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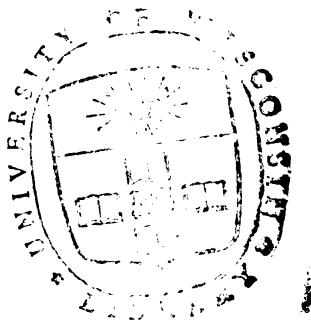
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Distracti, Isaac

**CALAMITIES**  
**OF**  
**AUTHORS ;**  
**INCLUDING**  
**SOME INQUIRIES**  
**RESPECTING**  
**THEIR MORAL AND LITERARY CHARACTERS.**  
**BY THE AUTHOR OF**  
**“CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE.”**

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“Such a superiority do the pursuits of Literature possess above every other occupation, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them, merits the pre-eminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions.”  
**HUME.**

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**VOL. I.**

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**LONDON:**  
**PRINTED FOR JOHN MURRAY, FLEET STREET ;**  
**W. BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH ; AND**  
**J. CUMMING, DUBLIN.**  
**1812.**



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**Printed by Nichols, Son, and Bentley,  
Red Lion Passage, Fleet Street, London.**

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## PREFACE.

**THE** Calamities of Authors have often excited the attention of the lovers of Literature; and, from the revival of letters to this day, this class of the community, the most ingenious and the most enlightened, have, in all the nations of Europe, been the most honoured, and the least remunerated. **PIERIUS VALERIANUS**, an attendant in the literary court of **Leo X.** who twice refused a bishoprick that he might pursue his studies uninterrupted, was a friend of Authors, and composed a small work, *De Infelicitate Literatorum*, frequently

reprinted\*. It forms a catalogue of several Italian literati, his contemporaries; a meagre performance, in which the author shews sometimes a predilection for the marvellous, which happens so rarely in human affairs; and he is so unphilosophical, that he places among the misfortunes of literary men, those fatal casualties to which all men are alike liable. Yet even this small volume has its value; for, although the historian confines his narrative to his own times, he includes a sufficient number of names to convince us that to devote our life to Authorship is

\* A modern writer observes, that "Valeriano is chiefly known to the present times by his brief but curious and interesting work, *De Literatorum Infelicitate*, which has preserved many anecdotes of the principal scholars of the age, not elsewhere to be found."

ROSCOE'S *Leo X.* vol. IV. p. 175.

not the true means of improving our happiness or our fortune.

At a later period, a congenial work was composed by THEOPHILUS SPIZELIUS, a German divine; his four volumes are after the fashion of his country and his times, which could make even small things ponderous. In 1680 he first published two volumes, intituled *Infelix Literatus*, and five years afterwards his *Felicissimus Literatus*; he writes without size, and sermonises without end, and seems to have been so grave a lover of symmetry, that he shapes his *Felicities* just with the same measure as his *Infelicities*. These two equalized bundles of hay might have held in suspense the casuistical ass of Sterne, till he had died from want of a motive to chuse either. Yet SPIZELIUS is not to be contemned because he is ver-

bose and heavy; he has reflected more deeply than VALERIANUS, by opening the moral causes of those calamities which he describes\*.

The chief object of the present work is to ascertain some doubtful yet important points concerning AUTHORS. The title of AUTHOR still retains its seduction among our youth, and is consecrated by ages. Yet what affectionate parent would consent to see his son devote himself to his pen as a profession? The studies of a true Author insulate him in society, exacting daily labours; yet he will receive but little encouragement, and less remunera-

\* There is also a bulky collection of this kind, intituled *Analecta de Calamitate Literatorum*, edited by Mencken, the author of *Charlataneria Eruditorum*, which I recollect turning over, many years ago, at the late Mr. Cavendish's library.

tion. It will be found that the most successful Author can obtain no equivalent for the labours of his life. I have endeavoured to ascertain this fact, to develop the causes, and to paint the variety of evils that naturally result from the disappointments of genius. Authors themselves never discover this melancholy truth till they have yielded to an impulse, and adopted a profession, too late in life to resist the one, or abandon the other. Whoever labours without hope, a painful state to which Authors are at length reduced, may surely be placed among the most injured class in the community. Most Authors close their lives in apathy or despair, and too many live by means which few of them would not blush to describe.

Besides this perpetual struggle with penury, there are also moral causes which



influence the Literary Character, fertile in calamities. I have drawn the individual characters and feelings of Authors from their own confessions, or deduced them from the prevailing events of their lives; and often discovered them in their secret history, as it floats on tradition, or lies concealed in authentic and original documents. I would paint what has not been unhappily called the *psychological* character\*.

I have limited my enquiries to our own country, and generally to recent times; for researches more curious, and æras more distant, would less forcibly act on

\* From the Grecian *Psyche*, or the soul, the Germans have borrowed this expressive term. They have a *psychological Magazine*. Some of our own recent Authors have adopted the term peculiarly adapted to the historian of the human mind.

our sympathy. If, in attempting to avoid the naked brevity of VALERIANUS, I have taken a more enlarged view of several Authors, it has been with the hope that I was throwing a new light on their characters, or contributing some fresh materials to our literary history. But, if it is necessary to apologise for my redundance, it is more so, I fear, for my deficiencies; many topics yet remain untouched. Nor am I less anxious for the fate of the opinions and the feelings which have arisen in the progress and diversity of this work; to them, whatever their errors may be, my readers at least owe the materials of which this work is formed; these will be received with regard, as the confessions and statements of genius itself — in mixing them with my own feelings, let me apply a beautiful apologue, of the

Hebrews.—The clusters of grapes sent out of Babylon, implore favour for the exuberant leaves of the vine ; for, had there been no leaves, you had lost the grapes.

## ADDENDUM.

To the account of the fate and fortune of the broken-hearted AMHURST, Vol. I. p. 15, I must add one more striking example, of a political author, in the case of DR. JAMES DRAKE; a man of genius, and an excellent writer. He resigned an honourable profession, that of medicine, to adopt a very contrary one, that of becoming an Author by Profession for a party. As a Tory writer, he dared every extremity of the law, while the recreant evaded it by every subtilty of artifice; he sent a masked lady with his MS. to the printer, who was never discovered; and was once saved by a flaw in the indictment from the simple change of an *r* for a *t*, or *nor* for *not*; one of those shameful evasions, by which the law, to

its perpetual disgrace, so often protects the criminal from punishment. DR. DRAKE had the honour of hearing himself censured from the throne; of being imprisoned; of seeing his "Memorials of the Church of England" burnt at London, and his "Historia Anglo-Scotica" at Edinburgh. Having enlisted himself in the pay of the Booksellers, among other works, I suspect, he condescended to practise some literary impositions. For he has reprinted Father Parsons's famous libel against the Earl of Leicester in Elizabeth's reign, under the title of "Secret Memoirs of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1706," 8vo. with a preface pretending it was printed from an old MS. I have compared it with the Jesuit's "Leycester's Commonwealth," and it proves to be an exact reprint. By such contemptible means an

Author by Profession can condescend to live. Yet **DRAKE** was a lover of literature; he left behind him a version of Herodotus, and once the most popular and curious "System of Anatomy" that was ever published. But to wind up our story with an excellent moral; after all this turmoil of his literary life, neither his masked lady, nor his *r's* nor his *l's* availed him. — Government brought a writ of error; severely prosecuted him; and, abandoned, as usual, by those for whom he had annihilated a genius which deserved a better fate, his perturbed spirit broke out into a fever, and he died raving against cruel persecutors, and patrons not much more humane.



# THE CALAMITIES

OF

## AUTHORS.

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AUTHORS BY PROFESSION,

GUTHRIE AND AMHURST—SMOLLETT.

A GREAT author once surprised me by inquiring, what I meant by “An Author by Profession?” While he seemed offended at the supposition that I was creating an odious distinction between authors, I was only placing it among their calamities.

The title of AUTHOR is venerable; and, in the ranks of national glory, authors mingle with its Heroes and its Patriots. It was, indeed, by our authors, that foreigners have been taught most to esteem



us; and this remarkably appears in the expression of Gemelli, the Italian traveller round the world, who wrote about the year 1700; for he told all Europe that “ he could find nothing amongst us but our “ writings to distinguish us from the worst “ of barbarians.” But to become an “ Author by Profession,” is to have no other means of subsistence, than such as are extracted from the quill; and no one believes these to be so precarious as they really are, until disappointed, distressed, and thrown out of every pursuit by which he can derive a maintenance, the noblest mind often sinks to a venal dependant, or a sordid labourer.

Literature abounds with instances of “ Authors by Profession” accommodating themselves to both these inconveniencies. By vile artifices of faction and popularity

their moral sense is equally injured, whether in prose or verse, while the Literary Character sits in that study which he ought to dignify, merely, as one of them sings,

“ To keep his mutton twirling at the fire.”

And, as another said, that “ he is a fool  
“ who is a grain honestier than the times  
“ he lives in.”

Let it not, therefore, be conceived that I mean to degrade, or vilify, the Literary Character, when I would only separate THE AUTHOR from those pollutors of the press, who have turned a vestal into a prostitute; a grotesque race of famished buffoons or laughing assassins; or that other populace of unhappy beings, who are driven to perish in their garrets, unknown and unregarded by all, for illusions

which even their calamities cannot disperse. Poverty, said an Ancient, is a sacred thing—it is, indeed, so sacred, that it creates a sympathy even for those who have incurred it by their folly, or plead by it for their crimes.

The history of our Literature is instructive—let us trace the origin of characters of this sort among us: some of them have happily disappeared, and, whenever great Authors obtain their due rights, the Calamities of Literature will be greatly diminished.

As for the phrase of “Authors by Profession,” it is said to be of modern origin; and GUTHRIE, a great dealer in Literature, and political Scribe, is thought to have introduced it, as descriptive of that class of writers which he wished to separate from the general term. I present the reader with

an unpublished letter of GUTHRIE, in which the phrase will not only be found, but, what is more important, which exhibits the character in a degraded form. It was addressed to a Minister.

“MY LORD,

*June 3, 1762.*

“IN the year 1745-6, Mr. Pelham, then first Lord of the Treasury, acquainted me, that it was his Majesty’s pleasure I should receive, till better provided for, which never has happened, £200. a year, to be paid by him and his successors in the Treasury. I was satisfied with the august name made use of, and the appointment has been regularly and quarterly paid me ever since. I have been equally punctual in doing the Government all the services that fell within my abilities or sphere of life, especially in those critical situations that call for unanimity, in the service of the Crown.

“Your Lordship may possibly now suspect

that *I am an Author by Profession* : you are not deceived ; and will be less so, if you believe that I am disposed to serve his Majesty under your Lordship's *future patronage and protection, with greater zeal if possible than ever.*

“ I have the honour to be,

“ My Lord, &c.

“ WILLIAM GUTHRIE.”

Unblushing venality ! In one part he shouts like a plundering hussar who has carried off his prey ; and in the other he bows with the tame suppleness of the “ quarterly ” Swiss chaffering his halbert for his price ;—“ to serve his Majesty ” for — “ his Lordship's future patronage.”

GUTHRIE'S notion of “ An Author by Profession,” entirely derived from his own character, was two-fold ; Literary task-work, and Political degradation. He was to be a gentleman convertible into an

historian, at — per sheet; and, when he had not time to write histories, he chose to sell his name to those he never wrote. —These are mysteries of the craft of Authorship; in this sense it is only a trade, and a very bad one! But when in his other capacity, this gentleman comes to hire himself to one Lord as he had to another, no one can doubt that the stipendiary would change his principles with his livery.

Such have been some of the “ Authors by Profession” who have worn the literary mask; for literature was not the first object of their designs. They form a race peculiar to our country. They opened their career in our first great Revolution, and flourished during the eventful period of the civil wars. In the form of Newspapers, their “ Mercuries and Diurnals” were

political pamphlets \*. Of these, the Royalists, being the better educated, carried off to their side all the spirit, and only left the foam and dregs for the Parliamentarians; otherwise, in Lying, they were just like one another; for "the Father of lies" seems to be of no Party! Were it desirable to instruct men by a system of political and moral calumny, the complete art might be drawn from these archives of political lying, during their flourishing æra. We might discover principles among them which would have humbled the genius of Machiavel himself,

\* I have elsewhere pourtrayed the personal characters of the hireling chiefs of these paper wars: the versatile and unprincipled Marchmont Needham, the Cobbet of his day; the factious Sir Roger L'Estrange; and the bantering and profligate Sir John Birkenhead.

and even have taught Mr. Sheridan's more popular scribe, Mr. Puff, a sense of his own inferiority.

It is known that, during the administration of Harley and Walpole, this class of Authors swarmed and started up like mustard-seed in a hot-bed. More than fifty thousand pounds were expended among them! Faction, with mad and blind passions, can affix a value on the basest things that serve its purpose\*. These "Authors by Profession," wrote more assiduously, the better they were paid; but as attacks only produced replies and rejoinders, to remunerate them was heightening the fever and feeding the disease. They were all fighting for present

\* An ample view of these lucubrations is exhibited in the early volumes of the Gentleman's Magazine.



pay, with a view of the promised land before them; but they at length became so numerous, and so crowded on one another, that the Minister could neither satisfy promised claims nor actual dues. He had not at last to bestow, either a tide-waiter's place, or a commissioner of the wine licenses, as TACITUS GORDON had: he had not even a collectorship of the Customs in some obscure town to give, as was the wretched worn-out OLDMIXON's pittance\*; not a crumb for a mouse!

\* It was said of this man that "he had submitted to labour at the press, like a horse in a mill, till he became as blind and as wretched." To shew the extent of the conscience of this class of writers, and to what lengths mere party-writers can proceed, when duly encouraged, OLDMIXON, who was a Whig historian, if a violent party-writer ought ever to be dignified by so venerable a title, unmercifully rigid to all other his-

The captain of this banditti in the administration of Walpole was ARNALL, a young attorney, whose mature genius for scurrilous party-papers broke forth in his tender nonage. He received above ten thousand pounds for the obscure labours of four years; and this patriot was suffered to retire with all the dignity which a pension could confer. He not only wrote for hire, but valued himself on it; proud

torians, was himself guilty of the crimes with which he so loudly accused others. He charged three eminent persons with interpolating Lord Clarendon's history; this charge was afterwards disproved by the passages being produced in his Lordship's own hand-writing, which had been fortunately preserved; and yet this accuser of interpolation, when employed by Bishop Kennett to publish his Collection of our Historians, made no scruple of falsifying numerous passages in Daniel's Chronicle, which makes the first edition of that collection of no value.

of the pliancy of his pen and of his principles, he wrote without remorse what his patron was forced to pay for, but to disavow. It was from a knowledge of these "Authors by Profession," writers of a faction in the name of the community, as they have been well described, that our great Statesman Pitt fell into an error which he lived to regret. He did not distinguish between Authors ; he confounded the mercenary with the men of talent and character ; and with this contracted view of the political influence of genius, he must have viewed with awe, perhaps with surprise, its mighty labour in the volumes of Burke.

But these " Authors by Profession" sometimes found a retribution of their crimes even from their masters. When the ardent Patron was changed into a cold

Minister, their pen seemed wonderfully to have lost its point, and the feather could not any more tickle. They were flung off, as Shakespeare's striking imagery expresses it, like

“ An unregarded bulrush on the stream,  
 “ To rot itself with motion.”

Look on the fate and fortune of AMHURST. The life of this “ Author by Profession” points a moral. He flourished about the year 1730. He passed through a youth of iniquity, and was expelled his college for his irregularities : he had exhibited no marks of regeneration when he assailed the university with the periodical paper of the *Terræ Filius*; a witty Saturnalian effusion on the manners and toryism of Oxford, where the portraits have an extravagant kind of likeness, and are so

false and so true that they were universally relished and individually understood. AMHURST, having lost his character, hastened to reform the morals and politics of the nation. For near twenty years he toiled at "The Craftsman," of which ten thousand are said to have been sold in one day. Admire this patriot! an expelled collegian becomes an outrageous zealot for popular reform, and an intrepid Whig can bend to be yoked to all the drudgery of a faction! AMHURST succeeded in writing out the minister, and writing in Bolingbroke and Pulteney. Now came the hour of gratitude and generosity! His patrons mounted into power — but — they silently dropped the instrument of their ascension. The political prostitute stood shivering at the gate of preferment, which his masters had for ever flung

against him. He died broken-hearted, and owed the charity of a grave to his bookseller.

So much for some of those who have been "Authors by Profession" in one of the two-fold capacities which GUTHRIE designed, which is, to write for a minister; the other, that of writing for the bookseller, though far more honourable, is sufficiently calamitous.

In commercial times, the hope of profit is always a stimulating, but a degrading motive; it dims the clearest intellect, it stills the proudest feelings. Habit and prejudice will soon reconcile even genius to the work of money, and to avow the motive without a blush. "An Author by Profession," at once ingenious and ingenuous, declared that, "till fame appears to be worth more than money; he would

“ always prefer money to fame.” Johnson had a notion that there existed no motive for writing, but money! Yet, crowned heads have sighed with the ambition of Authorship; and this great master of the human mind could suppose that on this subject, men were not actuated either by the love of glory or of pleasure! Fielding, an Author of great genius and of “ the profession,” in one of his Covent-garden Journals asserts, that “ An Author, “ in a country where there is no public “ provision for men of genius, is not obliged “ to be a more disinterested patriot than “ any other. Why is he whose *livelihood* “ *is in his pen*, a greater monster in using “ it to serve himself, than he who uses his “ tongue for the same purpose?”

But it is a very important question to ask, Is this “ livelihood in the pen”

really such? Authors drudging on in obscurity, and enduring miseries which can never close but with their life — shall this be worth even the humble designation of a “livelihood?” I am not now combating with them whether their task-work degrades them, but whether they are receiving an equivalent for the violation of their genius, for the weight of the fetters they are wearing, and for the entailed miseries which form an Author’s sole legacies to his widow and his children. Far from me is the wish to degrade literature by the inquiry — but it will be useful to many a youth of promising talent, who is impatient to abandon all professions for this one, to consider well the calamities in which he will most probably participate.

Of most “Authors by Profession” — who



has displayed a more fruitful genius, and exercised more intense industry, with a loftier sense of his independence, than SMOLLETT? But look into his life and enter into his feelings, and you will be shocked at the disparity of his situation with the genius of the man. His life was a succession of struggles — vexations and disappointments, yet of success in his writings. SMOLLETT, who is a great poet though he has written little in verse, and whose rich genius had composed the most original pictures of human life, was compelled by his wants to debase his name by selling it to Voyages and Translations, which he never could have read. When he had worn himself down in the service of the public, or the booksellers, there remained not, of all his slender remunerations, in the last stage of life, sufficient to convey him to a cheap

country and a restorative air, on the continent—the Father may have thought himself fortunate, that the daughter whom he loved with more than common affection was no more to share in his wants; but the Husband had by his side the faithful companion of his life, left without a wreck of fortune. SMOLLETT gradually perishing in a foreign land, neglected by an admiring public, and without fresh resources from the booksellers, who were receiving the income of his works—threw out his injured feelings in the character of *Bramble*; the warm generosity of his temper, but not his genius, seemed fleeting with his breath. Yet when SMOLLETT died, and his widow in a foreign land was raising a plain monument over his dust, her love and her piety but “made the little less.” She perished in friendless solitude! Yet SMOLLETT dead

—soon an ornamented column is raised at the place of his birth, while the grave of the Author seemed to multiply the editions of his works. There are indeed grateful feelings in the public at large for a favourite author; but the awful testimony of those feelings by its gradual progress, must appear beyond the grave! They visit the column consecrated by his name, and his features are most loved, most venerated, in the bust.

SMOLLETT himself shall be the historian of his own heart; this most successful "Author by Profession," who, for his subsistence, composed master-works of genius, and drudged in the toils of slavery, shall himself tell us what happened, and describe that state between life and death, partaking of both, which obscured his faculties, and sickened his lofty spirit.

“ Had some of those who were pleased  
“ to call themselves my friends been at any  
“ pains to deserve the character, and told  
“ me ingenuously what I had to expect in  
“ *the capacity of an Author, when I first*  
“ *professed myself of that venerable fra-*  
“ *ternity*, I should in all probability have  
“ spared myself the *incredible labour and*  
“ *chagrin I have since undergone.*”

As a relief from literary labour, SMOLLETT once went to re-visit his family, and to embrace the mother he loved—but such was the irritation of his mind and the infirmity of his health, exhausted by the hard labours of authorship, that he never passed a more weary summer, nor ever found himself so incapable of indulging the warmest emotions of his heart. On his return, in a letter, he gave this melancholy narrative of himself. — “ Be-

"tween friends I am now convinced that  
 " *my brain was in some measure affected ;*  
 " for I had a kind of *Coma Vigil* upon me  
 " from April to November without inter-  
 " mission. In consideration of this circum-  
 " stance I know you will forgive all my pee-  
 " vishness and discontent—tell Mrs. Moore  
 " that with regard to me she has as yet seen  
 " nothing but the wrong side of the tapes-  
 " try." Thus it happens in the life of  
 Authors, that they whose comic genius dif-  
 fuses cheerfulness, create a pleasure which  
 they cannot themselves participate.

The remarkable expression of a *Co-  
 ma Vigil*, difficult to explain, may be  
 described by a verse of Shakespeare in his  
 antithetical account of love, a passion  
 made up of contrarities. Thus the *Coma  
 Vigil* was

" Still-waking sleep ! that is not what it is !"

Of praise and censure, says **SMOLLETT** in a letter to **Dr. Moore**,—" Indeed I am " sick of both, and wish to God my circumstances would allow me to consign my " pen to oblivion." A wish, as fervently repeated by many " Authors by Profession," who are not so fully entitled as was **SMOLLETT** to write when he chose, or to have lived in quiet for what he had written.

An Author's life is therefore too often deprived of all social comfort, whether he be the writer for a minister, or a bookseller—but their case requires to be stated.

## THE CASE OF AUTHORS STATED,

INCLUDING THE HISTORY OF LITERARY PROPERTY.

JOHNSON has dignified the Booksellers as "The Patrons of Literature," which was generous in that great Author, who had written well and lived but ill all his life on that patronage. Eminent Booksellers, in their constant intercourse with the most enlightened class of the community, that is, with the best authors and the best readers, partake of the intelligence around them; their great capitals too are productive of good and evil in literature; useful, when they carry on great works; and pernicious, when they sanction indifferent ones. Yet are they but commercial men. A trader can never be

deemed a patron, for it would be romantic to purchase what is not saleable; but where no favour is conferred, there is no patronage.

Authors continue poor, and Booksellers become opulent; an extraordinary result! Booksellers are not agents for Authors, but proprietors of their works; so that the perpetual revenues of literature are solely in the possession of the trade.

Is it then wonderful that even successful Authors are indigent? They are heirs to fortunes, but by a strange singularity they are disinherited at their birth; for, on the publication of their works, these cease to be their own property. Let that natural property be secured, and a good book would be an inheritance, a leasehold or a freehold, as you chuse it; it might at least last out a generation, and descend to the



Author's blood, were they permitted to live on their father's glory, as in all other property they do on his industry\*. Something of this nature has been instituted in

\* The following facts will shew the value of *Literary Property*; immense profits and cheap purchases! The manuscript of **ROBINSON CRUSOE** ran through the whole trade, and no one would print it; the bookseller, who, it is said, was not remarkable for his discernment, but for a speculative turn, bought the work, and got a thousand guineas by it. How many have the booksellers since accumulated? **BURN'S Justice** was disposed of by its author for a trifle, as well as **BUCHAN'S Domestic Medicine**; these works yield annual incomes. **GOLDSMITH'S Vicar of Wakefield** was sold in the hour of distress, with little distinction from any other work in that class of composition; and *Evelina* produced five guineas from the niggardly trader. **Dr. JOHNSON** fixed the price of his *Biography of the Poets* at two hundred guineas; and **Mr. Malone** observes, the booksellers in the course of twenty-five years have probably got

France, where the descendants of Corneille and Moliere retain a claim on the theatres whenever the dramas of their great ancestors are performed. In that country literature has ever received peculiar ho-

five thousand. I could add a great number of facts of this nature which relate to living writers; the profits of their own works for two or three years would rescue them from the horrors and humiliation of pauperism.— It is, perhaps, useful to record, that, while the compositions of genius are but slightly remunerated, though sometimes as productive as “the household stuff” of literature, the latter is rewarded with princely magnificence. At the sale of the Robinsons, the copy-right of “Vyse’s Spelling-book” was sold at the enormous price of £2200, with an *annuity* of fifty guineas to the Author! A Spaniard, kissing the hands of Mr. Vyse, would wish him a thousand years for this annuity! But can we avoid recollecting, that many a fine genius is darn-  
ing his own stockings?

nours—it was there decreed, in the affair of Crebillon, that literary productions are not seizable by creditors\*.

