition of a troubled scene and not the troubled exhibition of a calm one—is, I apprehend, the *experimentum crucis* of art. The strife of Byron and the confusion of Bulwer are the pictures of an ordinary interest mirrored in a disturbed fancy. Homer's song of the battles on the banks of the Simois is as passionless and calm as the reflection of them in the stream might be. His poem shows action in repose, boundless passion never tumultuous. Doubtless the interest must originate with the author, but his business is to transfer it all to his subject. If it be conceded—and I take it to be undeniable—that genius is but the highest art, and that, invention being equal, the palm must be given to him in whom judgment is most despotic, we settle the question of merit, when we say that Shakspeare and Scott write like the masters of passion, and Byron and Bulwer like its slaves."

"Bulwer chiefly aspires to the praise of portraying character," said Wilkins, "and it is there that his failure is most ridiculous. His system is Rochefoucauld caricatured. He confounds the concentrative and generalising quality of a descriptive character with the broad and diversified substance of a dramatic one. In an epigram we may say, metaphorically and extremely, that a man

never means a compliment but he makes an insult; but to introduce a Lord Aspeden actually making every speech throughout a long conversation, an elaborate rudeness, is totally to mistake the limits of art: it is to forget the person in the character; to lose the man in the manner; to evaporate the substance into the quality. It may be said that in many of the plays of the old stage-writers, Shakspeare among the number, the personages are mere embodiments of a feeling or idea—what Ben Jonson calls personified 'humours.' But this great distinction is to be taken, that Richard and Iago are characters of passion, and a passion may well leaven the whole individual into its own similitude, whereas Aspeden, Brown, and that cluster in the 'Disowned,' are but the character of manners, and manner is an affectation which can but flit over the surface, not 'enter into the soul.' The qualities of nearly all his heroes are mixed in impossible combinations: the flippancy of one, the philosophy of another, and the feeling of a third are selected; and, with the address of an Orford and the morals of a Shippen; the prudence of a sage and the gayety of a boy; a fop's extravagance and a warrior's fortitude—are all assigned to a common man of the world. This, as Piranesi told Fuselli, is not designing but building a man. It is a want of psychological truth. A Henry Pelham may have really existed, and may again exist, but the novelist has to do with generalities; he is to describe a species, not an individual. Fact is the field of the historian, and probability of the romance-writer: and when the latter errs against verisimility, although he is supported by facts, he violates truth as much as the other does when he contradicts documents for the purpose of making a credible story. Herein Bulwer wanders farther than Byron; for the poet's characters being in wild and imaginary scenes may be warped into a strangeness which we cannot venture to deny; but the novelist's personages being on the terra firma of a brick pavement, and breathing the common air of cities, are within a far narrower law. Lara, in his wild solitudes, above and beyond the sympathies of the world, is in a very different predicament

from Henry Pelham, Esquire, No. — St. James's street, who reads newspapers, and keeps appointments by St. Stephen's clock. Besides, Byron's people are self-consistent; they are under the control of some one great impulse, and not swayed by a score of opposing ones. Wolfe, Glanville, Mordaunt, and all that class of choking gentlemen are creative lies; the author does not say 'the thing which is not,' but he images the thing which cannot be. They are, like Macbeth's dagger,

> A false creation,
> Proceeding from a heat-oppressed brain.

His greatest blunder, however, is the character of Aram. His object in that story was to show that a man might be guilty of a great crime, such as murder, without having his nature depraved by it; and to demonstrate this he falsified the character of a man whose story proved precisely the reverse; for the real Aram was a dirty and vulgar scoundrel. Fortunately Bulwer's theory is as false as it is mischievous, for wherever he has deserted fact he has erred from truth."

"Bulwer forgets," said Dr. Gauden, "that most men as well as women, 'have no characters at all.' He overlooks that class which 'Nature makes by the gross, and sets no mark upon them;' a class which largely shades the light of life, and should find a place in the tablet of the faithful portrayer of humanity. He willingly essays the complications of a Hamlet, but the exquisite nothingness of a James Gurney is beyond his skill. He discerns on the shoulders of every lackey a head that might inform the counsels of cabinets. His heroes have their dinners announced by men who might put the Duc de la Rochefoucauld to the blush. Every jockey salutes them with an epigram, and every landlord converses in syllogism. His very animals have characters: tot canes, tot ingenia. His philosophy, though it seems to me but a trick of words, commends him I believe to many, who, captured by any thing that is brilliant and novel, do not stop to inquire if it is true. When I daily hear perspicuous writers, such as Addison, Goldsmith, and Scott, put aside as superficial

thinkers, and the tripod given to those who are considered deep only because they are obscure, I am tempted to keep in mind, a curious but most valuable remark of Bolingbroke upon that point. 'To speak the truth,' says that sagacious writer, 'though it may seem a paradox, our knowledge on many subjects and particularly on philosophy and metaphysics, must be superficial to be real. This is the condition of humanity.' If Scott has no system of human action, it is because human action cannot be systematised. But one might pardon even greater charlatanry than Bulwer's, if it were set forth in tolerable English. His style, with its 'varnish of words and its garnish of flowers,' is decidedly the most vicious of the age; I can forgive almost any thing but the one-legged poetry of staggering prose. He does not use comparisons for illustrations; simile seems to be with him a mode of writing. It puts me fairly out of temper to see a man, circling round some thin notion in endless gyrations of metaphor. Scott uses tropes very freely, but his flowers have always the significancy of an eastern garland."

"All Bulwer's conceptions," said Wilkins, "lack the freshness of true creation. There is a total want of generosity in the author's mind. It is in this wide nobility of sentiment, this sympathy with the free and the foreign, that Scott stands so pre-eminent. All his characters are sparkling with the dews of natural life. When Richard met Saladin, and was challenged by the Saracen to a trial of strength, he undertook to sever with his sword, an iron bar of an inch and a half diameter. One of his attendants warned him of the magnitude of the enterprise, and his own enfeebled health from illness. 'Peace, villain!' cried Richard, settling himself firmly on the ground and looking round with fierceness, 'Thinkest thou that I *could* fail in *his* presence!' I doubt whether Mr. Bulwer would have understood the feeling."

"We may safely venture to admire personally the man who writes so," said I, "for he must have had a touch of the crusader in him, who describes crusaders so well. Bulwer never succeeds in placing his charac-

ters independent on his own mind, and looking at them quite *ab extra*. He shows them to us as they seem to him, not as they were; we see them mediately, not in their own bold individuality. He maps out their natures too analytically; in short, he describes, rather than exhibits them. The secret of the failure is that he is too much of a metaphysician to be a dramatist. But, after all, say what we may, he is popular beyond all rival, and I invariably bow, in all literary subjects, to the judgment of the public. Storace used to say that the merits of no musical composition could be considered as settled until it came to be ground upon the hand-organs."

"If I had not taken so much of Mr. Benton's good wine," said Wilkins, "and if I was not afraid of disturbing the audible slumbers of my excellent friend, Mr. Rolle, I should enter at large upon the subject which you moot. As it is, I will only say that it is not in the nature of a truly great work that it ever can be popular. Nothing of exalted merit is capable of being *presented* to the public; the 'Creation,' for example, could never come upon a hand organ. That which lies in the way of the mob enough to receive a full hearing, must necessarily be very inferior. There is no music in 'Yankee Doodle.' If I were to frame an extreme theory upon the subject, it should be upon the principle of the Greek philosopher. 'This is right,' says Epicurus, 'precisely because the people are displeased with it.' In many matters it must be so; 'the eyes of the multitude,' said Plato, 'are not strong enough to look upon truth;' and generally where they blink most there is most truth. It is constantly happening that in literature as in every thing else, those voices which make up public opinion, are baying darkly where there is no game; but the blunder is finally discovered. 'Truth,' says my Lord Coke, 'may peradventure by force for a time be trodden down, but never by any means whatsoever can she be trodden out.'"

"Your doctrine," said Gauden, "would be 'qualis sopor fessis' to poor Chandos of Sudeley,—the *peer*-less Sir Egerton Brydges. He has reached the conclusion

that all good books are unpopular, and by a very harmless *non distributio medii*, resolved therefrom that all unpopular books, like his own, are good. The theme of his musings is still the hope of Milton:

> At ultimi nepotes,
> Et cordatior ætas,
> Judicia æquiora rebus forsitan
> Adhibebit, integro sinu.

The temper of his intellect was in fact, too feeble for the violence of his impressions. I have sometimes heard it said in derogation of Lord Byron's merits, that he was the poet of temperament, rather than of intellect. I admit the distinction between these sources of inspiration; but in this case, the delicacy of the temperament seems to me to exalt the marvel of the intellect. For immense mental power must have been required to constrain such ardour of excitement to intelligent expression. Passion furnishes materials for creation, but is, in itself, its antipodes. In the reasoning fervour and logical fury of the Giaour, I am impressed even to awe, by the fearless might of an intellect which every where copes and conquers the volcanic vehemence of feeling. To break up into meaning words the inarticulate roar of suffering,—to syllable the yell of anguish, is like snaffling a tornado, or tying knots in a thunder-bolt."

"But when I hear of these neglected authors praying for justice, I think of the Regent's reply to a similar request of Voltaire when he had been slapped for being insolent, 'mais elle est faite.'"

"Poor Sir Egerton!" said Wilkins. "The history of his mind and fortunes has matter that might give us pause. Born with talents of no common order, and feelings and sensibilities of the most delicate texture,—the stuff that bards are wrought of; impelled to a career of mental exertion by a most passionate ardour for distinction, and aided in it by all the advantages which high rank and abundant wealth could furnish, he has, after a long life of toil and struggling, to look back over a dreary track of painful effort and bitter suffering, and forward to a prospect of oblivion. After seventy-five

years of incessant literary labour, he is known to the world by a caricature in Frazer, a philippic in the Edinboro', and a passing encomium from Southey. Yet the old man, an exile in a distant land, with broken fortune, and unstrung and embittered mind, may teach to every author a lesson that shall make him a 'sadder and a wiser man.' With all his endowments, why is not his statue in the temple of Fame? Merely from want of patient meditation and resolute self-study; merely because he did not master his genius and control his temperament. When he experienced an inclination to literature, he sat down to rummage among dusty antiquities; when he felt the stirrings of poetic sensibility, instead of watching them, and seizing a directing theme to the production of feeling beauties, he only speculated about their existence in all great poets, and thereupon concluded that he too was a great poet. He should have grappled with his emotions, and controlled them to creation.* I verily believe, that by intense observation of the workings of his own mind, Brydges might have risen at length to such nervous conceptions, as live and move, and have their being in Byron's pages. He studied books far too much; had he burned his folios, the flame might have lighted the fire of a great poetical genius. When he felt, he should have analysed; then he might have reproduced. The want of calm reflection, and the pain encountered in confronting one's own mind, have generated an impatient habit of thought. He is unwilling to enter upon a mine of deep inquiry; if a subject of discussion starts up before him, he defers it to a more convenient season, or lets the reader know that he is preparing a separate work upon that point. He thinks in fragments; and, uninclined or unable to continue long upon the wing, ever fails to reach any thing truly great."

* Since these paragraphs were penned, the unfortunate baronet has inherited another and a darker title, "per legem terræ." The sneer of ridicule was the best return his literary efforts met in life; but, methinks, "they must have hearts very tough and dry," to use the quaint expression of Hooker, who will now refuse to shed a tear over the sorrows of this high-minded, but most unhappy man.

"What you say is very just," said I; "he has the wildness rather than the fulness of the pulse of genius. But after every abatement, I would still give my hearty vote that he should take the very highest place among our prose authors. There is no writer whose works I have more frequently in my hands, and none to whom I feel more inclined to make those grateful acknowledgments which every man owes to him who has improved and amused him, who has informed his understanding, and gratified his taste. He is the English Montaigne, with vastly stronger blood. His knowledge of the world is thorough; his knowledge of the human heart singularly deep and searching. His critical perceptions are unerring; his critical principles, I think, wrong, but they never affect his conclusions, for he never follows them but in general speculations; he says, for example, that poetry should be natural and unconstrained, and adds that Gray is one of the greatest of poets. His letters on Lord Byron constitute, in my judgment, the finest piece of particular criticism that this or any language contains, though he assigns the noble poet a much higher rank than you or you would concede to him. His style is perfect; formed upon no model, but growing up from ceaseless and easy employment of the pen, it is rich, but not loaded; natural, but full of vigour; it fascinates by its refinement, and compels by its strength. The harsh points which he often presents to the reader will prevent his ever being much a favourite with the multitude, but kinder qualities endear him to the man of letters. He seems, in truth, to possess a two-fold nature; of which one part is querulous, irritable, egotistical and assuming; the other, gentle, generous, and genial. That side of his mind which is turned towards men, is like the side of a high promontory that regards the sea, rough, abrupt, and unpleasant of access: but that which looks towards poetry and the free fields of genius, is like the other side which lies towards the land, and is fanned by the mild inland breezes, soft, smooth, and sunny, mantled with roses, and refreshing to the reposer. To despise golden opinion is too much his failing. But he is a fine thinker, and a judicious selection,

in two or three volumes, from the whole mass of his works, would form a treasury of wisdom. He is, moreover, a true poet, and that he has achieved no great poem, is the fatal result of a false poetical theory. If, instead of writing fourteen thousand lines in four years, as he oddly boasts, he had written but fourteen, his fame had been secure. He has not attained the rare and fine art 'de faire difficilement des vers.'"

"It is queer," said Wilkins, "that Brydges and his brother reprinters should imagine that the rescuing which they gave to perishing works, was of any service, or should think that they benefited letters while they made a point of limiting their issues to "only twenty copies," or in some cases that I remember "decem exemplaria sola." Surely, such an impression left the book, so far as the public was concerned, the same sealed treasure that it found it. Those bibliomaniacs were a worthless set."

"Harmless, rather," said Dr. Gauden. "They amused themselves highly, and they injured nobody. They erected typography into one of the fine-arts, and thus extended the sources of inoffensive pleasure. The investigation of a date or an author's first name, is very capable, I assure you, of delighting and even improving the best faculties of the mind; and to bear off an 'editio princeps,' from a circle of panting bidders, in the rich consciousness of envied ownership, is a pleasure which a sage would scarcely venture to ridicule, or a divine to condemn. To be unprofitable is not the worst quality of a mundane occupation; and I would that mankind in the pursuit of honour, wealth, and power, were always as honourably or as wisely employed as was the Roxburghe club in discussing *ekes* and *algates*."

"Sir Egerton's poetry," said Benton, "has one merit; that of being intelligible; a merit, which is certainly rare and probably great; for as a general rule, the best writing is the most intelligible. Pope and Addison every body can understand; but what can you make of the poetry of Shelley or the prose of Coleridge?"

"Shelley, I abandon," said Wilkins, "for I never read him. But of Coleridge it must indeed be confessed, that

if he has the truth, he has also the obscurity, of an oracle. Yet amidst the perplexed and tangled disquisitions, with which his writings abound, you meet occasionally with a splendid simile or a glorious burst of poetry, which produces upon the irritated mind, the same startling delight, the same rich relief which occurs to him who, wandering through a thick and undergrown forest by moonlight, comes suddenly upon a clear, amphitheatral opening, where the moon is reposing calmly on the silent grass, and shedding its silvery lustre upon the green-topped trees; he pauses for a moment to gaze on the heaven-decked scene, and breathe in freedom the expansive air; a spring of love bursts from his heart; he blesses nature for her gladness, and plunges again into the thicket, refreshed and invigorated in soul. The obscurity of Herand and Hazlitt proceeds from a very different cause from Coleridge's; for 'true, no meaning puzzles more than wit.' Hazlitt's thoughts are like the illuminated letters in the old manuscripts; so overlaid with ornaments that you cannot get at the meaning; and when you do fathom it, it is but the fragment of the sign of an idea."

"Let not Coleridge," said Mr. Rolle, "that 'spirit, still, of height unknown,' be classed with that servile company who wore his livery and disgraced his name. In the store-house of criticism there is no line which has measured the depth of his seeing; no glass has yet descried the height of his imaginings. With his works before you, it baffles you to comprehend and to measure the extent of his powers. His mind was a different faculty from that of other people; it was an extraordinary combination of perception, feeling, and imagination, and all these qualities seemed to be exerted at once; it was as if he had observed with his heart, and thought with his fancy. You look upon his discoveries in the tracts of truth, with the surprise and awe with which you would watch a man performing operations by means of a new and peculiar sense. He stood at the centre whence poetry, morals, and metaphysics originate, and he commanded them all. He became a poet by piercing all the mysteries of philosophy, and a

philosopher, by treasuring all the revelations of poetry. It would take a life-time to exhaust his discoveries. His sentences are heavy with rivelled thought; they are swollen with pregnant conceptions."

"Coleridge thought in metaphor," said Wilkins, "and that makes a brilliant but not an accurate thinker. His invention was endless, but he was destitute of judgment. He could analyse in detail illimitably, but he could not compose or embrace many rival suggestions. A master intellect habitually contemplates every thought in its relations to all other kindred or opposing thoughts; the entrance of Kehama into Padalon is an emblem of the manner in which a great mind reaches truth. Coleridge could invent theories, but he could not choose between them; he could broach opinions, but he could not tell their value. He could build systems and he could defend them; but he could not demonstrate the truth. In fact, Coleridge was a poet; the greatest, perhaps, that ever lived; but he was no more than a poet. He carries into all researches the spirit of a dreamer by the lonely woods. All his thoughts have been bathed in the tide of the passions; his reasonings seem to be wet with sensibility. His breast is momently swept with the gusts of feeling; his sentences seem to tremble with feeling. There never was a mind in which the materials of poetry lay in richer or more splendid profusion."

"As a poet for this life, I prefer Wordsworth to all his contemporaries," said Rolle; "I hope to read Coleridge in another. I look upon Coleridge as one who, in the cycle of progressive being, had got ahead of the rest of mankind by two or three stages of existence. I imagine, however, that if Pericles were alive, he would prefer Campbell to all the poets of this time. But if you require feeling in poetry, there is no one richer in the wealth of the heart than Mrs. Hemans. With what luxurious Sybaritism of sensibility she atmosphered her mind! She seems to have realised to the fancy the delicious impossibilities with which Volpone tempted Celia:

Your bath shall be the juice of July flowers,
Spirit of roses and of violets!"

"I cannot join in the high admiration which you express of Coleridge," said Dr. Gauden. "I confess myself unable to take the distinction which is very usually admitted between the man and the author. I cannot respect even the intellectual qualities of one who lived, like Coleridge, in open defiance of the most solemn and sacred duties of life. There must have been something very unsound in the perceptions of a mind that did not see and admit that the obligations resting on a husband and father were paramount to all personal aspirations after Fame or even Wisdom. If virtue and poetry are inconsistent, no man who has just notions of the real value of reputation, would hesitate which to renounce.

Integra sit morum tibi vita; Hæc Pyramis esto:
Et poterint tumulo sex satis esse pedes."

"I fully admit the weightiness of the suggestions which you make," said Wilkins; "but before we condemn a man like Coleridge, let us consider the mighty temptations which assailed him. Let us remember how nearly we have been destroyed by the puny passions which have played through our breasts, and let us not mock the mighty ruin over which the hottest ploughshares of hell have been urged. The strong seductions and fierce trials of the heart of genius who shall estimate? Such men are in a raging tumult even from their very birth; they are living always in the midst of tempests, and never, during life, enjoy the blessing of clear vision or calm touch. They are never masters of themselves; but their will is swayed, like a wave-mounted ship, by the surgings of the sea of passion. What does an ordinary mind know of the inner storm and whirlwind, as it were, of restlessness,—the craving after excitement and high action,—the inability to calm the breast and repose in fixity,—the wild beatings and widowed longing after sympathy,—which rack those hearts which are born with the ocean's temper and the lion's mettle. The feeling which attends these high en-

dowments is like a caged panther, that rages to leap upon some satisfying object, and if barred from that, boils and lashes tumultuously in its den. Then consider how hard a task it is for the lofty intellect to learn humility,—for the blood-royal of proud genius to be tutored,—for the far-glancing, eagle-eyed, eagle-spirited soul to be schooled in the dull lore of duty. About the heart of genius the passions gather as to a stately midnight banquet: hard-breathing Ambition, frowning, stone-eyed,—deep-masked Love, scattering from his censer dimming fumes and enervating odours,—coarse-vested Pride, with curling lip, ready to pluck his eye out if it be admired,—lean Sensibility, quick-glancing, pale-cheeked and vulture-beaked. Existence is to such men anguish; every pulse is pain; their breath is a sigh. The inward and incessant self-strife of the spirit,—the instinctive jar and discord of the feeling,—the inevitable chasing of the soul even in its calmest hours and quietest moods,—will move the heart to tears without a grief. Shall we wonder that this constant suffering makes them reckless, and saps and shatters the moral being? It is the severe lot of genius that its blessedness should be its bane; that that wherein its heavenly franchise gives it to excel mankind, is the point wherein it should be cursed above its brethren. For its high privilege is to taste of pleasures inappreciable to mortal tongue; in the empyreal privacies of lonely thought to enjoy the manna of angelic natures,—in the fragrant bowers of fancy to feast on dream-food,—

> On honey-dew to feed,
> And drink the milk of Paradise.

Thus is its taste depraved by its celestial birthright: and thus does its craving after rich and strange delights render it ever restless amid the pale joys, and cold and quiet offerings of the earth. To suffering also it brings the same exquisite sensibility as to pleasure; it is Apician in its griefs; pursuing and extracting the taste of wo through all its hidden forms. The spirit that abides in the still valleys of contented mediocrity can know as little of the gigantic sorrows and sufferings and allure-

ments and goadings of a great soul that mounts amid the shelving cloudage of the highest skies, as the shaded pool can know of the deep sweeping currents of the sea, or the swelling whirlpool of a gulf. Let the shore thick-strewn with the wrecks of gallant ships, and let the haggard and storm-stained state of the vessel which has escaped, declare the perils of the deep; and let the utter destruction of Burns and Byron and Rousseau and Mirabeau, and the rent and shattered escape of Johnson and Hall and Collins, confess that genius is an awful gift.

> The lowest slave,
> The veriest wretch of want and care,
> Might shudder at the lot that gave
> To genius Glory and Despair.

Seeing that these things are so, 'Quod ergo tantis auxilium malis?' may we not ask with the Italian poet—

> Ecquid Platonis docta volumina,
> Cultique præceptor Lyceï
> Sollicitam recreare mentem,
> Modumque curis figere tristibus
> Possunt? vel auri perpetuo fluens
> Rivus? vel in sublime tollens
> Per titulos popularis aura?
> Fomenta sunt hæc prorsus inania;
> Luduntque falsa vulgus imagine;
> Vulgique primores acuti
> Viribus ingenii tumentes.
> At tu beatam docere si cupis
> Vitam, periclis liber ab omnibus
> Adhæreas Deo, piaque
> Mente sacrum venerare numen.
> Hinc hauries veram et sapientiam,
> Verumque honorem, et divitias; ferus
> Quas nec tyrannus, nec fremendi
> Vis rapiat truculenta belli.
> Quicquid bonorum cernitur usquam,
> Hoc fonte manat: quo sine, quis, licet
> Terrasque, cœlumque regna
> Possideat, miser usque vivit.

It is, indeed, a noteworthy fact that no man possessed of that character of genius which is attended with very susceptible feelings, has ever escaped moral shipwreck,

except under the pilotage of ardent religion. Long was Coleridge the sport of the wayward winds of passion; but he found at last the quiet harbour. Doctor, can you remember his opium, when you read his letter to little Kinnaird?"