The history of Literary Property in this country might form as ludicrous a narrative as Lucian's "true history." It was a long while doubtful whether any such thing existed, at the very time when booksellers were assigning over the perpetual copy-rights of books, and making them the subject of family settlements for the provision of their wives and children! When *Tonson* in 1739 obtained an injunction to restrain another bookseller from printing *Milton's Paradise Lost*, he brought into court as a proof of his title an assignment

\* The circumstance, with the poet's dignified petition, and the King's honourable decree, are preserved in *Curiosities of Literature*, vol. II. p. 181. edition 1807.

of the original copy-right, made over by the sublime poet in 1667, which was read. Milton received for this assignment, the sum which we all know — *Tonson* and all his family and assignees rode in their carriages with the profits of the five pound epic\*.

\* The elder *Tonson's* Portrait represents him in his gown and cap, holding in his right hand a volume lettered "Paradise Lost"—such a favourite object was Milton and copy-right! Jacob Tonson was the founder of a race who long honoured Literature. His rise in life is curious. He was at first unable to pay twenty pounds for a play by Dryden, and joined with another bookseller to advance that sum; the play sold, and Tonson was afterwards enabled to purchase the succeeding ones. He and his nephew died worth two hundred thousand pounds.—Much old Tonson owed to his own industry; but he was a mere trader. He and Dryden had frequent bickerings; he insisted on receiving 10,000

The verbal and tasteless lawyers, not many years past, with legal metaphysics, wrangled like the schoolmen, inquiring of each other, “ whether the *style* and *ideas* “ of an Author were tangible things; or if “ these were a *property*, how is *possession* “ to be taken, or any act of *occupancy* made “ on mere intellectual *ideas* ?” Nothing,

Verses for two hundred and sixty-eight pounds, and poor Dryden threw in the finest Ode in the language towards the number. He would pay in the base coin which was then current; which was a loss to the Poet. Tonson once complained to Dryden, that he had received 1446 lines of his translation of Ovid for his Miscellany for fifty guineas; when he had calculated at the rate of 1518 lines for forty guineas; and he gives the poet a piece of critical reasoning, for Tonson considered he had a better bargain with “ Juvenal, which is reckoned “ not so easy to translate as Ovid.” In these times such a mere trader in Literature has disappeared.

said they, can be an object of property, but which has a corporeal substance; the air and the light, to which they compared an Author's ideas, are common to all; ideas in the MS state were compared to birds in a cage; while the Author confines them in his own dominion, none but he has a right to let them fly; but the moment he allows the bird to escape from his hand, it is no violation of property in any one to make it his own. And to prove that there existed no property after publication, they found an analogy in the gathering of acorns, or in seizing on a vacant piece of ground; and thus degrading that most refined piece of art formed in the highest state of society, a literary production, they brought us back to a state of Nature; and seem to have concluded that Literary Property was purely

ideal; phantoms which as their Author could neither grasp nor confine to himself, he must entirely depend on the public benevolence for his reward\*.

There were indeed some more generous spirits and better philosophers fortunately found on the same bench; and the identity of a literary composition was resolved into its sentiments and language, besides what was more obviously valuable to some persons, the print and paper. On this slight principle was issued the profound award which accorded a certain term of years to any work, however immortal. They could not diminish the immortality of a book, but only its reward. In all the litigations respecting Literary Property, Authors were little

\* Sir James Burrow's Reports on the question concerning Literary Property, 4to. London, 1773.

considered — except some honourable testimonies due to genius, from the sense of WILLES, and the eloquence of MANSFIELD. Literary Property was still disputed like the rights of a parish common. An honest printer, who could not always write grammar, had the shrewdness to make a bold effort in this scramble, and perceiving that even by this last favourable award all Literary Property would necessarily centre with the Booksellers, now stood forward for his own body, the Printers. This rough advocate observed that “ a few persons who call themselves *Booksellers*, about the number of *twenty-five*, “ have kept the *monopoly of books and* “ *copies* in their hands, to the entire exclu- “ sion of all others; but more especially “ the *Printers*, whom they have always “ held it a rule never to let become pur-



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“chasers in *copy*.” Not a word for the *Authors!* As for them, they were doomed by both parties as the fat oblation: they indeed sent forth some meek bleatings; but what were **AUTHORS**, between Judges, Booksellers, and Printers? the sacrificed among the sacrificers!

All this was reasoning in a circle. **LITERARY PROPERTY** in our nation arose from a *new state of society*—These lawyers could never develop its nature by a wild analogy to acquiring the property of acorns in a state of nature by gathering them; nor discover it in any common law right, for our common law, composed of immemorial customs, could never have in its contemplation an object which has not existed till in recent times. Literature, in its enlarged spirit, certainly never entered into the thoughts or attention

of our rude ancestors. All their views were bounded by the necessities of life; and as yet they had no conception of the impalpable, invisible, yet sovereign dominion of the human mind—enough for our rough heroes was that of the Seas! Before the reign of Henry VIII. great Authors composed occasionally a book in Latin, which none but other great Authors cared for, and which the people could not read. In the reign of Elizabeth, ROGER ASCHAM appeared; one of those men of genius born to create a new æra in the history of their nation. The first English Author who may be regarded as the founder of our *prose-style* was ROGER ASCHAM; the venerable parent of our *native literature*. At a time when our scholars affected to contemn the vernacular idiom, and in their Latin works

were losing their better fame, that of being understood by all their countrymen, ASCHAM boldly avowed the design of setting an example, in his own words, TO SPEAK AS THE COMMON PEOPLE, TO THINK AS WISE MEN. His pristine English is still forcible without pedantry, and still beautiful without ornament. The illustrious BACON condescended to follow this new example, in the most popular of his works. This change in our literature was like a revelation; these men taught us our language in books. We became a reading people; and then the demand for books naturally produced a new order of Authors—who traded in literature—a literary calamity, to be noticed in the next.—It was then, so early as in the Elizabethan age, that *Literary Property* may be said to derive its obscure origin in this nation. It was

protected in an indirect manner by the *licensors* of the press; for although that was a mere political institution, only designed to prevent seditious and irreligious publications, yet, as no book could be printed without a licence, there was honour enough in the licensors, not to allow other publishers to infringe on the privilege granted to the first claimant.—In Queen Anne's time, when the office of licensors was extinguished, a more liberal genius was rising in the nation, and *Literary Property* received a more definite and a more powerful protection. A limited term was granted to every Author to reap the fruits of his labours; and Lord Hardwicke pronounced this statute, "an universal Patent for Authors." Yet subsequently the subject of *Literary Property* involved discussion; even at

so late a period as in 1769, it was still to be litigated. It was then granted that originally an Author had at common law a property in his work, but that the Act of Anne took away all copy-right after the expiration of the terms it permitted.

As the matter now stands, let us address an Arithmetical age — but my pen hesitates to bring down my subject to an argument fitted to “these coster-monger times\*”—It is in fact derived from—*Long Annuity!* On the present principle of Literary Property, it results that an Au-

\* A Coster-monger, or Costard-monger, is a dealer in apples, which are so called because they are shaped like a *Costard*, i. e. a man's head. *Steevens*.—Johnson explains the phrase eloquently: “In these times when the prevalence of trade has produced that meanness, that rates the merit of every thing by money.”

thor disposes of a leasehold property of twenty-eight years, often for less than the price of one year's purchase! How many living Authors are the sad witnesses of this fact, who, like so many Esaus, have sold their inheritance for a meal! I leave the whole school of Adam Smith to calm their calculating emotions concerning "that unprosperous race of men" (sometimes this Master-Seer calls them "unproductive") "commonly called *men of letters*," who are pretty much in the situation which lawyers and physicians would be in, were these, as he tells us, in that state when "*a scholar and a beggar*" "seem to have been very nearly *synonymous terms*"—and this melancholy fact that man of genius discovered, without the feather of his pen brushing away a tear from his lid—without one spontaneous

and indignant groan! I turn from the leaden-hearted disciples of Adam Smith, and from all their vile vocabulary of "unproductive stock," to appeal to the livelier genius of any auctioneer's puffer, any chapman of second-hand wares, any huckster of old iron and broken china, whether he does not feel himself a being more important, than an "Author by Profession," and far less miserable?

Authors may exclaim, "we ask for justice, not charity." They would not need to require any favour, nor claim any other than that protection which an enlightened government, in its wisdom and its justice, must bestow. They would leave to the public disposition the sole appreciation of their works; their book must make its own fortune; a bad work may be cried up, and a good work may be cried down; but

Faction will soon lose its voice, and Truth acquire one. The cause we are pleading is not the calamities of indifferent writers; but of those whose utility, or whose genius, long survives that limited term which has been so hardly wrenched from the penurious hand of verbal lawyers. Every lover of literature, and every votary of humanity, has long felt indignant at that sordid state and all those secret sorrows to which men of the finest genius, or of sublime industry, are reduced and degraded in society. JOHNSON himself, who rejected that perpetuity of literary property, which some enthusiasts seemed to claim at the time the subject was undergoing the discussion of the judges, is however for extending the copy-right to *a century*. Could Authors secure this their natural right, Literature would acquire a



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permanent and a nobler reward ; for great Authors would then be distinguished by the very profits they would receive, from that obscure multitude, whose common disgraces they frequently participate, notwithstanding the superiority of their own genius. JOHNSON himself will serve as a proof of the incompetent remuneration of Literary Property. He undertook and he performed an Herculean labour, which employed him so many years that the price he obtained was exhausted before the work was concluded—the wages did not even last as long as the labour ! Where then is the Author to look forward, when such works are undertaken, for a provision for his family, or for his future existence ? It would naturally arise from the work itself, were Authors not the most ill-

treated and oppressed class of the community. The daughter of MILTON need not have excited the alms of the admirers of her father, if the right of Authors had been better protected; his own *Paradise Lost* had then been her better portion, and her most honourable inheritance. The children of BURNS would have required no subscriptions; that annual tribute which the public pay to the genius of their parent, was their due, and would have been their fortune\*.

\* It is the suggestion of a learned friend, that an Author ought to have some portion of the profit of every Edition secured by Law. This would be on the principle explained in page 26, in regard to the descendants of Corneille and Moliere.

## THE SUFFERINGS OF AUTHORS.

THE *natural rights and properties of* AUTHORS not having been sufficiently protected, they are defrauded, not indeed of their fame, though they may not always live to witness it, but of their *uninterrupted profits*, which might save them from their frequent degradation in society; and in the words of that act of Anne which confers on them some right of property, “too often to the ruin of them and their families.” It is curious that this act is designed “for the *encouragement of learned men to write useful books.*”

Hence we trace a literary calamity which the public endure in those “Authors

by Profession," who, finding often too late in life that it is the worst profession, are not scrupulous to live by some means or other. "I must live," cried one of the brotherhood, shrugging his shoulders in his misery, and almost blushing for a libel he had just printed—"I do not see the necessity," was the dignified reply. Trade was certainly not the origin of Authorship. Most of our great Authors have written from a more impetuous impulse than that of a mechanic; urged by a loftier motive than that of humouring the popular taste, they have not lowered themselves by writing down to the public, but have raised the public to them. Un-tasked, they composed at propitious intervals; and feeling, not labour, was in their last, as in their first page.

When we became a reading people, books were to be suited to popular tastes, and then that trade was opened that leads to the Work-house. A new race sprung up, that, like ASCHAM, "spoke as the "common people;" but would not, like ASCHAM, "think as wise men." The founders of "Authors by Profession" appear as far back as in the Elizabethan age. Then there were some roguish wits, who taking advantage of the public humour, and yielding their principle to their pen, lived to write, and wrote to live; loose livers and loose writers! — like Autolytus, they ran to the fair, with baskets of hasty manufactures, fit for clowns and maidens\*.

\* An abundance of these amusing tracts were eagerly bought up in their day, came in the following generation to the ballad-stalls, but are in the

Even then flourished the craft of Authorship, and the mysteries of book-selling. Robert GREENE, the master-wit, wrote "The Art of Coney-catching," or Cheatery, in which he was an adept; he died of a surfeit of rhenish and pickled herrings, at a fatal banquet of Authors—and left as his legacy among the "Authors by Profession" "a groatsworth of wit, bought with a million of repentance." One died of another kind of surfeit. Another was assassinated in a brothel—But the list of the calamities of all these worthies have as great variety as those of the Seven Champions. Nor were the *Stationers*, or *Book-venders*, as the publishers of books were first designated, at a fault in the mysteries present enshrined in the cabinets of the curious. Such are the Revolutions of Literature!

of "Coney-catching." Deceptive and vaunting title-pages were practised to such excess, that Tom NASH, an "Author by Profession," never fastidiously modest, blushed at the title of his "Pierce penniless," which the publisher had flourished in the first edition, like "a tedious mountebank." The Booksellers forged great names to recommend their works, and passed off in currency their base metal stamp with a royal head. "It was an usual thing in those days," says honest Anthony Wood, "to set a great name to a book or books, by the sharking booksellers or snivelling writers, to get bread."

Such authors as these are unfortunate, before they are criminal; they often tire out their youth before they discover that "Authors by Profession" is a denomination ridiculously assumed, for it is none!

The first efforts of men of genius are usually honourable ones—but too often they suffer that genius to be perverted and debased. Many who would have composed history have turned voluminous party-writers; many a noble satirist has become a hungry libeller. Men who are starved in society, hold to it but loosely. They are the children of Nemesis! they avenge themselves—and with the Satan of MILTON they exclaim;

“ Evil, be thou my good !”

Never were their feelings more vehemently echoed than by this Nash—the creature of genius, of famine, and despair. He lived indeed in the age of Elizabeth, but writes as if he had lived in our own. He proclaimed himself to the world as *Pierce Penniless*, and on a retrospect of his *literary life*, observes that he had “ sat



“ up late and rose early, contended with  
“ the cold, and conversed with scarcitie;”  
he says, “ all my labours turned to losse,  
“ —I was despised and neglected, my  
“ paines not regarded, or slightly re-  
“ warded, and I myself, in prime of my  
“ best wit, laid open to povertie. Where-  
“ upon I accused my fortune, railed on  
“ my patrons, bit my pen, rent my papers,  
“ and raged.”—And then comes the after-  
reflection, which so frequently provokes  
the anger of genius. “ How many base  
“ men that wanted those parts I had, en-  
“ joyed content at will, and had wealth  
“ at command. I called to mind a cobbler  
“ that was worth five hundred pounds;  
“ an hostler that had built a goodly inn;  
“ a carman in a leather-pilche that had  
“ whipt a thousand pound out of his horses  
“ tail — and have I more than these?

“ thought I to myself; am I better born?  
“ am I better brought up? yea and better  
“ favoured! and yet am I a beggar? How  
“ am I crost, or whence is this curse?  
“ Even from hence, the men that should  
“ employ such as I am, are enamoured of  
“ their own wits, though they be never so  
“ scurvie; that a scrivener is better paid  
“ than a scholar; and men of art must  
“ seek to live among cormorants, or be kept  
“ under by dunces, who count it policy to  
“ keep them bare to follow their books  
“ the better.” And then, NASH thus  
utters the cries of

A DESPAIRING AUTHOR!

“ Why is 't damnation to despair and die  
When life is my true happiness' disease?  
My soul! my soul! thy safety makes me fly  
*The faulty means* that might my pain appease;

Divines and dying men may talk of hell ;  
 But in my heart her several torments dwell.

Ah, worthless wit, to train me to this woe!  
 Deceitful arts that nourish discontent !  
 Ill thrive the folly that bewitch'd me, so !

Vain thoughts, adieu ! for now I will repent ;  
 And yet my wants persuade me to proceed,  
 Since none take pity of a Scholar's need ! —

Forgive me, God, altho' I curse my birth,  
 And ban the air wherein I breathe a wretch !  
 For misery hath daunted all my mirth—

Without redress complains my careless verse,  
 And Midas' ears relent not at my moan !  
 In some far land will I my griefs rehearse,  
 'Mongst them that will be mov'd when I  
 shall groan !

England, adieu ! the soil that brought me forth !  
 Adieu, unkinde ! where skill is nothing worth !”

Such was the miserable cry of an “ Au-  
 thor by Profession” in the reign of Eliza-

beth. NASH not only renounces his country in his despair — and hesitates on “the faulty means” which have appeased the pangs of many of his unhappy brothers, but he proves also the weakness of the moral principle among these men of genius; for he promises, if any Mæcenas will bind him by his bountie, he will do him “as much honour as any poet of my beardless years in England — but,” he adds, “if he be sent away with a flea in his ear, let him look that I will rail on him soundly; not, for an hour, or a day, while the injury is fresh in my memory, but in some elaborate polished poem, which I will leave to the world when I am dead, to be a living image to times to come of his beggarly parsimony.” Poets might imagine that CHATTERTON had written all this, about the time he struck a

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balance of his profit and loss by the death of Beckford the Lord Mayor, in which he concludes with “ am glad he is dead by 3*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*! \*”

\* As the page admits of it, this balance-sheet of literary iniquity and trade, shall be placed under the eye of the Reader. CHATTERTON had written a political Essay for “ The North Briton,” which opened with the precluding flourish of “ A spirited people “ freeing themselves from insupportable slavery :” it was however, though accepted, not printed, on account of the Lord Mayor’s death. The Patriot thus calculated the death of his great Patron !

	<i>£.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Lost by his death in this Essay .....	1	11	6
Gained in Elegies.....	<i>£.</i> 2	2	
—— in Essays. ....	3	3	
		5	5 0
Am glad he is dead by .....	<i>£.</i> 3	13	6

## A MENDICANT AUTHOR,

AND THE PATRONS OF FORMER TIMES.

It must be confessed, that before “Authors by Profession” had fallen into the hands of the Booksellers, they endured peculiar grievances. They were pitiable retainers of some great family, and might be abject enough in a drawing-room. The miseries of such an Author, and the insolence and penuriousness of his patrons, who would not return the poetry they liked and would not pay for, may be illustrated by the character of THOMAS CHURCHYARD, a poet of the age of Elizabeth, one of those unfortunate men, who have written poetry all their days, and lived a long life, to complete the misfortune. His muse was so fertile, that his

works pass all enumeration. He courted numerous patrons, who valued the poetry, while they left the poet to his own miserable contemplations. In a long catalogue of his works, which this poet has himself given, he adds a few memoranda, as he proceeds, a little ludicrous, but very melancholy. He wrote a book which he could never afterwards recover from one of his patrons, and adds, "all which book was in  
" as good verse as ever I made; an honour-  
" able knight dwelling in the Black Friars  
" can witness the same, because I read it  
" unto him." Another accorded him the same remuneration — on which he adds, "An infinite number of other Songs and  
" Sonnets given where they cannot be reco-  
" vered, nor purchase any favour when they  
" are craved." Still, however, he announces  
" twelve long tales for Christmas, dedicated

“ to twelve honourable Lords.” Well might CHURCHYARD write his own sad life under the title of “ The tragical Discourse of the haplesse Man’s Life.”

Yet CHURCHYARD was no contemptible Bard; he composed a national poem, “ The Worthiness of Wales,” which has been reprinted, and will be still dear to his “ Father-land,” as the Hollanders expressively denote their natal spot. He wrote, in “ The Mirrour of Magistrates,” the life of Wolsey, which has parts of great dignity; and the life of Jane Shore, which was much noticed in his day, for a severe critic of the times writes :

“ Hath not Shore’s wife, although a light-skirt  
 she,  
 Given him a chaste, long, lasting memorie ?”

CHURCHYARD and the miseries of his poetical life are alluded to by Spenser.



He is old Palemon in "Colin Clout's come home again." Spenser is supposed to describe this laborious writer for half a century, whose melancholy pipe in his old age may make the reader "rew:"

"Yet he himself may rewed be more right,  
"That sung so long untill quite hoarse he  
grew."

His epitaph, preserved by Camden, is extremely instructive to all poets, could epitaphs instruct them. —

"*Poverty* and *Poetry* his tomb doth enclose;  
"Wherefore, good Neighbours, be merry in  
*prose.*"

It appears also by a confession of TOM NASH, that an Author would then, pressed by the *res angusta domi*, when "the bottom of his purse was turned upward," submit to compose pieces for

gentlemen who aspired to authorship. He tells us on some occasion, that he was then in the country composing poetry for some country squire;—and says, “ I am  
 “ faine to let my plow stand still in the  
 “ midst of a furrow, to follow these Senior  
 “ Fantasticos, to whose amourous *villanellas*\* I prostitute my pen,” and this too “ twice or thrice in a month;” and he complains that it is “ poverty which alone  
 “ maketh me so unconstant to my determined studies, trudging from place to place to and fro, and prosecuting the means to keep me from idlenesse.” An Author was then much like a vagrant.

Even at a later period, in the reign of the literary James, great Authors were re-

\* *Villanellas*, or rather “ *Villanescas*, are properly country rustic songs, but commonly taken for ingenious ones made in imitation of them.” PINEDA

duced to a state of mendicity, and lived on alms, although their lives and their fortunes had been consumed in forming national labours. The antiquary STOWE exhibits a striking example of the rewards conferred on such valued Authors. STOWE had devoted his life, and exhausted his patrimony, in the study of English antiquities; he had travelled on foot throughout the Kingdom, inspecting all monuments of antiquity, and rescuing what he could from the dispersed libraries of the monasteries. His stupendous collections, in his own hand-writing, still exist, to provoke the feeble industry of literary loiterers. He felt through life, the enthusiasm of study; and seated in his monkish library, living with the dead more than with the living, he was still a student of taste: for Spenser the Poet visited the

library of Stowe, and the first good edition of Chaucer, was made so chiefly by the labours of our Author. Late in life, worn out with study and the cares of poverty, neglected by that proud metropolis of which he had been the historian, yet his good humour did not desert him; for, being afflicted with sharp pains in his aged feet, he observed that "his affliction lay in that part which formerly he had made so much use of." Many a mile had he wandered, many a pound had he yielded, for those treasures of antiquities which had exhausted his fortune, and with which he had formed works of great public utility. It was in his eightieth year that STOWE at length received a public acknowledgement of his services, which will appear to us of a very extraordinary nature. He was so reduced in his circumstances

that he petitioned James I. for a *licence to collect alms* for himself! “ as a recompence for his labour and travel of *forty-five years* in setting forth the *Chronicles of England*, and *eight years* taken up in the *Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, towards his relief now in his old age; having left his former means of living, and only employing himself for the service and good of his country.” Letters patent under the great seal were granted. After no penurious commendation of Stowe’s labours, he is permitted “ to gather the benevolence of well-disposed people within this realm of England: to ask, gather, and take the alms of all our loving subjects.” These letters patent were to be published by the clergy from their pulpit; they produced so little that they were renewed for another twelve-

month ; one entire parish in the city contributed seven shillings and sixpence ! Such then was the patronage received by STOWE, to be a licensed beggar throughout the Kingdom for one twelvemonth ! Such was the public remuneration of a man who had been useful to his nation, but not to himself !

Such was the first age of *Patronage*, which branched out in the last century into an age of *Subscriptions*, when an Author levied contributions before his work appeared ; a mode which inundated our literature with a great portion of its worthless volumes : of these the most remarkable are the splendid publications of RICHARD BLOME ; they may be called fictitious works, for they are only mutilated transcripts from Camden and Speed, but richly ornamented and pompously printed, which

this literary adventurer, said to have been a gentleman, loaded the world with, by the aid of his subscribers. Another age was that of *Dedications*\*, when the Author was to lift his tiny patron to the skies in an inverse ratio, as he lowered himself in this public exhibition. Sometimes the party haggled about the price †; or the

\* This practice of DEDICATIONS had indeed flourished before; for Authors had even prefixed numerous dedications to the same work, or dedicated to different patrons, the separate divisions. Fuller's "Church History" is disgraced by the introduction of twelve title-pages, besides the general one; with as many particular dedications, and no less than fifty or sixty inscriptions, addressed to benefactors; for which he is severely censured by Heylin. It was an expedient to procure dedication fees; for publishing books by *subscription* was an art not yet discovered.