"When I call to mind," said Dr. Gauden, "the history of the Popes and Spensers of another day, and the Scotts and Southeys of our own, I must hesitate before I admit that genius always requires this special dispensation. If you would compare the moral tone of true genius with spurious,—of that poetical ability which springs from the soundness of the head, with that which is generated by the corruption of the heart,—contrast Lord Byron with Mr. Southey. Byron's enervating interest is like the fatal sweetness of the panther's breath and body; Southey's untainted vigour has the fragrance of the free mountain air of virtue: the one degrades and belittles the reader; the other exalts and strengthens him: the one is 'naturally inclined to believe the worst, which is the certain mark of a mean spirit and a wicked soul;' the other is generous with 'the princely heart of innocence.' Southey is of the royal lineage of ancient genius, and has the robust and warrior-blood of the old kings of wisdom: with the lascivious pleasing of modern favourites,—the perfumed softness of these immortals of a season,—he has no kindred. Most of us 'destine only that time of age to goodness, which our want of ability will not let us employ in evil:' Southey has consecrated to virtue the best vigour of his manly days. With one or two exceptions, I confess that I rarely trouble myself to open any of these late volumes of elegant literature; and when I do, I usually find that no faculty is exercised except my memory. The remains of the old temples at Athens have served as the materials of all the structures that have been erected there during many centuries, and the quarry of Pentelicus has not been opened since Phidias and Praxiteles digged beauty from its bosom. The material condition is but an emblem of the intellectual; the moderns have never visited nature as their ancestors did, but have been contented to trans-

pose, to vary, and reset the gems which their bold predecessors seized from the treasury of her wealth. While I allow the moderns to dictate upon all subjects relating to the economy of life,—since, that matter being founded on experiment, the latest production is likely to be the best,—for all that adorns and charms existence,—for elegance in poetry, and purity and strength in prose composition,—we must turn to the models of another time. The throne of science may be founded in cities, the resorts of manhood; but the shrine of the muses is in the valley of our childhood. Thither will we retire from the mechanical and 'busy hum of men,' to listen to those masters who 'instruct without clamour, and heal without stripes.' The fresh vapours that curled about the mountain-tops, melted in the morning of our existence into streams of crystal purity, with which the narrow and muddy rivulets that gurgle at midday, may not be compared. Life is not long enough for all knowledge, and while we linger among the moderns, we may be neglecting the wisdom of antiquity for ever. Non refert quam multos, sed quam bonos habeas libros; multitudo librorum onerat non instruit, et satius est paucis auctoribus te tradere, quam errare per multos. I am at least sure of meeting among the ancients, what will neither vitiate my principles, nor deprave my passions; but much that will better fit me for the duties of life, the only thing that is valuable in life. The sounding extravagances of Byron and his fellows, are to me but as music to a deaf man's ear; and I could wish," added the doctor, rising, "that on my tomb might be inscribed a sentiment, like that on Evelyn's; 'In an age of extraordinary events and revolutions, he learned that all is vanity which is not honest, and that there is no solid wisdom but in real piety.' "

CHAPTER XI.

"Fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity,
Sound sense, and love, itself, and mirth, and glee,
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."
WORDSWORTH.

I HAD accepted an invitation to a dance at Mrs. ——. It was late when I entered the rooms, and they were fully crowded by the thousand and one persons whom all manner of motives call together on such occasions. Mingling in the streams which flowed devious around the dancing parties like the water around the eyotts of the Bosphorus, I submitted to "roll darkling down the torrent of my fate," till the destinies of the voyage at length brought me to a corner where I effected a landing, and paused to make my observations. My meditations were interrupted by the gay voice of my old friend Seward.

"My good fellow, how d'ye do? I am glad in sooth that you are here, for the evening is so warm that I was about to melt, thaw and resolve into *adieu!* but I shall cool near you, for you are looking as frigid as the faith of Zeno."

"Your presence is to me," said I, "as manna in the desert. I am half a stranger here, and as you know every body by nature whether you have ever seen them or not, pray give me a *catalogue raisonnée* of this goodly companie."

"Any catalogue of the women," said Seward, looking deliberately around the room, "of the unmarried ones that is, would be a *sale catalogue*, I suspect, rather than a rational one. To begin, this is an article in front of us to which I would call the attention of purchasers; a volume in magnificent preservation, and lettered, but wholly free from gilt. Years of hours has passed over

her, like their index over the clock's face, recording changes, [illegible] unchanged."

"Perhaps," said I, "she has lived so long that she has passed from the influence of time, into the changeless regions of Eternity."

"One would be afraid to touch that woman," continued Seward, "lest she should crumble to dust at the contact. Were you to meet her in the vestibule of the British Museum, you would imagine that you had stumbled by mistake on the Egyptian room. Pettigrew would be in ecstasies with her. If she should happen to lose her title to life, which is generally a copyhold at the will of the Lord, she might continue to hold by prescription."

"Her memoirs would form an interesting volume."

"I am told that she is preparing her reminiscences of the court of Cleopatra. Next to her is a lady who should figure in Dr. Askew's catalogue; she squints like the queen in a pack of cards, and has a bitter pride of soul corresponding.

> Full sixty years the world has been her trade;
> No passion gratified, *not e'en* her hate.

She has thorough experience of life, and that experience has made her temper as stinging as coloquintida. It is the unpartaken privilege of the loftiest minds to know the world without being disgusted with it. Earth has seen but one man who could draw a Falstaff after having painted a Timon."

"What a contrast," said I, "to the bright scene which we now behold, would be exhibited, if we could have the inner bosom of this company laid before us!"

"Yes," replied Seward, "gay as these people seem, many a smiling face is but the mask of cheerless misery, or ferocious passion. Here is the mother's desperate game; the neglected wife's sad counterfeit of joy; the heart-sickness of the unnoticed well-born poor, and the embittered struggle of the low-born rich; the weary disappointment and renewed mortification of the fading beauty 'withering on the thorn;' and the anxious jealousy of the rivalled *belle*. It is a fortunate thing, my

dear Pulteney, that Momus' plan of a windowed breast was not adopted. Every heart knoweth its own bitterness, and heaven bears witness that that knowledge sufficeth. Do you see that blushing rose-bud of forty?"

"Yes, does she not paint?"

"She is now only *party*-coloured; she is blue in the morning, and vermilioned at night. Though awkward and ugly she is a charming intellectual woman, being like a Corinthian column, chiefly ornamented at the top. If her mother had not been, like St. Paul, in labours most abundant, she would have formed a very desirable connexion; but as it is, instead of getting a handsome estate of entail, she will only get the beggarly tale of an estate."

"Society and the law," said I, "in this country, agree like a miser and his son; the sole object of the one being to collect, and of the other to dissipate."

"The involuntary respect which the world pays to rich men," said Seward, "has always been to me a matter of marvel. We despise power when we are beyond its reach, and we hate the man of blood; but we pay studious homage to rich men who we know can never possibly benefit us; we crook the knee to wealth where no 'thrift can follow fawning.' Now there is a fat brute; the very Mount Blank of the human intellect; vulgar, low-born, and illiterate; yet he commands more deference and attention than any man in the room, 'or woman either;' and all through a successful voyage to the Indies. The cause of this passes my understanding."

"The reason," said I, "is, that definite superiority is always more impressive than indefinite, though the latter be greater; hence blood is more respected than talent, and money more than blood."

"There is a cant," said Seward, "of believing that wealth is more potent in this country than in others; but that, like all popular talk, is false. Gold every where is magical; there is not a government in the world which is not essentially a chrysocracy. Aladdin's lamp we may be sure was of silver."

"The reason of the mistake," said I, "is, that in other

countries, wealth and rank are generally united; the presence of the latter implies the existence of the former, and the reverence which is offered to the one is supported by the other. The power of money is equally felt every where; it is more acknowledged here. The regard for it is less concealed, and creeps more into our daily speech."

"Yes," replied Seward, "we instinctively take *worth*, as Cleopatra took a speech of Anthony, in a 'dolorous sense.' That old fellow we were speaking of, is quite a poet: the muses, I suppose, alighted upon him by mistake for Mount Helicon. The sight of a person like him must first have suggested the application of the name of 'Microcosm' to man. He is a bachelor, and wisely remains so; for though Bentham treats of marriage as an 'œconomical' relation, he more justly esteems it an expensive one."

"Who is that that just nodded to you?"

"His name is Somers; he is a perfidious parasite, poor and a *parvenu*; but one whose constant sprightliness makes him always agreeable. Though every body's very obedient servant, his language is generally that of a superior, and his bearing singularly independent; for he has sense enough to know that in order to have his voluntary servitude accepted, he must proffer it with the condescension of a master. We court the subjection of an assuming man of fashion because we please ourselves by thinking that we command the ruler of others. The acceptance of a favour is always accompanied by a slight sense of inferiority in the accipient, and we love not to be obliged by one whose crouching we contemn. To rule securely we must in reality serve; to serve profitably we must in appearance rule."

"What is his profession?"

"He entered an attorney's office, some years ago, but never seriously obeyed the 'Law's serious call.' The few clients he had, he lost by idleness; for a lawyer's fee is always a fee conditional. At the most flourishing period, I imagine he could not be considered as more than a monoptote in his profession. His carelessness, I suspect, compels him to the profession of a crane-

ologist—one conversant with the habits of the long-*billed* species. He lives, as they say, by his wits; but how long that means of subsistence will continue I know not, for to come to one's money's end soon brings one to one's wit's end. He is 'clean gone for ever;' for the continued habit of doing wrong has in him eaten out those habits of doing right which the soul brings from heaven, and he has utterly lost his self-respect. Take warning my son, and fall not into dangerous ways. Commit crimes occasionally if you like, but avoid the *practice* of small evils. We talk of acquiring a habit; we should rather say, being acquired by it. Habit is the janisary power in man; passion and principle the antagonist revolutionary powers for evil and for good. How often the latter will prevail may be judged from there being but one Mahmoud in history, and one Henry the Fourth in fiction."

"Thank you for your counsel. Who is that *distrait*, but manifestly affected youth by the wall?" said I.

"A young man of moderate talents but morbid egotism; who, having read that Byron, and Shelley, and Gray, and a hundred more were silent and distant in company, cherishes the same awkwardness with all the enthusiasm of sympathetic talent. *Vitium, Gaure, Catonis habes.* Half the vices and most of the absurdities of young men arise from their not discovering that they are not men of genius."

"Men who live alone among their books," said I, "can scarcely ever take the just measure of their own minds. But a little conversation with business or society soon clears the judgment, and the running stream shakes off the mantling self-conceit that has creamed in repose."

"Yes, for that kind of morbidness, as for private injuries, the remedy is by action. There is a person before you, of whom it were an even wager at any given moment, whether he be in the theatre or the church—whether he be fighting cocks or presiding at a prayer-book society. He is a professional *roué*, and an *amateur* Christian. For Christianity like the rest of the fine arts, has its professors, its critics, and its amateurs;

the Catholic church containing the most professors, the Presbyterian the most critics, and the Episcopal the most *amateurs*."

"He belongs, I suppose," said I, "to that extended class of persons who are churchmen without being believers."

"Just so; and the demagogue bishop of —— stands in the same company."

"Is *he* not sincere?"

"As Wordsworth says,

> He is sincere
> As vanity and fondness for applause,
> And new and shapeless wishes will allow.

The best defence of him that his best friend could make, would be that, in his ardent fancy he has so completely identified himself with his cause, that what the world deems selfishness he persuades himself is devotion. I can pardon all but his writings; for though he plumes himself upon them, and seems resolved, like St. Paul, to show his faith by his *works*, his literary pretensions are beneath contempt. His mind is a small one, and seems to have been fed from youth on the literature of newspapers and souvenirs. The trash of quotations with which his brain is crammed and his writings are larded, render applicable to him the epithet of Shirley about Prynne 'voluminously ignorant;' yet when you pass on to the original part, you cannot help exclaiming, 'would God it were all quotation.' His harp, too, hangs by the waters of Babble-on; and that is the saddest part of all, for 'a fool in verse is twice a fool in prose.'"

"I am afraid, my dear Seward, from your manner of treating the pious, that you are 'little better than one of the wicked.' I should be afraid to go to church with you, lest, like Robert Morris, you should alarm the congregation by knocking at the door."

"They tell a good story of Sheridan in that matter," replied Seward. "The witty statesman and dramatist was once prevailed on to go to church with his wife, or perhaps entered the sanctuary to avoid a creditor.

It was the first time in his life he had ever been there, and he was profoundly ignorant of the etiquette of the place. The only public assemblies with which he was acquainted were the House of Commons, and the Theatre; and reasoning from the analogy of the most respectable, as soon as the clergyman began, 'Let all the earth keep silence,' Sherry roared out with vehement good will, "Hear! hear! hear! hear him! hear him! hear him!' The astonished visages of the congregation soon convinced him that he was wrong, and drawing on his other source of experience, as soon as the exhortation was finished he began to clap lustily, and pound with the end of his cane. Finding that this blunder was worse than the last, he roared to the Sexton, 'here, box-keeper, let me out of this box;' and made his way home from his first, last, and only visit to the steeple-house."

"To recall you to your Asmodean occupation, pray who are those two persons conversing near the window?"

"They are two brothers, and of the most opposite characters possible. It is marvellous how two persons coming from the same source and going through the same scenes, should be so different. One has grown sillier and pleasanter every year; the other, shrewder and severer every day. The head of the one and the heart of the other have met the bustle of the world as an ice and an egg meet the fire; the one becoming softer and the other harder. The latter of them, though otherwise much a gentleman, is a great dealer in proverbs: and rightly, for the unwritten wisdom of the world is greater than that which has been penned. There is a person near them whose history proves how politically and socially as well as morally true is the sentiment that one man plants and another reaps the harvest. He is a merchant, once of great wealth, who ruined himself by undertaking great schemes which others of less ability are now prosecuting with boundless profit. It is always so: the first founder of a great scheme of wealth, though he may begin as rich as the cream I am eating, will infallibly terminate, like the end

of most of the towns of India, *poor*. When he retires to starve on a crust,

> Then in the vulgar yelling press,
> And gorge, the fruits of his success."

"There is Scribbleton, the tourist, I see," said I. "He has 'done,' France and Austria, and I presume will soon despatch America."

"I met him once," said Seward, "on a steamboat in the west, and happening to have a copy of Xenophon's Memorabilia under my arm, I complimented myself on the similarity of literary taste which our choice of the same author for a travelling companion exhibited. 'How so?' said he, with a puzzled air. 'Why,' said I, 'I travel with the Reminiscences of Socrates, and you with the Expedition of Cyrus.' What I most admire in Scribbleton is his sacred regard for truth; he esteems it far too highly to allow a grain of it to be thrown away upon a volume of travels. There was some difficulty lately about securing the right of publishing some of his tours, and I advised his publisher, if he could not get a copy-right for them as books, to take out a patent for them as inventions. Those professional tourists who come forth one after another and gather up and tell the ten-times-repeated nothing about the country, put me in mind of a sort of bird called the alcedo, which frequents the channel of the Bosphorus. For the flight of these birds no motive is known; they seem to be impelled by a restless instinct to keep perpetually moving up and down the narrow strait; when they arrive at one sea, they wheel round and return to the other. The French call them 'les âmes damnées,' because they never have rest. Their flight is as still as death, and no one ever heard the sound of their wings. These tourists are as restless, as senseless, and as dull: would God they were as silent."

"It is these fellows, I imagine," said I, "who keep up the irritated feeling which has so long existed between England and America; they sow contempt, and they reap hatred."

"That feeling was inevitable by the relation in which the countries stood as elder and younger brother, and is now passing away because the relation is approaching equality. America had always been looked on as 'the boy,' and it was forgotten that the boy would some time become a man; England was jealous, that one whose swaddling-clothes were still in the drawer, should presume to argue and even claim control. But the alienation is not natural, and cannot continue. I, as an American, claim share in the glories of England before the revolution, as the glories of our own parent; I claim share in her honours since then, as the honours of our own brother. Mutual pride has hitherto kept us apart; but as we are the child, and also made the breach, I think that the offer of restored union should come first from us: sure I am that it would be responded to. I would say to America in the words of the poet:

Incipe MAGNE puer, *risu* cognoscere matrem."

"Scribbleton," said I, "is an example of a tourist who has reaped the mental but not the moral benefits of travel. He has been far, seen much, and thought deeply; but he has never escaped from that atmosphere of proud diffidence and sensitive contempt which he first brought with him from his study. Moon-like, he has moved around the world, but always revolved about his own axis. He has tasted the world, but has not used the medicine of society. In crowds, and looking outward, he has been alone, and living inward."

"The man who lives alone," said Seward, "is apt to forget the individuality of others; the man who lives in society, is apt to forget his own. The former becomes egotistic, the latter, impertinent; the one is scornful, the other undignified. Contempt is the disease of solitude. Ascribe to residence and not to reason, the bitter gibes of Byron, Landon, Brydges and Southey."

"To the union between literature and society may be ascribed, I imagine, much of the decline of that ferocious acrimony which defeatured the writings of the

old scholars. That spirit of 'war to the knife,' which wishes the pen were a poniard, now lingers only in the theological lists. The church is, still, often defended like the altar, by railing. The time has passed in which the moral character perished with the critical reputation, but it is still held that nothing but a *knave* can divide the church."

"The reformation, or the principle which it asserted, bred these broils. Under the thick blanket of infallibility, we had still snoozed without a dream."

"Agitation was a necessary consequence of reviving knowledge. Light always breeds a tumult in the air. There are two gases which, being mixed, are quiet in the shade and explode in the sun: thus, also, in churches and in nations, the elements of discord repose in quiet union beneath the darkness of ignorance, but become volcanic in the brightness of learning. The reformation was less a consequence of the regeneration of Europe. A new spirit was arisen, and it became necessary that its entity and distinctness should be formally proclaimed; it was proclaimed by one profession in the name of the whole. It is commonly said that Luther failed; that is not true. The reformation and the Crusades succeeded, without triumphing: they did not conquer, but they saved Europe from barbarism. And the friends of religion, morality, and good politics must generally be content to gain their point without the victory."

"One's reason is with the new church, to be sure, but one's taste is with the old one: it was a structure so massive and imposing."

"Quite mass-ive enough, and rather too imposing," said Seward. "By-the-by, I went, the other day, into a 'dissenting' church; and I am surprised that these congregations should be charged with departing so much from the Catholic practice: for I found that if they *had* abandoned the 'canon,' they retained the 'missa sicca,' or 'dry service,' in perfection. One of the worst things about the reformation was its breaking up the ability and taste for building cathedrals. The moral influence of a Duomo is as valuable as its æsthetic. I

cannot feel piously in the modern barn-like structures, which are, like the terrace of the infernal palace seen by Vathek and Nouronihar, 'd'une architecture inconnue dans les annales de la terre.'"

"Do you see those old prudes sitting along the wall there, like Caryatides? I would give something to know *who* is the subject of their conversation."

"They are doubtless infinitely scandalised," said Seward, "by the short sleeves and low bosoms of some of these fair creatures. A woman becomes the guardian of virtue in others, as St. Angelica became the patroness of teeth—by losing her own. I lately offended one of those matrons, carelessly, and I have suffered more than if I had lost an eye. Would God, Stanley, that in life as in law, a deed without consideration were void."

"Who is that foppish fellow with a glass at his eye?"

"A *beau:* but so ill-tempered a person that I call him a balistre, or cross-*bow*, especially as he shoots a keen shaft, when he will. He claims to be descended from worthy ancestors; and the length of the *descent* is, I believe, not denied. He is greatly attached to a young lady, whom he is too vain, or too lazy to woo; contradicting, therein, the definition of the law books, that attachment is the means whereby a man is compulsorily brought to court."

"He may find, as many before him have done, that an attachment neglected is followed by distress infinite."

I left Seward, and strolled into an adjoining room. Standing in the centre of it, in profound abstraction, was a certain Mr. Jones, a man of much sense and science, but the oddest creature in the world. He was one of those persons who seem to have no consciousness of a world of thought or action external to their own peculiar existence and perceptions, and by consequence, lack all feeling of the ridiculous. He had formerly been librarian to some public institution, and his memory, one of Magliabecchian or Giraldian extent, was possessed of all that strange lumber of editions, dates and bindings which Dibdin and the rest of them

have classified into a science. How such a man found himself in a ball-room, it would be as difficult to explain as to tell how any one can read La Martine's Pilgrimage, or a Bridgewater Treatise, or do any other impossible act: probably, the man himself would be the most puzzled of all inquirers to unravel the mystery.

Having, by a series of vigorous efforts, made him at length, aware of my existence and presence, I asked his opinion of Ampère's Theory of Galvanic currents.

"The best exposition of that hypothesis," said he, in a tone that might make the hearing and the deaf change characters, "is to be found in a volume on Galvanism, published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, Pater-noster Row, London, 1826, twelve-mo, hot-pressed, one volume, price ten shillings, boards. The impression is extremely incorrect, although printed by A. Strahan, Law-Printer to the King's most excellent Majesty, Printer's street, London. For example, on page two, signature B, line fourteenth from the bottom, I met with so gross an error as a zero instead of a three in the fifteenth place of the denominator of a fraction. Such mistakes are rare in books issuing from the house of Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, Paternoster Row, London. The same work was translated into German, and published for the trade by Schweitz, Schwatz, and Schwitzheimer, Wien, price nine florins; fine paper copies eleven florins and a half, and extra-fine large paper, copies (only ten copies printed) price thirteen florins. The edition of Schweitz, Schwatz, and Schwitzheimer, Wien, I do not possess; but I have that of Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, London."

"And you adopt the theory, as expounded in this work by Messrs. Longname and Company, Paternoster Row, price ten shillings, boards?"

"To a certain extent: but in one point I agree with the view taken by Mr. De Nosta, Member of the Society of Arts at Paris, Fellow of the Royal Societies of London and Edinburgh, Member of the Copenhagen So-

ciety, of the Literary Society of St. Petersburg, Honorary Member of the Austrian Association, &c. &c. &c., Knight Companion of the order of Bavaria, Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, &c. &c., entitled 'The Memoirs on Magnetism and Galvanism,' Paris, Revère, rue de Saints-Pères, 1820, 8vo. nine francs, fifty centimes, half bound in sheep backs and corners gilt. His view differs from that supported in the work published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Longman, Paternoster Row, London, twelve-mo, hot-pressed, price twelve shillings, boards, in representing the cause of repulsion to consist in this position of the currents;" and Mr. Jones knelt down on the floor, and drawing a piece of chalk out of his pocket, began to describe his diagrams upon the carpet.

"My dear Mr. Jones," cried I, "it is not to be thought of, that such invaluable demonstrations should be delivered in circumstances where I can so imperfectly comprehend them: pray, reserve the proofs till I have the pleasure of visiting you at your chambers."

When I had succeeded in restoring him to his feet, I made my escape and returned to the dancing-rooms. There, in the midst of a brilliant circle of ladies, with every eye fixed on him in delight and admiration, stood Tyler, himself the gayest of the gay, and in dress and manner altogether native to the scene of fashion. I could not help pausing to admire the talents which enabled this man to change, at pleasure, from the circle of grave debate to the throng of pleasure, with no change of distinction, or abatement of superiority, to command alike the respect of the inquirer after truth, and to fascinate the gaze of the follower of amusement. I had admired, before, the eloquence of his discourse, and the deep penetration of his mind, and my interest was enhanced when I now witnessed him master of the sparkling jest and the brilliant compliment, and observed his practised address, and the courtly ease, as of one "to the manner born," with which he mingled dominantly in the graceful strife.

I turned to another part of the room, and saw Emily

Wilson. I had met her once or twice since her coming to town, and with no other feelings than those of a common acquaintance. I approached her and offered myself to her as a partner in the next dance.

Wonderful, and above the rarest forms of brightness that flash upon the fancy, was the beauty of this girl. I turned in what I fancied the calm admiration of a secure indifference, to look upon her as she stood invested with enchantment, as if it were a drapery. Absorbed by the deep impression of her loveliness, and unconsciously drawn back over the bright links of a long-darkened memory, with the doubtful and surprised interest of one to whom in some careless waking mood, the marvellous pictures of an unremembered dream successively occur for the first time, did I gaze upon her countenance. As I looked upon the splendid neatness of her vestal purity, and studied the mild brilliance of her dark and morbid eye, which fascinated the beholder by the potent gentleness of virgin fear, and made another's heart more timid than itself, her fair brow, whereon was throned perfect peace, and her lip, which smiled to please itself, and not to win notice from others, I felt as he may feel who unconsciously has clasped a pebble in his hand all night, and finds, by the returning light, that pebble is a diamond. There are women, and not unlovely ones, of whose beauty the whole expression is resident *upon* the face; the countenance of Emily was as a shield whereon an inward spirit leaned and looked out.

It was then, as I gazed upon her amid the swell of music, and the blaze of lamps, and the exciting scene of festive splendour, that love returned upon my heart. A fresh and manly spirit, refined from the turbid vehemence of my first wild passion, now flowed through my spirit with a breathless gladness. The recollection of the months just passed, which had wrought upon my nature with a transforming might, rolled away like a globed dream, and the gorgeous lights of youth streamed through the interval, illumining with the unreal splendours of the dawn, the firm-based perceptions of the

present time. All the magnificent hopes of former years came back upon me, purged of their palpable falsity, yet glowing with fervid vigour. Long had my thoughts been estranged from her, and my ancient aspirations strangled in oblivion; but I remembered now that it was for *her* that I had laboured and lived lonely; that she, the life-giving goddess to my former schemes was still living, the same but lovelier; that naught had perished of the foregone drama, but that all might be again renewed and realised. These thoughts passed rapidly through my mind, and love rose, tide-like, through my soul. Like the deep joy which we feel when reconciled to a dear friend with whom we have quarrelled, was the gladness which I experienced when thus reconciled to my former self. Perhaps, to speak accurately, it was another and a diverse emotion which sprang up within me, rather than an old one which was renewed, one with which feeling had more to do, and fancy less; but it carried me back to forgotten days, and made me a boy again.