† The price of the dedication of a Play was even fixed, from five to ten guineas, from the Revolution

statue, while stepping into his niche, would turn round on the author to assist his invention. A patron of PETER MOTTEUX, dissatisfied with Peter's colder temperament, composed the superlative dedication to himself, and completed the misery of the Author by subscribing it with Motteux's name\*! Worse fared it when Authors were the unlucky hawkers of their

to the time of George I.; when it rose to twenty—but sometimes a bargain was to be struck—when the author and the play were alike indifferent. Even on these terms could Vanity be gratified with the coarse luxury of panegyric, of which every one knew the price.

\* This circumstance was so notorious at the time, that it occasioned a poetical satire in a dialogue between Motteux and his patron Henningham—preserved in that vast flower-bed or dunghill, for it is both, of "Poems on Affairs of State," vol. II. 251. The patron, in his zeal to omit no possible dis-



own works; of which I shall give a remarkable instance in MYLES DAVIES, a learned man maddened by want and indignation.

tinction that could attach to him, had given one circumstance which no one but himself could have known, and which he thus regrets :

PATRON.

I must confess I was to blame  
That one particular to name;  
The rest could never have been known,  
*I made the style so like thy own.*

POET.

I beg your pardon, Sir, for that !

PATRON.

Why d——e what would you be at ?  
*I writ below myself, you sot,*  
Avoiding figures, tropes, what not ;  
For fear I should my fancy raise  
*Above the level of thy plays !*

The subject before us exhibits one of the most singular spectacles in these volumes; that of a scholar of extensive erudition, whose life seems to have passed in the study of languages and the sciences, while his faculties appear to have been disordered from the simplicity of his nature, and driven to madness by indigence and insult. He formed the wild resolution of becoming a Mendicant Author, the hawker of his own works—and by this mode endured all the aggravated sufferings, the great and the petty insults of all ranks of society, and even sometimes from men of learning themselves, who denied a Mendicant Author the sympathy of a brother.

Myles Davies and his works are imperfectly known to the most curious of our literary collectors. His name has scarcely reached a few; the Author and his works

are equally extraordinary, and claim a right to be preserved in this treatise on the Calamities of Authors.

Our Author commenced printing a work, difficult, from its miscellaneous character, to describe; of which the volumes appeared at different periods. The early, and the most valuable volumes, were the first and second; they are a kind of bibliographical, biographical, and critical work, on English Authors. They all bear a general title of “*Athenæ Britannicæ* \*.”

\* “*Athenæ Britannicæ*, or a Critical History of the Oxford and Cambridge Writers and Writings, with those of the Dissenters and Romanists as well as other Authors and Worthies, both Domestic and Foreign, both Antient and Modern. Together with an occasional freedom of thought, in criticising and comparing the parallel qualifications of the most eminent Authors and their performances, both in MS. and print, both at home and abroad. By M. D.

Collectors — some years past — have sometimes met with a very curious volume entitled “*Icon Libellorum*,” and sometimes the same book, entitled, “A Critical History of Pamphlets.” This rare book

London, 1716.” On the first volume of this series Dr. Farmer, a blood-hound of unerring scent in curious and obscure English books, has written on the leaf “This is the volume copy I have met with.” Even the great bibliographer, Baker, of Cambridge, never met but with three volumes (the edition at the British Museum is in seven) sent him as a great curiosity by the earl of Oxford, and now deposited in his collection at St. John’s College. Baker has written this memorandum in the first volume. “Few copies were printed, so the work is become scarce, and for that reason will be valued. The book in the greatest part is borrowed from modern historians, but yet contains some things more uncommon, and not easily to be met with.” How superlatively rare must be the English volumes which the eyes of Farmer and Baker never lighted on!

forms the first volume of the "Athenæ Britannicæ." The Author was Myles Davies, whose biography is quite unknown: he may now be his own biographer. He was a Welsh clergyman, a vehement foe to Popery, Arianism, and Socinianism, of the most fervent loyalty to George I. and the Hanoverian succession; a scholar, learned in Greek and Latin, and skilled in all the modern languages. Quitting his native spot with political disgust, he changed his character in the metropolis, for he subscribes himself "Counsellor at Law." In an evil hour he commenced Author, not only surrounded by his books, but with the more urgent companions of a wife and family; and with that child-like simplicity, which sometimes marks the mind of a retired scholar, we perceive him imagining that his immense reading would prove a

source, not easily exhausted, for their subsistence.

From the first volumes of his series much curious literary history may be extracted amidst the loose and wandering elements of this literary chaos. In his dedication to the Prince he professes "to represent writers and writings, in a catop-trick view."

The preface to the second volume opens his plan — and nothing as yet indicates those rambling humours which his after-volumes exhibit.

As he proceeded in forming these volumes, I suspect, either that his mind became a little disordered, or that he discovered that mere literature found but penurious patrons in "the Few;" for, attempting to gain over all classes of society, he varied his investigations,

and courted attention, by writing on law — physic — divinity — as well as literary topics. By his account,

“The avarice of Booksellers, and the stinginess of hard-hearted Patrons, had driven him into a cursed company of door-keeping herds, to meet the irrational brutality of those uneducated mischievous animals called footmen, house-porters, poetasters, mumpers, apothecaries, attornies, and such-like beasts of prey,” who were, like himself, sometimes barred up for hours in the menagerie of a great man’s antichamber. In his addresses to Drs. Mead and Freind, he declares, “My misfortunes drive me to publish my writings for a poor livelihood; and nothing but the utmost necessity could make any man in his senses to endeavour at it, in a method so burdensome to the modesty and education of a scholar.”

In French he dedicates to George I.; and in the Harleian MSS. I discovered a long letter to the earl of Oxford, by our author, in French, with a Latin ode. Never was more innocent bribery proffered to a Minister! He composed what he calls *Stricturæ Pindaricæ* on the "Mughouses," then political clubs; celebrates English Authors in the same odes, and inserts a political Latin drama, called "Pallas Anglicana." Mævius and Bavius were never more indefatigable! The Author's intellect gradually discovers its confusion amidst the loud cries of penury and despair.

To paint the distresses of an Author soliciting alms for a book which he presents — and which, whatever may be its value, comes at least as an evidence that the suppliant is a learned man, is a case so uncommon, that the invention of the



novelist seems necessary to fill up the picture. But MYLES DAVIES is an artist, in his own simple narrative.

Our Author has given the names of several of his unwilling customers —

“ Those squeeze-farthing and hoard-penny ignoramus Doctors, with several great personages who formed excuses for not accepting my books ; or they would receive them, but give nothing for them ; or else deny they had them, or remembered any thing of them ; and so gave me nothing for my last present of books, though they kept them *gratis et ingratiis*.

“ But his grace of the Dutch extraction in Holland (said to be akin to Mynheer Vander B—nck) had a peculiar grace in receiving my present of books and odes, which, being bundled up together with a letter and ode upon his graceship, and carried in by his porter, I was bid to call for an answer five years hence.

I asked the porter, what he meant by that? I suppose said he four or five days hence — but it proved five or six months after, before I could get any answer, though I had writ five or six letters in French with fresh odes upon his graceship, and an account where I lived, and what noblemen had accepted of my present. I attended about the door three or four times a week all that time constantly from twelve to four or five o'clock in the evening; and walking under the fore windows of the parlours, once that time his and her grace came after dinner to stare at me, with open windows and shut mouths, but filled with fair water, which they spouted with so much dexterity that they twisted the water through their teeth and mouth-skrew, to flash near my face, and yet just to miss me, though my nose could not well miss the natural flavour of the orange-water showering so very near

me. Her grace began the water work, but not very gracefully, especially for an English lady of her description, airs, and qualities, to make a stranger her spitting-post, who had been guilty of no other offence than to offer her husband some writings.— His grace followed, yet first stood looking so wistfully towards me, that I verily thought he had a mind to throw me a guinea or two for all these indignities, and two or three months' then sleeveless waiting upon him — and accordingly I advanced to address his grace to remember the poor Author, but, instead of an answer, he immediately undams his mouth, out fly whole showers of lymphatic rockets, which had like to have put out my mortal eyes.”

Still he was not disheartened, and still applied for his bundle of books, which were returned to him at length unopened, with “ half a guinea upon top of

the cargo," and "with a desire to receive no more; I plucked up courage, murmuring within myself

"*Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.*"

He sarcastically observes,

"As I was still jogging on homewards, I thought that a great many were called *their Graces*, not for any grace or favour they had truly deserved with God or man, but for the same reason of contraries, that the *Parcæ*, or Destinies, were so called, because they spared none, or were not truly the *Parcæ*, *quia non parcebant.*"

Our indigent and indignant Author, by the faithfulness of his representations, mingles with his anger some ludicrous scenes of literary mendicity.

"I can't chuse (now I am upon the fatal subject) but make one observation or two more upon the various rencontres and adventures

I met withall, in presenting my books to those who were likely to accept of them for their own information, or for that of helping a poor scholar, or for their own vanity or ostentation.

“Some Parsons would hollow to raise the whole house and posse of the domestics to raise a poor *crown*; at last all that flutter ends in sending Jack or Tom out to change a guinea, and then 'tis reckoned over half a dozen times before the fatal crown can be picked out, which must be taken as it is given, with all the parade of alms-giving, and so to be received with all the active and passive ceremonial of mendication and alms-receiving — as if the books, printing and paper, were worth nothing at all, and as if it were the greatest charity for them to touch them or let them be in the house; ‘For I shall never read them,’ says one of the five shilling piece chaps — ‘I have no time to look in them,’ says another; — ‘Tis

so much money lost,' says a grave Dean; — 'My eyes being so bad,' said a Bishop; 'that I can scarce read at all.' — 'What do you want with me?' said another; 'Sir, I presented you the other day with my *Athenæ Britannicæ*, being the last part published.' — 'I don't want books, take them again; I don't understand what they mean.' 'The title is very plain,' said I, 'and they are writ mostly in English.' 'I'll give you a crown for both the volumes.' 'They stand me, Sir, in more than that, and 'tis for a bare subsistence I present or sell them; how shall I live?' 'I care not a farthing for that, live or die, 'tis all one to me.' — 'Damn my master!' said Jack, ' 'twas but last night he was commending your books and your learning to the skies; and now he would not care if you were starving before his eyes; nay, he often makes game at your clothes, though he thinks you the greatest scholar in England.' "

Such was the life of a learned mendicant author! The scenes which are here exhibited appear to have disordered an intellect which had never been firm ; in vain our Author attempted to adapt his talents to all orders of men, still "To the crazy ship, all winds are contrary."

## COWLEY.

### OF HIS MELANCHOLY.

THE mind of COWLEY was beautiful, but a querulous tenderness in his nature breathes not only through his works, but influenced his habits and his views of human affairs. His temper and his genius would have opened to us, had not the strange decision of Sprat and Clifford withdrew that full correspondence of his heart which he had carried on many years. These letters were suppressed because, as they acknowledge, "in this kind of prose Mr. Cowley was excellent! They had a domestical plain-



ness, and a peculiar kind of familiarity.” And then the florid writer runs off, that, “in letters, where the souls of men should appear undressed, in that negligent habit they may be fit to be seen by one or two in a chamber, but not to go abroad into the streets.” A false criticism, which not only since their time appears by Mason’s *Memoirs of Gray*, but might have occurred to these friends of Cowley, in recollecting that the *Letters of Cicero to Atticus* formed the most delightful chronicles of the heart—and the most authentic memorials of genius. Peck obtained one letter of Cowley’s, preserved by Johnson, and it exhibits a remarkable picture of the miseries of his poetical solitude. It is, perhaps, not too late to inquire, whether this correspondence was destroyed, as well as suppressed? Would

Sprat and Clifford have burnt what they have told us they so much admired \*?

Fortunately for our literary sympathy, the fatal error of these fastidious critics has been in some degree repaired by the

\* My researches could never obtain more than one letter of COWLEY'S—it is but an elegant trifle—returning thanks to his friend EVELYN, for some seeds and plants. “The Garden” of EVELYN is immortalized in a delightful Ode of COWLEY'S, as well as by EVELYN himself. Even in this small note, we may discover the touch of COWLEY. I presume it has never been printed. The original was in Astle's Collection.

“Mr. Abraham Cowley, to John Evelyn, Esq.

“SIR, *Barn Elms, March 23, 1663.*

“There is nothing more pleasant than to see kindness in a person, for whom we have great esteem and respect: no, not the sight of your Garden in May, or even the having such an one; which makes me more obliged to return you my most

admirable genius himself, whom they have injured. When COWLEY retreated from society, he determined to draw up an apology for his conduct — and to have dedicated it to his patron, Lord St.

humble thanks for the testimonies I have lately received of you, both by your letter and your presents: I have already sowed such of your seeds as I thought most proper, upon a hot-bed ; but cannot find in all my books a catalogue of these plants which require that culture, nor of such as must be set in pots ; which defects, and all others, I hope shortly to see supplied, as I hope shortly to see your work of Horticulture finished and published ; and long to be in all things your disciple, as I am in all things now,

Sir, Your most humble,

and most obedient Servant,

A. COWLEY."

Such were the ordinary letters which passed between two men whom it would be difficult to parallel, for their elegant tastes and gentle dispositions. Evelyn's beautiful retreat at Sayes Court

Alban's. His death interrupted the entire design—but his essays, which Pope so finely calls “the language of his heart,” are evidently parts of these precious Confessions. All of COWLEY's tenderest and most beautiful is at Deptford is described by a contemporary for “a garden exquisite and most boscaresque, and, as it were, an exemplar of his book of Forest-trees.” It was the entertainment and wonder of the greatest men of those times, and inspired the following lines of Cowley, to Evelyn and his Lady, who excelled in the arts her husband loved; for she designed the frontispiece to his version of Lucretius.

“ In BOOKS and GARDENS, thou hast plac'd aright  
 (Things well which thou dost understand,  
 And both dost make with thy laborious hand)  
 Thy noble innocent delight ;  
 And in thy virtuous WIFE, where thou again dost meet  
 Both pleasures more refined and sweet ;  
 The fairest garden in her looks,  
 And in her mind the wisest books.”

undisguised feelings have therefore not perished. These Essays now form a species of composition in our language, a mixture of prose and verse—the man with the poet—the self-painter has sat to himself, and, with the utmost simplicity, has copied out the image of his soul.

Why has this Poet twice called himself THE MELANCHOLY COWLEY? He employed no poetical *cheville*\* for the metre of a verse which his own feelings inspired.

COWLEY, at the beginning of the Civil War, joined the Royalists at Oxford; followed the Queen to Paris; yielded his days and his nights to an employment of the highest confidence, that of decyphering the royal correspondence; he

\* A term the French apply to those *botches* which bad poets use to make out their metre.

transacted their business, and, almost divorcing himself from his neglected muse, he yielded up for them the tranquillity so necessary to the existence of a poet. From his earliest days he tells us how the poetic affections had stamped themselves on his heart, “like letters cut into the bark of a young tree, which, with the tree, will grow proportionably.”

He describes his feelings at the Court:

“I saw plainly all the paint of that kind of life, the nearer I came to it — that beauty which I did not fall in love with when, for aught I knew, it was real, was not like to bewitch or entice me when I saw it was adulterate. I met with several great persons whom I liked very well, but could not perceive that any part of their greatness was to be liked or desired. I was in a crowd of good company, in business of great and honour-

able trust; I eat at the best table, and enjoyed the best conveniences that ought to be desired by a man of my condition; yet I could not abstain from renewing my old school-boy's wish, in a copy of verses to the same effect;

“ Well then! I now do plainly see,  
This busie world and I shall ne'er agree!”

After several years' absence from his native country, at a most critical period, he was sent over to mix with that trusty band of Loyalists, who, in secrecy and in silence, were devoting themselves to the royal cause. Cowley was seized on by the ruling powers. At this moment he published a preface to his works, which some of his party interpreted as a relaxation of his loyalty. He has been fully defended. COWLEY, with all his

delicacy of temper, wished sincerely to retire from all parties; and saw enough among the fiery zealots of his own, to grow disgusted even with Royalists.

His wish for retirement has been half censured as cowardice by Johnson; but there was a tenderness of feeling which had ill formed COWLEY for the cunning of party intriguers, and the company of little villains. About this time he might have truly distinguished himself as “The melancholy Cowley.”

I am only tracing his literary history for the purpose of this work: but I cannot pass without noticing the fact, that this abused man, whom his enemies were calumniating, was at this moment, under the disguise of a Doctor of Physic, occupied by the novel studies of Botany and Medicine; and as all science in the mind



of the Poet naturally becomes poetry, he composed his books on plants in Latin verse.

At length came the Restoration—which the Poet zealously celebrated in his “Ode” on that occasion. Both Charles the First and Second had promised to reward his fidelity with the Mastership of the Savoy—but, Wood says, “he lost it by certain persons enemies of the Muses.” Wood has said no more; and none of Cowley’s biographers have thrown any light on the circumstance: perhaps we may discover this literary calamity.

That COWLEY caught no warmth from that promised sunshine which the new monarch was to scatter in prodigal gaiety, has been distinctly told by the Poet himself; his Muse, in “The Complaint,” having reproached him thus,

“Thou young Prodigal, who didst so loosely  
waste

Of all thy youthful years, the good estate—  
Thou changling then, bewitch'd with noise  
and show,

Wouldst into Courts and Cities from me go—  
Go, Renegado, cast up thy account—  
Behold the public storm is spent at last ;  
The Sovereign is toss'd at sea no more,  
And thou, with all the noble company,  
Art got at last to shore—

But, whilst thy fellow-voyagers I see,  
All march'd up to possess the promis'd land ;  
Thou still alone (alas !) dost gaping stand  
Upon the naked beach, upon the barren sand.”

But neglect was not all COWLEY had to endure; the royal party seemed disposed to calumniate him. When COWLEY was young, he had hastily composed the comedy of “The Guardian;” a piece which served the cause of Loyalty. After the

Restoration, he re-wrote it under the title of "Cutter of Coleman Street;" a comedy which may still be read with equal curiosity and interest: a spirited picture of the peculiar characters which appeared at the Revolution. It was not only ill received by a faction, but by those vermin of a new court who, without merit themselves, put in their claims, by crying down those who with great merit, are not in favour. All these, to a man, accused the Author of having written a satire against the King's party. And this wretched party prevailed, too long for the Author's repose, but not for his fame. Many years afterwards this comedy became popular. DRYDEN, who was present at the representation, tells us, that COWLEY "received the news of his ill success, not with so much firmness, as might have been expected from so great a

man." COWLEY was in truth a great man; and a greatly injured man. His sensibility, and delicacy of temper, were of another texture than Dryden's. What, at that moment, did COWLEY experience, when he beheld himself neglected, calumniated, and, in his last appeal to public favour; found himself still a victim to a vile faction; who, to court their common master, were trampling on their honest brother?

Now we shall find an unbroken chain of evidence, clearly demonstrating the agony of his literary feelings. The cynical Wood tells us, that, "not finding that preferment he expected; while others for their money carried away most places, he retired discontented into Surrey." And his panegyrist, Sprat, describes him as "weary of the vexations and formalities of an active condition—he had been perplexed with a long

compliance with foreign manners. He was satiated with the arts of a Court, which sort of life, though his virtue made it innocent to him, yet nothing could make it quiet. These were the reasons that moved him to follow the violent inclination of his own mind," &c. I doubt if either the sarcastic Antiquary, or the flowery Panegyrist, have developed the simple truth of COWLEY'S "violent inclination of his own mind." He does it himself more openly in that beautiful picture of an injured Poet, in "The Complaint," an Ode warm with individual feeling, but which Johnson coldly passes over, by telling us that "it met the usual fortune of Complaints, and seems to have excited more contempt than pity."

Thus the Biographers of COWLEY have told us nothing—and the Poet himself has

probably not told us all. To those calumnies respecting Cowley's Comedy, raised up by those whom Wood designates as "Enemies of the Muses," it would appear that others were added of a deeper dye, and in malignant whispers distilled into the ear of Royalty. COWLEY, in an Ode, has commemorated the genius of Brutus, with all the enthusiasm of a votary of Liberty. After the King's return, when COWLEY solicited some reward for his sufferings and services in the royal cause, the Chancellor is said to have turned on him with a severe countenance, saying, "Mr. COWLEY, your pardon is your reward!" It seems that Ode was then considered to be of a dangerous tendency among half the nation; Brutus would be the model of enthusiasts, who were sullenly bending their neck under the yoke of

Royalty. Charles II. feared the attempt of desperate men; and he might have forgiven Rochester a loose pasquinade, but not COWLEY a solemn invocation. This fact then is said to have been the true cause of the despondence so prevalent in the latter poetry of "the melancholy Cowley." And hence the indiscretion of the Muse, in a single flight, condemned her to a painful, rather than a voluntary solitude: and made the Poet complain of "barren praise" and "neglected verse\*."

While this anecdote harmonises with better known facts, it throws some light on the violent cry raised against the co-

\* The anecdote I have noticed is probably little known. It may be found in "The judgment of Dr. Prideaux in condemning the Murder of Julius Cæsar by the Conspirators as a most villainous act, maintained, 1721," p. 41.

medy, that was but an echo of some preceding one. COWLEY retreated into solitude, where he found none of the agrestic charms of the landscapes of his Muse. When in the world, Sprat says “ he had never wanted for constant health and strength of body ;” but, thrown into solitude, he carried with him a wounded spirit — the Ode of Brutus, and the condemnation of his Comedy, were the dark spirits that haunted his cottage. Ill health soon succeeded low spirits — he pined in dejection, and perished a victim of the finest and most injured feelings.

But before we leave THE MELANCHOLY COWLEY, he shall speak the feelings, which here are not exaggerated. In this Chronicle of Literary Calamity, no passage ought to be more memorable than



the solemn confession of one of the most amiable of men and poets.

Thus he expresses himself in the Preface to his “Cutter of Coleman Street:”

“We are, therefore, wonderful wise men, and have a fine business of it; we, who spend our time in Poetry. I do sometimes laugh, and am often angry with myself, when I think on it; and if I had a son inclined by nature to the same folly, I believe I should bind him from it by the strictest conjurations of a paternal blessing. For what can be more ridiculous than to labour to give men delight, whilst they labour, on their part, most earnestly, to take offence.”

And thus he closes the Preface, in all the solemn expression of injured feelings: — “This I do affirm, that *from all which I have written, I never received*

*the least benefit, or the least advantage; but, on the contrary, have felt sometimes the effects of malice and misfortune!"*

COWLEY'S ashes were deposited between those of his own Chaucer and Spenser; a marble monument was erected by a duke; and his eulogy was pronounced, on the day of his death, from the lips of Royalty. The learned wrote, and the tuneful wept—well might the neglected bard, in his retirement, compose an epitaph on himself, living there “entombed, though not dead.”

To this ambiguous state of existence, he applies a conceit, not inelegant, from the tenderness of its imagery:

Hic sparge flores, sparge breves rosas,  
Nam vita gaudet mortua floribus;

100 COWLEY — OF HIS MELANCHOLY.

Herbisque odoratis corona

Vatis adhuc cinerem calentem.

IMITATED.

Here scatter flow'rs, and short-lived roses  
bring,

For life, tho' dead, enjoys the flow'rs of  
spring ;

With breathing wreaths of fragrant herbs  
adorn

The yet warm embers in the Poet's urn.

## THE PAINS OF FASTIDIOUS EGOTISM.

I MUST place the Author of "The Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors," who himself now ornaments that roll, among those who have participated in the Misfortunes of Literature.