When the dance was ended, we walked out upon the terrace which extended behind the rooms, to escape from the uncomfortable heat of the ball-room. It was one of those mild and calm winter nights, when the absolute stillness of the air prevents the impression of the cold that may be in it, and gives a soft and mellow feeling to weather that might otherwise be chilling. The moon was shining in cloudless splendour, as white as snow; and shedding its pale beams through the foliage of the trees and tall bushes in the garden, threw a latticed shade upon the walks. It was a scene of beauty which refined though it stirred the spirit, and calmed the feelings while it made them intense.

"It is odd," said I, in a careless tone, for I was at a loss to know precisely what sentiments Emily might at this time entertain towards me, "it is odd that you and I, who were formerly so well acquainted, should, of late, have met so rarely. You have been here a month, and this is positively almost the first time we have spoken to one another."

"You cannot imagine that that is my fault."

"It has been accident, I suppose," said I, "but it is certainly strange."

"It was not my wish," said Emily, "that this estrangement should occur: but I could not call upon you, you know, or ask you to dance with me."

"Certainly, certainly; the blame is entirely mine. It was an hallucination, a madness. *Can* you forgive me?"

"I can," said she, with a trembling voice, after a moment's pause.

"My conduct has been insane, nothing short of it; but it was an insanity that did my feelings less discredit than my faith. I thought that you had forgotten me, because your calmer manner did not testify that burning recollection which consumed my being: I thought that you despised me, because your moderated tone did not satisfy that diseased craving for sympathy which infinite love could not have filled. The expectation was madness; but its overthrow, though inevitable, was far deeplier maddening. From the dull anguish of real disappointment, and the keen agony of imagined ridicule, I had no refuge but to root up all natural sensation, and to hurl affection loose into the boundlessness of self. What seemed a fault, was folly; and what looked wild and wanton, was wretchedness. The miserable recklessness into which I strayed, was more a wandering from myself than from you. The coming back is a return to my nature's truth rather than my words. You have not forgotten upon what pledge that moon looked once?"

"Could I?"

I paused for a moment, incapable of speaking by the violence of opposite emotions, I was then about to reply, when the sound was heard of some one coming from the other end of the garden, along the path on which we were.

"We had better go in," said Emily, and she turned towards the house.

"Will you be alone to-morrow morning?" said I. "I will come and see you."

"You will find me alone at one."

At the entrance of the dancing-room a gentleman claimed the hand of Emily, in virtue of a promise, for the next quadrille, and I lingered alone upon the terrace. The garden appeared to be perfectly silent, and after a moment it struck me as odd that the person whom we had heard approaching us, did not make his appearance, for if he walked forward but a few steps he would certainly be visible from where I was standing, and there was no other entrance into the house except by the window where I was. It now, too, occurred to me for the first time as surprising, how any one could have been standing beyond us in the garden without our hearing him. The whole space of the ground was small, and this man must either have gone round by one of the side-walks with the utmost silence, or have been standing there at first and remained to listen to our conversation; and nothing but a wish to put an end to our colloquy could have induced him to move at that moment, and that end being accomplished he did not appear any farther.

I stepped down from the terrace and went along the central path. I met no one, but as I reached the end I heard some one spring over the side wall with some noise into the street. My curiosity was excited, and I ran rapidly to the street-door of the house, to intercept the person as he came in,—for I had no doubt that it was one of the company,—and discover who it was. No one was there, nor was any one visible in the adjacent streets. I returned back to the garden, and found Mr. Tyler strolling in it.

"Mr. Stanley," said he, extending his hand to me in his usual calm and gentlemanlike manner, "I regret that we have not met more frequently since you have been in town. I was intending to come and see you in a day or two to tell you of a source of amusement this city contains which you may not have heard of, in the shape of a club, and to put you in the way of entering

it if you felt so disposed. There are so few tolerably agreeable divertisements in this country, that I look upon it that when any man has discovered a new source of pleasure, a moral obligation rests upon him to communicate it to his friends. This society, of the construction and preservation of which I assume most of the credit, it has been very difficult to make up; for the Americans, as you must have observed, are about the most *unclubable* people on the face of the earth. There are no gentlemen so reserved and distrustful of one another. Every body seems to have a certain jealousy of his neighbour,—I speak, of course, of that class, only, with which we have any connexion,—the highest,—for the commons are associable enough. How different is this self-spiting suspicion from the careless *abandon* of the better sort of English society,—the delightful indifference of people conscious of standing indisputable; there is *there* no intrusion, no familiarity, and to strangers no unusual forwardness, but among acquaintances more true ease and sociableness than among any other nation that I have ever met with. I have seen and enjoyed this fine companionship, and have always been anxious to enjoy something of the same sort here. After many failures,—collecting widely and winnowing closely, losing the many who *would* not, and the more who *should* not come in,—I have succeeded in congregating about twenty persons, who constitute together a very pleasant band. I will at any time carry you to their place of meeting, if you would like to go, and you can afterwards decide whether you choose to be enrolled."

"Thank you kindly," said I. "I will join you with all my heart. I feel, strongly as you do, the necessity of men of leisure combining in self-defence against the men of business. The latter party trample upon us singly; we must unite to resist them. There are many people in the world who are thought dull because they are not appreciated: they would be pleasant and would elicit pleasure, if brought in union with others of the same description. I should describe England as a coun-

try, where every one, whatever may be his qualities, is sure to be appreciated, and that assurance is extremely agreeable."

"That you can certainly find those who will taste you, and whom you will taste, is one of the circumstances which makes that little island the pleasantest residence on the earth. I am surprised that any one whom weighty circumstances do not compel to live here, should live out of England; or, to speak more generally, that any one who can live in an old country, should live in a new one. Long practice and repeated experiments have caused the whole system of life to be brought to a far higher state of refinement in one land than in the other. There is the same difference that there is between a metropolis and a village: life in one is direct and decided, and looking to the substance; in the other it is constrained, embarrassed, and unindependent. America is a great country in the prospect, but not an agreeable one in the present. There is among the English a disposition to enjoy in passing, which the nervous agitation in which Americans live, looking only to the future, puts to flight. The former make the means their end; the latter divide the toil from the pleasure, and look on labour as a cheerless pilgrimage to the happy land beyond. The one live as they go; the other put off living till they are at leisure to do nothing but live. The man of principle who now resides in America, may be regarded as making an honourable self-sacrifice for posterity; but the man of pleasure who lives here is as foolish as the man who, being fond of shade, should, instead of buying a forest, purchase cleared ground and plant it with saplings."

"I should myself prefer to live among the English," said I, "because a natural relationship with them makes their country to us, like a father's house to a married son. But the people whom I most admire, and even envy, are the French. They have a philosophy against the ills of life, compared with which the philosophy of the schools is nothing,—the philosophy of the blood. They attain, as a nation, what sages and scholars, men

of thought and men of action, of old and now, in other countries, have striven for in vain. I regard them as being in truth the most rational and respectable people in the world; and that they are ridiculed by us is to be ascribed to that queer propensity in human nature to look upon the unhappy man with respect and the joyous man with contempt. The Parisian alone has discovered the important truth that it is not necessary to be happy in order to enjoy oneself. Still it does not follow that an American or an Englishman must be happy in Paris, although that mistake is constantly committed; their pleasure arises from what is within them, not around them."

"The nation which, for political and social advantages I should myself prefer to all others," said Tyler, "is Prussia. It is a nation which lives by law, and there is more freedom in that state than in any country in the world, as there is certainly less in America than in any other. And, indeed, it may be observed of every establishment, whether government, church, or party, that if its form is in one extreme, its spirit is likely to be in the opposite. If its constitution represents authority, its spirit will be liberty, and *versa vice:* if its profession is liberality, its practice will be exclusion, and the reverse. One reason of this is, that no danger being apprehended from that spirit which the form expressly exorcises, it is not guarded against in use, and soon enters either from the convenience of practice or the natural disposition of men; and for this cause the high-born are the most affable and the low-born the most exclusive:—a second reason is, that the administration of all extreme principles tends constantly to correct that wherein the principle is extreme; for, to prevent an extreme principle from becoming obnoxious or impracticable it must be tempered extremely:—a third reason is, that nothing can be practicable which is not, *in fact*, a mean, and that, consequently, if the form is in one extreme the spirit must be in the other, in order that the two be blended, or the one working through, and being muffled by, the other, may in operation constitute the

required medium. It is farther to be observed of liberty in democratic and despotic governments, that all definite assumptions, (as the royal prerogative in the one,) are limitations; while all indefinite concessions (as the popular privilege in the other) are without defence, because they are without bounds;—that in a monarchy the king has no party on his side, but the people are naturally opposed, or ready to be opposed to him, so that great forbearance must be exercised towards them; while, in a republic, the fact of one's being ruler is proof that a majority are attached to him, and will support him in all he undertakes;—and that the government of a republic is within the natural rule or principle on the subject, and is therefore interpreted widely; while the government of a despotism is an exception against admitted right and reason, and is, in exercise, necessarily expounded strictly. The Romish Church, of which the spirit was despotic, was, in its constitution, purely democratic,—the voluntary principle. The tyrannical government of the Roman Emperors was, in theory, entirely republican. In our time the most practical freedom is in China, Russia, and Prussia; and the vilest despotism on earth *may* be made of the mob-despotism of America. Much ruinous commotion and many a fatal revolution would have been avoided if people had understood that the spirit of a polity may be diverse from its form, and that not the principle, but the working of it only, is of importance. It is a principle of the English law, that the king has the direct and absolute ownership of all the land in the country, and that the landlord has no more than the mere right of using the soil; the former has 'absolutum et directum dominium;' the latter, only 'dominium utile.' But as the landlords can do more than use the land, they show their sense in not disturbing themselves about so idle a thing as the ultimate property: the Puritans would have fought about such a thing to the death. Why should a man of sense care that another should assume the right of cutting his head off when he chooses, if he knows that that power will never be exerted unless it is

deserved. When the Gracchan partisan at Rome was asked, 'If Caius Gracchus were to order you to fire the capitol, would you obey him?' he answered wisely, 'Yes; but he would never give such an order.' That assurance is the principle of protection in an enlightened despotism; and it is enough."

CHAPTER XII.

He who would live in cheerful mood,
Must rest in glimpses still:
But slightly hope to share the good,
Content to shun the ill.

WORDSWORTH.

Ehen! serenum quæ nebulæ tegant
Repente cœlum! quis sonus imbrium.

CASIMIR.

DELIGHTFUL were the thoughts, and delicious the hopes that visited my mind that night as I lay in sleepless happiness. Love is Nature. From ambition, from study, from pleasure and from toil, we start at some time, as from a dream, and deem that such life is madness: to love we turn with the full and unchecked satisfaction with which a chilled bird, long fluttering over the cheerless ground, at last folds its bill under its wing in its own warm nest, for we feel that affection is the home of the spirit. Love is the only mood of the feelings in which the heart bears witness unto itself, that it is rightly and wisely employed; it is the only employment of existence on which we do not look back with regret or condemnation. He who has wandered into the hardness of worldliness, and is arrested in his unprofitable errors by the strong hand of a pure attachment, feels, as he returns to kindliness, something of the satisfaction of a good conscience; for love is the erectness of the mind,—the unlost paradise of the moral life. And there is potential virtue in this sentiment, for it brings with it the airs of a holier clime than mortality

may assert, and gives testimony against the degradation of the world. It is the natural evidence of heaven. It teaches how real is the bliss which the unmaterial may give; and it tells, what no argument can evince, and what many a gifted intellect hath unluckily not known, or hath fatally forgotten, that the *spirit* can *feel*. Love sympathises with Piety, if present, and suggests it if absent; for the one is the health of the heart, and the other is the sanity of the soul.

Love, and its return, is the only *complete* enjoyment in life. It is the only state of which the happiness is in itself; in which to be is to be blessed. All other conditions are valued for what they bring, rather than for what they are; all, more or less, depend upon opinion for their worth. Of Love only, may the general principle be not affirmed, that if we

> Abstract what others feel, what others think,
> All pleasures sicken, and all glories sink.

It is well that we should have this tried assurance that there is a joy which the world can neither give nor take away. It is well that we should experience this feeling for a time, if it were only to enlarge our consciousness and elevate our hope.

Against the follies of the future, as well as the cares of the present, there descends no more healing or more fragrant balm upon the fretted soul, than when the spirit of the youthful heart nestles in the warm, soft thought of love. Let the sentiment be cherished; or, if past, let the bliss be remembered: for a thousand eager hearts have strayed into a cold and mad discomfort from not *knowing* of the still and sacred pleasure of pure love. When, therefore, a glancing eye, or a spring-white smile flashes on the high musings of the lonely mind, let the soft influence it heralds sink on thy heart with a subduing weight: the time may come, when the heaven of thy fancy will shed upon thy soul no drops like those.

I speak not now of that tumultuous and unpoised passion which will sometimes start within the breast,

and madden the heart with wild report of pleasure which it transcends the wish to shape; but the clear-eyed, though earnest, affection, which rests enriched in its own calmness, and is all-sufficient to itself. The former of these is fancy built on ignorance, and, by its very nature, must perish whenever it is realised. The latter is based upon profound and thorough experience, and seems but the renewing of a once-proved confidence, by the free-masonry of kindred hopes. The one is shunned by sobriety as much as it shuns the reason; the other is respectable before the judgment almost to religion.

We may conceive how the spirit on its entrance into a future world may be "changed in a moment," into a purity fit for the relish of celestial pleasures, when we observe how thoroughly in an instant a look or a blush can fling back the imagination and the heart into the simple tastes and sweet and mild visions of boyhood. To me, as at this time, my thoughts were floating in a golden air, the whole earth seemed transfigured into the mild glory of a paradisal world. The opal tints of spring-light were on all the forms that rose before my fancy. No memory appeared within my mind that was not tinged with pleasantness. The flush of young delight was new-purpling all in the air. Within the visible sphere, there rose and spread a summer world of balms and summer sounds, where Hope "reigned lord and king;" and all was endless life and all was splendid light. Whether it be to rear the sunny dome of just-approaching joys, or to hew out the Errool structures of dark apprehension, there is no architect like feeling. When quickened by gladness or fear, the subtle builder fills all the thought with instant-springing palaces, or dreary caves that have no bound.

As with the love of past years, the views and wishes and sentiments of past years returned upon me, the intermediate period seemed blotted from existence. The renewal of one common interest knit me wholly into union with my former self, and I but dimly remembered any other state or mood of life. It seemed now, as if

in that intermediary time, half of my moral life had been parlayzed, and as if my sense of all things must have been dim and dream-like; yet, while that time was passing, life seemed to pulse within me as fully and as naturally as at this moment. Such are the mysteries of our being!

It is wonderful how completely the feelings are, in their inception at least, under the control of the will. It is absolutely in the choice of a man whether a woman shall become to him an object of entire indifference, or whether the course of his thoughts and fancies shall be such that his spirit, bending to her as the ocean to the moon, must breathe by her glances and glow by her light. A week before I had looked on Emily without an emotion or an impression, because the *thought* of love was absent; now, she absorbed my every consciousness; she had become my mental being; every thought assumed her likeness; every recollection was fragrant with her sweetness: her memory garmented my soul. Her image multiplied itself through every pictured scene; wherever my sight was turned, she stood, with a fascination floating round her.

It was with a light step and a gay heart that I set out on the following morning to keep the appointment which Emily had permitted. I rang the bell and sent in my name; word was returned that Miss Wilson was engaged.

"Is she ill?" I inquired, with some anxiety.

"She is entirely well," said the servant.

"Is she not at home?" said I.

"She is at home, but engaged."

"Did she give you no message for me?"

"None."

I turned from the door, extremely surprised at this denial, and not a little vexed and sorry. I could not conjecture to what mistake on the one hand or the other it could be imputed. I could not have forgotten the hour that had been named, nor could my card very well have been mistaken; still, it was not possible, after what had passed between Emily and myself, to

attribute the refusal to deliberate inattention. I had, however, no means of satisfying the doubt until the lapse of a day gave me authority to call again; till which time, I must remain in doubt.

I was sitting at home in the evening of the same day, when Mr. Tyler was announced.

"The club, of which I spoke to you," said he, "sups together to-night. If you feel inclined to go out, we will walk down there."

"Certainly," said I, "I will go with you with great pleasure;" and I took my hat and went out in company.

We had walked on through two or three streets when we arrived in front of Mr. Tyler's house. "Excuse me for one moment," said he; "I want to get something here. If you will walk on, I will overtake you immediately."

I strolled on for a short distance and presently saw, by the lamp-light on the other side of the way, a man, whom I was sure was an old family servant whom my father had carried with him to the south. John Black was an important integral in my father's household, and I thought that I should have heard of his dismissal if it had taken place. Supposing, therefore, that if he were the person I thought him to be, he must have come to the north on some business for his master, I ran over and called him by name. He seemed delighted when he saw me, and exclaimed, "I am very thankful, sir, to have met you thus in person. I was just going to your house and should not have found you in. I have this moment come in town with this letter from your father; he ordered me to put it into your own hands, as it is of importance. I return to him immediately. He told me, also, sir, not to let any one see me give it to you, and to desire you to read it alone."

He gave me the letter and left me. I crossed back to the other side of the way, and seeing Tyler coming out of the door at that moment, I hastily thrust the package into my pocket, intending to come away from his club as soon as possible, and read it at my leisure.

I should have left him, and gone home at once, but to do so abruptly, might have given him offence, and to state the motive would have opposed the injunction of my father—an order which I resolved to obey strictly, because I did not understand it.

We walked a considerable distance beyond the frequented parts of the town, and passed through several winding streets quite unknown to me, before reaching the place which Mr. Tyler at length pointed out as the club-house. It was one of those large and princely structures which one meets with occasionally in the retired parts of a great city, of which the character and the position seem so much at variance that it is difficult to tell for what purpose it could ever have served, and which stands, amidst meanness and obscurity a monument of the caprice of wealth or the fickleness of fashion. The building had its front upon a narrow and deserted street, but the massive marble steps and heavy cornices which frowned in the moonlight, gave it a grand and imposing air. In the idlest mood you would have paused before such a building to guess what its history could have been.

We entered, and passed through a lofty arched hall into a large back room, where we found twelve or fifteen persons sitting at a supper-table. Mr. Tyler brought me to a seat near one end of the table, next to a person with whom I had some acquaintance, and as there was no other place near it went himself to the other end of the room.

The apartment was a handsone one, well lighted, and hung with pictures of a good deal of merit. An open door at the end led to a library which appeared to be elegantly furnished. I cast my eyes along the table to make my observations on the character of the company. Half a dozen of the number were persons whom I knew, and all of them men of fashion and fortune; the others had a gentlemanlike seeming, and the assembly, upon the whole, was one into which I could not but congratulate myself on finding entrance.

At this moment, however, I had no inclination to

enter into the gayety of conversation which appeared to be generally prevailing. My only consideration was how I should escape with the least awkwardness, and get home to read the letter which I had received from my father. My curiosity was strongly excited about it, and I felt anxious to know what motive could have dictated such a peculiar direction of secrecy and caution in receiving and reading it. The business which it related to, might require immediate action, and every moment that was lost might be of deeply unfortunate consequence. I accordingly made up my mind to retire from the table as soon as I could do so unobserved, and make my way home as speedily as possible.

I turned to the person sitting next to me, and asked him some question about the club. He told me that the rooms were open at all times, and that the members supped there every evening. A few minutes after, seeing that the attention of the company was at that instant engrossed by some peculiarly interesting topic of remark, I rose quietly from my seat and left the room.

When I reached the street door, I paused for a moment to see if my absence was noticed, for I thought it possible that Tyler or some other person might imagine from my abrupt departure that I was ill, and might come out to see what was the matter. As I stood there, a person came into the door, and at the same time some one entered the hall from a side room; the two men met and spoke to one another not seeing me, for I happened to be hidden from view by the shadow of a massive pillar in front of me. I lingered listening to their conversation from that sort of vague and mechanical curiosity which one has upon such occasions, and until I heard something that made me more than idly attentive.

"Well, Morton, when did you get back?" said the person who came from within.

"I reached town about an hour ago," said the other, "but without succeeding in the object of my journey. I got to Stanley as soon as horses could carry me there, but it was too late. I found that Thompson had

written to him, as we supposed—at least I inferred so from some remarks which fell from his lips, although I could get nothing from him directly. He either suspected my object, or his general habits of prudence kept him quiet. He is a sharp man, is Mr. Stanley; he deserves to have been a scoundrel. At night I made diligent inquisition among his papers for Thompson's letter, and found, by a memorandum, that it had been sent off that very afternoon, while I was in the house, to young Stanley here. There was not more than a moment that my eye was not upon him, but in that moment the mischief was done; an owl, you know, must cease its watch, to wink, and the brightest lamp will have its flickerings. Immediately I made this discovery, I set off in the hope of overtaking the messenger who had been despatched with the letter, but the same narrow failure again awaited me. The man whom I pursued did not arrive in town ten minutes before I did, and I made my way immediately to Stanley; I should have stationed myself in the house and obtained the packet by some means or other, but unfortunately Stanley had just gone out, I suspect with Harold, and, as I suppose the bearer of the letter must have met him in the street."

"Stanley," said the other, "is now in that room."

"Indeed! I must tell Harold at once that he has got that paper in his pocket at this moment, as I have no doubt that he has," returned the other: "if he goes out of this house alive, he goes without that packet;" and the two men went together into one of the side rooms, and closed the door.

The letter to which this person alluded was, of course, the one which my father's servant had handed me, and which, as had been conjectured, I had then upon my person. What were its contents I could not imagine; but I could not doubt the eagerness to possess it which suggested so long a journey for that single purpose, nor misunderstand the principle of action which prompted the ferocious remark which last fell upon my ear. Knowing that my absence would be soon discovered, and suspecting that pursuit might be made, I ran as rapidly as

possible, till I came up with a hackney coach, into which I threw myself and ordered the man to drive me home as fast as he could.

As soon as I had reached my own house, I took the immediate precaution of having every part of it fastened safely, so that I might be relieved from the fear of any of those attempts to possess this mysterious letter, which the unscrupulous anxiety of these persons might prompt them to make. I then set down to examine the parcel. The envelope contained a letter from my father, and another letter directed to him. The latter I laid upon the table. The letter of my father was as follows:

"MY DEAR SON,

"I send you this letter and its enclosure by my confidential servant, as the latter is of too much importance to be exposed to the perils of the post. I counsel you at the outset not to read them in any exposed place, nor to suffer *any one* to touch the enclosed paper.

"That paper relates to circumstances of much concern to yourself and me. As you are probably unacquainted with the facts to which it alludes, I will briefly explain them to you.

"You are aware that for a considerable part of my life, and indeed up to some years after your birth, I was the possessor of a large fortune, the whole of which was subsequently lost to me. The circumstances of that loss were these: at a time when from various causes there was a general disposition among men of wealth to engage in large monied speculations, and a strong temptation to do so, I became acquainted with a Mr. Thompson, a man possessed of fine powers of mind, and bearing a high character for judgment and integrity. After a briefer knowledge, than prudence would have sanctioned, I conceived a warm friendship for him, and we became extremely intimate. An opportunity for a profitable investment of money in the East India trade presented itself at this time, of which Mr. Thompson was anxious to take that advantage which his talents and acquaintance with business would

necessarily give him: he was, however, not master of capital enough to hope for much success. I at once became responsible for him in a considerable sum, which he adventured with good fortune, and from which he reaped a large profit. The obligation on my part was frequently renewed and always without loss, until I gradually became involved to the whole extent of my estate; at which epoch Mr. Thompson suddenly became bankrupt, and my whole fortune perished with his schemes. Most of his indebtedness was to a single person, Mr. Torrens, and to him my property was transferred. Mr. Thompson soon after left the country, and till recently, I never heard any thing about him.

"Last night, the accompanying letter was put into my hands. It is, as you will see, from him on his deathbed, and confesses the fraudulent nature of the transaction by which I was stripped of my fortune. He, it appears, was one of several persons who have for many years been leagued together for the purpose of aiding one another in their schemes; and I imagine that so much genius and so much depravity were never before united. Most of these men are in the highest ranks of society, and some of them are distinguished for character and consequence; and one or two are at this time occupying important situations under government. To such men it is manifest that reputation must be as dear as life, and the known possession of a secret like that communicated by Thompson might be fatal to the unwary possessor. Torrens was one of these persons, and of course, the obligation of Thompson to him was fictitious. He states, as you will see, that his engagements in commerce were undertaken at the suggestion of Torrens, who seems to have been the master-spirit of the company; and that their sole purpose was to involve me in the manner which I have described. These men are still pursuing their plans, though the names of none beside Torrens are mentioned. His mode of speaking of the incredible watchfulness and power of this party, suggested the caution which I gave you at first, respecting the secrecy to be observed as to this letter.