HORACE WALPOLE was the inheritor of a name the most popular in Europe; he moved in the higher circles of society; and fortune had never denied him the gratifications of the most lively tastes in all the elegant arts, and the most curious knowledge. These were particular advantages. But HORACE WALPOLE panted with a secret desire of literary celebrity; a full sense of his distinguished rank long

suppressed risking the name he bore to the uncertain fame of an Author, and the caprice of vulgar critics. At length he pretended to shun Authors, and to slight the honours of Authorship.—The cause of this contempt has been attributed to the perpetual consideration of his rank. But was this bitter contempt of so early a date? Was HORACE WALPOLE a Socrates before his time? was he born that prodigy of indifference, to despise the secret object he languished to possess? His early associates were not only noblemen, but literary noblemen; and need he have been so petulantly fastidious at bearing the venerable title of Author, when he saw Lyttelton, Chesterfield, and other Peers, proud of wearing the blue ribband of Literature? No! it was after he had become an Author that he contemned Authorship; and it was

not the precocity of his sagacity, but the maturity of his experience, that made him willing enough to undervalue literary honours, which were not sufficient to satisfy his desires.

Let us estimate the genius of HORACE WALPOLE, by analysing his talents, and inquiring into the nature of his works.

His taste was highly polished; his vivacity attained to brilliancy\* ; and his

\* In his letters there are uncommon instances of vivacity, whenever pointed against AUTHORS. The following have not yet met the public eye. What can be more maliciously pungent than this on SPENCE? "As I knew Mr. J. Spence, I do not think I should have been so much delighted as Dr. Kippis with reading his Letters. He was a good-natured harmless little soul, but more like a silver penny than a genius. It was a neat fiddle fiddle bit of sterling, that had read good books, and kept good company; but was too trifling for use, and only

picturesque fancy, easily excited, was soon extinguished; his playful wit and keen irony were perpetually exercised in fit to please a child."—On Dr. NASH's first volume of Worcestershire: "It is a folio of prodigious corpulence, and yet dry enough; but it is finely dressed with many heads and views." He characterises PENNANT; "He is not one of our Plodders (alluding to GOUGH); rather the other extreme; his *corporal* spirits (for I cannot call them *animal*) do not allow him to digest any thing. He gave a round jump from ornithology to antiquity, and, as if they had any relation, thought he understood every thing that lay between them.—The report of his being disordered is not true; he has been with me, and at least is as composed as ever I saw him." His Literary Correspondence with his friend Cole abounds with this easy satirical criticism—he delighted to ridicule Authors!—as well as to starve the miserable artists he so grudgingly paid. In the very volumes he celebrated the arts, he disgraced them by his penuriousness; so that he loved to indulge his Avarice at the expence of his Vanity!

his observations on life, and his memory was stored with the most amusing knowledge, but much too lively to be accurate; for his studies were but his sports. But other qualities of genius must distinguish the great Author, and even him who would occupy that leading rank in the literary republic our Author aspired to fill. He lived too much in that class of society which is little favourable to genius; he exerted neither profound thinking, nor profound feeling; and too volatile to attain to the pathetic, that higher quality of genius, he was so imbued with the petty elegancies of society, that every impression of grandeur in the human character was deadened in the breast of the polished Cynic.

HORACE WALPOLE was not a man of genius, but of the most refined ingenuity



— his most pleasing, if not his great talent, lay in letter-writing — here he was without a rival \* ; but he probably divined, when he condescended to become an Author, that something more was required than the talents he exactly possessed. In his latter days he felt this more sensibly, which will appear in those confessions which I have extracted from an unpublished correspondence.

\* He wrote a great number to Bentley, the son of Dr. Bentley, who ornamented Gray's works with some extraordinary designs. Walpole, who was always proud and capricious, observes his friend Cole, broke with Bentley because he would bring his wife with him to Strawberry-hill. He then asked Bentley for all his letters back, but he would not in return give Bentley's own.

This whole correspondence abounded with literature, criticism, and wit, of the most original and brilliant composition. This is the opinion of no friend, but an admirer, and a good judge; for it was Bentley's own.

Conscious of possessing the talent of amusement, yet feeling his deficient energies, he resolved to provide various substitutes for genius itself; and to acquire reputation, if he could not grasp at celebrity. He raised a printing-press at his Gothic castle, by which means he rendered small editions of his works valuable from their rarity, and much talked of, because seldom seen. That this is true, appears from the following extract from his unpublished correspondence with a literary friend. It alludes to his "Anecdotes of Painting in England," of which the first edition only consisted of 300 copies.

"Of my new fourth volume I printed 600; but, as they can be had, I believe not a third part is sold. This is a very plain lesson to me, that my editions sell for their curiosity, and not for any merit in them — and so they

would if I printed Mother Goose's Tales, and but a few.—If I am humbled as an Author, I may be vain as a Printer; and when one has nothing else to be vain of, it is certainly very little worth while to be proud of that."

There is a distinction between the Author of great Connections and another Author. With the first the *Man* may give a temporary existence to *his books*; but in the other, of real genius, it is the *book* which gives existence to the *man*.

His writings seem to be constructed on a certain principle, the awakening of public curiosity, by which he gave them a sudden, rather than a lasting existence. In historical research our adventurer startles the world by maintaining paradoxes which attacked the opinions, or changed the characters, established for centuries. Singularity of opinion, vivacity of ridicule, and polished

epigrams in prose, were the means by which HORACE WALPOLE sought distinction.

In his works of imagination, he felt he could not trust to himself—the natural pathetic was utterly denied him. But he had fancy and ingenuity; and therefore looking around for some artificial aid, some foreign novelty, by which he could attract attention, though he might not secure our hearts, he had recourse to the *Marvelous* in imagination, on the principle he had adopted the *Paradoxical* in history. Thus “The Castle of Otranto,” and “The Mysterious Mother,” are the productions of ingenuity, rather than genius; and display the miracles of Art, rather than the spontaneous creations of Nature.

Thus all his literary works, like the ornamented edifice he inhabited, were constructed on the same artificial principle;

an old paper lodging house, converted by the magician of taste into a Gothic castle, full of scenic effects.

“ A Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors” was itself a classification which only an idle amateur could have projected, and only the most agreeable narrator of anecdotes could have seasoned. These splendid scribblers are for the greater part no Authors at all.

His attack on our peerless Sidney, whose fame was more mature than his life, was formed on the same principle as his “ Historic Doubts” on Richard III. Horace Walpole was as willing to vilify the truly Great as to beautify deformity, when he imagined that the fame he was destroying or conferring, reflected back on himself. All these works were plants of sickly delicacy, which could never endure the

open air, and only lived in the artificial atmosphere of a private collection.—Yet at times the flowers, and the planter of the flowers, were roughly shaken by an uncivil breeze.

His “Anecdotes of Painting in England,” with their peculiar vivacity, form the most entertaining catalogue. Who can deny that he gives the spirit of the times, in their feelings towards the Arts? yet his pride was never gratified when he reflected that he had been writing the work of Vertue, who had collected the materials, but could not have given the philosophy. His great age and his good sense opened his eyes on himself; and HORACE WALPOLE seems to have judged too contemptuously of HORACE WALPOLE. The truth is, he was mortified he had not and never could obtain, a literary peer-

age; and he never respected the commoner's seat. At these moments, too frequent in his life, he contemns Authors, and returns to sink back into all the self-complacency of aristocratic pride.

This cold unfeeling disposition for Literary men, this disguised malice of envy, and this eternal vexation at his own disappointments,—break forth in his correspondence with one of those literary characters, with whom he kept on terms while they were kneeling to him in the humility of worship, or moved about to fetch or to carry his little quests of curiosity in town or country\*.

\* It was such a person as COLE of Milton, his correspondent of forty years, who lived at a distance, and obsequious to his wishes, always looking up to him, though never with a parallel glance—with whom he did not quarrel, though if Walpole could have

The following literary confessions, taken from letters hitherto unpublished, will illustrate the character I have drawn.

“ June 1778.

“ I have taken a thorough dislike to being an Author; and, if it would not look like begging you to compliment one by contrived panegyric, I should have been glad to read the private notes *Cole* made in his MSS. at the time he was often writing the civilest letters of admiration,— even *Cole* would have been cashiered from his correspondence. *Walpole* could not endure equality in literary men. — Bentley observed to *Cole*, that *Walpole's* pride and hauteur was excessive; which shewed itself in the treatment of *Gray*, who had himself too much pride and spirit to forgive it when matters were made up between them, and *Walpole* invited *Gray* to Strawberry-hill. When *Gray* came, he without any ceremony told *Walpole*, that he came to wait on him as civility required, but by no means would he ever be there on the terms of their former friendship, which he had totally cancelled.

From *COLE's* MSS.



dicting me, I would tell you what I am most seriously convinced of, that I find what small share of parts I had, grown dulled. And when I perceive it myself, I may well believe that others would not be less sharp-sighted. *It is very natural*; mine were *spirits* rather than *parts*; and as time has rebated the one, it must surely destroy *their resemblance* to the other."

In another letter to the Rev. W. Cole:—

"I set very little value on myself; as a man, I am a very faulty one; and *as an Author, a very middling one*, which *whoever thinks a comfortable rank, is not at all of my opinion*. Pray convince me that you think I mean sincerely, by not answering me with a compliment. It is very weak to be pleased with flattery; the stupidest of all delusions to beg it. From you I should take it ill. We have known one another almost forty years."

There were times when HORACE WALPOLE'S natural taste for his studies returned with all the vigour of passion — but his volatility, and his habits of life, perpetually scattered his firmest resolutions into air. This conflict appears beautifully described when the view of King's College, Cambridge, throws his mind into meditation; and the passion for study and seclusion instantly kindled his emotions, lasting, perhaps, as long as the letter which describes them occupied in writing.

“ *May 22, 1777.*

“ The beauty of King's College, Cambridge, now it is restored, penetrated me with a visionary longing to be a Monk in it. Though my life has been passed in turbulent scenes, in pleasures or rather pastimes, and in much fashionable dissipation; still, books, antiquity,

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and virtue, kept hold of a corner of my heart : and since necessity has forced me of late years to be a man of business, my disposition tends to be a recluse for what remains — but it will not be my lot ; and though there is some excuse for the young doing what they like, I doubt an old man should do nothing but what he ought, and I hope doing one's duty is the best preparation for death. Sitting with one's arms folded to think about it, is a very long way for preparing for it. If Charles V. had resolved to make some amends for his abominable ambition by doing good (his duty as a King), there would have been infinitely more merit than going to doze in a convent. One may avoid active guilt in a sequestered life, but the virtue of it is merely negative ; the innocence is beautiful."

There had been moments when Horace Walpole even expressed the tenderest

feelings for fame; and the following passage, written prior to the preceding ones, gives no indication of that contempt for literary fame, of which the close of this character will exhibit an extraordinary instance.

This letter relates an affecting event— he had just returned from seeing General Conway attacked by a paralytic stroke. Shocked by his appearance, he writes—

“ It is, perhaps, to vent my concern, that I write. It has operated such a revolution on my mind, as no time, at *my age*, can efface. It has at once damped every pursuit which my spirits had even now prevented me from being weaned from; I mean of virtu. It is like a mortal distemper in myself; for can amusements amuse, if there is but a glimpse, a vision of outliving one’s friends? *I have had dreams in which I thought I wished for*

*fame—it was not certainly posthumous fame at any distance ; I feel, I feel it was confined to the memory of those I love.* It seems to me impossible for a man who has no friends, to do any thing for fame — and to me the first position in friendship is, to intend one's friends should survive one—but it is not reasonable to oppress you, who are suffering gout, with my melancholy ideas. What I have said will tell you, what I hope so many years have told you, that I am very constant and sincere to friends of above forty years.”

In a published letter of a later date (1789), from HORACE WALPOLE to a literary friend, there is a remarkable confession, which harmonises with those already given ; and abating all that can be required for the affected modesty of the writer, much more will remain of that genuine conviction this Author had of the

quality of his genius, and the nature of his works.

“ My pursuits have always been light, trifling, and tended to nothing but my casual amusement. I will not say, without a little vain ambition of shewing some parts, but never with industry sufficient to make me apply to any thing solid. My studies, if they could be called so, and my productions, were alike desultory. In my latter age I discovered the futility both of my objects and writings—I felt how insignificant is the reputation of an Author of mediocrity; and that, being no genius, I only added one name more to a list of writers; but had told the world nothing but what it could as well be without. These reflections were the best proofs of my sense; and when I could see through my own vanity, there is less wonder in my discovering that such talents as I might have had, are impaired at seventy-two.”

Thus humbled was HORACE WALPOLE to himself!—there is an intellectual dignity, which this man of wit and sense was incapable of reaching — and it seems a retribution that the scorner of true greatness, should at length feel the poisoned chalice return to his own lips. He who had contemned Sidney, and quarrelled with and ridiculed every contemporary genius he personally knew, and affected to laugh at the literary fame he could not obtain, —at length came to scorn himself!— and endured “the penal fires” of an Author’s hell, in undervaluing his own works, the productions of a long life!

The following extraordinary letter will illustrate this part of his character; never was literary contempt more keenly pointed, nor the chagrin and disappointment of

an Author less carelessly concealed — nor his real talents more apparent.

HORACE WALPOLE to ———.

“ *Arlington street, April 27, 1773.*

“ Mr. Gough wants to be introduced to me! Indeed! I would see him, as he has been midwife to Masters; but he is so dull that he would only be troublesome — and besides, you know I shun authors, and would never have been one myself, if it obliged me to keep such bad company. They are always in earnest, and think their profession serious, and dwell upon trifles, and reverence learning. I laugh at all these things, and write only to laugh at them and divert myself. None of us are authors of any consequence, and it is the most ridiculous of all vanities to be vain of being *mediocre*. A page in a great author humbles me to the dust, and the conversation of those that are not superior



to myself, reminds me of what will be thought of myself. I blush to flatter them, or to be flattered by them; and should dread letters being published some time or other, in which they would relate our interviews, and we should appear like those puny conceited wittlings in Shenstone's and Hughes's correspondence, who give themselves airs from being in possession of the soil of Parnassus for the time being; as Peers are proud because they enjoy the estates of great men, who went before them. Mr. Gough is very welcome to see Strawberry-hill, or I would help him to any scraps in my possession that would assist his publications, though he is one of those industrious who are only re-burying the dead — but I cannot be acquainted with him; it is contrary to my system and my humour; and besides, I know nothing of barrows and Danish entrenchments, and Saxon barbarisms and Phœnician characters — in short, I

know nothing of those ages that knew nothing—then how should I be of use to modern literati? All the Scotch metaphysicians have sent me their works. I did not read one of them, because I do not understand what is not understood by those that write about it; and I did not get acquainted with one of the writers. I should like to be intimate with Mr. Anstey, even though he wrote *Lord Buckhorse*, or with the Author of the *Heroic Epistle*—I have no thirst to know the rest of my contemporaries, from the absurd bombast of Dr. Johnson, down to the silly Dr. Goldsmith, though the latter changeling has had bright gleams of parts, and the former had sense, till he changed it for words, and sold it for a pension. Don't think me scornful. Recollect that I have seen Pope, and lived with Gray. Adieu!"

Such a letter seems not to have been written by a literary man—it is the babble

of a thoughtless wit and a man of the world. But it is worthy of him whose contracted heart could never open to patronage or friendship. From such we might expect the unfeeling observation in the "Anecdotes of Painting," that "Want of patronage is the apology for want of genius. Milton and Fontaine did not write in the bask of court-favour. A Poet or a Painter may want an equipage or a villa, by wanting protection; they can always afford to buy ink and paper, colours and pencil. Mr. Hogarth has received no honours, but universal admiration." Patronage, indeed, cannot convert dull men into men of genius, but it may preserve men of genius from becoming dull men. It might have afforded Dryden that studious leisure which he ever wanted, and had given us not imperfect

tragedies, and uncorrected poems, but the regulated flights of a noble genius. It might have animated Gainsborough to have created an English school in landscape, which, I have heard from those who knew him, was his favourite but neglected pursuit. But Walpole could insult that genius, which he wanted the generosity to protect!

The whole spirit of this man was penury. Enjoying an income of many thousands, he only wished to appear to patronise the arts, which amused his tastes,—employing the meanest artists, at reduced prices, to ornament his own works, while he bitterly reprehends this economy, which others were compelled to practise. It was the simplicity of childhood in Chatterton, to imagine HORACE WALPOLE could be a patron—but it is

melancholy to record, that a slight protection might have saved such a youth. Gray abandoned this man of birth and rank, in the midst of their journey through Europe; Mason broke with him; even his humble correspondent Cole, this "friend of forty years," was often sent away in dudgeon; and he had quarreled with almost all the Authors he had been acquainted with. Horace Walpole once declared, that "he always tried to escape the acquaintance and the conversation of authors and artists."—The Gothic castle at Strawberry-hill, was indeed rarely graced with living genius—there the greatest was HORACE WALPOLE himself; but he had been too long waiting to see realised a magical vision of his hopes, which resembled the prophetic fiction of his own romance, that "the owner should grow

too large for his house." After many years, having discovered he still retained his mediocrity, he could never pardon the presence of that preternatural being whom the world considered a GREAT MAN.—Such was the feeling which dictated the close of the above letter; Johnson and Goldsmith were to be "scorned," since Pope and Gray were no more within the reach of his envy and his fear.

**INFLUENCE OF A BAD TEMPER  
IN CRITICISM.**

**UNFRIENDLY** to the literary character, some have imputed the brutality of certain Authors to their literary habits, when it may be more truly said, that they derived their literature from their brutality. The spirit was envenomed before it entered into the fierceness of literary controversy, and the insanity was in the evil temper of the man before he roused our notice by his ravings. **RITSON**, the late antiquary of poetry (not to call him poetical), amazed the world by his vituperative railing at two authors of the finest taste in poetry, **Warton** and **Percy**; he carried criticism, as the discerning few had first surmised, to in-

sanity itself; the character before us, only approached it.

DENNIS attained to the ambiguous honour of being distinguished as "The Critic," and he may yet instruct us how the moral influences the literary character, and how a certain talent that can never mature itself into genius, like the pale fruit that hangs in the shade, ripens only into sourness.

As a Critic, in his own day, party for some time kept him alive; Johnson revived him for his minute attack on Addison; and Kippis, feebly voluminous, and with the cold affectation of candour, allows him to occupy a place in our literary history, too large in the eye of Truth and Taste. No small portion of the productions of this redoubted Critic are violent strictures on "The Rape of the Lock" of Pope,



the "Cato" of Addison, the "Conscious Lovers" of Steele, &c. works which we scarcely remember were ever submitted to criticism.

Let us say all the good we can of him, that we may not be interrupted in a more important enquiry. DENNIS once urged fair pretensions to the office of Critic. Some of his "Original Letters," and particularly the "Remarks on Prince Arthur," are written in his vigour, and attain even to philosophical criticism\*. Aristotle and

\* It is curious to observe, that Kippis, who classifies with the pomp of enumeration, his heap of pamphlets, imagines that, as Blackmore's Epic is consigned to oblivion, so likewise must be the criticism, which, however, he confesses he could never meet with. An odd fate attends DENNIS's works: his criticism on a bad work ought to survive it, as good works have survived his criticisms.

Bossu lay open before him, and he develops and sometimes illustrates their principles, with a closeness of reasoning, and clearness of inference, rather surprising. From their school issued DENNIS. Passion had not yet blinded the young Critic with rage; and in that happy moment, Virgil occupied his attention even more than Blackmore.

The prominent feature in his literary character was good sense; but in literature, though not in life, good sense is a penurious virtue, of which all the acquisitions are mean; Dennis could not be carried beyond the cold lines of precedence and authority, and before he ventured to be pleased, he was compelled to look into Aristotle — the volume of his heart was a blank!

This blunted feeling of the mechanical Critic was at first concealed from the world in the pomp of critical erudition ; but when he trusted to himself, and, destitute of taste and imagination, became a Poet and a Dramatist, the secret of the Royal Midas was revealed. As his evil temper prevailed, he forgot his learning, and lost the moderate sense which he seemed once to have possessed. Rage, malice, and dulness, were the heavy residuum ; and now he much resembled that congenial soul whom the ever-witty South compared to the Taylor's goose, which is at once hot and heavy.

DENNIS was sent to Cambridge by his father, a saddler, who imagined a genius had been born in the family. He travelled in France and Italy, and on his return held in contempt every pursuit but Poetry and Criticism. He haunted the literary

coteries, and dropped into a galaxy of wits and noblemen. At a time when our literature, like our politics, was divided into two factions, DENNIS enlisted himself under DRYDEN and CONGREVE\* ; and, as legitimate criticism was then an awful novelty in the nation, the young critic, recent from the Stagirite, soon became an important, and even a tremendous spirit. Pope is said to have regarded his judgment,

\* See in DENNIS'S "Original Letters" one to Tonson, entitled, "On the conspiracy against the reputation of Mr. Dryden." It was in favour of *folly against wisdom, weakness against power, &c.*; that is, *Pope against Dryden*. He closes with a well-turned period. "Wherever genius runs through a work, I forgive its faults; and wherever that is wanting, no beauties can touch me. Being struck by Mr. DRYDEN'S genius, I have no eyes for his errors; and I have no eyes for his enemies' beauties, because I am not struck by their genius."

and Mallet, when young, tremblingly submitted a poem, to live or die by his breath. One would have imagined that the elegant studies he was cultivating, the views of life which had opened on him, and the polished circle around, would have influenced the grossness which was the natural growth of the soil. But ungracious Nature kept fast hold of the mind of DENNIS!

On his first introduction to the elegant table of Lord Halifax, the young Zoilus drank of better wines than usual; and became so impatient of contradiction, that, in his customary abrupt manner, he rushed out of the room, overthrowing the side-board; and inquiring on the next day how he had behaved, Moyle observed, "You went away like the Devil, taking one corner of the house with you." The

wits, perhaps, then began to suspect their young **Zoilus's** dogmatism.

The same abruptness and brutal vehemence mark the various facts recorded of this man; it is their mutual connection in the developement of the character that obliges me to indicate a few. When the actors had refused performing one of his tragedies to empty houses, **DENNIS** having, however, shewn some genius in the invention of some excellent thunder-rolling, which the property-man thought was too good a thing to be thrown aside with the tragedy, it rolled one night when **DENNIS** was in the pit, and it was applauded! Suddenly starting up, he cried to the audience, "By G—, they won't act my tragedy, but they steal my thunder!" with all the conviction that one was not more powerful than the other. Thus

when reading Pope's "Essay on Criticism," he came to the character of Appius, he suddenly flung down the new poem, exclaiming, "By G—, he means me!" He is painted to the life.

"*Lo! Appius reddens at each word you speak,  
And stares tremendous with a threatening eye,  
Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry\*.*"

\* The *character and temper* of DENNIS had a remarkable influence over his *manners and person*; a usual case with literary men of evil dispositions. It was impossible to observe the late vituperative RITSON, without detecting in that unfortunate man a strange mixture of assassin-like watchfulness, with incipient insanity. This abruptness and wildness in DENNIS'S manners have not been noticed. To complete this personage, I must refer the curious to a very extraordinary caricature, which Steele, in one of his papers of "The Theatre," has given of DENNIS. I shall, however, disentangle the threads, and pick out what I consider not to be caricature, but resemblance.

Even in his old age, for our chain must not drop a link, his native brutality never forsook him. Thomson and Pope cha-

“ His motion is quick and sudden, turning on all sides, with a suspicion of every object, as if he had done or feared some extraordinary mischief. You see wickedness in his meaning, but folly of countenance, that betrays him to be unfit for the execution of it. He starts, stares, and looks round him. This constant shuffle of haste without speed, makes the man thought a little touched; but the vacant look of his two eyes gives you to understand, that he could never run out of his wits, which seem not so much to be lost, as to want employment; they are not so much astray, as they are a wool-gathering. He has the face and surliness of a mastiff, which has often saved him from being treated like a cur, till some more sagacious than ordinary found his nature, and used him accordingly. Unhappy being! terrible without, fearful within! Not a wolf in sheep's cloathing, but a sheep in a wolf's.”



ritably supported the veteran Zoilus at a benefit play; and Savage, who had nothing but a verse to give, returned them very poetical thanks, in the name of DENNIS. He was then blind and old, but his critical ferocity had no old age; his surliness overcame every grateful sense, and he swore as usual, "They could be no one's but that *fool* Savage's" — an evidence of his sagacity and brutality\*! This

However anger may have a little coloured this portrait, its truth may be confirmed from a variety of sources. If Sallust, with his accustomed penetration, in characterising the violent emotions of Catiline's restless mind, did not forget its indication in "his walk now quick and now slow," it may be allowed to think that the character of DENNIS was alike to be detected in his habitual surliness and personal manners.