There is not enough stated by Thompson to vindicate my claims before a court of law; he says, however, that he has deposited other papers and deeds in the keeping of his private servant; and it is quite important that we should get them before any thing is known or done by Torrens or his friends. I shall take immediate steps for finding out this person, and will let you know if any thing is discovered. Meanwhile you cannot observe too much caution. Those whom we fear are probably near you.

"I offer you my congratulations on the prospect of recovering these estates, which will now be of very great value. You will hear from me again as soon as any thing farther has occurred.

"Your affectionate father,

"ATKYNS STANLEY."

I took up the letter which was enclosed in this; it contained little more than my father had stated. It said, however, with great emphasis, that the men against whom it gave information, were most formidable for their spirit and ingenuity; and that it was absolutely necessary that entire concealment should be preserved until the moment when all was prepared for action. Thompson seemed to labour under a feeling of the deepest terror, and when I remembered that the discovery which he so much deprecated had already taken place, I could not resist being a good deal agitated.

The surprise and alarm which these letters gave me may easily be imagined. It occurred to me at once that the person whom I had overheard in the hall of the club-house, must be the Torrens alluded to by Thompson, as he seemed likely to be the most interested of all in preventing the disclosures of that person. It was clear that he had obtained intelligence of the sending of this letter to my father, had reached his house before it was sent off to me, and was now aware that it was in my possession;—circumstances which exhibited an extent of watchfulness, and a promptitude of movement,

which seemed to justify the highest opinion of his talent and energy.

I had much to fear from qualities like these. What struck me as the most inexplicable part of the matter, and suggested very uncomfortable suspicions, was the fact of these two men having been in the same house in which Tyler and his friends were supping, and that they should appear from their conversation to be connected with them. Was it possible that any of that company belonged to that party of which Thompson spoke? These were grave questions. It was probable enough that those persons whom I had encountered at the shore, and who had robbed my friend Seward of his money, were of this same party, and I remembered that I had overheard them express the intention of inveigling me in the same manner when I came up to town. Mr. Tyler had shared Seward's losses before, and possibly he might here also be the victim of this club, and indeed might have been employed as the duped decoy of me to this house. I sat for a long time pondering the various conjectures which these and other considerations suggested. There was a struggle to take place which would probably require the exercise of all the power which I could summon into action, as well as all the ingenuity of which I was master.

On the following morning this second letter from my father was delivered from the post.

"My dear Henry,

"When I wrote to you yesterday, I entertained a hope that all the measures which we should adopt, might be taken before any thing was known by those persons whose craft and violence we have chiefly to fear. That hope is disappointed.

"I had just finished my last letter to you, and had put it into my pocket with the intention of giving it to my servant to bring to you, when a person by the name of Harold was announced, and came into the drawing-room where I was. He handed me a letter of introduction purporting to be from an intimate friend of mine,

but bearing date two days after I knew that he had certainly sailed for Europe. The moment I looked at it, I perceived that it was a forgery. I said nothing, but was of course strictly on guard.

"My immediate suspicion was that he was one of the gang of which Thompson's letter made mention. I saw that at least he *might* be one, and knowing that no harm could result from acting upon that conjecture in *negatives*, I determined on the utmost caution in his presence. He spent the day with me in delightful conversation, and such as might have routed many a suspicion, but I did not relax from my purpose. I retained my letter in my pocket until late in the afternoon, and then finding, for the first time, an opportunity of speaking alone to my servant without suspicion, I gave him my orders, and he set off without the knowledge of this Mr. Harold.

"My caution I knew was not foolish, and I soon found that it was very fortunate. I retired at my usual hour, and having locked the door of my chamber I went to bed, and soon fell asleep. At an advanced hour in the night, I was startled by a noise in the room, and woke up. A lamp was standing on my secretary, the light of which was kept from my eyes by a screen which had been lifted there from the corner of the room; near the secretary stood a man. Fortunately, I had waked in the first instance without noise or motion, and soon apprehending the state of the case, I remained still. Looking guardedly over the top of the screen, I saw that the person in the room was Harold; he was examining my papers. He turned over all of them, and at length took up my letter-book, in which I had noted the receipt of Thompson's letter, and its having been sent to you. He nodded his head, laid it down, closed the secretary, and having restored every thing to its place, left the room and the house. I heard him descend the steps, mount his horse and ride off. I went immediately into his room, and found on his table a note to

me, dated sunrise of the following morning, and apologising for his leaving me.

"That this man was one of Thompson's former confederates, that he had heard of his having written to me, and that the object of his visit was to obtain some information on the subject, or, as is more probable, to get possession of the letter, are circumstances which indeed are very surprising, but not on that account the less credible. This letter which I sent to you, tells enough to ruin the reputation of persons to whom unsullied and unsuspected character is probably of great consequence; no effort to possess it will probably be spared. I send you this instant information that you may be prepared in any encounter with this person or his party. You will be obliged to exert the utmost vigilance.

"ATKYNS STANLEY."

This account completed and explained that of the person whom I had met in the entry the evening before, and showed the error of my first notion that that man was the Mr. Torrens spoken of by my father. One mystery was superadded. My father spoke of this man as bearing the name of Harold; the other mentioned Harold as being at that time in the supper-room. How this multiplication of names took place it was difficult to imagine. That the visiter of my father should assume an unreal name it was natural to suppose: but to adopt the name of another of his party, would serve no better purpose than to expose his own. That Harold was the true name of the person spoken of at the club, appeared from the natural use made of it in this man's confidential discourse, and from its being apparently understood as the true name by the person to whom he spoke. This impossibility no surmise of mine could explain.

I sat down soon after, and wrote to my father an account of what I had observed and conned. I pointed out how accurate his suspicions were of the character of his visiter, and how narrow and how lucky had been his escape from his vigilant energy; and I assured him

of my willingness to co-operate with him to the extent of my ability in his efforts to baffle these men.

That evening when I retired to bed, I placed Thompson's letter under my pillow, that there might be no possibility of its being stolen. When I awoke on the following morning, it was gone.

CHAPTER XIII.

There is a pleasure in frank dialogue,
Where mind meets mind in free and full debate.
Men may live years and never know the strength
That is in others or within themselves.

SOUTHEY.

I WAS sitting in my library on the morning of that day, meditating upon the singular facts disclosed in the letters of my father, and brought before me in my own recent experience, when Mr. Tyler entered the room. Pleased with the visit of one whose conversation was always interesting, I dismissed all memory of these affairs from my mind, and prepared to, "cope him," in his learned inquiries.

A volume of Southey's "Sir Thomas More," was lying upon the table. "It is singular," said Tyler, turning over one or two of the leaves, "that such a man as the Laureate should exhibit a disposition to believe in ghosts; and, by-the-by, the inclination is not characteristic of him, for unsophisticated as he is in respect of feeling, few men are more boldly and sternly rational in matters of belief. Probably a few writers with whom the composition of this work led him to be conversant at the time, had tinged his mind with a peculiar hue when he penned these opening pages. In fact it often happens with bookish men that their perceptions are temporarily warped by some great writer with whose effusions they have recently communed, and the opinions expressed under such impressions are not so much their own thoughts, as the views of another, enforced by their reason."

"As a Christian," said I, "Mr. Southey might be

loath to disturb what is so intimately connected with the religious belief of so many; as one would hesitate to draw his bow against a serpent entwined around the form he loves. As a philosopher, he might respect the error which works in the cause of truth. Superstition is the floating robe of religion, and, as of old, there is often virtue in the vesture of the divine."

"If you admit the falsity of the notion," said Mr. Tyler, "I would oppose it, as I would every deviation from the strictest truth. It is the nature of error to expand. The admission of small errors into systems of truth has been the greatest enemy of truth in all ages; and the reason why right has never become triumphant and permanent, is that its defenders have not been jealous of its connexions—have not sternly beaten down the parasite twigs of falsehood which delight to fasten around it. Error is nepotistic, and wherever it enters it brings in its whole family."

"It seems to me," said I, "that there are many things besides those which address the intellect, that tend to keep us on the side of virtue; and though there be a cross of false blood in them, yet are they the adopted servitors of truth. Hopes and fears, and memories of suffering and delight, based, though they be, in fancy and mistake, go to make up that mingled mass of motive by which great principles of belief and action are lodged in the human character. The mere intelligence of various ages is perhaps the same, and their openness to logical evidence equal; but their susceptibility to hearty conviction, to that robust persuasion which fixes on the character, and transmutes the nature to its own likeness, is as different as the character of the times, and that is as various as the institutions of the age. Now, it is one thing to inform the mind and another to convince the man; one thing to prove and another to convert. The understanding may perceive an external result, without the sense rendering assent to the conclusion or taking it home to itself as among the vital entities of moral certainty. Bayle recognised, in geometry, the necessity of a certain result flowing from a

given promise, without yet admitting that result among the tried conclusions and new data of his mental being; he comprehended the proposition by his intellectual observation, without any impression on his spiritual consciousness; he saw but he did not believe. This difference between impassive mental perception and earnest moral conviction is alluded to by the Saviour where he says 'that seeing they shall not see.' How various is the persuasion of him who knows by reasoning that there is no danger in facing an assembly, from his who knows it by experience! The openness to logical influence depends merely on the natural intellect; but the mode in which conviction shall be impressed upon the heart, varies with the feelings, the personal experience, and the thousand accidental influences which have visited the individual. The mere mental acknowledgment of truth, especially of the truth of religion, is certainly insufficient; it is necessary to go on and leaven the character with it. To do this, different ages require different means; and what will operate in one century will be laughed at in the next. In one age, the ordeal—in another, the plague—in another, the wonders of science—in another, ghosts—these are the rude witnesses of truth, which strengthen belief, not by enlightening the intellect, but by acting on the moral consciousness. Beneath the current of all these varying impressions, stood the certainty of truth; each of them was transitory—if you will, false; but while they were the evidences of the truth to some, and the reminders of it to all, they were in no degree the foundation of it. They riveted popular faith, but were neither the cause nor the proof of the justness of that faith. And I find it a peculiar argument of Providence's being and appointment, that while revolving Time has exhibited in succession, phase after phase of man's mingled nature, it has never failed to bring upon the surface some quality by which it might be open to impressions leading to religion. When a chivalrous spirit was abroad in Europe, the times admitted of all its ardour being incorporated into Christian zeal; when in

the broad river of European thraldom, there started a strong eddy of intellectual independence, the position of things was such that it set in a direction to cleanse national faith: in an age of learning, the church was especially learned; in eras of discovery, science has been found the peculiar guide of faith; in times of political feeling, popular passion has burned towards divine truth. The last was an age of metaphysics, and then, the nature and construction of the mind were appealed to, as evidence of God. Without pushing this observation too far, would it be unfair to observe that all the experiences of all ages could not tend to this conclusion of religion, unless religion were true; that all the rays of light could not turn towards one point, unless that point were the centre? In objection to the admission of things not wholly true, among the evidences of religion, it may be said that if we find weakness in what supported the faith of other times, future ages may overthrow the foundation of ours; that the religion of the poet who was converted by a sound of thunder in clear weather, had in fact no apology at all. But the distinction which I have before alluded to will show us that these things are not the demonstration but the persuasion of a God, that they kindle devotion only because knowledge was there beforehand; that the mind saw before that there must be a God, and now felt that there was one."

"I am afraid that all the evidence of God will, if strictly examined, turn out to be but a suggester of him. Amidst the heap of remembrancers of deity, and the mass of cumulative probabilities of his existence, I have in vain looked for a clear and satisfactory *proof* of his being. It is a matter of little interest to me whether there be a God or not; for if I were persuaded of his reality, I would defy his power. Still, as a matter of speculative curiosity, we will, if you like, debate the question of his existence. First, then, 'God is a spirit;' spirit is a quality, and can, of course, have no independent being, and you can form no idea of it which is not more or less material; spirit, being immaterial,

cannot have locality, for position is the relation of one point to another, yet both residence and motion are the scriptural predictates of deity:—spirit cannot have passions, and so the logical framers of the articles declared that he was 'impartibilis, impassibilis;' yet anger, love, and jealousy are attributed to him—'God is love;' love is a feeling arising upon relation, and of course, he could not have loved before any thing was created, and yet he is unchangeable; he is described as tender and loving, and the misery of the world must make him miserable; if he is infinitely merciful, he must always pardon, and if infinitely just, never; and the Christian scheme does not reconcile the difficulty, because that Christ should die for sin, the innocent for the guilty, is not just."

"That God is impossible," said I, "is no proof that he is not true. Man's nature is an impossibility, and he is constantly described as inconsistent and self-contradictory. All those deviations from custom, which the course of nature is daily exhibiting, are impossibilities, yet facts."

"Still," said Tyler, "what external evidence is there for the naked fact of his being? By the argument of natural theology, God is shown to be a satisfactory theory; but the circumstance that an hypothesis explains all phenomena, does not prove the truth of the hypothesis. In electricity, acoustics and light, there are two hypotheses which equally solve all difficulties, and clearly demonstrate that an hypothesis is not necessarily true. The negative argument from the same source is equally fallacious. It is said that so curious and splendid a world could not *naturally* exist, yet God is more curious and more splendid, and he naturally exists; it comes to that. It is as philosophical to believe that the world is self-existent, as that God is; the same argument that proves a creator of the world, proves a creator of God. The notion of a deity only shifts the difficulty."

"I will freely admit," said I, "and I believe that every thinking believer will do the same, that the intellect can

shed no light upon the existence and character of God, and that the soul alone is capable of taking cognizance of his being. And this consideration will perhaps show how reasonable it is, when we follow intellect only, to expect such contradictions and difficulties as you have alluded to above. God may be viewed through a two-fold medium; firstly, as the mechanical creator of the material world, and secondly, as a spiritual being, recognised only by those powers which are capable of apprehending and feeling spirit. In the former view, he manifests himself only as agent, and when he is sought through his works, it is as agent only that he is to be discovered; in the latter, he is scanned as a being by the spirit and soul of man, and in this manifestation, it is his qualities and essence that are sought and seen. Any suggestions drawn from reason, which oppugn the *fact* of his being are entitled to regard; but those arguments which you have derived from the knowledge of the external world, and urged against any *mode* of his being, are impertinent, for it is only through the consciousness of the soul that we know aught of his nature, and that consciousness reveals no contradictions. Intellect is the instrument by which the first inquiry is conducted, and we may accordingly conclude that though intellect may think of God as external operant, it has no eye to look upon his inward essence, for the hints it gathers from nature do not extend so far; the spirit permeates the inner world of spirit, and it only can tell aught of the nature of God."

"If intellect," said Tyler, "cannot prove the truth of religion, on what do you found your faith?"

"I am convinced of the truth of Christianity," said I, "by perceiving its accordance with the fundamental form and native spirit of the soul. It is the truth of our nature. It restores to order what was confused, to symmetry what was irregular, to peace what was disturbed. Free from theory, it explains all phenomena; armed with no persuasives, it prevails with all who have heard it. Think of it, and it calms the sea of care; tell it, and it stills the storm of passion. How promi-

nent a topic is Peace, in the Bible and in the experience of all good men! no other creed professes to furnish it. Peace is the upright condition of the soul, and religion alone brings the spirit to this state; and what truth save the spirit's counterpart,—what fact save one which had lain beside it since the dawn of eternity,—could accomplish this? On the other hand, the inherent horror that belongs to wickedness,—the distress and inward combat of the erring spirit,—the strife of the dark soul that knows its darkness,—the blind battling of the remorseless lusts,—the torturing tumult of the giant passions, that can no more be steady than the sea beneath a tempest,—the agony of that crime-fouled mind which has become as a sea to which thought is a simoom, and memory a sirocco,—all force upon the soul the consciousness that vice is sin. From the nethermost hell of Atheism comes the loudest roar of belief, and the last shriek of writhing despair is a piercing yell of adoration. In the condition of them that are without God in the world, the necessity of belief is the most clearly seen. The livery of sin is less ambiguous than that of virtue; the white garments of purity may be sometimes soiled, but the dark trappings of vice will never lose their duskiness. Behold the minister of infidelity,—not one whose acts are penal, here or after,—not one who dreads conviction, or is lashed by memory of wicked deeds,—but who yet is wretched by the instinct of his spirit,—panting, dust-dry,—ever striving, but seeking nothing,—restless, but not from desire,—degraded, though guiltless. Conscience seems to become another self within him, and to perplex his spirit with a double personality. If such a man admits to his troubled thoughts the great idea of God, the health of mind which will ensue belief, will show him that if God be not a fact, he is at least a truth. When we reflect that in a well-ordered universe, peace must characterise a condition of right relations in things and thoughts and actions, and that to the wicked,—whether in his breast are rankling ambition's barbed thoughts, or, whether stifled in lustful thoughts, he

breathes the atmosphere of hell,—there is no peace, we must conclude that such a system is false and unnatural. On the other hand, tranquillity and health always belong to goodness; to fix the thoughts on heaven unbinds the chafing bands of care and irritation, and draws out the thorn of anguish from the wounded heart. 'The approaches to virtue,' says Bolingbroke, 'are all comfortable,' and in the new purity religion breathes around, we find nothing strange or unnative; we feel that we have but regained what we had lost by birth. And surely that thought which thus restores, not gives anew, —cures, not changes,—which gives expansion to the cramped limbs and strength to the withered arm,—is charactered with all the might and majesty of heaven, and bears the marks of Him whose breath revives, whose garments heal. There be perhaps those who walk the earth and bear no souls; but those who have, carry with them proof of God. Why should man search abroad and around him for proof of that of which he carries the fullest revelation within himself. If those who deny that sin will be punished, were to explore their own feelings, they would find that sin necessarily punishes itself. All the great dogmas of Christianity, such, for example, as that of the inability of man to be operated upon by religious impressions, after a certain time, which the Scriptures call the sin against the Holy Ghost, are known by daily experience to those who study the passions. A psychological proof may also be rendered of the natural efficacy of all the means of grace which the Bible exhibits;—the purifying nature of repentant sorrow,—the relief and coolness and confidence inspired by prayer,—the strength of faith,—the elevation of hope,—the heavenly-mindedness of charity. Doubtless, through the promises of God these are rendered efficient means beyond their natural power; yet thus far at least may human knowledge approve the conduct of Almighty wisdom. Leaving these details, the great fact, always acknowledged, that piety alone confers happiness, seems to me proof of its divine de-

scent. By few has this opinion, connate with the Psalmist's sentiment, 'Thou art a place to hide me in,' been better worded than by the Italian poet, Flaminius.

Ne tu beatum dixeris, optime
  Saule, superbo limine civium
  Qui prodit hinc et hinc catervâ
  Nobilium comitante cinctus;
Non si feracis occupet Africæ
  Quicquid præaltis conditur horreis,
  Gemmasque lucentes, et auri
  Possideat rutilos acervos.

Nec ille felix, qui valet omnium
  Causas latentes cernere, sidera
  Notare doctus, et profundas
  Ingenio penetrare terras.
Sed tu beatum jure vocaveris
  Qui mente purâ rite Deum colit,
  Ejusque jussa ducit amplis
  Divitiis pretiosiora.

Non ille vulgi gaudet honoribus;
  Sed carus ipsi Numinis est honos;
  Pro quo tuendo non recusat
  Dedecorum genus omne ferre.
Quin et relictis cœtibus urbium
  Mens ejus altum transvolat æthera,
  Deique summi, cœlitumque
  Colloquio fruitur beato.

Cœlestis ergo jam sapientia
  Plenus, pericli altior omnibus,
  Quiescit in Deo, furentum
  Despiciens hominum tumultus.
Sic prœliantes æquore turgido
  Ventos reducto montis in angulo
  Miratur, et gaudet procellâ
  Terribili procul esse pastor."

"To the argument that man finds peace and restoration in the thought of God and heaven," said Tyler, "it may be replied that the thought of God has originally created the evil which it is afterwards called in to heal. When the spirit hath been fancy-sickened by the fear of hell, it likes to be fancy-gladdened by the hope.

of heaven. All inferences of deity drawn from feeling must assume the existence of spirit. I think that all phenomena both of mental perception and spiritual impression are easily to be explained on the system of materialism. That a field of matter, within the eye of man, should be endowed with a capacity of being impressed, like a mirror, with the vision of an external scene, which vision might be dormant or vivid according to the impulses communicated from the rest of the frame, is a postulate which requires no attributes for matter but those which daily experience perceives and admits. That these visions should be capable of being revivified in a combination produced by their juxtaposition, or their overlapping one another, is an assumption not more violent. Now, if you will mark the operations of your mind, you will find that thoughts are always sensible pictures; no idea, however abstract, occurs to man in any other form than as a picture of a physical and material scene. It is therefore no improbable conjecture that thought is nothing more than the combination of those pictures which the external world has imprinted upon some organ within the eye possessing the property of renewing these images on future occasions. That this is the actual process of thinking, will be seen upon attending to the operation for a few minutes, whereby it will be found that nothing but places and persons have occupied the mental observation; but a ready test of the truth of my remark exists in the fact that we cannot change the thought which is before the mind without changing the focus of sight, which will be indicated by a throb in the eye, and that we can keep thoughts out of the mind by keeping pictures in it, and that we cannot look distinctly at one object, and think of another. This theory readily explains the phenomenon of dreaming. It is notorious that men dream when they are not soundly asleep; the brain is then sluggish, not torpid; and attempting to call up the images that lie upon it, or to think, it merely produces a lagging succession of pictures, which, if it were active and awake, would be combined into thoughts. Thus the

mental portion of our nature is the result of the reaction of the surrounding world upon our material frame, and that which is spiritual within us is the offspring of that which was once physical around us."

I reply, "But how much is there in our nature which we do not acquire! The intellect may be supposed of mundane growth, and all that goes to make up that moral picture-book, the mind, may have been imprinted by experience. But the heart has vitality and vigour of its own. Place a man in new and interesting circumstances, and his thoughts are what they always were: but strange and mighty feelings are always flung forth from the abysses of his soul, full as the swelling tide of the Propontic—forceful as the volleyed waters of the Nile-spring: a nature, new even to himself, reveals itself; he is overmastered and swayed despite of himself; there is within him, what he can neither measure in the present, nor count on for the future. If there were naught in man but what he learns from the world, how could he impart to the world that supramundane interest; that vivifying hue and life, which makes the formal represent the spiritual, and matter sinks beneath its meaning. The poet looks on nature, until, beneath the vesturing glory wherein he robes the scene, the earthly melts into celestial, and the landscape dims into a formless mirror of the gazer's soul. To the feeling heart, the yellow morning, shadow-cold and still: the eddying roar of purple noon; the crimson sunset's sleepy light; the cheerful evening, seraph-eyed, home-dear; the fading pallor of the lonely night—all are but natural hieroglyphics of passion. If man be but respiring matter, with no spark of the divine within him, explain to me the mystery of love; explain the dim memories and the infinite longings which a ray of beauty starts within him; explain the unbounded sense that quickens into life as we gaze along the orange splendours of the west, which wake an endless sigh that if full-drawn would rend the frame. Why does there rise and roll within the breast an ocean of excitement when we listen to music, behold the ensigns of

war or look upon the sites of battles, save that a chord is touched within, that vibrates with the infinite. When Twilight, fainting on the breast of Night, sighs forth excess of love in one long burning blush that purples all the air, why doth the lonely gazer's heart heave with oppressive ecstasy or gush with a soft torturing joy, save that to fill the large embrace of Nature, his spirit strives and fails. Where were the grace of life without the glow of spirit? It is by the successive influences of hope and fear, and love and tears, that we build up our moral being; and these sensations are the natural zodiac of the soul. What so informs an idiot mass of matter as to make it the emblem and representative of the eternal and the divine, save the vivifying and creative breath of spirit? Man, hurled into the infinite exile of the all-material, lights up his cavern into a temple of glory by the illumination of the fancy of the heart; and arranges the disordered fragments of an unmeaning chaos into monuments of wisdom and altars of divinity by the magnetic virtue of the instinct of the soul. If he cannot melt down all matter into liquid life, he opens great rifts and chasms in the sensible vault around him, wherethrough the ulterior light gleams gloriously. A lonely outcast in the regions of the palpable, he fraternises with the dumb and the surd, not by degrading himself but by elevating them. He calls creation into brotherhood with himself by breathing into all things the breath of expressive being. He gives a tongue to idle sounds, and a countenance to shapeless forms. He makes the lines upon the leaves the subjects of a divine palmistry, and with Egyptian ingenuity, construes the figures which the courses of the sun and the moon mark out upon the sky, into hieroglyphics of power and wisdom. He sympathises with the placid moon that leans over the sky to smile upon his solitude, and communes with the pale stars that tremble in the silence of the infinite. A poet might almost think that the varying phases of sky and earth were appointed only to gladden his sensibility by the embrace of the beautiful; for joy and awe and love unutterable are to

his musing thoughts hourly exhaled from matter: yet these impressions are charactered on the universe by the pencil of the spirit. Without the new-assorting harmony of spirit, where were the sweet relationships of mother, sister, wife, that flower upon the stalk of life? soft-palmed domestic loves and not harsh fears, embroidering being with its brightest blossoms? It is by the answer of spirit unto spirit that love springs from man to woman; it is by a sympathy of soul that the branches of one's consciousness extend within the bosom of another, and there put forth their softest, fullest leaves—that the heart sparkles with affection as the objects of its love play around it. And it is only by the quick-glancing light of love that the intellect of man is stirred with fire-like energy. Banish that spirit-born influence, and man becomes a stark, unpliant, marble-visaged savage. He is unprimered in the dignity of man, who does not know that the worthiest and the sweetest portion of our being, is that which lies beyond our bosom. When, by a leaping glance, two souls have flashed into splendid recognition, thereafter there floats up through the lover's mind a shadowless cloud of crystal brightness, and all his thoughts are roseate with the light; he who has ever loved will never doubt his immortality: and as well the prompting as the experience of the feelings hints this high conclusion. The providence of God hath not so opposed the judgment of the sagacious head and the longing of the upright heart, that the latter shall not be sanctioned by the former. And the heart longeth for communion with spiritual being. Being, it finds in the breathing matter wherewith it is encompassed, and spirit, it may apprehend in the thoughts of the mind and the pictures of the fancy; but spiritual being—that which feels as well as is seen; which acts and reacts; which appreciates and responds—can only be furnished by such unmaterial essence as we believe God and his angels to be. The thought and consciousness of pervading spirit, is the breath of the heart's being—the atmosphere which it breathes with a deep gladness, and without which it pines and suffers.