\* There is an epigram on Dennis by Savage, which Johnson has preserved in his life; and I feel

was, perhaps, the last peevish snuff shook from the dismal link of criticism; for, a few days after, was the redoubted DENNIS numbered with the mighty dead.

He carried the same fierceness into his style, and commits the same ludicrous extravagancies in literary composition, as

it to be a very correct likeness, although Johnson censures Savage for writing an epigram against DENNIS, while he was living in great familiarity with the critic. Perhaps that was the happiest moment to write the epigram. The anecdote in the text doubtless prompted "the fool" to take this fair revenge, and just chastisement. Savage has brought out the features strongly, in these touches—

" Say what revenge ON DENNIS can be had,  
 Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad.  
 On one so poor, you cannot take the law,  
 On one so old, your sword you scorn to draw.  
 Uncag'd then, let the harmless monster rage,  
 Secure in dullness, madness, want, and age !"

in his manners. Was Pope really sore at the Zoilian style? It is very laughable! He has himself spared me the trouble of exhibiting DENNIS's gross personalities, by having collected them at the close of the Dunciad; specimens which shew how low false wit and malignity can get to, by hard pains. I will throw into the note a curious illustration of the anti-poetical notions of a mechanical critic, who has no wing to dip into the hues of the imagination\*.

\* DENNIS points his heavy cannon of criticism, and thus bombards that aërial edifice, the RAPE OF THE LOCK. He is inquiring into the nature of *poetical machinery*, which, he oracularly pronounces, should be religious, or allegorical, or political; asserting the *Lutrin* of Boileau to be a trifle only in appearance, covering the deep political design of reforming the Popish church!—With the yard

In life and in literature we meet with men who seem endowed with an obliquity of understanding, yet active and busy spirits; but, as activity is only valuable in

of criticism, he takes measure of the slender graces and tiny elegance of Pope's aërial machines, as "less considerable than the *human persons*, which is *without precedent*. Nothing can be so contemptible as the *persons*, or so foolish as the understandings of these *hobgoblins*. Ariel's speech is one continued impertinence. After he has talked to them of black omens and dire disasters that threaten his heroine, those bugbears dwindle to the breaking a piece of china, to staining a petticoat, the losing a fan, or a bottle of sal volatile — and what makes Ariel's speech more ridiculous is the *place* where it is spoken, on the sails and cordage of Belinda's barge." And then he compares the Sylphs to the Discord of Homer, whose feet are upon the earth, and head in the skies. "They are, indeed, beings so diminutive that they bear the same proportion to the rest of the intellectual, that *Eels in vinegar* do

proportion to the capacity that puts all in motion, so, when ill directed, the intellect, warped by nature, only becomes more crooked and fantastical. A kind of frantic

to the rest of the material world ; the latter are only to be seen through microscopes, and the former only through the false optics of a Rosicrucian understanding." And finally, he decides that " these diminutive beings are only *Sawney* (that is, Alexander Pope), taking the change ; for it is he, a little lump of flesh that talks, instead of a little spirit." DENNIS's profound gravity contributes an additional feature of the burlesque to these heroi-comic poems themselves, only that DENNIS cannot be playful, and will not be good-humoured.

On the same tasteless principle he decides on the improbability of that incident in the *Conscious Lovers* of STEELE, raised by Bevil, who, having received great obligations from his father, has promised not to marry without his consent. On this, DENNIS, who rarely in his critical progress will stir a foot

enthusiasm breaks forth in their actions and their language, and often they seem ferocious, when they are only foolish. We may thus account for the manners and style of DENNIS, pushed almost to the verge of insanity, and acting on him very much like insanity itself; a circumstance which the quick vengeance of wit seized on, in the humorous "Narrative of Dr. Robert Norris, concerning the Frenzy of Mr.

without authority, quotes four formidable pages from *Locke's Essay on Government*, to prove that, at the age of discretion, a man is free to dispose of his own actions! One would imagine that DENNIS was arguing like a special pleader, rather than developing the involved action of an affecting drama. Are there critics who would pronounce Dennis to be a very *sensible* brother? It is here too he calls Steele "a two-penny author," alluding to the price of the *Tatlers*—but this cost Dennis dear!

John Dennis, an officer of the Custom-house."

It is curious to observe, that DENNIS, in the definition of genius, describes himself; he says, "Genius is caused by a *furiously joy* and *pride of soul* on the conception of an extraordinary hint. Many men have their *hints* without their motions of *fury and pride of soul*, because they want fire enough to agitate their spirits; and these we call cold writers. Others, who have a great deal of fire, but have not excellent organs, feel the fore-mentioned *motions*, without the extraordinary *hints*, and these we call fustian writers." His *motions*, and his *hints*, as he describes them, in regard to cold or fustian writers, seem to include the extreme points of his own genius.

Another feature strongly marks the race of the Dennises. With a half-conscious-

ness of deficient genius, they usually idolise some chimera, by adopting some extravagant principle; and they consider themselves as original, when they are only absurd.

DENNIS had ever some mishapen idol of the mind, which he was perpetually caressing with the zeal of perverted judgment or monstrous taste. Once his phrenzy ran entirely on the Italian Opera; and in his "Essay on Public Spirit," he detects its decline in tolerating the Italian Opera. I have seen a long letter by DENNIS to the Earl of Oxford, written to congratulate his Lordship on his accession to power, and the high hopes of the nation; but the greater part of the letter runs on the Italian Opera, while DENNIS instructs the Minister that the national prosperity can never be effectuated while this general corruption of the three kingdoms lies open!



DENNIS has more than once recorded two material circumstances in the life of a true critic; these are his *ill-nature* and the *public neglect*.

“ I make no doubt,” says he, “ that upon perusal of the critical part of these letters, the *old accusation* will be brought against me, and there will be a *fresh outcry* among thoughtless people that I am *an ill-natured man*.”

He entertained exalted opinions of his own powers, and the public neglect they received :

“ While others,” he says in his tracts, “ have been *too much encouraged*, he had been *too much neglected* — that his favourite system, that religion gives principally to great poetry its spirit and enthusiasm, was an important point, which had been left to be treated by *a person who had the honour of being your Lordship’s countryman* — your Lordship knows, that persons *so much and so long oppressed as I have*

*been*, have been always allowed to *say things concerning themselves* which in others might be offensive."

His vanity, we see, was equal to his vexation, and, as he grew old, he became more enraged; and, writing too often without Aristotle or Locke by his side, he gave the town pure Dennis, and almost ceased to be read. "The oppression," of which he complains, might not be less imaginary than his alarm of being included in the treaty with France, to be delivered up for having written a Whig tragedy against the Grand Monarque.

It is melancholy, but it is useful, to record the mortifications of such Authors. DENNIS had, no doubt, laboured with zeal which could never meet a reward, and, perhaps, amidst his critical labours, he turned often with an aching heart, from

their barren contemplation to that of the tranquillity he might have derived from his paternal saddles.

It was not Literature then, that made the mind coarse, brutalising the habits and inflaming the style of DENNIS. He had thrown himself among the walks of genius, and aspired to fix himself on a throne to which Nature had refused him a legitimate claim. What a lasting source of vexation and rage, even for a long-lived Patriarch of criticism !

Accustomed to suspend the scourge over the heads of the first Authors of the age, he could not sit at a table, or enter a coffee-house, without exerting the despotism of a literary dictator. How could the mind, that had devoted itself to the contemplation of Master-pieces only to reward its industry by detailing to the public their

human faculties, experience one hour of amenity, one idea of grace, one generous impulse of sensibility? DENNIS had so accustomed himself to asperity, and felt the irritation he gave and he received, that without having left on record but the unauthenticated rumour of his having attempted to stab a man in the dark\*, we conceive the improbity of his heart from the malice of his pen; yet the whole may be attributed to a crooked judgment, a gross taste, and an erroneous persuasion that the code of Genius was written by Aristotle, and expounded by DENNIS.

But the poor Critic himself at length fell more really the victim of his criticisms

\* Our Zoilus, when young, assaulted a gentleman with his sword, and for this he was expelled his College. Dr. Farmer, in a letter to Isaac Reed, ascertains the fact.

than the genius he had insulted — and, having incurred the public neglect, sunk fast into contempt, dragged on a life of misery, and in his last days, the blind and helpless Cacus in his den, scarcely vomiting his fire and smoke, though he could not correct his invincible brutality, became the most pitiable creature, receiving the alms he craved from triumphant Genius.

## DISAPPOINTED GENIUS

TAKES A FATAL DIRECTION BY ITS ABUSE.

How the moral and literary character are reciprocally influenced, may be traced in the character of a personage peculiarly apposite to these inquiries. This Worthy of Literature is ORATOR HENLEY—who is rather known traditionally than historically\*. He is so overwhelmed with the

\* So little is known of this singular man, that Mr. Dibdin, in his very curious "Bibliomania," was not able to recollect any other details than those he transcribed from Warburton's Commentary on the Dunciad. In Mr. Nichols's History of Leicestershire, a more copious account of HENLEY may be found: to their facts I have added something. It was, however, difficult to glean after so excellent a

echoed satire of Pope, and his own extravagant conduct for many years, that I should not care to extricate him, had I not discovered a feature in the character of HENLEY not yet drawn, and constituting no inferior calamity amongst Authors.

HENLEY stands in his "gilt tub" in the Dunciad; and a portrait of him hangs in the picture-gallery of the Commentary. Pope's verse and Warburton's notes are the pickle and the bandages for any Ægyptian mummy of dulness, who will last as long as the pyramid that incloses him. I shall transcribe for convenience the lines of Pope:

harvest-home. To the Author of the Life of Bowyer, and other works devoted to our authors, our literary history is more indebted, than to the labours of any other contemporary. He is the Prosper Marchand of English Literature,

“ Embrown'd with native bronze, lo! HENLEY  
stands,  
Tuning his voice, and balancing his hands ;  
How fluent nonsense trickles from his tongue !  
How sweet the periods, neither said nor sung !  
Still break the benches, HENLEY, with thy  
strain,  
While Sherlock, Hare, and Gibson, preach  
in vain.

Oh! great restorer of the good old stage,  
Preacher at once, and Zany of thy age \*!”

THE DUNCIAD.

It will surprise when I declare that this buffoon was an indefatigable student, a proficient in all the learned languages, an elegant poet, and, withal, a wit of no

\* It is, perhaps, unnecessary to point out this allusion of Pope to our ancient *mysteries*, where the *Clergy* were the *actors*; among which, the *Vice* or *Punch* was introduced.



inferior class. It remains to discover, why "the Preacher" became "the Zany."

HENLEY was of St. John's college, Cambridge, and was distinguished for the ardour and pertinacity of his studies; he gave evident marks of genius, and had the honour of addressing a letter to the Spectator, signed *Peter de Quir*, which abounds with local wit and quaint humour. I have discovered a more elaborate production, during his residence at Cambridge, in a poem entitled, "Esther, Queen of Persia\*." The author had not attained his twenty-second year, when it was published amidst graver studies; for three years after, HENLEY being M. A. published his "Com-

\* The title is, "Esther, Queen of Persia, an historical Poem, in four Books; by John Henley, B. A. of St. John's College, Cambridge. 1714."

plete Linguist," grammars of ten languages.

The poem itself must not be passed by in silent notice. It is preceded by a learned preface, in which the poet discovers his intimate knowledge of oriental studies, and some learned etymologies from the Persic, the Hebrew, and the Greek, concerning the name and person of Ahasuerus, whom he makes to be Xerxes. The close of this preface gives another unexpected feature in the character of him whom the poet tells us was "Embrowned with *native* bronze," — an unaffected modesty! Henley, alluding to a Greek paraphrase of Barnes, censures his faults without acrimony, and even apologizes for them, by thus gracefully closing the preface: "These can only be alleviated by one plea, the youth of the au-

thor, which is a circumstance I hope the candid will consider in favour of the present writer!"

This poem surmounts mediocrity. The versification is musical, the imagination is lively, and the narrative is never tedious.

The pomp of the feast of Ahasuerus has all the luxuriance of Asiatic splendour; and the circumstances are selected with fine taste :

“ The higher guests approach a room of state,  
Where tissued couches all around were set  
Labour'd with art ; o'er ivory tables thrown,  
Embroider'd carpets fell in folds adown.  
The bowers and gardens of the court were near,  
And open lights indulg'd the breathing air.

“ Pillars of marble bore a silken sky,  
While cords of purple and fine linen tie  
In silver rings, the azure canopy. }  
Distinct with diamond stars the blue was seen,

And earth and seas were feign'd in em'rald  
green ;

A globe of gold, ray'd with a pointed crown,  
Form'd in the midst almost a real sun."

Nor is HENLEY less skilful in the elegance of his sentiments, and in his développement of the human character.

When Esther is raised to the throne, the Poet says,

" And Esther, tho' in robes, is Esther still."  
and then sublimely exclaims,

" The heroic soul, amidst its bliss or woe,  
Is never swell'd too high, nor sunk too low ;  
Stands, like its origin above the skies,  
Ever the same great self, sedately wise ;  
Collected and prepar'd in every stage  
To scorn a courting world, or bear its rage."

The youthful Poet marks the vigour of his genius in the character of Haman, from which I select a few lines :

"Haman's address, his stars, and something  
 more, [power—  
 Had plac'd him foremost in the chace of  
 Haman had now engross'd the royal ear,  
 Another Xerxes govern'd in the peer—  
 For him the curious oft would plod the sky,  
 And each new world was Haman's property;  
 Himself in constellation sparkled there,  
 And Haman hung with honour in a star—  
 Would, as the juncture ask'd, embrace or kill,  
 Hug you to death, or stab you with a smile;  
 All the wild lengths of noble mischief run,  
 And leave no shining wickedness unknown;  
 Demurely o'er the public ruins move,  
 And colour every step with public love."

The reader is now enabled to decide on  
 the genius of HENLEY; many a greater  
 Poet has not always broke forth so richly  
 in its blossoms. But wit which the  
 Spectator has sent down to posterity, and  
 poetry which gave the promise of excel-

lence, did not bound the noble ambition of HENLEY; ardent in more important labours, he was perfecting himself in the learned languages, and carrying on a correspondence with eminent scholars.

He officiated as the Master of the Free-school at his native town in Leicestershire, then in a declining state; but the improvements he introduced were quite original. He established a class for public elocution, recitations of the classics, orations, &c.; and arranged a method of enabling every scholar to give an account of his studies without the necessity of consulting others, or of being examined by particular questions. These miracles are indeed a little apocryphal; for they are drawn from that pseudo-gospel of his life, of which I am inclined to think he himself was the apostle whose acts he celebrates.—

His grammar of ten languages was now finished; and his genius felt that obscure spot too circumscribed for his ambition. He parted from the inhabitants with their regrets; and came to the metropolis with thirty recommendatory letters.

HENLEY probably had formed those warm conceptions of patronage in which youthful genius cradles its hopes. Till 1724 he appears, however, to have obtained only a small living, and to have existed by translating and writing. Thus, after persevering studies, many successful literary efforts, and much heavy task-work, HENLEY found he was but a hireling Author for the Booksellers, and a salaried "Hypodocor" for the Minister; for he received a stipend for this periodical paper, which was to cheer the spirits of the people by ridiculing the gloomy forebodings of Am-

hurst's "Craftsman." About this time the complete metamorphosis of the studious and ingenious JOHN HENLEY began to branch out into its grotesque figure; and a curiosity in human nature was now about to be opened to public inspection. "The Preacher" was to personate "The Zany." His temper had become brutal, and he had gradually contracted a ferocity and grossness in his manners, which seem by no means to have been indicated in his purer days.—His youth was disgraced by no irregularities—it was studious and honourable. But he was now quick at vilifying the greatest characters, and having a perfect contempt for all mankind, was resolved to live by making one half of the world laugh at the other. Such is the direction of talents without principles.

He first affected oratory, and something



of a theatrical attitude, in his sermons, which greatly attracted the populace; and he startled those preachers who had so long dozed over their own sermons, and who now finding themselves with but few slumberers about them, envied their Ciceronian brother,

“Tuning his voice, and balancing his hands.”

It was alledged against HENLEY, that “he drew the people too much from their parish churches, and was not so proper for a London Divine as a rural Pastor.” He was offered a rustication, on a better living; but HENLEY did not come from the country to return to it.

There is a narrative of the life of HENLEY, which, subscribed by another person's name, he himself inserted in his “Oratory Transactions.” As he had to publish himself this highly-seasoned bio-

graphical morsel, and as his face was then beginning to be “embrowned with bronze,” he thus very impudently and very ingeniously apologizes for the panegyric:

“If any remark of the writer appears favourable to myself, and be judged apocryphal; it may, however, weigh in the opposite scale to some things less obligingly said of me; false praise being as pardonable as false reproach\*.”

In this narrative we are told, that when at college —

“He began to be uneasy that he had not the

\* This narrative is subscribed *A. Welstede*. Warburton maliciously quotes it as a life of *Henley*, written by *Welsted*—doubtless designed to lower the writer of that name, and one of the heroes of the *Dunciad*. The public have long been deceived by this artifice; the effect, I believe, of Warburton’s dishonesty.

liberty of thinking, without incurring the scandal of heterodoxy; he was impatient that systems of all sorts were put into his hands ready carved out for him; it shocked him to find that he was commanded to believe against his judgment, and resolved some time or other to enter his protest against any person being bred like a slave, who is born an Englishman."

This is all very decorous, and nothing can be objected to the first cry of this reforming patriot, but a reasonable suspicion of its truth. If these sentiments were really in his mind at college, he deserves at least the praise of retention; for fifteen years were suffered to pass quietly without the patriotic volcano giving even a distant rumbling of the sulphureous matter concealed beneath. All that time had passed

in the contemplation of church preferment, with the aërial perspective lighted by a visionary mitre. But HENLEY grew indignant at his disappointments, and suddenly resolved to reform “the gross impostures and faults that have long prevailed in the received *institutions* and *establishments of knowledge and religion*”—simply meaning that he wished to pull down the *Church* and the *University* !

But he was prudent before he was patriotic ; he at first grafted himself on Whiston, adopting his opinions ; and sent some queries, by which it appears that HENLEY, previous to breaking with the Church, was anxious to learn the power it had to punish him. The Arian Whiston was himself, from pure motives, suffering expulsion from Cambridge — for refusing his subscription to the Athanasian Creed ;

he was a pious man, and no buffoon, but a little crazed. When Whiston afterwards discovered the character of his correspondent, he requested the Bishop of London,

“ To summon Mr. Henley, the Orator, whose vile history I knew so well, to come and tell it to the Church. But the Bishop said he could do nothing ; since which time Mr. Henley has gone on for above twenty years without controul every week, as an Ecclesiastical Mountebank, to abuse Religion.”

The most extraordinary project was now formed by HENLEY ; he was to teach mankind universal knowledge from his lectures, and primitive Christianity from his sermons. He took apartments in Newport-market, and opened his “ Oratory.” He declared,

“ He would teach more in one year than schools and universities did in five ; and write

and study twelve hours a day, and yet appear as untouched by the yoke, as if he never bore it."

In his "Idea of what is intended to be taught in the *Week-days' Universal Academy*," we may admire the fertility, and sometimes the grandeur of his views. I possess his Lectures and Orations \*; they

\* Every lecture is dedicated to some branch of the Royal Family. Among them one is on "University Learning," an attack.—"On the English History and Historians," extremely curious.—"On the Languages, ancient and modern," full of erudition.—"On the English tongue," a valuable criticism at that moment when our style was receiving a new polish from Addison and Prior. Henley, acknowledging that these writers had raised *correctness* of expression to its utmost height, adds, though, "if I mistake not, something to the detriment of that *force* and *freedom* that ought, with the most concealed art, to be a perfect copy of

are of a very different nature than they are imagined to be; literary topics treated with great perspicuity, with varied erudition, and have something original and

nature, in all compositions." This is among the first notices of that excessive art which has vitiated our native idiom, substituting for its purity an affected delicacy, and for its vigour excessive ornament. Henley observes, that, "to be perspicuous, pure, elegant, copious, and harmonious, are the chief good qualities of writing the English tongue; they are attained by study and practice, and lost by the contrary: but *imitation* is to be avoided; they cannot be made our own but by keeping the force of our understandings superior to our models; by *rendering our thoughts the original, and our words the copy.*"—"On Wit and Imagination," abounding with excellent criticism.—"On grave conundrums and serious buffoons, in defence of burlesque discourses, from the most weighty authorities."—"A Dissertation upon Nonsense." At the close he has a fling at his friend Pope; it was after the publication of

pleasing in their manner. They were, no doubt, larded and stuffed with many high-seasoned jokes, which Henley did not send to the printer.

the Dunciad. "Of Nonsense there are celebrated professors; Mr. Pope grows witty like Bayes in the Rehearsal, by selling bargains (his subscriptions for Homer), praising himself, laughing at his joke, and making his own works the test of any man's criticism; but he seems to be in some jeopardy; for the ghost of Homer has lately spoke to him in Greek, and Shakespeare resolves to bring him, as he has brought Shakespeare, to a tragical conclusion. Mr. Pope suggests the last choice of a subject for writing a book, by making the *Nonsense* of others his argument; while his own puts it out of any writer's power to confute him." In another fling at Pope, he gives the reason why Mr. Pope adds the dirty dialect to that of the water, and is in love with the Nymphs of Fleet-ditch; and in a Lecture on the Spleen, he un-  
nounced "an anatomical discovery, that Mr. Pope's spleen is bigger than his head!"



**HENLEY** was a charlatan and a knave ; but in all his charlatanerie and his knavery, he indulged the reveries of genius ; many of which have been realized since ; and, if we continue to laugh at **HENLEY**, it will indeed be cruel, for we shall be laughing at ourselves ! Among the objects which **HENLEY** discriminates in his general design, were, “ to supply the want of an University, or universal school, in this Capital, for persons of all ranks, professions, and capacities — to encourage a literary correspondence with great men and learned bodies ; the communication of all discoveries and experiments in science and the arts ; to form an amicable society for the encouragement of learning, “ in order to cultivate, adorn, and exalt the genius of Britain ; ” to lay a foundation for an English academy ; to give a stand-

ard to our language, and a digest to our history; to revive the ancient schools of philosophy and elocution, which last has been reckoned by Pancirollus among the *artes perditæ*. All these were "to bring all the parts of knowledge into the narrowest compass, placing them in the clearest light, and fixing them to the utmost certainty." The religion of the Oratory was to be that of the primitive Church in the first ages of the four first general councils, approved by Parliament in the first year of the reign of Elizabeth. "The Church of England is really with us; we appeal to her own principles, and we shall not deviate from her, unless she deviates from herself." Yet his "Primitive Christianity" had all the sumptuous pomp of Popery; his creeds and doxologies are printed in the red letter, and

his liturgies in the black; his pulpit blazed in gold and velvet (Pope's "gilt tub"); while his "Primitive Eucharist" was to be distributed with all the ancient forms of celebrating the sacrifice of the altar, which, he says, "are so noble, so just, sublime, and perfectly harmonious, that the change has been made to an unspeakable disadvantage." It was restoring the decorations and the mummery of the Mass! He assumed even a higher tone, and dispersed medals, like those of Louis XIV. with the device of a Sun near the meridian, and a motto, *Ad summa*, with an inscription, expressive of the genius of this new adventurer, *Inveniam viam aut faciam!* There was a snake in the grass; it is obvious, that HENLEY, in improving literature and philosophy, had a deeper design,

to set up a new sect! He called himself "a Rationalist"—and on his death-bed repeatedly cried out, "Let my notorious enemies know I die a Rational."