And all the occupations of the world are grateful in proportion as they supply this craving of the soul. That earthly love wherein the heart delights more than in any mortal joys, is the freest approach to an embrace of spirits. When fair-limbed youth plays in the fresh rose-bowers of gayety and gambol, and his soul is first spoken to through long, dark eyelashes, wherefore doth his spirit tremble within him, save that he is homaging a deep-veiled spirit? That affection is the parent of the purest joy, and that 'no life is blest that is not graced with love,' gives proof, then, of the necessity of the existence of spirit to the happiness of man, and what is indispensable we may conclude exists. If we would know how largely it must enter into the general happiness of man, we have only to remember how sad and cheerless has been the temper of our souls when we have been much absorbed in the concerns of externality. From the drought of materiality, with what joy of heart the mind escapes away to the inward infinite of glorious thoughts and expands therein, bath-freshened and regaled—breathing freely a more healthy freshness than the ocean air. The soul embarking on high thoughts, is wafted on a smooth ocean by a swelling breeze: and that ocean is rapture and that breeze is ecstasy, and the haven of that voyage is the bosom and the peace of God. No man, indeed, can long be a materialist in feeling and idea: to shut up within himself, his consciousness and sympathy—a necessity induced by that creed—is a suffocation of feeling, a choking up of the vital being in an iron frame of anguish. His head may defend and his tongue proclaim a mechanical world, but his fancy still frames a spiritual universe, and the river of his feelings channels a free outlet through that vent. But the first moment that a conscientious atheist takes home to himself the hearty realisation of his theory, and materialises his imagination, his hopes and his dreams, he will perceive the *impossibility* of his scheme: he will find himself fearfully jailed up in interminable and maddening spheres of cold, dead matter; alone in a desert universe, his soul

gasping after spirit. The misery of this conscious death, this breathless life, will show him how alien to the breast of man are those dull iron thoughts; and the first moment of real conviction will be the last of possible belief. The materialist creates a world large enough for the intellect of man, but where his heart can have no room."

"If the natural heart," said Mr. Tyler, "so necessarily apprehends the existence of deity, how does it happen that persons have often been found in savage life, who have neither heard nor conceived the idea of God."

"The savage may know of Him by the inward revealing of his spirit, without in fact being aware of his knowledge. He does not think of God above him, but of God within him; the subjective feeling of his spirit has never become objective to his imagination. Deity is a presence familiar to his heart though new to his understanding. He is so certain of it that he has not thought of it—so assured of it that he has not remarked it. It is a sentiment which lies at the foundation of all his consciousness; it is the primal truth of his being; the first and central apprehension of identity."

"Your principles seem to militate against one another," said Tyler. "If the natural wants and instincts of mankind thus forcibly suggest the consolations of religion, might not human ingenuity have discovered them, and thus the establishment of Christianity not be a 'nodus vindice dignus?' If such a work seems difficult, contemplate the genius of Shakspeare, and remember that Nature amid her infinite creations might once evolve an intellect which should be to Shakspeare what Shakspeare is to us."

"Of course, a love for man and a desire to elevate his condition could not have been the motive of an imposture which commanded self-denial and privation, and which committed to the hands of men such an instrument of tyranny as the priestly power."

"Certainly," replied Tyler, "there could have been no other motive to such a scheme than ambition, and the pleasure of asserting the sovereignty of intellect, and

enjoying the consciousness of power: the wild delight of ruling and enslaving nations."

"If such must be the temper of the founder of Christianity, the impossibility of your suggestion is apparent; for how could a man of that strength and fierceness of temperament have ever discovered by the experience of his own spirit, those truths which are the dim yearnings of weakness, and tenderness, and shrinking pain? Look at the character of Christ as revealed in action and in utterance, as stamped upon his system, and as displayed in his conduct, and tell me whether such aims of callous ruthlessness could ever have visited the fineness of his gentle thinkings; whether his heaving tenderness of heart comports with the broad and brawny spirit of a stern impostor. Could the soft-eyed dove of heavenly affection have nestled in a bosom clamped by the iron paw of lion-like ambition? or could wounded peace have dropped its lonely tear, and sighed away its meek anguish, in a breast yell-fretted by the instant baying of the hell-dogs of selfishness? If he had been a cold impostor, such sentiments as he gave utterance to, could as little have been nourished in his bosom, or conceived by his intellect as the odorous jasmine could twine and blow around a pillar of fiery steel. Nothing petrifies the feelings like ambition; for it combines a rampant love of self with a ferocious hate of others. No beatings of compassion has the heart wherein are caverned out the winding galleried chambers of deceit; nor lingers the shrinking family of pity in a soul swept by the riotings of the high carnival of scorn. So far from triumphing over and enslaving the weakness of man, his was a spirit hourly alphabeted in the griefs of man, whose daily task it was to spell out, in lonely anguish, the slow syllables of mortal wo. Instead of exulting in mad gratifications of successful genius, he walked the earth in peaceful misery and passionless despair, ceaselessly descending the silent, endless staircases of gloom. You confound our knowledge of the triumph of Christianity with the condition and prospect of the case in the lifetime of its founder.

When you talk of the delights of empire, and of conscious power, you forget that the personal efforts of Christ failed utterly of success, that not one ray of triumph gilded the edge of all his labours. What self-loving mortal's eye would not have blenched in that hour when all his followers forsook him and fled, 'and no object met his gaze but a crucifix before him, and an infuriated mob behind him.'"

"If the happiness of man," said Tyler, returning to the previous topic of our conversation, "points to the acknowledgment of deity, his power and dignity disown so slavish a conclusion. The doctrine of the Scriptures merges individual strength and independence in a vague generality of idea, and drowns the human spirit in an ocean-bath of fancy and feeling. The sentiments and impressions which you have noticed are not wholly unknown to my experience: for though I have hardened myself in the conflict of the world, and the strife of sterner passions has mostly put to flight the mild emotions of the heart, yet often in the rudest energy of enterprise, and the most absorbing interest of effort, there has come upon me a weakness and an agony which prostrated the spirit before it, and I have wept in helpless anguish for the blind and mysterious *want* of my nature which was thus so darkly revealed. Nor has the intimation thus furnished been disregarded. I have tried to live in obedience to such knowledge,—to humble my heart to self-forgetfulness. I have striven to compel my nature to serve and love. But it was impossible. The sickly and unnatural tone it gave to my being was unendurable; and the glorious fulness of the joy with which I returned to liberty and free defiance told me *that* best became my spirit. Religion is a disease of the mind; it is the offspring of a morbid heart, and a visionary fancy. Will you call that natural to man with which he never sympathises, save in the hour of his sickness and suffering, and which is so opposite to the demands of health and strength, that no motive has yet been found sufficient to keep him mindful of it in those seasons? Before that argument is admitted, you

must prove that sickness and disappointment is the proper and intended state of man, and that health and success are errors of his being. If you would know what are really the *natural* demands and instincts of the being man, look upon him in that sound and integral condition in which he may most honestly represent his species; look upon him in the full spring-tide of healthfulness and vigour, and in the fresh morning hour of confidence and joy; not, when a crawling wretch, he sickens at the light—and in those better moments, when you may most clearly write man upon his brow, he has no need of God—his nature pulses not toward that conclusion. To argue from his state of feebleness and dejection, is as if you were to strike off one's limbs, and reason thence that Providence never meant that man should walk. So convinced am I that the whole scheme of Christian virtue is false, and that the suggestions of that scheme are alien to man's real interests, and destructive of his real greatness, that if I cannot explain the facts of Christianity without resorting to superhuman power, I shall rather believe that the archfoe of mankind has contrived this noxious and enslaving theory, and that the God of the Scriptures is the devil of the universe. Man's truest instinct is to his own greatness; and when he retires within himself, and bids the pulse of selfish vigour throb its fullest, deepest, best, then is he greatest, happiest; and in such blasphemy there is a deep religion, a loftier homage than by prayer or praise. The creature's glory glorifies the God; and man, defying him that made him, and tossing forth unfettered arms, sets fittest forth the praise of him he scorns. The maintenance of our individuality, of the oneness of our spirit, of the self-springing and entire energy of being, exalts the dignity and enjoyment of man; and this condition may not be where the thoughts are floating through eternity, and faith is reviving consciousness, through endless space, and the racy flavour of the manly spirit is diluted in its own immortality. In this case, believe me, there is no worthier adoration than to scorn reliance, and no clearer

note of honour than the voice which execrates its master. If consciousness of dignity, or the soul's own gratulation to itself, be a sure guide, man feels his strong divinity of soul most when most self-reliant; and never does the splendid creature glow more creator-like than when his bosom boils with wild rebellion. The brightness of the moon is fullest when it is most distant from the sun. The Christian attains immortality by appending his spirit to the eternal which is beyond him, and the Atheist by developing the infinite which is within him; the one draws God towards him, the other out of him; the one triumphs over decay by annihilating self in the all-inspiring, and the other by expanding it into the all-comprehensive; one marks his place in the ocean of eternity as a ridge in the wide ripple of the outmost surge, and the other as the centre whence the waves begin: both are portions of God, but the one is the end, and the other is the beginning. Thus it is that eating of the tree of life, men become as gods; for God-created man, uncreaturing himself, creates himself thereby into a god. Such a bold game is safe enough; for annihilation is impossible, and no suffering of body or of mind can conquer the intellect and will of man. The theory of feelings which you have set forth cannot be safe, for it opens a wide gate to all the sacred blasphemy of enthusiasm; and indeed, if you will look over the world, you will discover that almost all who hold the doctrines of the Scriptures, combine with its broad principles some foolish mysticism of their own, for the truth of which they have the same inward and incommunicable evidence. Where will you fix the limit to the guidance of feeling, if you do not choose to follow it till it makes the rim of your hat as broad as the absurdity of its wearer? how will you distinguish between the feeling which is natural, and the feeling which is morbid? The foundation on which you rest religion, is, indeed, borne out by the circumstance that beyond professional limits none but women, children, and dotards are the clients of devotion; go where we will, it is still the sickly heart, or the feeble head, that is the supporter of reli-

gion. But I must distrust a notion which requires as a preliminary for its acceptance, that we should stultify that intellect which is the best and only guide to truth which God has given us. You would laugh to scorn a man who in any other affair of life, were to follow any leader but reason; and it were strange if God had given us a guide which could find out every thing except himself."

"I must take leave to differ from you," said I, "on the assertion that intellect is always or generally the best or only guide to truth. In questions of morals and politics, in all that investigates the duties and relations of man, I do not think that reason alone is a safe counsellor. I hold that to just perceptions of great truths, there is necessary a joint action of the moral and the intellectual frame. I hold that when intellect is divorced from moral sympathy, its vigour is attenuated and unrobust; that when it approaches the examination of the principles of religion or policy, unaccompanied by a sound and active heart, its perceptions are meager, its comprehension puny, its conclusions fibrous. So highly do I regard the natural prudence of an upright heart, that I believe in all moral difficulties its suggestions are the wisest, and in all political embarrassments its judgments are the safest; and, indeed, I have no doubt that the feelings might be so educated that their logic in all matters short of the barrenness of pure science should be unerring. I look upon it that the promptings of a fresh and unsoiled heart are the index and judge of the duties of man; that the duties of man are correlative with his interests; and that the duties and the interests of man are the staple of all religious, moral, and political sciences. Physical relations are the objects of mere perception, and intellect is sufficient to discern and measure them; but individual experience and feeling are in some sort the data from which we educe moral truth. The fitness of systems to the dignity, the peace, and the satisfaction of the spirit of man is one great end to be accomplished; and the spirit must be so nurtured in gentleness and full expansion that it can take appre-

ciant cognizance of the truths brought before it. Its tone and temper must be healthy and vivacious, that it may taste and see, *gustet et videat*, by personal trial how they will be relished by the world at large. This is the point; feeling enters largely into the nature of men in general, and they require that the principles and schemes which are offered to them should be such as to gratify those feelings; and how can the statesman or the philanthropist judge of the demands of such feelings unless he cherishes them within his own bosom. It has often happened that stern and impatient minds, in despising feelings, have fatally forgotten to allow for their existence. It never occurred to Napoleon that the nation required some sort of religion, until he once found himself compelled to tears, as through the silence of the summer air, the evening bells of Brienne struck upon his ear, and his youthful days came back upon his heart: he then reasoned that if feeling was so strong in him, its effect on others must be prodigiously great. A sound heart devoted to truth will, though incapable of ratiocination, rarely err in action. A man of that sort will think correctly, though he may not be able to prove his thoughts, and will act sagaciously though he may be unable to tell why he acts so. To think justly is very different from thinking brilliantly, and to think wisely is above either. The first of these is always at the command of a right intention; the last is inseparable from a right frame of feeling. If you would know how much wiser in their own day, and for their own purpose, are the children of light than the children of the world, contrast the success of George the Third with the failure of De Retz, De la Rochefoucauld, or Olivarez. George the Third could have given no logical reason for the glorious and admirable policy which it is known that he suggested as well as maintained. He felt that it was honest, and he knew that it must be wise. The last conclusion of strenuous reason was the first suggestion of a simple heart, and George easily reached by the instinct of a right moral will, what Burke labori-

ously attained by the vast enginery of a splendid intellect."

"I am glad," said Tyler, "that you admit that some sorts of intellect can find out the truth."

"When Burke reasoned, mind wrought not alone. And it will invariably appear that those authors who have established great and permanent principles in any moral science, have been men of a strong moral constitution and of high moral character; and we cannot help concluding that in that lay the true secret of their strength. A distinction must be taken between those studies which regard the relations of things alone, and those whose subject, direct or collateral, is man; in the latter, science must always be tempered with conscience. In the one you are, without any prefixed design, to combine certain elements in due proportion, and let them work out what conclusion they may; in the other, you have a definite object to accomplish—the welfare of man—and the deductions of your science must always be controlled with reference to that end and in subordination to that intention. The subject of political economy, as reasoned out by modern philosophers, shows to what we are led by examining with the intellect alone any system of which the interests of man form a part. They have treated the subject as a pure science; they have taken up the elements and investigated them abstractly—with reference to their capacity and not their use; their separate magnitude and not their combined and relative importance; in reference to their qualities and not their objects; their nature and not their ends. They should have assumed the national prosperity and domestic welfare of men as the centre from which their inquiries should begin, and the axis around which their interests should revolve; and instead of running out the topic of riches into a lank and starved science, they should have seen that to give such elongation and extent to one subject was inconsistent with the subordinate and limited station which it must always hold in the mosaic platform of man's infinitely varied and complex wants and duties. In place of tra-

cing a circumference and fulfilling a circle, they have prolonged a radius and analysed a line. They have made a system of what was barely a science, and undertaking to construct a house they have exhausted their means in finishing one of the chambers. In the great cyclopedia of human and worldly interests, the only article which they have written is that of the science of wealth. From this difference between the completeness of this science in itself, and its inadequacy to the purpose to which it is applied, arises the diversity of contempt and admiration with which it has been regarded by different persons. For my part, while I think that the objects of the science are very small, I think that those objects have been treated with singular intelligence and skill; and that when the matter is more coolly examined, it will be seen that the modern science of wealth is a small, but very complete, department in the great and noble subject of true POLITICAL ECONOMY. To declare that the puny science now called by this name fulfils the measure of the social and political wants of man, or was a sound and sufficient scheme of national policy, were as foolish as to assert that salt is the only and adequate food for man, or to insist that a house can stand upon one pillar at the corner. The great Frederick said well that to confide the government to the hands of an economist would soon bring the country to ruin; for politics is the science of national welfare, and to attain this mixed result we must combine the thousand minor sciences that treat of his welfare in particulars; we must weave one interest with another and interlace a score of opposing purposes; and we must always remember that inquiries are to be cultivated not in proportion to their difficulty or curiosity but to the extent in which they advance the real interests of men. The cause of the error of the economists, to return to the outset of my remark, is that the intellect has grown masterless in construction of the means, while the heart has slumbered in oblivion of the end; the principles of things and not the interests of men have been their guide; they have been

philosophic rather than philanthropic. I have often been carried away by the fascination which there is in following out the creative principles of intellectual sciences; but I have always found that such exclusive devotion to the combinations of the mind, dwarfed the moral being and stunted the moral energies; I have found that it was as unholy as unprofitable; that not only was power wasted, but the passions of pride and selfishness cultivated, and love and considerateness destroyed. For the heart is a thing teeming with life; if it be exercised in openness it will be clustered with glad fruitage; if it lie dankly in the shade of a stern intellect it pullulates with poison-knobs. The true remedy for this mad passion of the mind—this fierce intoxication of the intellect—is to commune with the promptings of the moral sense—to listen to the ulterior truths it tells of duty and of destiny—and to be calmed and invigorated by the fresh freedom of a healthy heart. If we bear in mind that evil is but a mistake, and that the oblivion of the suggestions of feeling in combining the data of moral judgment must certainly conduce to error, we shall see the truth of Milton's observation, that sin sprang from the head of Satan."

"As respects those sciences of which the first and chief requisite is, that they should be suited to man's feelings and adapted to be popular," replied Mr. Tyler, "the data and suggestions are certainly to be furnished by the heart of the framer; but the combination of these data and the execution of these suggestions is the province of reason alone. On that sea, then, the 'intellectual all-in-all,' sails without a breeze and without maps. In regard of politics and private conduct, the success which you connect with the promptings of a just intention, is true merely by reason of that original and appointed connexion between the purest truth and the highest wisdom which the experience of time has attested by a proverb, and which holds so extensively as to have led many to the conclusion that the principles of morality were the deductions of convenience. But when you go on to make spiritual consciousness

and inward revelation the evidence of religious truth, you rest the proof of your creed upon an assurance which all the opposing creeds of Christianity equally possess and appeal to, and which is the foundation of the faith of the Mohammedans and Brahmins more satisfactorily than of yours. When you declare that the happiness which the acceptance of revelation produces, demonstrates its divine origin,—you establish a principle which gives divinity to every day-dream of the youthful heart—to the visions of the Sooffee—and the reveries of neologism and poetry. If, then, you leave this dangerous test, and say that the general acceptance of the truths of the Bible among men, establishes its claims, either as evincing their natural and constitutional inclination towards it, or as showing that the protection and support of the Almighty was in its favour, I shall reply that the professors of Islam, or either of the sects of the Hindoo religion are more numerous than the followers of Christ—that the religion of Mohammed was propagated with vast rapidity, and in many instances against the course of conquest—and that in those nations in which the cross has conflicted with the crescent, the former has been wholly subverted. If you refer to the miracles of Jesus, I will say, upon the one hand, that other miracles which you do not believe are equally well attested with his, and, on the other, that since Christ himself has said, that 'there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, (if it were possible,) they shall deceive the very elect,' *that* can neither be, nor be designed as, a test of the truth, which belongs equally to the true and the false; and this will bring us to that doctrine of Bishop Warburton, which Coleridge, according to his custom, has plagiarised and disguised, that from among those prophets who have supported their claims by miracles, we must choose him whose doctrines are most consonant to the nature and conduct of God; but, in order to escape the contradiction and inconsistency which I discovered in the nature and qualities of God you were obliged to declare

that we could form no notion of his properties from the material world, and even if we waive this admission, it will appear that, while all miracles must demonstrate the attribute of power, any given one must satisfy either the attribute of vengeance or of love, both of which are equally predicates of his nature. Upon what support, then, Christianity will lean I am at a loss to discover."

"Nothing," said I, willing to change the conversation, "is so unprofitable as religious discussion; and we differ so much as to our data that it is not surprising that we do not agree in our conclusions. But if, as you have acknowledged, political and social truth is not reached by the intellect alone, but is approached by 'two coursers of etherial race,' I cannot help thinking that the predominance which in this country is given to mathematical studies in the education of youth, is unfavourable to their best advancement in future life."

"I am inclined to doubt," said Mr. Tyler, "the benefit which any discipline in the art of reasoning or any analysis of the processes of demonstration will produce upon the mind, because I think that in the business of life, conclusions are linked to premises, rather by the instincts of taste, habit, and a thousand other indices of truth, which become blunted by the strong jealousy of usurping reason. As a means, however, of cultivating the intellect for that high duty which will befal it, I consider mathematics as a study of little value as compared with moral logic, and in fact I think that it is often injurious to the practice of the world. Mathematics is concerned with relations only, and has no regard to the nature and qualities of the things related; whereas, all the great problems in life are the analysis of qualities and the determination of facts. The data of the mathematician are fixed and known; the business of the politician and moralist is to fix his data, the reasoning upon them is a much smaller matter; so that the business of life ends where mathematics begins.

"Moreover, the axioms of mathematics are not axioms of general truth; they are derived from the consideration of form and quantity, and it does not follow that

what is true of form and quantity is true of moral principles or of human motives. Whenever you can associate forms and quantities, mechanically considered, in any one respect, in relations of equality or predominance, you can associate them in all; that is, if a is equal to b in one sense, it is equal in all; in other words, mathematics contemplates things in only one relation. But in morals, things are considered and compared by their categories or qualities, whereof each thing has many, according to the view and purpose in reference to which the thing is looked at; what is affirmed of a thing in contemplation of one category is not true of it in respect of another, nor true in respect of that category in reference to all considerations—as, human, divine, individual, social. These are distinctions which mathematics misses, and if the geometer reasons generally with the habits of his science, he will fall into error. Thus, the position, that two things being equal to a third are equal to one another, may be true universally if we define 'equal' with absolute strictness, but, in use, will constantly lead to the logical fallacy of an undistributed middle term; and if you will examine the logic of a mathematician you will find the error of a non-distributed medii very often committed. Another mathematical axiom which is not true in the scope of general reason is, that all the parts taken together are equal to the whole. This is not always true of physical science, and is generally false in morals. It is not true in chymical combination, and the instinct of a chymist's mind would be to deny the axiom; it is not necessarily true that if two motives separately have given values, those motives united will have a value equal to their sum. Davenant has shown that the price of corn is not proportionate to the size of the crop; and in truth there seems to me no fixed relation between them. I might name to you many other principles of mathematical science which are not true beyond the boundaries of that science. In truth, mathematics is a composite science, like mechanics and electricity, and not a fundamental exhibition of reason; it is *logic applied to the*

sciences of form and quantity. Analyse any demonstration, and you will find that it consists of certain observations of the senses respecting form, applied by means of the syllogism. The only reasoning in the science is logic; and therefore I hold it better to go back to pure logic, and imbue the mind with that which is really fundamental. There is danger that the mathematician will mistake the axioms of his science for the principles of reason, and will apply universally what is true only of a particular system. If, however, he discriminates between the general and the partial, and looks in all other sciences for those peculiar axioms which belong to it, and carries from his own study only the skill in applying them which he has there learned, there remains the fear lest the habit of his mind has become so much warped and straitened by contemplating one set of truths, that he cannot freely deal with those which are essentially different. The custom of being conversant with forms and quantities gives to the mind a formal way of regarding and combining principles—a habit of rigid juxtaposition which the vacillating and unsubstantial elements of moral and mental science will not admit of. The great problems of life require the reconcilement of a variety of agents and interests by a constant system of mutual compensation; we can very rarely rest in a result furnished with reference to merely one system of causes and consequences. Now, mathematical training induces a man to contemplate one set of data strictly and extensively, but does not qualify him to obtain a simple result from composite causes. Hence, the mathematician is competent to judge well of the tendency of one principle, or the result of one agent; but to invent and to examine that which will suit various and opposing requisites, is hardly within the scope of the chalk and the black-board. While the statesman is devising a measure of policy which is to gratify the pride of one, the interest of another, and the prejudices of a third, the pig-headed algebraist is proving that a different scheme must be framed in order to fulfil completely any one of these objects.