His address to the town\*, excited public curiosity to the utmost; and the floating crowds were repulsed by their own violence from this new paradise, where "The Tree of Knowledge" was said to be planted. At the succeeding meeting "the Restorer of Ancient Eloquence" informed "persons in chairs that they must come sooner." He first commenced by subscriptions to be raised from "Persons eminent in Arts and Literature," who, it seems, were lured by the seductive promise, that "if they had been virtuous

\* It has been preserved in "The Historical Register," vol XI. for 1726. It is curious and well written.

or penitents, they should be commemorated;" an oblique hint at a panegyric puff. In the decline of his popularity he permitted his door-keeper, whom he dignifies with the title of *Ostiary*, to take a shilling! But he seems to have been popular for many years; even when his auditors were but few, they were genteel\*; and in notes respecting him which I have seen, by a contemporary, he is called "the reverend and learned." His favourite character was that of a Restorer of Eloquence; and he was not destitute of the qualifications of a fine Orator, a good voice, graceful gesture, and forcible elocution. Warburton justly remarked, "Sometimes he broke jests, and sometimes that bread which he called the Primitive Eucharist." He would degenerate into

\* Gent. Mag. vol. LVII. p. 876.

buffoonery on solemn occasions. His address to the Deity was at first awful, and seemingly devout; but, once expatiating on the several sects who would certainly be damned, he prayed that the Dutch might be *undamm'd!* He undertook to show the ancient use of the petticoat, by quoting the scriptures where the mother of Samuel is said to have made him "*a little coat,*" ergo, a *PETTICOAT* \*! His advertisements

\* His "Defence of the Oratory" is a curious performance. He pretends to derive his own from great authority. "St. Paul is related, Acts 28, to have dwelt *two whole years in his own hired house,* and to have received all that came in unto him, teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. This was at *Rome,* and doubtless was his practice in his other travels, there being the same reason in the thing to produce elsewhere the like circumstances." He proceeds to shew "the calumnies and reproaches,

were mysterious ribaldry to attract curiosity, while his own good sense would frequently chastise those who could not

and the novelty and impiety, with which Christianity, at its first setting out, was charged, as a mean, abject institution, not only useless and unserviceable, but pernicious to the public and its professors, as the refuse of the world" — Of the false accusations raised against Jesus — all this he applies to himself and his Oratory — and he concludes, that "Bringing men to think rightly will always be reckoned a depraving of their minds, by those who are desirous to keep them in a mistake, and who measure all truth by the standard of their own narrow opinions, views, and passions. The principles of this Institution are those of right reason; the first ages of Christianity; true facts, clear criticism, and polite literature — if these corrupt the mind, to find a place where the mind will not be corrupted, will be impracticable." Thus speciously could "the Orator" reason, raising himself to the height of apostolical purity. And, when he was accused that he *did all for lucre*, he

resist it; his auditors came in folly, but they departed in good humour\*. These advertisements were usually preceded by a sort of motto, generally a sarcastic allusion

retorted, that "Some *do nothing* for it;" and that "he preached more Charity Sermons than any Clergyman in the kingdom."

\* He once advertised an Oration on Marriage, which drew together an overflowing assembly of females, at which, solemnly shaking his head, he told the ladies, that "he was afraid, that oftentimes, as well as now, they came to church in hopes to get husbands, rather than be instructed by the preacher;" to which he added a piece of wit, not quite decent. He congregated the trade of shoemakers, by offering to shew the most expeditious method of making shoes: he held out a boot, and cut off the leg part. He gave a Lecture, which he advertised was "for the instruction of those who do not like it; it was on the philosophy, history, and great use of *Nonsense* to the learned, political, and polite world, who excel in it."



to some public transaction of the preceding week \*. HENLEY pretended to great impartiality; and when two preachers had animadverted on him, he issued an advertisement, announcing "A Lecture that will be a challenge to the Rev. Mr. Batty, and the Rev. Mr. Albert. Letters

\* Dr. Cobden, one of George the Second's chaplains, having, in 1748, preached a sermon at St. James's, from these words: "Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness;" it gave so much displeasure, that the doctor was struck out of the list of chaplains; and the next Saturday, the following parody of his text appeared as a motto to Henley's advertisement:

"Away with the wicked before the king,  
And away with the wicked behind him;  
His throne it will bless  
With righteousness,  
And we shall know where to find him."

*Biographical Dictionary.*

are sent to them on this head, and a *free-standing place* is there to be had *gratis*." Once HENLEY offered to admit of a disputation, and that he would impartially determine the merits of the contest. It happened that HENLEY this time was overmatched; for two Oxonians, supported by a strong party to awe his "marrôw-boners," as the butchers were called, said to be in the Orator's pay, entered the list; the one to defend the *ignorance*, the other the *impudence*, of the Restorer of Eloquence himself. HENLEY found two rivals!—As there was a door behind the rostrum, which led to his house, the Orator silently dropped out, postponing the award to some happier day.

That this age of Lecturers may not despond for some notion of the proceedings of their model, HENLEY'S "Universal

Academy," and for whoever aspires to bring themselves down to his genius, I shall point out a rich treasure which lies buried under ground. In the second number of "The Oratory Transactions," is a diary from July 1726, to August 1728. It forms, perhaps, an unparalleled chronicle of the vagaries of the human mind. These archives of cunning, of folly, and of literature, are divided into two diaries; the one "The Theological or Lord's days subjects of the Oratory;" the other, "The Academical or Week-days subjects." I can only note a few. It is easy to pick out ludicrous specimens; for he had a quaint humour peculiar to himself; but among these numerous topics are many curious for their knowledge and ingenuity.

“The last Wills and Testaments of the Patriarchs.

“An Argument to the Jews, with a proof that they ought to be Christians, for the same reason which they ought to be Jews.

“St. Paul’s Cloak, Books, and Parchments left at Troas.

“The tears of Magdalen, and the joy of Angels.

“New Converts in Religion.” After pointing out the names of “Courayer and others, the D— of W—n, the Protestantism of the P—, the conversion of the Rev. Mr. B—e, and Mr. Har—y,” he closes with “Origen’s opinion of Satan’s conversion; with the choice and balance of Religion in all countries.”

There is one remarkable entry :

“Feb. 11. This week, all Mr. Henley’s writings were seized, to be examined by the State. *Vide Magnam Chartam, and Eng. Lib.*”

It is evident by what follows that the *personalities* he made use of, were one means of attracting auditors.

“ On the action of Cicero, and the beauty of Eloquence, and on living characters; of action in the Senate, at the Bar, and in the Pulpit—of the Theatrical in all men. The manner of my Lord —, Sir —, Dr. —, the B. of —, being a proof how all life is playing something, but with different action.”

In a Lecture on the History of Book-craft, an account was given

“Of the plenty of books, and dearth of sense; the advantages of the Oratory to the book-sellers, in advertising for them; and to their customers, in making books useless; with all the learning, reason, and wit, more than are proper for one advertisement.”

Amidst these eccentricities, it is remarkable, that "the Zany" never forsook his studies; and the amazing multiplicity of the MSS. he left behind him, confirm this extraordinary fact. These, he says, are "six thousand more or less, that I value at one guinea apiece; with 150 volumes of common places of wit, memoranda, &c." They were sold for much less than one hundred pounds; they must have contained many curious sketches. Was the literary curiosity of that day less keen, or was their estimate more exact than the Author's?

Such was "Orator HENLEY!" A scholar of great acquirements, and of no mean genius; hardy, and inventive; eloquent, and witty; he might have been an ornament to literature, which he made ridiculous; and the pride of the pulpit,

which he so egregiously disgraced; but, having blunted and worn out that interior feeling, which is the instinct of the good man, and the wisdom of the wise, there was no balance in his passions, and the decorum of life was sacrificed to its selfishness. He condescended to live on the follies of the people, and his sordid nature had changed him till he crept, "licking the dust with the serpent."

## THE MALADIES OF AUTHORS:

THE practice of every art subjects the artist to some particular inconvenience, usually inflicting some malady on that member which has been over-wrought by excess; Nature abused, pursues man into his most secret corners, and avenges herself. In the athletic exercises of the ancient Gymnasium, the pugilists were observed to become lean from their hips downwards, while the superior parts of their bodies, which they over-exercised, were prodigiously swollen; on the contrary, the racers were meagre upwards, while their feet acquired an unnatural dimension. The



secret source of life seems to be carried forwards to those parts which are making the most continued efforts.

In all sedentary labours, some particular malady is contracted by every worker, derived from particular postures of the body, and peculiar habits.—Thus the weaver, the tailor, the painter, and the glass-blower, have all their respective maladies. The diamond-cutter, with a furnace before him, may be said almost to live in one; the slightest air must be shut out of the apartment, lest it scatter away the precious dust.—a breath would ruin him!

The analogy is obvious \*—and the Au-

\* Hawkesworth, in the second paper of the *Advertiser*, has composed from his own feelings, an elegant description of intellectual and corporeal labour, and the sufferings of an Author, with the uncertainty of his labour and his reward.

thor must participate in the common fate of all sedentary occupations. But his maladies, from the very nature of the delicate organ of thinking, intensely exercised, are more terrible than those of any other profession ; they are more complicated, more hidden in their causes, and the mysterious union and secret influence of the faculties of the soul over those of the body, are visible, yet still incomprehensible ; they frequently produce a perturbation in the faculties, a state of acute irritability, and many sorrows and infirmities, which are not likely to create much sympathy from those around the Author, who, at a glance, could have discovered where the Pugilist or the Racer became meagre, or monstrous — the intellectual malady eludes even the tenderness of friendship.

The more obvious maladies engendered by the life of a student, arise from over-study. These have furnished a curious volume to Tissot, in his treatise "On the Health of Men of Letters," a book, however, which chills and terrifies more than it does good.

The unnatural fixed postures, the perpetual activity of the mind, and the inaction of the body; the brain exhausted with assiduous toil deranging the nerves, vitiating the digestive powers, disordering its own machinery, and breaking the calm of sleep by that previous state of excitement which study throws us into; are some of the calamities of a studious life; for like the ocean when its swell is subsiding, the waves of the mind too still heave and beat; hence all the small feverish symptoms,

and the whole train of hypochondriac affections, as well as some acute ones\*.

\* Dr. Fuller's "*Medicina Gymnastica*, or, a treatise concerning the power of EXERCISE, with respect to the Animal Economy, fifth edition, 1719," is useful to remind the student of what he is apt to forget; for the object of this volume is to *substitute Exercise for Medicine*. He wrote the book before he became a physician. He considers horse-riding as the best and noblest of all exercises, it being "a mixt exercise, partly active and partly passive, while other sorts, such as walking, running, stooping, or the like, require some labour and more strength for their performance." Cheyne, in his well-known treatise of "*The English Malady*," published about twenty years after Fuller's work, acknowledges that riding on horseback is the best of all exercises, for which he details his reasons. "Walking," he says, "though it will answer the same end, yet is it more laborious and tiresome;" but amusement ought always to be combined with the exercise of a student;

There is a pathetic letter by a student, one of the correspondents of the poets Hughes and Thomson. ALEXANDER BAYNE, to prepare his lectures, studied

the mind will receive no refreshment by a solitary walk or ride, unless it be agreeably withdrawn from all thoughtfulness and anxiety; if it continues studying in its recreations, it is the sure means of obtaining neither of its objects — a friend, not an author, will at such a moment be the better companion.

The last chapter in Fuller's work contains much curious reading on the ancient physicians, and their gymnastic courses, which Asclepiades, the pleasantest of all the ancient physicians, greatly studied; he was most fortunate in the invention of exercises to supply the place of much physic, and (says Fuller) no man in any age ever had the happiness to obtain so general an applause; Pliny calls him the delight of mankind. Admirable physician, who had so many ways, it appears, to make physic agreeable! He in-

fourteen hours a day for eight months successively, and wrote 1600 sheets. Such intense application, which, however, not greatly exceeds that of many Authors, brought on the bodily complaints he has minutely described, with "all the dispiriting symptoms of a nervous illness,

vented the *lecti pensiles*, or hanging beds, that the sick might be rocked to sleep; which took so much at that time, that they became a great luxury among the Romans.

Fuller judiciously does not recommend the gymnastic courses, because horse-riding, for persons of delicate constitutions, is preferable; he discovers too the reason why the ancients did not introduce this mode of exercise — it arose from the simple circumstance of their not knowing the use of stirrups, which was a later invention. Riding with the ancients was, therefore, only an exercise for the healthy and the robust; a horse without stirrups was a formidable animal for a valetudinarian.

commonly called vapours, or lowness of spirits." Bayne, who was of an athletic temperament, imagined he had not paid attention to his diet, the lowness of his table, and sitting with a particular compression of the body—all these were avoided. He prolonged his life for five years—and, perhaps, was still flattering his hopes with sharing one day in the literary celebrity of his friends; when, to use his words, "the same illness made a fierce attack upon me again, and has kept me in a very bad state of inactivity, and disrelish of all my ordinary amusements:" those *amusements* were his serious *studies*. There is a fascination in literary labour: the student feeds on magical drugs; to withdraw him from them requires nothing less than that greater magic, which could break his own spells.

A few months after this letter was written, Bayne died on the way to Bath, a martyr to his studies.

The excessive labour on a voluminous work, which occupies a long life, leaves the student with a broken constitution, and his sight decayed or lost. The most admirable observer of mankind, and the truest painter of the human heart, declares, "The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the *mind that museth on many things.*" Of this class was old RANDLE COTGRAVE, the curious collector of the most copious dictionary of old French and old English words and phrases. The work is the only treasury of our genuine idiom. Even this labour of the Lexicographer, so copious and so elaborate, must have been projected with rapture,



and pursued with pleasure, till, in the progress, "the mind was musing on many things." Then came the melancholy doubt, that drops mildew from its enveloping wings over the voluminous labour of a laborious Author, whether he be wisely consuming his days, and not perpetually neglecting some higher duties, or some happier amusements. Still the enchanted delver sighs, and strikes on, in the glimmering mine of hope. If he lives to complete the great labour, it is, perhaps, reserved for the applause of the next age; for, as our great Lexicographer exclaimed, "In this gloom of solitude I have protracted my work, till those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds;" but, if it be applauded in his own, that praise has come too late for

him whose literary labour has stolen away his sight. COTGRAVE had grown blind over this dictionary, and was doubtful whether this work of his laborious days and nightly vigils, was any thing but a superfluous labour, and nothing, after all, but a "poor bundle of words." The reader may listen to the gray-headed martyr, addressing his patron, Lord Burghley :

" I present to your Lordship an account of the *expençe of many hours*, which in your service, and to mine own benefit, *might have been otherwise employed*. My desires have aimed at more substantial marks; but *mine eyes* failed them, and forced me to *spend out their vigour in this bundle of words*, which may be unworthy of your Lordship's great patience, and, perhaps, *ill-suited to the expectation of others.*"

A great number of young authors have died of over-study. An intellectual enthusiasm, accompanied by constitutional delicacy, has swept away half the rising genius of the age. Curious calculators have affected to discover the average number of infants who die under the age of five years — had they investigated those of the children of genius, who perish before their thirtieth year, we should not be less amazed at this waste of man. There are few scenes more afflicting, nor which more deeply engage our sympathy, than that of a youth, glowing with the devotion of study, and resolute in distinguishing his name among his countrymen, — while death is stealing on him, touching with premature age, before he strikes the last blow. The Author perishes on the very pages which give a charm to his existence.

The fine taste and tender melancholy of HEADLEY, the fervid genius of HENRY KIRKE WHITE, will not easily pass away; but how many youths as noble-minded, have not had the fortune of Kirke White to be commemorated by genius, and have perished without their fame! HENRY WHARTON is a name well known to the student of English literature; he published Historical Criticisms of high value; and he left, as some of the fruits of his studies, sixteen volumes of MSS. preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth. These great labours were pursued with the ardour that only could have produced them; the author had not exceeded his thirtieth year, when he sunk under his continued studies, and perished a martyr to literature. Our literary history abounds with instances of the sad effects of an over-

indulgence in study; that agreeable writer, **HOWEL**, had nearly lost his life by an excess of this nature, studying through long nights in the depth of winter; this severe study occasioned an imposthume in his head; he was eighteen days without sleep, and the illness was attended with many other painful symptoms; the eager diligence of **BLACKMORE**, protracting his studies through the night, broke his health, and obliged him to fly to a country retreat. I shall add a recent instance, which I myself witnessed: it is that of **JOHN MACDIARMID**. He was one of those Scotch students, whom the golden fame of **Hume** and **Robertson** attracts to the metropolis. He mounted the first steps of literary adventure with credit; and passed through the probation of Editor and Reviewer, till he strove for

more heroic adventures. He published some volumes, whose subjects display the aspirings of his genius: "An Enquiry into the nature of Civil and Military Subordination," another into "the System of Military Defence." It was during these labours I beheld this Enquirer, of a tender frame, emaciated, and study-worn, with hollow eyes, where the mind dimly shone like a lamp in a tomb. — With keen ardour he opened a new plan of biographical politics. — When, by one who wished the author and his style were in better condition, the dangers of excess in study were brought to his recollection — he smiled, and, with something of a mysterious air, talked of unalterable confidence in the powers of his mind — of the indefinite improvement in our faculties; and, although his frame was not athletic, he

considered himself capable of trying it to the extremity — his whole life, indeed, was one melancholy trial — often the day cheerfully passed without its meal, but never without its page. The new system of political biography was advancing, when our young author felt a paralytic stroke. — He afterwards resumed his pen, and a second one proved fatal. He lived just to pass through the press his “Lives of British Statesmen,” a splendid quarto, whose publication he owed to the generous temper of a friend, who, when the Author could not readily procure a publisher, would not see even the dying author’s last hopes disappointed. Some research and reflection are combined in this literary and civil history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries — but it was written with

the blood of the author, for **MACDIARMID** died of over-study, and exhaustion.

Among the maladies of poor authors, who procure a precarious existence by their pen, one, not the least considerable, is their old age; their flower and maturity of life were shed for no human comforts; and old age is the withered root. The late **THOMAS MORTIMER**, the compiler, among other things, of that useful work, "The Student's Pocket Dictionary," felt this severely—he himself experienced no abatement of his ardour, nor deficiency in his intellectual powers, at near the age of eighty;—but he then would complain "of the paucity of literary employment, and the preference given to young adventurers." Such is the *youth* and such the *old age* of most authors!



## LITERARY SCOTCHMEN AND IRISHMEN.

WHAT literary emigrations from the North, of young men of genius, seduced by a romantic passion for literary fame, and lured by the golden prospects which the happier genius of some of their own countrymen opened on them! A volume might be written on literary Scotchmen, who have perished immaturely in this metropolis—little known, and slightly connected, they have dropped away among us, and scarcely left a vestige in the wrecks of their genius. Among them some Authors may be discovered who might have ranked, perhaps, in the first classes of our literature. I shall select

four out of as many hundred, who were not entirely unknown to me; a romantic youth—a man of genius—a fertile Author—but LOGAN must be distinguished as a tender poet, and one of the most brilliant prose writers.

ISAAC RITSON (not the well-known poetical antiquary) was a native of Cumberland, and a young man of genius, who perished immaturely in this metropolis by attempting to exist by the efforts of his pen.

In early youth he roved among his native mountains, with the battles of Homer in his head, and his bow and arrow in his hand; in calmer hours, he nearly completed a spirited version of Hesiod, which constantly occupied his after-studies; yet our minstrel-archer did not less love the severer sciences.

Selected at length to rise to the eminent station of the Village Schoolmaster,—from the thankless office of pouring cold rudiments into heedless ears, RITSON took a poetical flight. It was among the mountains and wild scenery of Scotland, our young Homer, picking up fragments of heroic songs, and composing some fine ballad poetry, would, in his wanderings, recite them with such passionate expression, that he never failed of auditors; and found even the poor generous, when their better passions were moved. Thus he lived like some old troubadour, by his rhymes, and his chaunts, and his virelays; and he who had set off on foot, after a year's absence, returned on horseback. This was the seducing moment of life; RITSON felt himself a laureated Petrarch. He had now quitted his untutored but

feeling admirers, and the child of fancy was to mix with the every-day business of life.

At Edinburgh he studied medicine, lived by writing theses for the idlers and the incompetent, composed a poem on Medicine, till at length his hopes and his ambition conducted him to London. But the golden age of the imagination soon deserted him in his obscure apartment in the glittering metropolis. He attended the hospitals, but these were crowded by students who, if they relished the science less, loved the trade more ; he published a hasty version of Homer's Hymn to Venus, which was good enough to be praised, but not to sell ; at length withering his fertile imagination over the task-work of literature, he resigned fame for bread ; wrote the preface to Clarke's Survey

of the Lakes, compiled medical articles for the Monthly Review; and, wasting fast his ebbing spirits, he retreated to an obscure lodging at Islington, where death relieved, without awaiting the tedious course of nature to remove, a hopeless Author, in the 27th year of his life.

Here is a precious fragment of the individual feelings of the man. The following unpolished lines were struck off at a heat in trying his pen on the back of a letter; he wrote the names of the Sister Fates, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos—the sudden recollection of his own fate rushed on him—and thus the rhapsodist broke out:

“ I wonder much, as yet ye’re spinning,  
Fates!

What thread’s yet twisted out for me, old jades!  
Ah, Atropos! perhaps for me thou spinn’st

Neglect, contempt, and penury and woe ;  
 Be 't so ; whilst that foul fiend, the spleen,  
 And moping melancholy spare me, all the rest  
 I'll bear, as should a man ; 'twill do me good,  
 And teach me what no better fortune could,  
 Humility, and sympathy with others' ills.

————— Ye destinies,  
 I love you much ; ye flatter not my pride.  
 Your mien, ' tis true, is wrinkled, hard, and  
     sour ;  
 Your words are harsh and stern ; and sterner still  
 Your purposes to me. Yet I forgive  
 Whatever you have done, or mean to do.  
 Beneath some baleful planet born, I 've found,  
 In all this world, no friend with fostering hand  
 To lead me on to science, which I love  
 Beyond all else the world could give ; yet still  
 Your rigour I forgive ; ye are not yet my foes ;  
 My own untutor'd will 's my only curse.  
 We grasp asphaltic apples ; blooming poison !  
 We love what we should hate ; how kind, ye  
     Fates,

To thwart our wishes! O you're kind to scourge!  
And flay us to the bone to make us feel!"—

Thus deeply he enters into his own feelings, and abjures his errors, as he paints the utter desolation of the soul while falling into the grave that was opening at his feet.

About twenty years ago, the town was amused almost every morning by a series of humorous or burlesque poems by a writer under the assumed name of *Matthew Bramble*—he was at that very moment one of the most moving spectacles of human melancholy I have ever witnessed.

It was one evening I saw a tall, famished, melancholy man enter a bookseller's shop, his hat flapped over his eyes, and his whole frame evidently feeble from exhaustion and utter misery.—The Bookseller enquired how he proceeded in his new tragedy? “Do not talk to me about my

Tragedy ! “ Do not talk to me about my Tragedy ! I have indeed more tragedy than I can bear at home ! ” was the reply, as the voice faltered as he spoke. This man was Mathew Bramble, or rather — M'DONALD, the author of the Tragedy of Vimonda, at that moment the writer of comic poetry — his Tragedy was indeed a domestic one, in which he himself was the greatest actor among a wife and seven children — he shortly afterwards perished. I heard at the time, that M'DONALD had walked from Scotland with no other fortune than the novel of “ The Independent ” in one pocket, and the Tragedy of “ Vimonda ” in the other. Yet he lived some time in all the bloom and flush of poetical confidence. Vimonda was even performed several nights, but not with the success the romantic poet, among his native



rocks, had conceived was to crown his anxious labours — the theatre disappointed him — and afterwards, to his feelings, all the world!

LOGAN had the dispositions of a poetic spirit, not cast in a common mould; but with fancy he combined learning illuminated by philosophy, and adorned philosophy with eloquence; while no student had formed a loftier feeling of the character of a man of letters.

His claims on our sympathy will arise from those circumstances in his life, which open the secret sources of the Calamities of Authors; of those minds of finer temper, who, having tamed the heat of their youth by the severe patience of study, form that relish for the Beautiful in literary composition, whose memorial they leave in their works, yet still, from causes not always difficult to discover, find their

favourite objects and their fondest hopes barren and neglected. It is then the thoughtful melancholy, which constitutes so large a portion of their genius, absorbs and consumes the very faculties to which it gave birth.

LOGAN studied at the University of Edinburgh, was ordained in the Church of Scotland—and early distinguished as a poet by the simplicity and the tenderness of his verses, yet the philosophy of history had as deeply interested his studies. He gave two courses of Lectures. — I have heard from his pupils their admiration, after the lapse of many years; so striking were those lectures for their originality, and so seducing by their splendour. LOGAN's merits as an historical lecturer are justly described as having successfully applied the science of moral philosophy to the history

of mankind. All wished that LOGAN should obtain the chair of the Professor of Universal History — but an unforeseen and invincible *etiquette* had arisen, and the professorship was lost!

This was his first disappointment in life, yet then perhaps but lightly felt; for the public had approved of his poems, and a successful poet is easily consoled for the disappointments of life. Poetry to such a gentle being seems an universal specific curing all the evils of life; for it acts at the moment, exhausting and destroying too often the constitution it seems to restore.

He had finished the Tragedy of Run-namede; it was accepted at Covent-garden, but interdicted by the Lord Chamberlain, from some suspicion that its lofty sentiments contained allusions to the politics of the day. The Barons in arms who met

John, were conceived to be deeper politicians than the Poet himself was aware. This was the second disappointment in life of a man of genius.

The third calamity was the natural consequence of a tragic Poet having written a Tragedy, who was a Scotch Clergyman. LOGAN had inflicted a wound on the Presbytery, heirs of the genius of old Prynne, whose puritanic fanaticism had never forgiven HOME for his Douglas, and now groaned to detect genius still lurking among them. LOGAN, it is certain, expressed his contempt for them; they their hatred of him; folly and pride of a Poet, to beard Presbyters in a land of Presbyterians!

He gladly abandoned them, retiring on a small annuity. They had, however, hurt his temper—they had irritated the nervous

system of a man too susceptible of all impressions, gentle or unkind — his character had all those unequal habitudes which genius contracts in its boldness and its tremors; he was now vivacious and indignant, and now fretted and melancholy. He flew to the Metropolis, occupied himself in literature, and was a frequent contributor to the English Review. He published “A Review of the Principal Charges against Mr. Hastings.” LOGAN wrestled with the genius of Burke and Sheridan; the House of Commons ordered the publisher Stockdale to be prosecuted, but the Author did not live to rejoice in the victory obtained by his genius.

This elegant philosopher has impressed on all his works, the seal of genius; and his posthumous compositions became even popular; he who had with difficulty es-

caped excommunication by Presbyters, left the world, after his death, two volumes of Sermons which breathe all, that piety, morality, and eloquence admire. His unrevised Lectures, bearing the name of another person, were given to the world in "A View of Ancient History." But one highly-finished composition he himself published; this is a philosophical review of Despotism; had the name of GIBBON been affixed to the title-page, its authenticity had not been suspected\*.

From one of his executors, Dr. Donald Grant, who wrote the life prefixed to his

\* This admirable little work is intituled, "A Dissertation on the Governments, Manners, and Spirit of Asia; Murray, 1787." It is anonymous; but, my late publisher informed me, was written by Logan. His "Elements of the Philosophy of History" are valuable. His "Sermons" have been just republished.

poems, I heard of the state of his numerous MSS. ; the scattered, yet warm, embers of the unhappy bard ; several tragedies, and one on Mary Queen of Scots, abounding with all that domestic tenderness and poetic sensibility, which formed the soft and natural feature of his muse. These, with minor poems, thirty lectures on the Roman History, and portions of a periodical paper, were the wrecks of genius ! I have heard much of his latter life. He had resided here, little known out of a very private circle, and perished in his fortieth year, not of penury, but of a broken heart. Such continued industry, such fervour of mind, such noble and well-founded expectations of fortune and fame ; all the plans of literary ambition overturned ; his genius, with all its delicacy, its spirit, and its elegance, became a prey to that melan-

choly which constituted so large a portion of it.

LOGAN, in his "Ode to a Man of Letters," had formed this lofty conception of a great Author.

" Won from neglected wastes of time,  
Apollo hails his fairest clime,  
The provinces of mind ;  
An Egypt with eternal towers \* ;  
See MONTESQUIEU redeem the hours  
From LOUIS to Mankind.

No tame remission Genius knows,  
No interval of dark repose,  
To quench the ethereal flame ;  
From Thebes to Troy, the victor hies,  
And HOMER with his hero vies  
In varied paths to Fame."

\* The finest provinces of Egypt gained from a neglected waste.



Our children will long repeat his "Ode to the Cuckoo," one of the most lovely poems in our language; magical stanzas of picture, melody, and sentiment.

These Authors were undoubtedly men of finer feelings, who all perished immaturely, victims in the higher department of literature! But this article would not be complete without furnishing the reader with a picture of the fate of one, who' with the same ardour, and with a pertinacity of industry, not common, having undergone regular studies, and not without talents, not very injudiciously deemed that the life of a man of letters could provide for the simple wants of a philosopher.

This man was the late ROBERT HBRON, who, in the following letter, transcribed from the original, stated his history to the Literary Fund. It was written in a moment

of extreme bodily suffering and mental agony.—In the house to which he had been hurried for debt—at such a moment, he found eloquence in a narrative, pathetic from its simplicity, and valuable for its genuineness, as giving the results of a life of literary industry, combined with talent, and productive of great infelicity and disgrace; one would imagine that the author had been a criminal, rather than a man of letters.

The Case of a Man of Letters, of regular education, living by honest literary industry.

“ Ever since I was eleven years of age I have mingled with my studies the labour of teaching or of writing, to support and educate myself.

“ During about twenty years, while I was in constant or occasional attendance at the Uni-

versity of Edinburgh, I taught and assisted young persons, at all periods, in the course of education ; from the Alphabet to the highest branches of Science and Literature.

“ I read a course of Lectures on the Law of Nature, the Law of Nations, the Jewish, the Grecian, the Roman, and the Canon Law, and then on the Feudal Law ; and on the several forms of Municipal Jurisprudence, established in Modern Europe. I printed a Syllabus of these Lectures, which was approved. They were intended as introductory to the professional study of Law, and to assist gentlemen who did not study it professionally, in the understanding of History.

“ I translated Fourcroy’s Chemistry twice, from both the second and the third editions of the original ; Fourcroy’s Philosophy of Chemistry ; Savary’s Travels in Greece ; Dumourier’s Letters ; Gesner’s Idylls in part ;

an abstract of Zimmerman on Solitude, and a great diversity of smaller pieces.

“ I wrote a Journey through the Western parts of Scotland, which has passed through two editions ; a History of Scotland in six volumes 8vo. ; a Topographical account of Scotland, which has been several times reprinted ; a number of communications in the Edinburgh Magazine ; many Prefaces and Critiques ; a Memoir of the life of Burns the Poet, which suggested and promoted the subscription for his family ; has been many times reprinted, and formed the basis of Dr. Currie’s life of him, as I learned by a letter from the Doctor to one of his friends ; a variety of *Jeux d’Esprit* in verse and prose ; and many abridgments of large works.

“ In the beginning of 1799 I was encouraged to come to London. Here I have written a great multiplicity of articles in almost every branch of Science and Literature ;

my education at Edinburgh having comprehended them all. The London Review, the Agricultural Magazine, the Anti-jacobin Review, the Monthly Magazine, the Universal Magazine, the Public Characters, the Annual Necrology, with several other periodical works, contain many of my communications. In such of those publications as have been reviewed, I can shew that my anonymous pieces have been distinguished with very high praise. I have written also a short system of Chemistry in one volume 8vo. — and I published a few weeks since, a small work called “ Comforts of Life \*,” of which the first edi-

\* “The Comforts of Life” were written in prison; “The Miseries” necessarily in a drawing-room. The works of authors are often in contrast with themselves; melancholy authors are the most jocular, and the most humourous the most melancholy!

tion was sold in one week, and the second edition is now in rapid sale.

“ In the Newspapers — the Oracle, the Porcupine when it existed, the General Evening Post, the Morning Post, the British Press, the Courier, &c. I have published many Reports of Debates in Parliament; and I believe, a greater variety of light fugitive pieces than I know to have been written by any one other person.

“ I have written also a variety of compositions in the Latin and the French languages, in favour of which I have been honoured with the testimonies of liberal approbation.

“ I have invariably written to serve the cause of religion, morality, pious christian education, and good order, in the most direct manner. I have considered what I have written as mere trifles; and have incessantly studied to qualify myself for something better. I can prove that I have, for many years, read

and written, one day with another, from twelve to sixteen hours a day. As a human being, I have not been free from follies and errors. But the tenor of my life has been temperate, laborious, humble, quiet, and, to the utmost of my power, beneficent. I can prove the general tenor of my writings to have been candid, and ever adapted to exhibit the most favourable views of the abilities, dispositions, and exertions of others.

“For these last ten months I have been brought to the very extremity of bodily and pecuniary distress.

“I shudder at the thought of perishing in a gaol.

92, *Chancery-lane,*

*Feb. 2, 1807.* (In confinement.)

The physicians reported, that ROBERT HERON'S health was such, as rendered him totally incapable of extricating himself from the difficulties in which he was

involved, by the *indiscreet exertion of his mind, in protracted and incessant literary labours.*"

About three months after, HERON sunk under a fever, and perished amidst the walls of Newgate. We are disgusted with this horrid state of pauperism; we are indignant at beholding an Author, not a contemptible one, in this last stage of human wretchedness! after early and late studies, after having read and written from twelve to sixteen hours a day!—O ye populace of scribblers! before ye are driven to a garret, and your eyes are filled with constant tears, pause—recollect that not one of you possesses the learning or the abilities of HERON; shudder at all this secret agony and silent perdition!

The fate of HERON—is the fate of hundreds of Authors by Profession in the



present day; of men of talents and of literature — who can never extricate themselves from a degrading state of poverty. I will not allude to a populace of nameless scribblers: but to these Scotch I will add two Irish Authors who have recently perished.

CHARLES M'CORMICK, a native of Ireland, was a classical Student, had devoted his early studies to the Poets, the Orators, and the Historians of his own country. He had passed much of his time in the Bodleian Library, collecting materials for a history of Ireland — this was the early and the late object of his studies. He resigned the Bar, prompted by literary ambition, having already distinguished himself, as we are told, by a purity of style, and a depth of thought which were extolled by the editors of

periodical works, who reap the first harvest of every Author, and whose cheering voice too often fascinates the young writer. M'CORMICK prepared himself for a life of literary labour—by severe studies and ardent enterprise—he was unsubdued by fatigue, and only smiled on disappointment. The bright path he had entered, soon contracted into an obscure one, and his great views diminished in his progress. It is said he wrote books, to which the names of other persons are prefixed, to supply his wants—and those to which his own appears, were hasty productions from the same cause. He wrote a “Life of Burke” while the press was waiting for every sheet; Histories of Charles II, Reign of George III, a continuation of Rapin, and many others. The great work he had so fondly planned, which

had never been neglected, he resumed under the patronage of the Earl of Moira ; but all the maladies of Authorship were closing a life of sedentary and vexatious pursuits ; he sold his books gradually to provide a meal, lost his cheerfulness in beholding an affectionate wife and family sharing his distresses, and perished under an accumulation of griefs and a broken heart in June 1807.

Another child of literary despair, was **JAMES WHITE**, who appears to have been a man of genius and of good family, but one of those spirits, who, having resolved to live on the labours of an Author, are too haughty to receive any other aid than what they expect to derive from their ill-fated pens. **WHITE** had received his education at the University of Dublin, and was there deemed a scholar of brilliant

genius. He published poems and several Romances, "Adventures of John of Gaunt," of "Richard Cœur de Lion," with numerous translations from Cicero, and the speeches of Mirabeau; but his "Letters to Lord Camden on the State of Ireland" were admired for their vigour and elegance. During the winters of 1797 and 1798, some persons noticed in the pump room at Bath, or in the streets, a thin, pale, emaciated man, with a wild yet penetrating look—no one knew the awful stranger—but his habits of life were discovered. He had eaten no animal food for months; a cold potatoe, bread and water, were his meal; unable to pay his lodging, he was known to sleep for nights beneath a hay-rick, — too proud to ask relief, yet once failing sinking Nature drove him, in wild agony, into an Inn at

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Bath; yet his pride, even in the inn to which his wants had driven him, refused to accept the sustenance offered to him; his deranged conduct alarmed the mistress, and, when the magistrate placed him under the parish officers, his only sense was the indignity he had incurred. It was at this moment he produced the "Letters to Lord Camden." A subscription was soon raised, WHITE was persuaded to receive it as a loan; on no other terms would he accept it. The struggle of literary glory, of honour, and pauperism, did not last; he had pushed Nature to the verge of human existence; and he was found dead in his bed at a public house near Bath, in March 1799.

## LABORIOUS AUTHORS.

It is one of the groans of old Burton over his laborious work, when he is anticipating the reception it is like to meet with, and personates his objectors;—

“This is a thinge of meere industrie; a collection without wit or invention; a very toy! — So men are valued! their labours vilified by fellowes of no worth themselves, as things of nought; who could not have done as much?”

There is, indeed, a class of Authors who are liable to forfeit all claims to genius, whatever their genius may be —

these are the laborious writers of voluminous works ; but they are farther subject to heavier grievances, to be undervalued or neglected by the apathy or the ingratitude of the public.

Industry is often conceived to betray the absence of intellectual exertion, and the magnitude of a work is imagined accessarily to shut out all genius. Yet a laborious work has often had an original growth and raciness in it, requiring a genius whose peculiar feeling, like invisible vitality, is spread through the mighty body. Feeble imitations of such laborious works, have proved the master's mind that is in the original. There is a talent in industry, which every industrious man does not possess ; and even taste and imagination may lead to the deepest studies

of antiquities, as well as mere undiscerning curiosity and plodding dulness.

But there are other more striking characteristics of intellectual feeling in authors of this class. The fortitude of mind in completing labours, of which, in many instances, they were conscious that the real value would only be appreciated by dispassionate posterity, themselves rarely living to witness the fame of their own work established\* ; while enduring the very worst kind of criticisms, those from malicious or insensible contemporaries. Even that noble enthusiasm which so strongly characterises genius in productions, whose originality is of a less ambiguous nature, has been experienced by some of these laborious authors, who have sacrificed their

\* See Note [A] at the end of this article.



lives and fortunes to their beloved studies. The enthusiasm of literature has often been that of heroism, and many have not shrunk from the forlorn hope\*. Have not many great labours been designed by their authors, even to be posthumous, prompted only by their love of study, and a patriotic zeal for posterity †? How many of these laborious authors commenced their literary life with a glowing ardour, while the feelings of genius have been obstructed by those numerous causes which occur too frequently in the life of a literary man ‡. Ordinary minds are incapable of such an impulse; does it not rather indicate a mind of far larger powers than popular prejudice has conceded to some laborious authors?

\* See Note [B] at the end of this article.

† See Note [C].

‡ See Note [D].

Writing on the Calamities attached to Literature, I must notice one of a more recondite nature, yet of which, perhaps, few literary agonies are more keenly felt. I would not excite an undue sympathy for a class of writers who are usually considered as drudges ; but the present case claims our sympathy.

There are men of letters, who, early in life, have formed some favourite plan of literary labour, which they have unremittingly pursued, till, sometimes near the close of life, they either discover their inability to terminate it, or begin to depreciate their own constant labour. The literary Architect has grown gray over his edifice ; and, as if the black wand of enchantment had waved over it, the colonnades become interminable, the pillars seem to want a foundation, and all the

rich materials he had collected together, lie before him in all the disorder of ruins. It may be urged that the reward of literary labour, like the consolations of virtue, must be drawn with all their sweetness from itself; or, that if the author be incompetent, he must pay the price of his incapacity. This may be Stoicism, but it is not Humanity. The truth is, there is always a latent love of fame, that prompts to this strong devotion of labour; and he who has given a long life to that which he has so much desired, and can never enjoy, might well be excused receiving our insults, if he cannot extort our pity.

A remarkable instance occurs in the fate of the late Rev. W. COLE; he was the College friend of Walpole, Mason, and Gray; a striking proof how dissimilar habits and opposite tastes and feelings can

associate in literary friendship; for COLE, indeed, the public had informed him that his friends were poets and men of wit; and for them, COLE's patient and curious turn was useful, and, by its extravagant trifling, must have been very amusing. He had a gossip's ear, and a tatler's pen — and, among better things, wrote down every grain of literary scandal his insatiable and minute curiosity could lick up; as patient and voracious as an ant-eater, he stretched out his tongue, till it was covered by the tiny creatures, and drew them all in at one digestion. All these tales were registered with the utmost simplicity, as the reporter received them; but, being but tales, the exactness of his truth made them still more dangerous lies, by being perpetuated; in his reflections he spared neither friend nor foe; yet, still anxious

after truth, and usually telling lies, it is very amusing to observe, that, as he proceeds, he very laudably contradicts or explains away in subsequent memoranda what he had before written. Walpole, in a correspondence of forty years, he was perpetually flattering, though he must imperfectly have relished his fine taste, while he abhorred the more liberal feelings to which sometimes he addressed a submissive remonstrance. He has at times written a letter coolly, and, at the same moment, chronicled his suppressed feelings in his diary, with all the flame and sputter of his strong prejudices. He was expressively nick-named Cardinal Cole. These scandalous chronicles, which only shew the violence of his prejudices, without the force of genius, or the acuteness of penetration, were ordered not to be opened till twenty

years after his decease; he wished to do as little mischief as he could, but loved to do some \*. When the lid was removed from this Pandora's box, it happened that some of his intimate friends lived to perceive in what strange figures they were exhibited by their quondam admirer!

COLE, however, bequeathed to the nation, among his unpublished works, a vast mass of antiquities, historical collections, and one valuable legacy; he was a literary antiquary, and the Cardinal disappeared, when I witnessed the labours, and heard the cries, of a literary Martyr.

COLE had passed a long life in the pertinacious labour of forming an *Athenæ Cantabrigienses*, and other literary collections — designed as a companion to the work of Anthony Wood. These mighty

\* See note [E] at the end of this article.

labours exist in more than fifty folio volumes in his own writing. He began these collections about the year 1745 ; and in a fly leaf of 1777, I found the following melancholy state of his feelings, and a literary confession, as forcibly expressed as it is painful to read, when we consider that they are the wailings of a most zealous votary :

“ In good truth, whoever undertakes this drudgery of an *Athenæ Cantabrigienses*, must be contented with no prospect of credit and reputation to himself, and with the mortifying reflection that after all his pains and study, through life, he must be looked upon in a humble light, and only as a journeyman to Anthony Wood, whose excellent book of the same sort will ever preclude any other, who shall follow him in the same track, from all hopes of fame ; and will only represent him as

an imitator of so original a pattern. For, at this time of day, all great characters, both Cantabrigians and Oxonians, are already published to the world, either in his book, or various others; so that the collection, unless the same characters are reprinted here, must be made up of second-rate persons, and the refuse of authorship — However, as I have begun, and made so large a progress in this undertaking, *it is death to think of leaving it off*, though, from the former considerations, so little credit is to be expected from it.” \*

Such were the fruits, and such the agonies, of nearly half a century of assiduous and zealous literary labour! COLE urges a strong claim to be noticed among our literary calamities. †

I will illustrate the character of a laborious Author, by that of ANTHONY WOOD.

\* See note [F] at the end of this article.

† See note [G].



The whole tenor of Wood's life testifies, as he himself tells us, that "books and MSS. formed his Elysium, and he wished to be dead to the world." This sovereign passion marked him early in life, and the image of death could not disturb it. When young, "he walked mostly alone, was given much to thinking and melancholy." The *deliciæ* of his life were the more liberal studies of painting and musick, intermixed with those of antiquity; nor could his family, who checked such unproductive studies, ever check his love of them. With what a firm and noble spirit he says,

"When he came to full years, he perceived it was his natural genie, and he could not avoid them— they crowded on him—he could never give a reason why he should delight in those studies, more than in others, so

prevalent was Nature, mixed with a generosity of mind, and a hatred to all that was servile, sneaking, or advantageous for lucre-sake."

These are not the roundings of a period, but the pure expression of a man who had all the simplicity of childhood in his feelings. Could such vehement emotions have been excited in the unanimated breast of a clod of literature? Thus early, Anthony Wood betrayed the characteristics of genius; nor did the literary passion desert him in his last moments. With his dying hands he still grasped his beloved papers, and his last mortal thoughts dwelt on his *Athencæ Oxonienses*.

It is no common occurrence to view an Author speechless in the hour of death, yet fervently occupied by his posthumous fame. Two friends went into his study, to sort that vast multitude of papers, notes,

letters—his more private ones he had ordered not to be opened for seven years; about two bushels full were ordered for the fire, which they had lighted for the occasion. “As he was expiring, he expressed both his knowledge and approbation of what was done by throwing out his hands.”

Turn over his Herculean labour—do not admire less his fearlessness of danger, than his indefatigable pursuit of truth. He wrote of his contemporaries as if he felt a right to judge of them, and as if he were living in the succeeding age; courtier, fanatic, or papist, were much alike to honest Anthony; for he professes himself,

“Such an universal lover of all mankind, that he wished there might be no cheat put upon readers and writers in the business of commendations. And (says he) since every

one will have a double balance, one for his own party, and another for his adversary, all he could do, is to amass together what every side thinks will make best weight for themselves. Let posterity hold the scales."

Anthony might have added, "I have held them." This uninterrupted activity of his spirits was the action of a sage, not the bustle of one intent merely on heaping up a book.

"He never wrote in post, with his body and thoughts in a hurry, but in a fixed abode, and with a deliberate pen. And he never concealed an ungrateful truth, nor flourished over a weak place, but in sincerity of meaning and expression."

ANTHONY WOOD cloystered an athletic mind, a hermit critic abstracted from the world, existing more with posterity than amidst his contemporaries. His pre-

judices were the keener from the very energies of the mind that produced them ; but, as he practises no deception on his reader, we know the causes of his anger or his love. And, as an original thinker creates a style for himself, from the circumstance of not attending to style at all, but to feeling, so Anthony Wood's has all the peculiarity of the writer. Critics of short views have attempted to screen it from ridicule, attributing his uncouth style to the age he lived in. But not one in his own time, nor since, have composed in the same style. The austerity and the quickness of his feelings, vigorously stamped all their roughness and vivacity on every sentence. He describes his own style as " an honest, plain English dress, without flourishes or affectation of style, as best becomes a history of truth and matters of fact. It is the first (work) of its nature

that has ever been printed in our own, or any other mother-tongue."

It is, indeed, an honest Montaigne-like simplicity. Acrimonious and cynical, he is always sincere, and never dull. Old Anthony to me is an admirable character-painter, for anger and love are often picturesque. And among our literary historians he might be compared, for the effect he produces, to Albert Durer, whose kind of antique rudeness has a sharp outline, neither beautiful nor flowing; and without a genius for the magic of light and shade, he is too close a copier of Nature, to affect us by ideal forms.

The independence of his mind nerved his ample volumes, his fortitude he displayed in the contest with the University itself, and his firmness in censuring Lord Clarendon, the head of his own party. Could such a work, and such an

original manner, have proceeded from an ordinary intellect? Wit may sparkle, and sarcasm may bite; but the cause of literature is injured when the industry of such a mind is ranked with that of "the hewers of wood, and drawers of water;" ponderous compilers, or creeping commentators. Such a work as the *Athenæ Oxonienses* involved in its pursuit some of the higher qualities of the intellect; a voluntary devotion of life, a sacrifice of personal enjoyments, a noble design combining many views, some present and some prescient, a clear vigorous spirit equally diffused over a vast surface. But it is the hard fate of authors of this class to be levelled with their inferiors\*!