We constantly see results anticipated by the prophetic eye of political wisdom, which strict reason could not adduce, and we see schemes of conduct devised by some happy mental instinct, attaining their purpose in the end, which when stated were almost demonstrably inefficient. In these cases there is a system of compensation; a blunder of too much here is rectified by one of too little there, and the confusion of contending forces works out the directness of a right resultant. The comprehensive generalisation of Napoleon could rarely satisfy with a reason the bigoted scrutiny of that great analyst who 'carried into the cabinet the doctrine of infinitesimals.'"

"One of the advantages which mathematics has in the present time," said I, "is its tendency to check and chill the airy dreams of modern philosophy; dreams which are harmless enough in religion and metaphysics, but which are of fatal influence in political action. I should regard as a general blessing any thing which would dispel the heated visions of speculative reform, and arrest the progress of revolution in Europe."

"I look upon the spirit of change as already crushed in the old world," he replied, "and the destiny of Europe as settled for the next century in favour of conservatism. A few clear heads and strong hands on the continent have shown what an empty delusion is the spirit of the age; and the governments of those countries seem to be resolving themselves into great military establishments—a form of polity which I very highly approve. In England, there never was the slightest ground for thinking that principles so unnational as those of radicalism, would eventually succeed; for, there, patriotism is toryism—for as far as either the head or the heart are concerned, the institutions of the country are the country. In America we have long suffered under a moral absolutism, and our experience has shown that a democracy is merely one of the forms of despotism; but the facility with which this people is moved in masses affords a fair prospect of the speedy establishment of a formal monarchy. In fact, nothing is so idle

as the hope of liberty. Men love despotism. They cannot exist without a thraldom of some kind. In all conditions and under all circumstances they will carve out a tyranny for themselves. And this delight which men take in fixed and firm control, arises, in part, from the native inclination of the heart to serve and look up —in part, from its weakness, and its impatience and hatred of care and responsibility—and in part, from its instinctive fondness for that which is certain, unchanging, and may be calculated upon, and which it may cling to amid the fluctuations of feeling and the vacillations of opinion. In action and in speculation; in the conflicts of danger and the confusions of opinion; in science, philosophy, and literature—men habitually look for that ruler who is firm, stable, confident, and composed, and to him they take their oath of fealty. It is the idlest foolery of babyhood to expect equality before the world has been emancipated from the slavery of the passions, and the power of intellect has been effectually abolished. In politics you will always find that the clearest and simplest principle of action is that which draws the mass toward it, while those rules of conduct which are perplexed or complicated are never cordially embraced. Hence, in ancient establishments, loyalty is likely to be the predominating sentiment, and in times of excitement if you can stave off the first assault of a restless mob, the people will come forward to the rescue. In democratic constitutions, personal attachment is the easiest and clearest guide, and will probably be the controlling power in the nation. A polity whose plan contemplates that the multitude should think, and reason, and take intelligent conclusions, must needs fail. For, a nation, a mob, and that class of persons who, being at the head of the latter are at the heart of the former, can very well comprehend one idea, and indeed they never act vigorously except in executing an idea; but they can never put two ideas together."

"Your remark is just: and it will generally be found that that party prevails in the commonwealth whose purpose is the simplest, and whose guiding principle

may most easily be reduced to a maxim and a watch-word. No scheme of policy which embodies more than a single idea can ever be popular or national, and in truth such a system will rarely be right. Hence, the theories, or complex ideas of the economists are necessarily unpopular; and perhaps this very complexity makes them false, that is—in the only sense in which a polity can be false—unsuited to the nation."

"What a splendid nation America would become," said Mr. Tyler, "if some great man were to place himself at the head of the government, who should have spirit and the power to strike from the body politic the dull cancer of democracy, and revive that soul of manly freedom which the elder statesmen of our country breathed into the constitution, and who could perceive the mighty difference that there is between a great nation, and a great collection of individuals. It is the tendency of democratic principles to destroy nationality, and to reduce society to the 'dust and powder of individuality;' it is essentially a separating and a selfish principle; its guide is personal, and not public interests; it is a principle, which if introduced into society, would reduce men to the level of the infamous, the sensual, and the malignant. But if a man of genius and enterprise attains the highest office, and banishes this baneful meanness from the counsels of the country, and gives full developement to the great resources of the nation, we shall behold the noblest spectacle of public greatness that the world has ever seen. I want no change in the principles of the constitution, or in the character of the people or the times; the republican and revolutionary doctrines of the age, if freely and fairly carried, will, I am persuaded, give a noble result. Men who have drawn their maxims of political reasoning from the states of the old world, have never rightly comprehended this new spirit as exhibited in our land. I admit, that liberal sentiments displaying themselves under the constitutions of hoary monarchies, must work unmingled evil; for they find nothing connate to their fashion: but in a young, unfettered, ever-moving nation,

the consequences are widely different. The whirlwind that passes through a city, demolishes dwellings; the storm that sweeps over the moor, only purifies the air. As the ragings of the unchecked sea still have their law, and the blast of the volleying tempest moves through its appointed path, so there is there a reasoning method in the wildest madness of popular freedom. The unbridled license of democracy will work out a conservatism of its own; and with all their tossings, the waters will still pursue their channel. There is a notion abroad that the extension of the stern and severe habitudes of the age will banish the gentleness of sentiment, and the delicate interest of poetry. Nothing is more false: they will only give them vigour and robustness; as, of old, from the foaming sea sprang beauty, so from the dashing tumult of politics and trade there will be flashed forth a splendid energy of poetic interest. Those who have been accustomed to see a principle embodied in one form, may not easily remember it when it appears in others. They who have seen poetry dreaming along the still and crystal-misted valleys, may not recognise her in the gray-robed spirit of the storm. She can gird a sword upon her thigh, as well as slumber in the waving shade. In the trumpet's roar, and in the rush of armies, and in the dust and din of bare and iron effort, there is poetry. Force, and life, and action are the home of her dwelling."

"Doubtless, the throes of republican excitement will produce men who will rank with the mighty statesmen of times past. Almost the only specimen that we have yet had of the great men of democracy, is Napoleon. I mean, that, while the qualities by which the old race of politicians succeeded were such as could not have been triumphant except in a monarchy, the elements of Napoleon's power were such as a democracy best furnishes. This much we may foresee, that the great men of our country must be something more than diplomatists; for the great men of our land must appear at the head of the government, and that is not the proper post for a diplomatist, as that station requires respect-producing

energy and dignity, rather than sagacity; he should be the second man, controlling the first. His place, then, is in a monarchy, and not a republic; he should be prime minister, and not president. Hence, if the diplomatist of a ruling party ever be seen at the head of the administration, his failure may be confidently predicted."

"The source of the popularity of Napoleon," said Tyler, "and of all those who have been the demigods of a multitude, lies in their activity; their restlessness; in their always *doing* something; in their always exciting and interesting the people; and constantly affording them something to talk, and think, and dream about. Such high and stimulating scenes as these men unfold to the nation, produce a mental intoxication. You may observe that vices and passions enslave mankind in proportion to the degree in which they fill the imagination."

"There is something," said I, "extremely interesting in the characters of those churchmen who mingled in the politics of Europe from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, and showed to what intense force the human spirit may attain when it throws aside all the distractions of petty passions and interests, and consecrates its energies to one great purpose. Never has the power of the human intellect, or the might of the human will, been more augustly eminent."

"The history of those men should teach us that power is the offspring of purpose, and that success attends on resolution. The contemplation of these men placing themselves at the summit of greatness by the might of a stern determination, and carving their way to influence by the resistless force of firm intention, stirs us to the strength of great designs, and nerves our energies with strenuous vigour. We realise in their history the picture which has been drawn of one of those fixed and self-reliant men, whose purposes 'ne'er feel retiring ebb,' but the 'compulsive course' of whose unslackening efforts keeps due on till it attains success. 'He willed it, and became it. He must have

worked hard; and with tools, moreover, of his own invention and fashioning. He waved and whistled off ten thousand strong and importunate temptations; he dashed the dice-box from the jewelled hand of Chance, the cup from Pleasure's, and trod under foot the sorceries of each: he ascended steadily the precipices of Danger, and looked down with intrepidity from the summit; he overawed Arrogance with sedateness; he seized by the horn and overleaped low Violence; and he fairly swung Fortune round.' It is in the power of all men to accomplish the same great end; for there is nothing in the universe of mind or matter that does not obey the talisman of a strenuous will. To be, we have only to resolve. Determination creates ability."

"I cannot but think," said I, "that there are natural differences in the intelligence of different persons. You shall see two brothers going hand in hand through the same circumstances of education and experience, and turning out very differently. There must be a variety in the substances, when the same light makes the ruby red and the sapphire blue."

"Sir, you are deceiving yourself by a material simile. The brothers are not exposed to the same circumstances. Upon the mind of one of them there has fallen perhaps, in early youth, some pregnant seed of thought, gathered from some casual discourse of graybeards, or caught from some greeting in the streets, and that has dwelt there silently, and taken root and grown into a branching tree of principles and purposes, to which the other is wholly a stranger. If there be any native distinctions in the minds of men, they consist in the different dispositions to be great, and spirits to dare great things, which they bring with them into life; for I am convinced that there is none in the degrees of their understanding. Byron wrote, at twenty, no better than you or I could have written; but if he had been naturally gifted with genius, the proportion of his eminence during his minority and after it, must have been the same. To say that his genius was not developed during his boyhood, is idle; for if the power was there it must

have shown itself. Suffering, passion, and an intense desire to be great, generated in him the 'faculty divine.' Chatterton had fathomed the source of his own ability when he said, that man is equal to any thing, and that every thing might be accomplished by diligence and abstinence, and that God had sent his creatures into the world with arms long enough to reach any thing if they would bear the trouble of extending them. That the human character may be transformed, as well as the human intellect advanced, by the force of ardent resolution, may be attested by the history of the Great Frederick, 'qui, né facile, se rendit severe;' by the life of the greater Mirabeau, who passed from extreme susceptibility to rude insensibility."

"If so much is within the scope of personal effort to accomplish, there must be some grievous error in the popular systems of education," said I; "for such results are but rarely elicited."

"In modern schools, there is too much instruction, and too little education. We should educate the intellect, not load the memory. We should inure the mind to exertion, to steadiness of observation and quickness of action; we should make it 'Prompt, intrépide á l'attaque;' send it forth, not with the cumbrous armour of knowledge, but with the stygian dye of inward strength. Boys are recommended to cultivate a taste for reading, and many respectable writers have extolled its benefits: I think nothing is more hurtful. Of reading which is read for the pleasure which it affords, but little is remembered; and the time is wasted, the judgment enfeebled, the passions stirred without any action upon the intellect, and the fancy filled with idle, and therefore harmful visions and aspirations. The tone of the mind thus habituated to receive the chewed food of another's thinkings, is weakened; and the intellectual and moral energies are spent in the unreal regions of memorising fancy. Men, so educated, drone away their days over their books, and sit soaking their intellects with the moist conclusions which others have distilled. The mind, instead of being made strong and agile, is laden

till it staggers under the weight; and on that field where the nimble spirit of a war-horse is required, it appears baggage-burdened with the panniers of a mule. If reading were accompanied by that keen and ever-flashing scrutiny of criticism necessary to make it profitable, but few would be eager to cultivate it. Book-threading is, I grant, a delicious amusement; but all serviceable exercises are laborious, and most easy ones injurious. As the matter now goes, I regard reading and revery as the opium of the mind."

"Your system," said I, "agrees pretty closely with the advice of Lord Bolingbroke, that men should not be taught what to think, but how to think. By-the-by, I am amazed at the neglect into which the writings of that great philosopher have fallen. If there be a life in wisdom, or a soul in wit, or in sentences of magic beauty a force that makes itself to be remembered, his fame should never have passed away from the earth. There was that, both in his character and in his genius which addressed posterity, rather than the present, and yet his distinction died before him."

"It is indeed lamentable to see," said Mr. Tyler, "to how mean an influence of priestly prejudice his renown has been succumbed. His reputation, like his person, has been devoured by worms. But I cordially unite with you in yielding the profoundest homage to his greatness. Of all the lords of mind, none hath a larger state or loftier pace than he. The whole frame of his intellectual exhibition is marked by a grandness of conception, a majesty of mind, that is as rare as it is delightful; the natural high utterances of one that breathes a superior atmosphere of thought to that of ordinary men."

"He is the only infidel derider of man," said I, "from whose writings you come exalted, ennobled, and with added vigour in the cause of virtue. The most generous believer might read Bolingbroke, and in the spirit of his sentiments find nothing alien to the high hopings of the Christian heart. He looked on man with the scowl of a demon, and on truth with the smile of a

seraph. His intellect was brilliant, though disordered; splendid, though erring; bright, but blasted. The gorgeous structure of his philosophy is riven to the foundation; but genius always commands our sympathy, for, 'like the temples of the gods, she is venerable even in ruins.' I have never read Bolingbroke without a feeling of deep melancholy; so sincere and elevated are his aspirations, so vain and errabund his theories. He often seems to feel the hollowness of the portion which he had chosen, but there abides within him a native nobility of soul, an inherent dignity of character, which forbids the vanity of regret or the weakness of a groan. We find in him none of those fretful and deep repinings, whereby Byron hourly showed that the load which he had assumed was too heavy for him, and daily crushed him to the earth; nor, on the other hand, do we see that either the wild revelry of the feebler children of perdition, or that rigid calmness beneath which the arch-apostate veiled from his peers the burning anguish of his soul; but rather the sad cheerfulness and vain hopefulness of one that did not feel that all the fault was his. Towards the regions of moral truth he often turns a sightless eye; but the placid countenance tells that the blindness was not wilful. He reminds me of a benighted fisherman, who, to join his family on shore, makes his way cheerily over the ice with pole and push, and dexterous leap; not seeing that the field which he is crossing is detached from the land, and is drifting away to the solitudes of the midnight sea. Though he shivers by the flickering bonfire of deism, he utters no complaint; though he wanders through the sands of barren and irremediable error, he never quits the philosophic dignity of the flowing robe and burnished ring. His step along the paths of infidelity is like the tread of Vathek down the stairs of the hall of Eblis; for though the road is to utter and eternal perdition, the feet of a born king of men are upon it. We might liken him to a banished noble among the frosts of Siberia; noble, though banished,—though destitute, still dignified; con-

scious that there still remained to him an 'order,' from which none could degrade him, and that a star still shone upon his breast which no monarch could strike off."

"In pronouncing sentence upon the moral course of a man like St. John, we must take into account those splendid infirmities of nature which ensure for genius the fame of a conqueror, and the fate of a victim; that irrepressible ardour of spirit, which, while it kindles the intellect into a flashing fire, clouds the judgment with the fumes of excitement, and disturbs the reason with its wild impatience. His is a breast which passion has vexed with all its storms. The chords of sensibility have been swept from the highest to the lowest note by the tempest blasts of suffering. Yet is his mind redolent of much of that fresh purity which grand and generous thoughts bring with them. Throughout all his nature there are traits of high nobility; there is visible in him none of the languor of a mind washed with debauchery, or drenched in the 'sickly dews' of selfishness; 'le vice l'entrainait sans l'asservir.' Much still 'sounds man' about him. For the waywardness of his temper and the madness of his conduct, some excuse may be found in the tormenting persecutions and mortifying irritations which harassed his life. Soon after his entrance into public life, he found a youthful rival, whose character he detested, and whose talents he despised, safely fixed in circumstances to laugh at his impotent ragings, and by force of dull and regular exertion pinning him to the stake of exile and contempt. He found factions using him when they needed his assistance, and turning from him in the day of his calamity. He had early thrown a fatal die, and must through life abide the cast. With energies that demanded action, and a heart which domestic interests could not satisfy, he was doomed to feel in the flush of early manhood, that his day had gone by for ever. Idolising reputation, he lived long years with the sting of a moral attainder 'tingling in every vein.' When I look upon him strug-

gling under the deadly precious load of genius, and taking his steps, perforce unsteady, over the 'burning marle' of statesmanship, at a time when politics swayed the hearts of men with the firmness of a principle, and the fervour of a passion, I confess that I cannot discover his failings; and before I have finished his majestic apologies for his errors, I have already forgotten what they were. It has been his misfortune that there are few persons who have been capable of representing him justly; for those who admired his politics were sure to abhor his philosophy. The eunuch-mind of the younger Walpole could as little taste the strong and rasping sense of the moralist, as his filial tenderness could tolerate the contemptuous energy of the politician. This variety of quality which made his character inconsistent, entered likewise into his genius, and made it copious. He partook of the best essence, and was tinged with the distinct peculiarities of many of those distinguished persons by whom he was companioned and courted. He had much of the steel-toothed sagacity of Swift, all of the moral purpose, mild fancy, and untrembling judgment of Pope, the severe taste of Atterbury, and the rich scholarship of Arbuthnot. I think that his power of sarcasm was by nature both stronger and more delicate than that of his poetical friend; but the latter had so educated his mind in bitterness, that he had become, like Lot's wife, a pillar of salt. His sneer is often savage, but it is never the sneer of jealousy or hate; it seems to proceed from conscientious contempt. More usually he flashes the stings of satire under the cover of a graceful irony, and like the panegyrist of Harmodius, linking an energetic purpose with a classic elegance, he wreathes his dagger in myrtle. He unites the full compass of English sense with the pointed vigour of the wits of France. His style has a corresponding breadth and liberality, and lies between the high cathedral style of Milton and the sauntering grace of Addison. He exhibits a fresh and ever-springing life of mind. Every sentence rays distinct and vivid

thought. He is not a formal reasoner; he does not deal in technical argumentation; he plays no tunes with his ponderous hammer. He tears down systems with the naked hand of masculine sense; and like a moral Milo, he rends the aged trunks of philosophic theories with the bare arm of unschooled force. He confronts the gowned professors of philosophy, in the natural majesty of unrobed reason. His manner most felicitously seconds his purpose. His sentences are not rich nor highly wrought: it is their tone, rather than their structure which gives them their weight. Burke builds up his style with a laborious carpentry beneath your eye, and it is clear that the author is below his character; he has put on his stage robes, and is mounted on a platform. Bolingbroke's manner, though lofty, is not stilted. His sentences have all the natural joints of lively thought. He wears no pasteboard limbs. In his paragraphs every member *tells;* in every sentence, and the tiniest part of it, you see the force and shaping of a serious mind. He never writes for display, but, in an earnest way, to communicate his thoughts. His stately tread is the accustomed princely step of one who has ever moved on marble, reposed on velvet, and breathed the air of palaces. The grave procession which rests in the spectator's mind as a passing dream of splendour, is the daily condition of his life. There is nothing dreamy or scholastic about Bolingbroke: he is always fresh with the hourly interests of life. He examines theories of metaphysics with the closeness and seriousness of one discussing measures in council. He states his system with the air of a man ready to furnish an estimate, or to embody his sentiments in resolutions. Without dreaming of comparing the magnificent moral force of the patriot with the merely intellectual vigour of the partisan, I must say, that as a stylist, as a communicator of thoughts, I prefer the well-laced sobriety of Bolingbroke to the Persian prodigality of Burke. Bolingbroke shapes his thoughts into ornament; Burke weaves decorations around his. Beauty, with one, is

the form of the conception; with the other, it is the garniture of the apparel. Bolingbroke's entertainments are like the European banquets on silver plate, where what is showy, is also useful; Burke reminds us of that Asiatic prince who breakfasted his friends on stacks of roses."

CHAPTER XIV.

When hope displays its magic art
  The way of life to clear;
The faintest visions of the heart
  Like solid joys appear.

But when that hope dark grief o'erweighs,
  And cares the soul involve,
The solid joys that deck'd our days
  Like thinnest dreams dissolve.
Hood.

I weed all bitterness from out my breast;
It hath no business where thou art a guest.
Lament of Tasso.

On the following morning I called again at Mr. Wilson's house to see Emily. The circumstance of my last repulse had dwelt in my mind as a matter of some astonishment, though not of any apprehension. To what motive it was to be assigned I could not guess; still I could scarcely persuade myself that it arose from intention, or was dictated by any change of feeling on her part towards me. When, therefore, I again presented myself at the door, it was without any doubt that if Emily was really at home I should be admitted at once. My surprise and alarm may easily be conceived when the same answer was again returned to my inquiry, that Miss Wilson was engaged.

Determined to know at once whether the refusal was so strongly personal to myself as this repetition of the same reply seemed to indicate, "May I inquire," said I, to the attendant who appeared at the door, "whether you have received explicit orders not to admit me?"

"I am directed," he replied, "not to admit Mr. Stanley whenever he calls."

I had walked several squares before the tumult of indefinite emotions which this unexpected rejection in a quarter where I had dreamed of nothing but kindness and regard, had excited, before I was calm enough to ask myself the meaning of so inexplicable an occurrence. But three days had passed since Emily had received me with good-will and even tenderness, and had herself assured me of the warmth of her feelings towards me. Could it be possible that offended by my previous long neglect, she had chosen again to draw me to her feet only in order to repulse me the more decidedly, and to enjoy the cruel triumph of wounding my wishes and destroying my peace? Unworthy as seemed the adoption of so cold a policy, I could not help, in the first bitterness of irritated feeling, imagining that some motive of that kind must be the cause of such signal inconsistency; but when the soft and gentle countenance of Emily rose before my calmer mind, in the peaceful image of its sweet benignity, the suggestion dropped from my thoughts as a scheme too alien from her artlessness. I felt convinced that she was labouring under some false impression, arising either from accidental mistake, or occasioned by the wilful misrepresentation of some third person. When I called to mind the circumstances discovered to me by the recent letters of my father, and added to them the occurrences at the sea-shore which had so much surprised me at the time, but now seemed in all probability a part of the same system, it became manifest that I and my family had some dark and formidable enemies, the ruthless ingenuity of whose proceedings it was not easy to fathom. That some portion of this mysterious influence which had acted so fatally upon the fortunes of my father, had been brought to bear on this present matter for the destruction of my plans and the ruin of my happiness, was an opinion which, strange and improbable as in many respects it appeared, I was strongly inclined to entertain. The incident by which my con-

versation with Emily in the garden had been interrupted on the evening when I had first met her, and the impression which it had produced upon me at the time of our intercourse being on that occasion the subject of observation, now occurred to me as confirmatory of the same suspicion.

That night there was a large party at the house of a woman of considerable distinction in the fashionable world, and I went to it. I came in late, and having made my way through the gay crowd to a remote part of the rooms, one of the first objects that there met my eyes was the figure of Emily, standing alone between the windows, and leaning thoughtfully on a marble slab. As I looked upon her, the loveliness which seemed visibly to enhaze her presence fluttered my nature with a wildness which nothing could resist. The throb of deep excitement wherewith the might of one earnest thought disturbed my frame, was an unuttered prayer that the rich hope which her existence gave might not be blasted. The fulness with which the memories and dreams which her contemplation had lately spread through my mind had absorbed my whole being, proved to me that the sentiments and impressions which her nearness rayed forth over my mind made my true life, and that the dim sense of consciousness which alone I realised when other influences engrossed me, was a twilight vitality of spirit external to that deeper sphere of joy. Now, one glance at that soul-enthralling countenance and shape caused my feelings to flash back in an instant to that inner strength of being which recent hours had faded into common life. To be flung down from this high interior state of blessedness, and turned away to wander an alien from my better self, was a calamity which I could not think of. That accident or the cold plans of another's interest should thus pluck out so full a promise of all future pleasure of heart and elevation of spirit, was a prospect that stirred my deepest feelings, and impelled me to determine that such a result should be baffled.

I approached and spoke to her. She observed my

presence a moment or two before I reached her, and I observed a paleness to pass over her countenance and an embarrassment to affect her manner, although she did not move from her position.

"The ill success," said I, "which has attended two of my visits, compels me to fear that I have in some way forfeited that kindness which so graciously appointed an hour for receiving it—a fear which has filled me with the deepest uneasiness."

"I must be permitted," said she, beginning to move from her place, "to question the sincerity of that uneasiness which has taken so little trouble to prevent the fact which it fears."

"I cannot conceive," said I, "to what you have reference. There is certainly some mistake. I am sure that I have done nothing which malice itself could torture to offence."

"It is needless," she replied very coldly, "to debate a matter so unambiguous as the circumstances to which I allude. When I say that I am fully aware of recent transactions on your part, I need scarcely add that of course all intercourse between us must be at an end. My only error consisted in confiding in words whose hollowness a disregard prolonged through so long a time abundantly proclaimed. That fault will be best atoned by a return to that previous indifference."

When she had finished she turned towards a neighbouring group, and left me overcome with astonishment. To what events she made allusion I could not conceive. I felt certain that she had been abused by some false stories, and that a brief explanation on my part would dispel the impression which seemed to rest so strongly upon her. But to obtain such a hearing as would suffice to remove the deep influence which circumstance had made upon her seemed impossible, and that candour which any suggestions on my part would require for their appreciation was precluded by the prejudgment which seemed to be so decidedly fixed. I felt besides a kind of desperateness occasioned by the consciousness of the injustice that was done me, and a

determination to renounce all attempt at reconciliation. Vexation at myself did the work of resentment against another, and I turned aside with the cruel conviction that all the hopes which I had cherished in this so lovely person were struck down, and dead for ever.

I looked towards the quarter where Emily was conversing with some one whom I did not know. The thought that she whose every look and motion fancy had familiarised to my thoughts with such a household custom and acquaintance that all her beauty seemed to be *my own*, was now estranged to me probably for ever, was one "that worked like madness in my brain." So entwined in all my wishes was her lovely form, and so blended with every memory that flitted before my musings was the image of her smiling face, that she seemed to me a portion of myself; and it appeared against nature that so entire a portion of my very being should be alienated from me, and the "altered eye" of "hard unkindness" substituted for that dreamy glance of sympathy which made her love appear a fair creation in which my dim and shapeless imaginings of bliss were mirrored by reality. Those looks and smiles which had once flashed upon my secret spirit as hieroglyphics of peculiar passion and the private countersigns of personal appreciation, were now the common language which she used towards others, though full of strange meaning still to me. I had felt as if it was by some secret convention between us that the changes of countenance were so charged with deep expression, and while they still bore the same significance, and still woke in me the accustomed answering emotion, I could not deem that so deep an inward change had taken place in her, while those things which had stood as the exponents of feeling were unaltered. The happy confidence which gave such character to her whole conduct was gone; but the want and the weakness had remained on mine. Could I have roused resentment to ward off sensibility, and have armed myself with hate as shield against suffering,

> Then I might have hardened
> My soul in misery, and have had comfort.

But the perfect gentleness and timid softness of this sweet girl forbade me to cherish one harsh thought. I could not violate the sacred defencelessness of that artless feeling which had so long spread the simple purity of infancy through my thoughts, and reigned in my heart with a childlike holiness of truth. The fact and the satisfaction were taken from my life; the delusion and the dream still stayed behind.

That the change which the sentiments of Emily had undergone did not arise from want of real regard on her part previously, or any natural decline of that affection which had once been warm, was sufficiently apparent from her language and manner. Some inexplicable circumstance had intervened to overthrow her opinion of my character, and force upon her judgment what her heart might still oppose. What that event was, and how the impression which it had left might be removed, were more than I could resolve; but I could still retain the hope that when time or accident had removed the barrier of error which now opposed my wishes, I might recover that favourable respect which had been lost, and once more renew the pure attachment which it once sustained. Meanwhile, it was a mystery that puzzled my best ingenuity to discover.

CHAPTER XV.

There is no power
Of sweetness in the softest tones of love,
Or in the whisper of reposing peace,
Can glad the heart with half that strength of joy
Which the shrill ringings of the trumpet's blast
Spread through the frame.

BAILLIE.

Herein we will forget the world awhile,
And merrily will laugh one hour away
Of life's dull calendar.

COLERIDGE.

THE strange disappearance of the letter from beneath my pillow, which I have spoken of in a preceding chapter, occasioned me the greatest surprise and uneasiness. To believe that any one had entered my chamber in the night and possessed himself of any thing in such a situation as it was, seemed impossible. No one could possibly conjecture where I would place the letter, if he were even aware of my possessing it; and if accident or reason should guide him to the very spot, I could not conceive how any one could enter and leave my chamber and the house, without either creating alarm or leaving behind any trace of his passage. The doors and windows of all the rooms stood on the following morning as they had been left; nothing furnished the slightest evidence that there had been any intrusion within the walls of the house.

When I called to mind, however, what my father had said of the incredible ingenuity and daring of those who were specially interested in obtaining this document,

and what I myself had discovered of their knowledge and disposition, I was strongly persuaded that it was to their acts and efforts that the loss of this paper was to be attributed. The conversation which I had overheard in the hall of the club-house evinced their acquaintance with the possessor of the letter, as well as their determination to obtain it by some means or other. That a band of resolute and scheming men could, under these circumstances, have entered my apartment and removed what they pleased without disturbance or detection was by no means impossible. By reasoning boldly upon the probabilities of the case, they might have been directed to the place where the valued writing was actually concealed; for I had chosen the protection which almost any man would have selected who would not trust to the safety of his drawer or his writing-desk. In the utter absence, at least, of any probable mode of accounting for the disappearance of the letter, I was compelled to conclude that those unknown persons whose interference had been so much dreaded and deprecated, had obtained the instrument which of all others it was desirable to conceal from them.

The conviction that these formidable adventurers were near me, and that I had been thus far the victim of their designs, roused in me a resolution to grapple with their mysterious strength, and frustrate, if it were possible, their lawless enterprise. The task seemed full of difficulty and danger; but I could fight with the same weapons which they did, and could start a spirit to oppose them, as stern and deadly as their own. If intellect and a cool heart gave them their power, I had the same sources of counsel and energy, and was not afraid to meet them firmly, mind to mind. If they could intrigue, I could scheme too; and could fling as thick dangers and clogs about their path as they could throw around mine. If, "be bold, be bold, and every where, be bold," had been the motto of their triumphs, I had as brave a temper as their own; if, "be not too bold" had been their shield from peril, I could forge as strong an armour of caution as they could do. At all events,

exertion and the strife of contest are grateful to the manly mind. They rouse within the soul a depth and strength of life which testify how cognate with its true character is the stirring force of action. In the rage of passion, and the roar of danger, the thrilling spirit tastes its keenest joy.

The club-house suggested itself to me as the place where I should be most likely to hear or see something which might throw light upon the character of that company of persons who were united in those plans which I was anxious to overthrow. The two persons whom I had overheard in the entry seemed to reside in some part of the building, and so far as I could judge from their allusions, were not without connexion with some of that party whom I was now going to meet. I entertained the hope that by some means or other I might obtain such information as would aid my future plans.

Accordingly in the evening I walked down in the direction which Tyler and myself had previously taken. I was not certain of the precise situation of the house, and I passed through a number of streets which were wholly new to me, before I discovered the proper route. After wandering about for a good while I at length came upon the narrow street in which the old building was placed. I lingered for a few minutes in the entry and around the door with the hope of meeting some one of the persons of whose kindly intentions towards myself I had been the unsuspected discoverer on the former occasion. No one, however, was visible, and I presently walked into the library of the club, of which I had taken a hasty glance on my last visit. Two or three men of gentlemanly appearance were reading in different parts of the room. The collection of books, so far as I could judge from a rapid inspection, appeared to be a good one, and the whole apartment bore marks of refinement and taste. I passed through several chambers which seemed to be designed for private sitting-rooms, and were arranged with neatness and elegance. There were several rooms on the same floor with which there was no communication, and a number of passages

which ran from the extreme parts of the building, and gave an air of intricacy to its plan which somewhat surprised me. It did not appear to me that the arrangement of the place was that which the ostensible use of the pile required.

Finding nothing to detain me longer there, I strolled into the supper-room. A number of persons were sitting at a well supplied table, and my entrance was greeted at once by Seward and two or three more of my friends. Mr. Tyler appeared to be doing his duty with the glasses at the top of the table. It was as inviting a picture of joviality as I ever saw.

I am one of those who divide their pains from their pleasures by a pretty distinct interval, and never suffer the long shadow of coming trouble to darken the brightness of the present scene. It is the unfortunate condition of ordinary being that when gayety and grief partake our life, it is the former conquers. When the circumstances which are around us differ in their complexion from the spirit which is within us, the latter sometimes triumphs, and is sometimes quelled. But the law which regulates the difference, makes not for our comfort; for a gloomy temper flings a dusky colouring over the fairest state, and the gayety of the stoutest heart struggles dimly and is soon depressed, amid scenes of suffering. To reverse this rule, were to attain the true law of life. Could we teach our mood to yield in pleasure and prevail in grief, content might always sit upon our crest. Acting on this philosophy at least in halves, I threw aside all disturbing recollections, and gave myself up to the enjoyment of the hour.

A chair was placed for me at the table by one of the smallest and blackest men I ever beheld. His head and countenance resembled one of those shrivelled pieces of fruit that one sees in the spring on an apple-tree which has survived the winter.

"That man," said Seward, who was sitting opposite to me and had been enjoying my surprise at the little object, "is like the substance from which Raymond Sully first made alcohol, 'nigrum nigrius nigro,' and

realises a peculiar phrase of Suetonius 'ne(g)ronior ne(g)ro.' His soul is in a sad case. It has what Fuller would call 'a small diocese to attend to.' Truly life is to him what Pope declares it is to all—'a dark abode.' One would think that his spirit had sinned in some pre-existing state and had been condemned to a life-long suit of mourning in this world. He is embodied darkness; he furnishes a perfect example of an expression which Bentley would have inserted in Milton—'inspissated gloom.' A printer might make use of him to point a sentence; we employ him to point a jest. By-the-by, have you heard the last rumour?"

"No; and I should not credit it if I had. Troubled times, like these, are like a lawyer's office, full of Reports."

"My good fellow, there is often more credulity in disbelieving than in believing. As to what I speak of, they say that poor Tom Ferrars is done up, 'cracking the claw of a lobster'—dipped—cleaned out—or what you will."

"The deuce!"

"The deuce! No, his own folly rather. Poor Tom was one of those that, like a corked bottle, are lightest at the top. Such people, like an old piano, are only fit to be practised on. In spite of his silliness it seems he lived in great credit. Poor fellow! he'll be as hot-pressed as a new English volume of poems to live now."

"He may assume the valiant air of Pistol and exclaim—'base is the slave that pays!' If that wont do he may run, like a Scotch novel. In truth he is only accomplishing his destiny; he was always empty and noisy as a drum, and now like it he is beaten. But he was a well-tempered man, and I sincerely pity him."

"Pardon me: he was well-natured, but not well-tempered. Good nature is from birth; good temper is the result of sense, and that he never had. The only evidence of intellect that he furnished was in being tolerably moral and I believe thoroughly upright: for it takes more sense to make an honest man than the

world generally thinks. It was the easiness of his spirit that made Tom usually inferior to his companions; for if two men even of equal talent live much together, the worst-natured will commonly get the superiority."

"This is a century of inventions, and perhaps he will find out some new mode of living upon nothing. He has at least the resort of a wife, 'sad refuge,' I admit, 'from the storms of fate;' but still, as Etherege says, 'a wife is no curse when she brings the blessing of a good estate with her!'"

"Mrs. —— is, I believe, one of his largest creditors, and perhaps she might take personal security for her debt. But for my part, I am of Othello's thinking, though I would make no exception:

> I would not my unhoused free condition
> Put into circumscription and confine,
> For the sea's worth."

"'Dos est uxoria lites,' says Ovid; 'strife and tumult are the dowry that comes with a wife,' says the learned mocking-bird of our drama. I would decline any such offer in the spirit of Demosthenes when turned away from the too expensive Lais, and 'I would not buy repentance at the expense of my liberty.' By-the-by, Metellus in a speech in Gellius has reconciled the opposite arguments about marriage in the neatest manner possible: 'ita natura tradidit ut, nec cum illis satis commodè, nec sine illis ullo modo vivi possit.' Still, as that Greek epigram which was the last learned utterance of the tongue of Porson, remarks—every body declaims against marriage and every body gets married: and I should look as blank as the verse of Montgomery or the cartridge of Moore if you should some day cast these sayings in my teeth as I approach you wife-armed with some simpering Beatrice. It would require the valour of a flattered coward to look you in the face."

"It is a melancholy but a common thing, to see a man possessed of all the rich advantages which Ferrars had from nature, going through life with scarce an hour of real happiness. Rich, high-born, and mingling in

the best society, he has passed through pleasure and has passed by it, and has missed it. The social distinction of his family imposed upon him an unprofitable routine of ceremony, which is only tolerable as long as it is new. The lives of the great resemble those large-paper copies of books which are prepared for their use; though splendid in appearance, the greater portion of the page is blank. Their life has no vicissitudes, and its unvarying satisfaction never permits to look forward to that occasion which is always fair and on which Fortune always sits and smiles—the next. But in truth, every man's condition has in it some accursed poison-bone that vitiates all the rest. Life is like a China-cup and at the fall it broke."

"Payne!" said an Englishman, from the other side of the table, "have you read Brougham's last speech?"

"No, but if you are sure it is his last, I will. I took my leave of him when he took up the vindication of that woman who first showed the world the meaning of that Shakspearean phrase that puzzled Hamlet, a 'mobled queen.' I doubt not, that in that speech he well merited the title of old Sylvester, 'silver-tongued.' But what have you in all your records of eloquence that can outweigh the well-brained sentences of Webster? What a towering monument of mind is he! He may be termed a *real* statesman, according to the legal definition of the reality—'permanent, fixed and immovable, which cannot be carried out of its place.'"

"Ay! 'overbearing, persuasive, and impracticable.' There are many things in this world that are of great value and no use; and Webster is one of them. Every man has his fault, and greatness is his."

"England has secured an eternal supremacy for her great statesmen over those of other nations by the wise device of enrolling them in the peerage. Men may talk as they will of the majesty of intellect or the kingliness of character; there is no greatness which the world will always and inevitably acknowledge save that of title. The moment a man is inscriptus quietis ordinibus of the nobility, he assumes in the instinctive and

ineradicable admission of all men, a superior nature. He may be a parvenu and a brute, but his name clothes him, in the imagination of all, with the splendour and homage of feudal dignity, and Tudor and Plantagenet float before our eyes."

"True: and in England that natural fealty always prevails over the opposing popularity of democratic aspirants and enables the balance of contest to be on the side of the aristocracy; so that we have generally the satisfaction of being, at least, enslaved by a gentleman. Britain's feudality has saved her from the political Fetichism of America, whose devotion only bows to beasts. It has also kept us from the leaden tyranny of wealth, which has here set up its altars unopposed—temples were the banks of Greece; banks are the temples of America."

"Of England and America we must say, 'magis pares quam similes.' The system of civility which prevails in the two countries is different. England is a lake, calm and dignified, shaded by willows and fringed with daisies. America is a river, that dashes along, often muddy and always agitated, rarely graceful and never dignified, but in this wild and free impetuosity an emblem of all that is bold, and daring and spirited in man, and sometimes too not failing in its unfettered energy to work out a high and earnest beauty. Our greatness lies in that enterprise and activity of which we can give no vouchers in the drawing-room. The Englishman walks in a narrow sphere, and in that sphere excels what his colonist can do in any one of the departments in which he figures. The American is a flambeau that stinks in a drawing-room, but burns admirably on the race-ground: the Englishman is a wax-candle, elegantly bright in its station, but which, if moved out of its place, flares desperately."

"Old ——, who has just come back from England, has been letting off a number of his queer epigrams about that nation. I see that he has also printed something."

"Those must admire —— who think with Heraclitus that the excellence of the soul consists in its aridity; for

he is abundantly dry. His success seems to illustrate what the lawyers term the 'policy of assurance,' for only by everdaring could his moderate talents have placed him where he stands."

"Do you know him, Payne?"

"Not personally, but I have read his pamphlets."

"Your judgment then is scarcely impartial; for it is always the disposition of man to overestimate those whom he knows, and underestimate those whom he does not. He has sense, but not the sense to show it. How different is his sobriety from the character of his brother—a toper that would 'coin his blood for *drams*.' His defect is that in cultivating diligently some of the deeper sciences, he has neglected the knowledge of those lighter subjects, a familiarity with which men are hourly called on to exhibit. Hence with a fund of wisdom he passes often for a fool, for men naturally judge of merit by that test with which they are most conversant, and which therefore occupies the largest space in their own minds. Thus Kenelm Digby founds his lofty admiration of Spenser on the knowledge of Astrology which one of his stanzas displays; and Selden extols Ovid as a great Canon Lawyer. While Nash despises a Lord Mayor of his time because he could not write a blank verse, and Kean sneers the Duke of Wellington into insignificance with 'Pooh! he is no judge of acting.' It is the misfortune of ——, that his temper is too critical, his mental scrutiny too severe. He is ever transmuting pleasure into annoyance by the keenness of his analysis, and crushing the gayety of careless joy to shell out the kernel of moral wisdom that lies within it. Like the pedant in Faust, 'whilst we enjoy, he reasons of enjoyment.' But he misses the condition, while in pursuit of its livery; and to such poor moralists the men of mirth may justly say in the better philosophy of natural feeling,

> Wiser things may wise men say,
> But we are wiser far than they."

Meanwhile an earnest controversy was raging on

my right hand between the Englishman of whom I have spoken and a diminutive Frenchman who sat opposite to him, on that everlasting subject of national difference, the character of Napoleon. The latter proved that his favourite commander triumphed at Mont St. Jean in every respect except gaining the victory, while his antagonist reproached the Emperor with cowardice in surviving the last hour of his glory. Upon this point I was referred to as arbitrator—a mode of arriving at truth of which the English seem particularly fond.

"I confess," said I, to the despiser of France, "that I cannot agree with you in thinking Napoleon's life at St. Helena undignified or degrading: on the contrary I think that his conduct during that residence was the only thing by which he showed that he was truly great. In the bustle of action, animation, passion and the excitement of enterprise will elevate men; in the repose of peace and unemployment, strength of character alone can sustain them. That he who, as the poet says of Corinth,

> had seen
> Glory in all her beauty, all her forms,

should live contented, happy, and with a healthy mind in the naked solitude of a lonely island, and never be so truly dignified as in that hopeless exile, is the loftiest exhibition of nobility of nature with which I am acquainted."

"I wonder," cried Seward, "that the nations should be so enraged at Napoleon's policy. He was only a practical philosopher, illustrating Pythagoras's definition of beauty—the reduction of many into one. No doubt they tell monstrous lies about him; indeed, when a man becomes eminent, truth resigns her office of biographer; and lies have so tripping an adaptation to the nimble tongue that he who is talked of much, will be talked of falsely. If you wish a novelty to be believed, state it in an improbable form; never repeat wonders, till they believe them."

"How remarkable a circumstance that one man

should devastate Europe in such a manner, and one other man should redeem it. In the trinity of the Hindus the creator is accompanied by a destroyer and a preserver; and it rarely happens in action or in truth, that a Seva spirit is let forth upon the earth without an antagonist Vishnoo appearing at the same time. When the fame of the liberator of Europe in these latter days shall be posthumous, his true greatness will be seen. There is no shield from the shafts of detraction save the marble of the tomb. Shakspeare's remark applies rather to effects than to reputation."

"It is odd how solicitous a man always is to avoid the appearance of contradicting Shakspeare. We refer to him as to Nature herself, and never think of allowing for the existence of inaccuracy in his copies. I presume there is not an observation in his plays that can be shown to be incorrect."

"If Shakspeare had written nothing else than Falstaff's 'Whose mare's dead?' and Dogberry's assumption of dignity because 'he had had losses,' they would have been enough to stamp him as the most accurate observer that ever lived. I wonder, by-the-by, that we have no edition of his works with æsthetical and critical notes; none but antiquarians have as yet illustrated him, or old pedants who insisted on the unities as if a play had been an estate in joint-tenancy. Instead of looking for his originals in real life, they have been burrowing 'where,' in Saxo Grammaticus, 'the rude forefathers of the "Hamlet" sleep.' What study of chronicles could illustrate Lear."

"Lear!" said the little Frenchman beside me, who had been occasionally interposing a question, when the conversation went beyond his depth, "Lear? who was Lear?"

"Lear, my dear fellow," replied Seward, "was an old fool who pulled off his boots at night before he saw whether he could find his slippers. His sagacious daughters drew the neatskin on their own legs and kicked the old fellow into the fields."

"I should like to see illustrations of Shakspeare's

characters drawn from history. The conduct of Harley, Earl of Oxford, might throw light upon the indecision of Hamlet. An inquiry into Shakspeare's choice of subjects from history might be curious; as, to discover what difference of taste led Scott to select Richard, and Shakspeare to take John."

"Scott loved the romantic; Shakspeare's sympathy was with the familiar, the domestic, the universal. The conduct of a story was Scott's *forte;* the illustration of it, Shakspeare's. Scott in the vigour of his genius was too prodigal of his power, for the benefit of his reputation—in his poems, the incidents injure the impression of the poetry, and the verse conceals the course of the incidents. A wary author would have presented but one object of admiration at a time. When Protogenes in his picture of a reposing Satyr, had painted a partridge with so much skill that all Greece was in raptures with it, the self-denying painter wisely erased the picture of the bird, because it withdrew the attention from the principal figure. The same uncalled-for richness of phrase has detracted from Coleridge's character as a philosopher."

"In metaphysics, the redundance you allude to, is a more positive evil than in narrative. Ornamental turns of style obstruct the way to truth. A moralist poising periods, is like a wrestler fighting in a cloak. In Coleridge I suspect this garniture concealed weakness. He did little to extend science; though he showed us a new method of thinking old thoughts. Indeed a good disposition of common materials is as valuable as the creation of new substances. It is only in the arrangement of its particles that the diamond differs from the coal. Coleridge certainly leaves much that is good behind him, and while the remark of Augustin is mournfully correct 'mortuis authoribus veneni, scelerata tamen eorum doctrina non moritur,' it is equally true that the help that is done by a good man to virtue is as immortal as the principle it defends. Coleridge was almost the only one of his contemporaries that showed a disposition to revive the architectural sentences, the pala-

tial paragraphs of that æra of our literature in which Coke said that 'a good style, and fair falling sentences never were at so high a price as now they bear.' The tendency of taste is very different now; it inclines to a direct, downright and even *brusque* manner. In all the technical parade of Coleridge, there is far less of the real staple of thought, than in the pedestrian plainness of Lamb, a man whose incomparable richness of humour, seems to hide from popular appreciation the uncommon strength and soundness of his intellect."

"When Elia first fell into my hands, I could not help exclaiming in the words of Ben Jonson,

> Blest be the hour wherein I bought this book;
> His studies happy that composed the book;
> And the man fortunate that sold the book!

Charles and his sister were a brace of angels. Byron's poetry is unearthly but very worldly; Lamb's prose unworldly but very earthly, and it is that 'smell of mortality,' that *fronde*-like trembling, clinging to the familiar things of nature that makes him so dear a friend to us. He has none of the high-mounting wings of inspired verse that lift beyond the fears of humanity till we forget our low condition,

> Sub pedibus que vidit nubes et sidera Daphnis;

nor in his contentedness with this week-day world does he insist with the Epicurean rapacity of the noble poet on seizing all the richest delights that life can furnish, and crying with the tempter,

> The heads of parrots, tongues of nightingales,
> The brains of peacocks, and of ostriches,
> Shall be our food: and, could we get the phœnix,
> Though nature lost her kind, she were our dish.

As the cold winds sweep uncomfortably without, it is satisfaction enough for him that he is sheltered in the house of life, even though his seat is by the kitchen fire.

He can warm himself by the embers of existence, and on his wooden bench, 'brimful of moral,' can find on his hearth the hues of heaven."

"Keats, I think, would have done great things in poetry if he had lived. Bellerophon's Pegasus would have soared to Heaven, but a wasp stung him, and the rider was flung; Keats's Pegasus was so stung by 'Southey or Milman.' If the latter did it, I would give him Lord Coke's rebuke; 'It becometh not divines to be of a fiery and salamandrine spirit.'"

"Keats might have improved, but I have little confidence in the strength of the stalk that puts forth its blossoms so soon. Every housekeeper can tell you that the fruit that is destined to be preserved, ripens late. The class of writers to which he belonged undertook to revive the language of the days of Elizabeth; but the moralist who had contemplated their principles and conduct might have said to them in the words of Phavorinus, 'vive moribus præteritis; loquere verbis præsentibus.'"

"Talking of Shakspeare, there is a remark of Falstaff which, after lying neglected since the time it was uttered, has received a remarkable conformation in these latter days. In enumerating the grounds of the Prince's attachment to Poins, the hoary jester says, 'Because their legs are both of a bigness; and he plays at quoits well; and jumps upon joint-stools; and *swears with a good grace*.' There has not been, perhaps, in all Europe, enough familiarity with men to observe how likely the accomplishment of ingenious profanity was to interest and be valued in a boon companion, especially by one whose early years had not led him to be familiar with such exhibitions. Delhi Abdalla, Capitan Pasha, and afterwards Vizier of the present intelligent and strong-minded Sultan Mahmoud was a boatman on the Bosphorus, who attracted the notice of the sultan while rowing in his barge, by the strange oaths which he swore, and an odd manner of shouting them out. Upon these grounds, though so illiterate that he could not

write, he was put at the head of the fleet, and raised high in the favour of his master."

"Egad! if such are the benefits of blasphemy, it will be worth while to cultivate the habit of 'exclaiming a little profanely,' as Lamb expresses it. Most of the English kings have had their peculiar 'figures of imprecation,' by which they might be known, as a knight by his device in battle: and a catalogue of royal and noble swearers from the sublime profanity of the conqueror, to the 'oath referential' or 'sentimental swearing' of the witty companion of the Regent would contain some great names. Canning talked of a work on the subject, in his warm youth, and it would have been well if he had found time to execute the project in a cursory manner. The Conqueror, who was great, even in his blasphemies, and of whom the Saxon Chronicle says finely that 'though very stern and also hot, he loved the tall deer as if he were their father,' swore commonly 'by the splendour of God,' and on great state occasions 'by the resurrection and the throne of God.' Rufus contented himself with 'the foot of St. Luke,' and Richard preferred the ardour of 'the Apostle Paul.' The 'Queen of the lion port,'—it is odd, by-the-by, that Fath Ali Shah, the king of Persia, applied the expression, lion-hearted, to Queen Elizabeth in a conversation with Sir Harford Jones,—frequently invoked the different members of the Divine person, and when Cherbury was presented to her, he says that when she spoke to him 'she swore by her usual oath.' The piddling profanity of James minced down the matter into what D'Israeli calls a 'harmless expletive,' of which numerous examples will be found in Ben Jonson and his contemporaries. An analysis of the transformations of the supreme name from the 'uds' of James to the 'egad' of Dryden and his biographer, by an Orford or a D'Israeli would be amusing. Jonson makes it an article of praise in Fastidious that 'he swears tersely and with great variety.' Scarcely an anecdote of Lord Thurlow has come down to us that has not an oath in it, and I presume the Chancellor resorted to it on the principle on which

Fuseli himself, no mean craftsman in the art, advised his wife when she was vexed 'to try swearing, because she had no idea what a relief it was.' One of the old biblical commentators adduces even King David as a professor of the science, for by a small change in the punctuation he is made to swear very appropriately that 'the Lord made the sun to rule; by day! and the moon; by night!' In the Yakkun Nattannawa, a Cingalese Devil hymn, the Devil Oddy is described as 'dwelling in desolate temples and in solitary houses, and constantly swearing.'"

After this conversation had continued for some time longer, I began to feel wearied, and finding that nothing seemed likely to be elicited which concerned the principal object which had brought me there, I rose from my seat to return home. As I passed round the end of the table I observed Mr. Tyler earnestly engaged in debating with a man in spectacles, about the colour of Falernian wine; which his antagonist held, according to the prevailing opinion, to have been black, while he, in support of a theory of his own, maintained that it was green. He seemed so earnestly engaged in the controversy as not to see me, so I went out without saluting him.

In the hall, between the supper-room and the street door, there was a pair of folding doors, which usually stood open, but which, as I issued from the former apartment, I perceived on this occasion, to be closed. Upon trying the handle, I found that the door was locked. A servant came out immediately from a side-room, and pointing to a narrow door on the opposite side, told me that the hall was always fastened up at that hour, but that I would reach the street through the passage which he indicated. I accordingly turned into the narrow entry, and the pullied door which led to it, swung heavily too behind me. There was a lamp hanging from the ceiling, and when I had reached the middle of the floor, I observed that there was no issue from the opposite side, but that the place was terminated by a bare wall. Imagining that I had misunderstood the di-

rection which had been given to me, and had got into the wrong apartment, I turned to retrace my steps. At that moment the light was extinguished, and I was left in complete darkness. At the same instant a noise was audible above, and I found myself rising gradually through the air.

I at first mistrusted the evidence of my feelings, that the floor was actually ascending, and stretched out my hand towards the wall, to assure myself of the fact. I found that it was as I suspected. The rapidity of the motion began also to increase. What was the object of this treachery, and what would be the issue of it, I could not conjecture. Doubtless an encounter with those persons of whose character I had already received some fearful tokens, was at hand. To make any call for assistance was idle; for aught that I knew, every individual in the house was joined with these desperadoes. I therefore remained quiet, and collected: I called into readiness all the energies of my mind and temper, and stood prepared for any event of peril or perplexity that might befal.

The velocity of my movement had so much increased, that I thought I could not be far from the top of the building, when the ascent was suddenly arrested. Without moving, I waited the result.

"Sit down," whispered a voice in my ear.

I did so, and each of my arms was immediately seized and held firmly but without uncomfortable tightness. The place was profoundly dark, but I heard a faint rustling and breathing which convinced me that I was in a room with a number of persons. In a few moments I perceived a very faint light in the apartment which appeared to be transmitted through a screen which stood at some distance in front of me, and which I presumed separated me from those for whose purposes I was brought to this place.

As I sat in this position, various low sounds reached my ear, but no one spoke. The noise, which was slight and occasional, and would perhaps have been inaudible to one whose senses were less keenly excited

and attentive than my own, resembled that of persons sitting at a table and leaning at intervals upon it, and touching it slightly. Some communication appeared to be going on, but no voice even in a whisper was to be heard. Presently a door on the opposite side of the room was opened with suddenness, and closed in the same authoritative manner, and a footstep, as of some one treading with firmness and decision, was audible.

"Accursed blunderers!" said a voice, which was apparently that of the person who had come in, in a very suppressed but angry tone, which the perfect silence of the place and the unusual susceptibility of my faculties, alone, enabled me to hear, "think you that he carries his papers with him? And of what use will his life be without them? Let him go at once."

Some confusion seemed to prevail in consequence of this interruption, and I heard repeatedly the sound of something written very rapidly, and passed, as I conjectured between the parties. This mute debate continued for a few minutes, and then a smart blow was struck by a hand upon the board as if some one was enforcing, by that emphatic gesture, the opinion which he maintained, and an individual rose upon his feet. Something was presently whispered in the ear of one of the persons by whom I was guarded, which seemed to have been conveyed by a messenger from the council, although I did not hear the sound of any one crossing the room.

"Rise," said the same man who had before addressed me; and I accordingly stood up.

Immediately the platform on which I stood began to descend as it had risen; and in a few moments I reached the ground. In an instant the lamp again hung burning from the ceiling and the whole of the narrow apartment appeared precisely as I had left it. The place was perfectly silent, and no trace was visible of the agency by which I had been elevated to that mysterious chamber. I walked towards the door by which I had entered and it opened with facility. So quiet and natural did every thing seem, that I could not help feeling

as if I had been dreaming, and as if all the objects which I had witnessed were the unreal shapes of distempered sleep. I thought of returning into the supper-room, to see if any thing could be found there to aid me in exploring the singular circumstances by which these recent incidents had been effected. The door, however, was locked, though the gay voices of those whom I had left there were still audible. Among the rest I distinguished the tones of Mr. Tyler, still occupied with his antiquarian controversy. The opposite door, which had been closed when I was last there, was now wide open and fastened back as I had been accustomed to see it. I had no idea of leaving the building until I had discovered something which might throw light upon the events which had happened, and assist to prepare me for any future difficulties into which I might be thrown with these persons. As, however, it was probable that I was then observed, and any effort at that moment to elude or beguile the scrutiny of my enemies, I left the house directly with the intention of returning when the lapse of a few hours should afford a prospect of acting more successfully. I accordingly gained the street and walked briskly on in the direction of my residence.

I remained at home till about midnight, and then having accoutred myself in a heavy, large-collared overcoat, and capacious, broad-rimmed hat, I sallied out to see what discovery I could make connected with the adventures I had just passed through. A hackney-coach brought me to the entrance of the street in which the house I sought was situated; I then got out and dismissing the vehicle, walked along till I reached the building. The street-door was fastened, and I feared that I had too long deferred my attempt. I thought, however, that I would walk round to the other side, which I had observed was approached by another street in the rear, in hopes of finding an entrance on that quarter. Passing, therefore, through a narrow alley which intersected the street in which I was, I reached the back garden wall, in the centre of which was a gate. I tried the latch and found that it was open. I

paused for a moment to meditate upon the wisdom of pursuing the attempt which was before me, and to plan the course which I would pursue. The place was possessed by those to whose passions or interest, if detected, the sacrifice of my life would be a trifling consideration. And, indeed, I ran great risk of incurring a recognition which was so likely to prove fatal. On the other hand my curiosity to learn something of the mysterious brotherhood which inhabited these walls was extremely great. And as well my interest as my feelings, prompted me to the enterprise; for the paper which had disappeared so strangely from my chamber, had probably been taken by some of this party, and I felt anxious to obtain a clue which might lead to its recovery, for its value to me was of course very great. These motives, as well as a strong ambition to conquer, if possible, the ruthless enmity by which the interests of my house were opposed, and disappoint the schemes that now seemed triumphing in their malignity, urged me to proceed. The danger I regarded lightly, for there is something in the presence of peril which rouses a boldness and confidence within the breast which makes toil and risk a pleasure rather than a dread. I trusted that the resources of a fertile mind, and a heart which knew not what it was to fear, would carry me safely through the difficulties which were before me: and I, therefore, opened the gate and went into the yard.

There was a small door in the rear of the house which was open, and a man was standing within it. Assuming a bold and indifferent air I walked directly up to him, but before I had reached the steps he left his position and came towards me. I happened to remember the name of one of the persons who had been spoken of by the men whom I had overheard on a former evening in the vestibule of this building; and as the chances were considerably in favour of its successful employment, I determined to make use of it.

"Good night!" said I, in a careless tone, as I brushed past him, and I endeavoured to imitate the tones of one of the speakers on the occasion alluded to,

for his voice still lingered in my ear; "this is a clever disguise: by-the-by, is Morton still in the room?"

For aught that I knew, the person himself, whom I addressed, was Morton; but I had nothing else to do than to throw myself upon the probability, and trust to its supporting me. Fortunately it succeeded entirely. The person eyed me for a moment rather dubiously, and then replying in a refined and courteous tone that he believed he was, he continued his course and left the yard. I did not expect to encounter in that place, any but men of a coarse and common aspect; but both the appearance and the speech of this man convinced me that he was a gentleman.

When I had reached the entry which issued in the small door I have spoken of, I paused to listen if there was any one else in the passages by whom my presence might be discovered. But I heard no one; the whole building seemed to be silent. I made my way cautiously along and with as little noise as it was possible. Passing one or two rooms, which from their silence and darkness, appeared to be unoccupied, I presently reached a large intersecting hall occupied by a broad and massive flight of steps, and dimly lighted by a lamp which hung in the centre. Leaning upon the large carved post which terminated the balusters, I again stopped to try to ascertain in what part of the building were the persons for whose whereabout I was seeking. I thought that if I could approach their place of assembling, or put myself in a situation to overhear their conversation as they were going out, I might possess myself of such knowledge as would be valuable for the future.

I ascended the stairs slowly and noiselessly, until I reached the entry of the second story in which they terminated. The rooms which stood near the head of the flight appeared to be as deserted as those which I had left below. Crossing the direction of the staircase was a long passage, into which several apartments opened, and at either end of which was a flight of stairs leading to higher parts of the building; a lamp near the

middle of this hall flung a faint light along it. I walked forward a little distance through one of the arms of this entry, and had gone about half-way to the termination of it when I heard the sound of some one coming out of one of the chambers in an upper story, and descending to pass apparently through the place where I stood. The house, as I have already said, had the air of having once been the abode of wealth and magnificence, and the entry which was a noble arch was flanked on both sides by large pairs of columns standing with a small interval between them which was about large enough to conceal the figure of a man. Into one of these niches I hastily threw myself to find a hiding-place until the person who was approaching should be past. He came along with rather a hurried step, and walking directly in front of my position reached the staircase and descending it left the house. I was standing sideways in my narrow concealment, and being unable to turn without fear of arresting attention, I did not see the figure of the man.

Supposing that there might be other persons coming from the same place, I remained for a few minutes where I was, without moving. In a little while a number of men issued from the same room, so far as I could judge, from which the first had come, and descended in the same direction. Leaning forward from my lurking-place, I perceived a bright and increasing light in the quarter in which they were, and I inferred that some of them were bearing lamps or candles. The size of the columns by which I was protected, was barely sufficient to hide me from view even under the duskiness that was then shading the entry, and I could scarcely hope to escape observation, when so many were passing in so strong a light. I thought of rushing from my concealment and escaping from the building before they reached the staircase, but as I was about to put this intention in effect, I caught sight of the figure of one of the persons already turning on to the landing which gave a view of the passage in which I was. I drew

hastily back, and pressing as closely as possible against the wall I awaited the result.

As they drew near, so strong a glare was thrown upon the walls and pillars that I felt that my detection was inevitable, and I stood in that shrinking dread in which one hides from that danger which is yet absent although certain. When the company had arrived almost in front of my position, they paused: feeling certain that they saw some part of my dress, although they were yet beyond my own range of sight, I was about to come out and reveal myself to them. To my infinite relief one of the party opened a door which was in the wall of the entry, and all of them went into the room. As the door was closed and bolted I saw that it was of extraordinary thickness, and I heard the sound of an inner door also fastened. There was no keyhole or other aperture by which it might be possible to hear what was said within.

I remained for a few minutes in my shelter pondering what course would be best to pursue, and making up my mind that I must retire without accomplishing the object for which I had come, when my attention was arrested by the footstep of some one coming very quietly and slowly up the great staircase from the lower hall. I listened, and the sound was so stealthy that it was clear that the person, whoever he might be, was anxious to escape notice, and was perhaps engaged in much the same undertaking as had brought me there. I drew back, and remained motionless. The stranger came along the entry noiselessly and deliberately, and as he passed me I perceived that he was closely muffled in a long cloak. There was something in his appearance which, combined no doubt with the association which several incidents led me to form between the persons connected with this house and those whom I had encountered at the sea-shore, that I thought resembled the man who had passed me under the trees on that occasion. But if that conjecture were correct, what could cause in this place the concealment which he manifestly courted, or could induce him to assume, as

my own case led me to suppose, the office of a spy upon his own fellows?

When he came to the door at which the others had entered he paused a moment before it, and placing his ear close to it listened for some time. He then moved a few steps and laid his finger upon a part of the panelling of the wall. A tall but narrow door flew open, sufficiently large to admit a single person; he went in and closed it behind him. This extraordinary conduct surprised me extremely. The proceedings of those who were connected with this establishment resembled the operations of magic rather than of human power. But it was impossible to render any explanation of the incident which I had just witnessed. If the individual who had thus secreted himself was a friend and fellow of those who were in the room, why did he bear the character and court the concealment of a spy? If he was an enemy, how did he possess the intimate knowledge which he displayed with the construction of the building? While these thoughts were passing through my mind, the panelled door again opened, and the same person came out and fastened the spring as before. Without a moment's delay he moved quickly along the entry, and, descending the stairs, left the house. As soon as I had satisfied myself that he was out of hearing, I walked towards the private door which he had closed, in the hope that I should be able to enter it and, as I presumed that he had done, observe the proceedings of those who were within. As I laid my finger upon the door to feel for the spring, I heard the bolt of the great inner door withdrawn, and a sound of voices which indicated that the company were coming out. I passed my hand in nervous embarrassment several times over the spot where I had seen the other lay his touch, without being able to find the spot. The door, which had been unbolted swung heavily open, and the handle of the outer door was raised, while I yet stood exposed in the ineffectual attempt to enter the secret door. The ponderous iron bar grated roughly as it moved back, and I saw that but one escape was

left me, in flight. I darted along the entry, and reached the stairs. When I had turned round the angle in the wall I stopped for an instant to ascertain whether I had been seen or heard. No sound whatever was discernible behind me. I walked back a few steps so as to command a view of the passage, and found that the large door was still unopened. Encouraged by this indication that the intention of the party to leave the apartment had been changed, and inexpressibly and madly eager to have one chance of discovering something of their proceedings, I ran back to the place where I had been endeavouring to admit myself into the secret room in the wall, and again passed my hand along the channelled mouldings to find the catch which had baffled me before. The roar of the iron bar again smote fearfully in my ear, just as I touched the important spot and the small door flew open. I hastily threw myself within and drew the door behind me at the same instant that the heavy oak of the adjoining one moved upon its hinges. The noise of the closing spring was merged in that of the opening hinges.

The place in which I found myself was a passage channelled out in the thick wall that bounded the entry. Judging from the light which was visible at a little distance along, part of the partition which separated it from the apartment within, was transparent. Fearful, however, of being heard through the thin division which on both sides shielded me, I did not move. The persons who were just issuing as I entered this concealment, all left the room excepting two, who still remained behind. When the door was closed some conversation ensued which I was enabled to hear with great distinctness.

"Well, Williams," said one of them, "what do you think of this matter?"

"I have no doubt," replied the other, "that jealousy of superior talents is the cause of most of this excitement against Harold. Still, it must be admitted that there is some ground for the charge of treachery, and I think that the matter was very properly taken up. But

I fear very much that injustice will be done. I suspect that Morton's design is to make the decision of our meeting to-morrow night final upon the subject of Harold's guilt, and as we have sworn not to communicate to him any knowledge of the proposed assembly, I suspect that he will be condemned unheard."

"I tell you what," said the other negligently, after a pause, during which he appeared to have been engaged in writing and had stopped to mend his pen, "if we kill Harold, we shall destroy the very centre and support of our society, and I shall take my leave of it pretty soon. No man can counsel and control like him. None can command the respect which he enforces. Morton can talk, but he lacks the strength and depth of character which long habits of action alone can give."

"As to Harold's behaviour about Stanley," remarked his companion, "proceeding from friendship and kindness to him, the notion is ridiculous. There is as much of such feeling in his breast as there is milk in a 'male tiger.' And that he should be playing falsely with him is equally improbable, for that would occasion less benefit than the opposite course would ensure, and would farther expose him to great danger. If Stanley is a rogue, why does not Harold initiate him into this company?"

"True enough. At what hour did they say we meet to-morrow?"

"Ten precisely: and in the upper room of the old central hall."

"There is one thing," resumed the first, after a considerable pause, "which makes me disinclined to proceed against Harold; and that is the danger we are in from the Stanleys. If that matter were settled, and all alarm banished, we might amuse ourselves by putting Harold to death for not settling it sooner: but if we lose his aid, or if he by that superhuman sagacity which belongs to him, discover our plot and abandon us, I fear we are gone. I know no means of obtaining the papers which are in possession of young Stanley, and if that cannot be done, our only safety consists in put-

ting both the old and the young one to sleep in the same grave;—a clumsy mode, that, of doing the business;" and the speaker went on with his writing.

"That whole matter must be settled to-morrow night, and our system of proceeding ascertained. There is not much time to lose; for after the specimen young Stanley had this evening of our way of managing affairs, he will be very apt to try if he cannot give us some trouble. It would be droll if he applied to the police: ha! ha! Certainly Harold was right, it was a great blunder to haul him up before the council; but I am not so sure it was exactly as wise to let him go. It was Morton's idea, that of questioning him,—and Harold's vehemence in insisting on sending him away, has raised this storm of virtue in his breast. I hardly know myself why Harold opposed his death. I do not see what harm it could have done."

In possessing myself of a knowledge of the position and policy of these men and their party, I had gained what I wanted, and the tone of this conversation was scarcely so agreeable as to induce me to stay any longer in the place where I was. I therefore touched the spring of the little door which had admitted me, and stepped out into the entry. Every thing there was quiet, and I made my way out of the house without loss of time. I walked rapidly home, and did not feel myself fully at ease till I found myself within my own walls. Throwing myself on a chair before the fire I breathed for the first time with freedom; and availing myself of the opportunity of making my calm reflections upon the events which had befallen me, I reviewed all the incidents which that busy evening had disclosed.

The first circumstance which arrested my curiosity and perplexed my thoughts was, that the letters which my father had sent me, and which I had missed from under my pillow as I have already described, did not appear to be in the possession of those persons whose safety they principally concerned, and whom I had so reasonably suspected. This I inferred, both from the words which I had heard in the darkness of my con-

cealment before the mysterious tribunal in the beginning of the evening, and from those which fell from the two speakers in the chamber. The acquisition of these documents seemed to constitute the object which had led to my summons before the first of these bodies, and the possession of them appeared to form the danger of which the latter spoke; and the improbability of my carrying them about my person, which the interrupter of the secret council so reasonably presented, was the consideration, so far as I could judge, which led to my dismissal. On the other hand, the savage determination to obtain those papers, which one of the speakers whom I had heard in the entry on the former evening expressed, and the great importance which he manifestly attached to Thompson's letter especially, seemed to point to him or his party as the only persons likely to make the bold attempt which would be necessary to secure them.

The character and personality of the Mr. Harold, whose name had been so often used, was as dubious and contradictory as any part of the multiform mystery which engaged my meditations. It was he, as I inferred from the dialogue which I had last heard, who intruded upon my first imprisonment and to whom I was then indebted for my liberty. It was he who, although he apparently was the chief and master of the whole society, was the object of the design which the company were to canvass on the former evening. I have already spoken of the fact that my father had mentioned that the person who visited him was named Harold, and that I had heard that very person inquire whether Harold was in the house, and told that he was. What I had learned that evening was equally surprising. Previous incidents and general circumstances rendered it apparent that the chief enemy whom I had to encounter was this person, whoever he might be; and yet the charge against him was that he was colluding with me. That, however, might be the mistaken inference which his companions had drawn from the mere circumstance of

his having urged the propriety of dismissing me without injury from the tribunal before which I had been brought; yet there was another thing which made it probable that broader grounds existed in the minds of these men for the opinion of some intercourse and understanding between us—irrational and impossible to be credited by any one as that appeared to me. One of the men who were conversing in that room which I commanded from my concealment, spoke of the friendship which subsisted between Harold and myself, and although he doubted the sincerity of his regard, his language indicated that the person of whom he spoke sustained at least the semblance of intimacy with me, and was at all events on a footing of familiarity and acquaintance. Certainly this was wholly inexplicable. I did not even know the man by sight: and it was not easy to imagine what circumstances another could contrive to produce in the minds of third parties an impression of an intercourse which had never in any degree existed.

The events of the evening taken together, and coupled with the knowledge which the conversation of the two men had revealed, proved the existence of a band of men united for purposes of extraordinary profligacy, bound by principles of singular hardihood and sternness, and controlled by a spirit and an intelligence which had not often before brought the best defence of virtue to second the worst suggestions of depravity. The glimpse which I had obtained of the system and character of this strange and dark brotherhood presented an outline of daring wickedness and dazzling power, which fancy might fill up as it pleased. What organisation gave unity and vigour to their action, and what definite ends employed their energies I was wholly ignorant; but the only occasion which had brought me under the direct influence of this company was sufficient to inspire an awe for the ingenuity of their means as well as the ruthlessness of their schemes. One of the men who were in the apartment together had

laughed at the idea of my applying to the police for aid. Was their strength such as to defy the law with security? Was it possible that their daring had tainted the sources of protection, and that the government of the law was within their hands?

The personal danger in which I stood, as well as the probability which there was that our efforts to prevail in the recovery of my father's property would be ineffectual, were apparent, and filled me with anxiety; but what action to take I was at a loss. Any force, whether legal or wrongful, which could be brought against them would necessarily fail of the object for which it would be used: the sword was no instrument for exploring the dimness of doubtful right or demonstrating the validity of a tangled title. Pacific ingenuity had overcome justice; nothing but the same species of power could restore it completely. I felt anxious to contend against them with their own weapons, and baffle them in the labyrinth of their own tortuous plans. Coolness, courage, and counsel, I thought, could effect the end.

To know more fully the extent of their information and power, and the course which they intended to pursue, was the first requisite. This might be accomplished if I could become privy to the proceedings of the meeting which was to take place on the following evening; for that subject was to form one of the themes of its deliberation. Of the place and time of that assembly I was already aware, and I entertained no doubt of being able to place myself in such a situation as to see and hear all that should then be done and said. Upon the knowledge which I should thus obtain, I would be better able to ground my subsequent proceedings and I postponed till then the settlement of any scheme of conduct. Besides this, another benefit might be obtained from the cognizance of the incidents of that meeting. It chiefly concerned the position of Harold, and if I could possess a knowledge so important to him, I might make its communication the price

of important concessions from him—a mode of moral barter or diplomatic set-off, with which I presumed so experienced a contriver as himself was familiar. At least I should have a power over him which I could employ to advantage.

END OF VOL. I.

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Extract from Sir Walter's Diary.

"Also read again, and for the third time at least, Miss Austen's very finely written novel of Pride and Prejudice. That young lady has a talent for describing the involvements, and feelings, and characters of ordinary life, which is, to me, the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary common-place things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early."