Let us exhibit one more picture of the

\* At the close of these volumes I will add an apology for this author and the work itself.

calamities of a laborious author, in the character of JOSHUA BARNES, editor of Homer, Euripides, and Anacreon, the writer of a vast number of miscellaneous compositions in history and poetry. Besides the works he published, he left behind him nearly fifty unfinished ones; many were epic poems, all intended to be in twelve books, and some had reached their eighth! His folio volume of "The History of Edward III." is a labour of valuable research. He wrote with equal facility in Greek, Latin, and his own language, and he wrote all his days; and, in a word, having little or nothing but his Greek professorship, not exceeding forty pounds a year, BARNES, who had a great memory, a little imagination, and no judgment, saw the close of a life devoted to the studies of humanity settle around him in gloom and despair.



The great idol of his mind was the edition of his Homer, which seems to have completed his ruin; he was haunted all his days with a notion that he was persecuted by envy, and much undervalued by the world; the sad consolation of the secondary and third-rate authors, who often die persuaded of the existence of ideal enemies. To be enabled to publish his Homer at an enormous charge, he wrote a poem, the design of which is to prove that Solomon was the author of the Iliad, and it has been said that this was done to interest his wife, who had some property, to lend her aid towards the publication of so divine a work. This happy pun, was applied for his epitaph:

Joshua Barnes,

Felicis memoriæ, judicium expectans;

*Here lieth*

*Joshua Barnes,*

OF HAPPY MEMORY, AWAITING JUDGMENT!

The year before he died he addressed the following letter to the Earl of Oxford, which I transcribe from the original. It is curious to observe how the veteran and unhappy scribbler, after his vows of retirement from the world of letters, thoroughly disgusted with "all human learning," gently hints to his patron, that he has ready for the press, a singular variety of contrasted works, yet even then he did not venture to disclose one tenth part of his concealed treasures!

## TO THE EARL OF OXFORD.

"MY HON. LORD,      *Oct. 16, 1711.*

"This, not in any doubt of your goodness and high respect to learning, for I have fresh instances of it every day; but because I am prevented in my design of waiting personally on you, being called away by my business for Cambridge, to read Greek lectures this term,

and my circumstances are pressing, being, through the combination of Booksellers, and the meaner arts of others, too much prejudiced in the sale. I am not neither sufficiently ascertained whether my Homer and Letters came to your honour; surely the vast charges of that edition has almost broke my courage, there being much more trouble in putting off the impression, and contending with a subtle and unkind world, than in all the study and management of the press.

“ Others, my Lord, are younger, and their hopes and helps are fresher; I have done as much in the way of learning as any man living, but have received less encouragement than any, having nothing but my Greek professorship, which is but forty pounds *per annum*, that I can call my own, and more than half of that is taken up by my expences of lodging and diet in terme time at Cambridge.

“ I was obliged to take up three hundred and fifty pounds on interest towards this last work, whereof I still owe two hundred pounds, and two hundred more for the printing, the whole expence arising to about one thousand pounds. I have lived in the University above thirty years, fellow of a college now above forty years standing, and fifty-eight years of age, am batchelor of divinity, and have preached before kings; but am now your Honour’s suppliant, and would fain retire from the study of humane learning, which has been so little beneficial to me, if I might have a little prebend, or sufficient anchor to lay hold on; only I have two or three matters ready for the press, an Ecclesiastical History, Latin; an Heroick Poem of the Black Prince, Latin; another of Queen Anne, English, finished; a treatise of Columnes, Latin; and an accurate treatise about Homer, Greek, Latin, &c.—I would fain be permitted the

honour to make use of your name in some one, or most of these, and to be, &c.

JOSHUA BARNES\*.”

He died nine months afterwards. Homer did not improve in sale, and the sweets of patronage were not even tasted. This then is the history of a man of great learning, of the most pertinacious industry, but somewhat allied to the family of the *Scribleri*.

I shall close this article by inserting two literary poems, which here will not be out of place. The first is an elegant effusion by an enthusiast of literature, who would render its labours sublime, triumphant over death; but the reply, by a great genius himself, is more remarkable. Of the *Calamities of Literature*,

“He best can paint them who shall feel them most.”

\* Harleian MSS. 7523.

These are said to have been the only English verses Dr. BENTLEY ever composed; and Johnson admired them so much, that he once repeated them from memory — truth and vigour, on this subject, give a value to poetry, which it would not receive from elegance and fancy.

## AN IMITATION OF HORACE,

## Book III. Ode 2.

*Sent by Mr. TITLEY to Dr. BENTLEY.*

He that would great in science grow,

By whom bright Virtue is ador'd,

At first must be content to know

An humble roof, a homely board.

With want and rigid college laws

Let him, inur'd betimes, comply;

Firm to Religion's sacred cause,

The learned combat let him try;

Let him her envied praises tell,

And all his eloquence disclose ;

The fierce endeavours to repel,

And still the tumult of her foes.

Him early form'd, and season'd young,

Subtle opposers soon will fear ;

And tremble at his artful tongue,

Like Parthians at the Roman spear.

Grim Death, th' inevitable lot,

Which fools and cowards strive to fly,

Is with a noble pleasure sought

By him who dares for Truth to die.

With purest lustre of her own,

Exalted Virtue ever shines ;

Nor, as the vulgar smile or frown,

Advances now, and now declines.

A glorious and immortal prize

She on her hardy son bestows,

She shows him Heaven, and bids him rise,

Though pain, and toil, and death oppose :

With lab'ring flight, he wings th' obstructed way,  
Leaving both common souls and common clay.

## DR. BENTLEY'S REPLY.

Who strives to mount Parnassus' hill,  
And thence poetic laurels bring,  
Must first acquire due force, and skill,  
Must fly with swan's or eagle's wing.

Who Nature's treasures would explore,  
Her mysteries and arcana know,  
Must high as lofty Newton soar,  
Must stoop as delving Woodward low.

Who studies ancient laws and rites,  
Tongues, arts, and arms, and history,  
Must drudge like Selden, days and nights,  
And in the endless labour die.

Who travels in religious jars,  
Truth mixt with error, shade with rays,  
Like Whiston wanting pyx or stars,  
In ocean wide, or sinks or strays.  
But grant our hero's hope, long toil  
And comprehensive genius crown,



All sciences, all arts his spoil,

Yet what reward, or what renown?

Envy, innate in vulgar souls,

Envy steps in, and stops his rise;

Envy, with poisoned tarnish, fouls

His lustre, and his worth decries.

He lives inglorious, or in want,

To college and old books confin'd;

Instead of learned, he's call'd pedant,

Dunces advanc'd, he's left behind:

Yet left content, a genuine Stoic he,

Great without patron, rich without South-sea.

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[A] P. 233. It is said that the *Optics* of *Newton* had no character or credit here till noticed in *France*. It would not be the only instance of an author writing above his own age, and anticipating its more advanced genius. This melancholy truth is illustrated by the fate of the *Marquis of Worcester*, who, in

the reign of Charles II. offered to publish the hundred processes and machines enumerated in his "Century of Inventions," if the King would extricate him from the difficulties in which he had involved himself by the prosecution of useful discoveries. This extraordinary pamphlet was probably read with ridicule; the petition, at least, was never attended to; and even in these times one cannot read it without astonishment at the gigantic powers of that noble author's invention. But he had anticipated the age we live in: the Telegraph and the Steam-engine, he contemplated in fancy, he would now see on our roads, and in our common manufactories! — How many works of erudition might be adduced to shew their authors' disappointments! PRIDEAUX's learned work of the "Connection of the Old and New Testament," and SHUCKFORD's similar one, were both a long while before they could obtain a publisher, and much longer before they found readers. — It is said Sir WALTER RALEIGH burnt the second volume of his History, from the ill success the first had met with. — PRINCE's "Worthies of Devon" was so unfavourably received by the public, that the laborious and patriotic author was so discouraged as not to

print the second volume, which is said to have been prepared for the press.—FARNEWORTH'S elaborate Translation, with notes and dissertations, of Machiavel's works, was hawked about the town; and the poor author discovered that he understood Machiavel better than the public. After other labours of this kind, he left his family in distressed circumstances.—Observe, this excellent book now bears a high price!—The fate of the "Biographia Britannica," in its first edition, must be noticed: the spirit and acuteness of CAMPBELL, the curious industry of OLDYS, and the united labours of very able writers, could not secure public favour; this treasure of our literary history was on the point of being suspended, when a poem by Gilbert West drew the public attention to that elaborate work, which, however, still languished, and was hastily concluded.—GRANGER says of his admirable work, in one of his letters, "On a fair state of my account, it would appear that my labours in the improvement of my work do not amount to *half the pay of a scavenger!*" He received only one hundred pounds to the times of Charles I. and the rest to depend on public favour for the continuation. The sale was sluggish; even Walpole seemed doubt-

ful of its success, and probably secretly envied the skill of our portrait-painter. It was too philosophical for the mere collector, and it took near ten years before it reached the hands of philosophers; the author derived little profit, and never lived to see its popularity established! I shall just mention here, that we have had many highly valuable works suspended for their want of public patronage, to the utter disappointment, and sometimes the ruin of their authors; such are OLDYS's *British Librarian*, MORGAN's *Phœnix Britannicus*, DR. BERKENHOUT's *Biographia Literaria*, PROFESSOR MARTYN's and DR. LETTICE's *Antiquities of Herculaneum*: all these are first volumes, there are no seconds! They are now rare, curious, and high priced! Ungrateful Public! Unhappy Authors!

[B] P. 234. PURCHAS spent his life in travels and study, to form his "Pilgrim, or Relation of the World." When he gave his first volume to the public, he was thrown into prison, at the suit of his printer, and the reward of the Pilgrim was to rest in a prison! This, however, did not repress the ardour for publication. His loud complaints, how-

ever, excite our sympathy. "Many," says honest PURCHAS, "have applauded my endeavours, but *probitas laudatur et alget*: if I had not lived in great part upon exhibition of charitable founders, and on extraordinary labours of lecturing, as the term is, the *Pilgrim* had been a more agreeing name to me than *Purchas*." RUSHWORTH and RYMER, to whose collections our history stands so deeply indebted, must have strongly felt this literary ardour, for they passed their lives in forming them; till RYMER, in the utmost distress, was obliged to sell his books and his fifty volumes of MSS. which he could not get printed; and RUSHWORTH died in the King's-Bench, of a broken heart; many of his papers remain unpublished. His ruling passion was amassing State matters, and he voluntarily neglected great opportunities of acquiring a large fortune to this entire devotion of his life. The same fate has awaited the similar labours of many authors to whom the history of our country lies under deep obligations. ARTHUR COLLINS, the historiographer of our Peerage, and the curious collector of the valuable "Sydney papers," and other collections, passed his life in rescuing these wrecks of antiquity; in giving authenticity to our

history, or contributing fresh materials to it; but his midnight vigils were cheered by no patronage, nor his labours valued, but when the eye that pored on the mutilated MS. was for ever closed. Of all those curious works of the late Mr. STRUTT, which are now bearing such high prices, all were produced by extensive reading, and illustrated by his own drawings, from the manuscripts of different epochs in our history. What was the result to that ingenious artist and author, who, under the plain simplicity of an antiquary, concealed a fine poetical mind, and an enthusiasm for his beloved pursuits to which only we are indebted for them. STRUTT, living in the greatest obscurity, and voluntarily sacrificing all the ordinary views of life, and the trade of his *burin*, solely attached to national antiquities, and charmed by calling them into a fresh existence under his pencil, I have witnessed at the British Museum, forgetting for whole days his miseries, in sedulous research and delightful labour; at times even doubtful whether he could get his works printed; for some of which he was not regaled even with the Roman supper of "a radish and an egg." How he left his domestic affairs, his son can tell; how

his works have tripled their value, the booksellers.— It is an extraordinary event in literary history, that an author should call on his printer as a testimony of the truth of the principles he would inculcate. In writing, however, on the Calamities attending the love of literary labour, Mr. JOHN NICHOLS, the modest annalist of the literary history of the last century, and the friend of half the departed genius of our country, could not but occur to me. He has zealously published more than fifty works, illustrating the literature and the antiquities of the country; labours not given to the world without great sacrifices. The personal evil to which his literary passion may have subjected him, has been remedied by his professional diligence, and those firm connections which the virtues of half a century have secured to him. Experience shewed him the madness of being merely an author; but I shall draw from him his own ingenuous confession, made at that temperate moment when retreating from active life. Bishop Hurd, with friendly solicitude, writes to Mr. Nichols on some of his own publications, "While you are enriching the Antiquarian world" (and, by the *Life of Bowyer*, may be added the *Literary*), "I hope you do

not forget yourself. *The profession of an Author, I know from experience, is not a lucrative one.*—I only mention this because I see a large catalogue of your publications." At another time the Bishop writes, "You are very good to excuse my freedom with you ; but, as times go, almost any trade is better than that of an Author," &c. On these notes Mr. NICHOLS confesses, "I have had some occasion to regret that I did not attend to the judicious suggestions."—We owe to the late THOMAS DAVIES, the author of Garrick's life, and other literary works, beautiful editions of some of our elder poets, which are now eagerly sought after, yet, though all his publications were of the best kinds, and are now of increasing value, the taste of Tom Davies twice ended in bankruptcy. It is to be lamented for the cause of literature, that even a bookseller may have too refined a taste for his trade, and it will always be his interest to float on the current of public taste, whatever that may be ; should he have an ambition to *create* it, he will then be anticipating a more cultivated curiosity by half a century ; and thus the business of a bookseller rarely accords with the design of advancing our literature.



The works of Literature, it is then but too evident, receive no equivalent; let this be recollected, by him who would draw his existence from them; a young Author has often resembled that one whom Johnson, in a humorous letter in the *Idler* (No. 55), tells us, who, having composed a work "of universal curiosity, computed that it would call for many editions of his book, and that in five years he should gain fifteen thousand pounds by the sale of thirty thousand copies." There are indeed who have been dazzled by the good fortune of GIBBON, ROBERTSON, and HUME; we are to consider these favourites, not merely as Authors, but as possessing, by their situation in life, a certain independance which preserved them from the vexations of the authors I have noticed. Observe, however, that the uncommon sum GIBBON received for copyright, though it excited the astonishment of the philosopher himself, was for the continued labour of a *whole life*, and probably the *library* he had purchased for his work equalled at least in cost the produce of his *pen*; the tools cost the workman as much as he obtained for his work. Six thousand pounds gained on these terms will keep an author indigent!

[c] P. 234. Bishop Kennett's stupendous "Register and Chronicle," Volume I. is one of those astonishing labours, which could only have been produced by the pleasure of study urged by the strong love of posterity. It is a diary in which the Bishop, one of our most studious and active authors, has recorded every matter of fact, "delivered in the words of the most authentic books, papers, and records." The design to preserve our history from the Restoration. This silent labour he had been pursuing all his life, and published the first volume in his sixty-eighth year, the very year he died. But he was so sensible of the coyness of the public taste for what he calls in a letter to a literary friend, "a tedious heavy book," that he gave it away to the publisher. "The volume, too large, brings me no profit. In good truth the scheme was laid for conscience sake to restore a good old principle, that history should be purely matter of fact, that every reader, by examining and comparing, may make out a history by his own judgment. I have collections transcribed for another volume, if the bookseller will run the hazard of printing." This volume has never appeared, and the bookseller probably lost a considerable sum by the present; it lay till lately in

dust in the shops; a copy is now most difficultly procured. It is invaluable. Such then are the remunerations of laborious authors and their booksellers. See the Bishop's letter in Nichols's *Life of Bowyer*, Vol. I. p. 383.

[D] P. 234. STRUTT having obtained the first gold medal that was ever given at the Royal Academy, wrote a letter to his mother, in which his future prospects, and the ardour of his imagination on his entrance into the world, present a picture of what is passing in the mind of the ingenuous youth, who, after the devotion of a long life, frequently terminates in a much lower station than it had imagined. STRUTT, considered as an author, ranks among the laborious class, yet he had a genius and an imagination which aimed at one much higher, which he appears to have neglected for his antiquarian pursuits. I select those passages indicative of these finer feelings; reminding the reader that they have been those of many authors, and artists, who have never attained to that distinction for which they so fervidly laboured; and often have sunk into a lower rank.

But let us listen to what STRUTT felt, and what he proposed doing, in the golden age of fancy.

He thanks his mother, and his friends, who have taken so deep an interest in his success; and to repay the obligations they had generously laid on him, he proceeds thus:—

“ I will at least strive to the utmost, to give my benefactors no reason to think their pains thrown away. If I should not be able to abound in riches, yet, by God's help, I will strive to pluck that palm which the greatest artists of foregoing ages have done before me; *I will strive to leave my name behind me in the world, if not in the splendour that some have, at least with some marks of assiduity and study;* which, I can assure you, shall never be wanting in me. Who can bear to hear the names of Raphael, Titian, Michael Angelo, &c. the most famous of the Italian masters, in the mouth of every one, and not wish to be like them? And to be like them, we must study as they have done, take such pains, and labour continually like them; the which shall not be wanting on my side, I dare affirm; so that, should I not succeed, I may rest contented, and say I have

done my utmost. God has blessed me with a mind to undertake. You, dear madam, will excuse my vanity ; you know me, from my childish days, to have been a vain boy, always desirous to execute something to gain me praises from every one ; always scheming and imitating whatever I saw done by any body."

And when he settles in the metropolis, and studies at the British Museum, amidst all the stores of knowledge and art, his imagination delights to expatiate in its future prospects. In a letter to a friend he has chronicled his feelings :

"I would not only be a great antiquary, but a refined thinker ; I would not only discover antiquities, but would, by explaining their use, render them useful. Such vast funds of knowledge lie hid in the antiquated remains of the earlier ages ; these I would bring forth, and set in their true light\*."

POOR STRUTT, at the close of life, was returning to his own first and natural energies, in producing a work of the imagination. He had made considerable

\* This interesting correspondence will be found more at large in Mr. NICHOLS's "Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century," when they shall be published ; who liberally communicated them to me as they passed the press.

progress in one, and the early parts which he had finished, bear the stamp of genius; it is entitled "Queenhoo-hall, a Romance of ancient times," full of the picturesque manners and costume, and characters of the age, in which he was so conversant; with many lyrical pieces, which often are full of poetic feeling—but he was called off from the work to prepare a more laborious one. "Queenhoo-hall" remained a heap of fragments at his death; except the first volume, and was filled up by a stranger who had no interest in the work; but there is no doubt this laborious author was a man of the finest genius and sensibility.

[E] P. 239. I well remember the cruel anxiety which prevailed in the nineteenth year of these inclosures; it spoiled the digestions of several of our literati who had had the misfortune of Cole's intimate friendship, or enmity. One of these was the writer of the Life of Thomas Baker, the Cambridge Antiquary, who prognosticated all the evil he among others were to endure; and, writhing in fancy under the whip not yet untwisted, justly enough exclaims, in his agony, "The attempt to keep these characters from the

public till the subjects of them shall be no more, seems to be peculiarly cruel and ungenerous, since it is precluding them from vindicating themselves from such injurious aspersions, as their friends, perhaps however willing, may at that distance of time, be incapable of removing." With this Author Mr. Masters, Cole had quarrelled so often, that Masters writes, "I am well acquainted with the fickleness of his disposition for more than forty years past."

[F] P. 241. One of the miseries of poor COLE was to dispose of his collections; and he has put down this *naive* memorandum. "I have long wavered how to dispose of all my MS volumes; to give them to *King's College*, would be to throw them into a *horse-pond*; and I had as lieve do one as the other; they are generally so *conceited of their Latin and Greek*, that all other studies are barbarism."

[G] P. 241. The same fate has awaited the life-labours (if the expression be allowed) of several other authors who have never published their works, from too nice scruples of their incompleteness. Such was the learned Bishop LLOYD, and the Rev. THOMAS BAKER, who first engaged in the same pursuit as COLE, and

carried it on to the extent of about forty volumes in folio. LLOYD is described by Burnet as having "many volumes of materials upon all subjects, so that he could, with very little labour, write on any of them, with more life in his imagination, and a truer judgment, than may seem consistent with such a laborious course of study; but he did not lay out his learning with the same diligence as he laid it in." It is mortifying to learn, that, in the words of Johnson, "he was always hesitating and enquiring, raising objections, and removing them, and waiting for clearer light and fuller discovery."—Many of the labours of this learned Bishop were at length consumed in the kitchen of his descendant. "Baker (says Johnson) after many years past in biography, left his manuscripts to be buried in a library, because that was imperfect which could never be perfected." And to complete the absurdity, or to heighten the calamity which the want of these useful labours make every literary man feel, half of the collections of BAKER sleep in their dust in a turret of the University; while the other, deposited in our national library at the British Museum, and frequently used, are rendered imperfect by this unnatural divorce.



## THE DESPAIR OF YOUNG POETS.

**WILLIAM PATTISON** was a young Poet who perished in his twentieth year; his character and his fate resembled those of Chatterton; he was one more child of that family of genius, whose passions, like the torch, kindle but to consume themselves.

The youth of **PATTISON** was that of a Poet; many become irrecoverably Poets by local influence; and Beattie could hardly have thrown his "Minstrel" into a more poetical solitude than the singular spot which was haunted by our young Bard. His first misfortune was that of having an anti-poetical parent; his next was that of having discovered a spot which

confirmed his poetical habits, inspiring all the melancholy and sensibility he loved to indulge. This spot, which in his fancy resembled some favourite description in Cowley, he called "Cowley's Walk." Some friend, who was himself no common painter of fancy, has delineated the whole scenery with minute touches, and a freshness of colouring, warm with reality. Such a poetical habitation becomes a part of the Poet himself, reflecting his character, and even descriptive of his manners.

"On one side of 'Cowley's Walk' is a huge rock, grown over with moss and ivy climbing on its sides, and in some parts small trees spring out of the crevices of the rock; at the bottom are a wild plantation of irregular trees, in every part looking aged and venerable. Among these cavities, one larger than the rest

was the cave he loved to sit in—arched like a canopy, its rustic borders were edged with ivy hanging down, overshadowing the place, and hence he called it (for poets must give a name to every object they love) “Hederinda,” bearing ivy. At the foot of this grotto a stream of water ran along the walk, so that its level path had trees and water on one side, and a wild rough precipice on the other. In winter, this spot looked full of horror, the naked trees, the dark rock, and the desolate waste; but in the spring, the singing of the birds, the fragrancy of the flowers, and the murmuring of the stream, blended all their enchantment.”

Here, in the heat of the day, he escaped into the “Hederinda,” and shared with friends his rapture and his solitude; and here, through summer nights, in the light of the moon he meditated and me-

lodised his verses, by the gentle fall of the waters. Thus was PATTISON fixed and bound up in the strongest spell the demon of poetry ever drew around a susceptible and careless youth.

He was now a decided Poet. At Sidney College in Cambridge he was greatly loved; till, on a quarrel with a rigid tutor, he rashly cut his name out of the College book, and quitted it for ever in utter thoughtlessness and gaiety, leaving his gown behind, as his *locum tenens*, to make his apology, by pinning on it a satirical farewell.

“Whoever gives himself the pains to stoop,  
 And take my venerable tatters up,  
 To his presuming inquisition I,  
 In *loco Pattisoni*, thus reply;  
 ‘Tir’d with the senseless jargon of the gown,  
 My master left the college for the town,

And scorns his precious minutes to regale  
With wretched college-wit and college-ale.' ”

He flew to the metropolis — to take up  
the trade of a Poet!

A translation of Ovid's Epistles had engaged his attention during two years; his own genius seemed inexhaustible; and pleasure and fame were awaiting the poetical emigrant. He resisted all kind importunities to return to college, he could not endure submission, and declares “his spirit cannot bear controul.” One friend “fears the innumerable temptations to which one of his complexion is liable in such a populous place.” PATTISON was much loved — he had all the generous impetuosity of youthful genius; but he had resolved on running the perilous career of Literary Glory, and he added one more

to the countless thousands who perish in  
obscurit

His first letters are written with the same spirit that distinguishes Chatterton's — all he hopes he seems to realize. He mixes among the wits, dates from Button's, and drinks with Concanen healths to college friends, till they lose their own; more dangerous Muses condescend to exhibit themselves to the young Poet in the Park; and he was to be introduced to Pope. All is exultation! Miserable youth! The first thought of prudence appears in a resolution of soliciting subscriptions from all persons, for a volume of poems.

His young friends at college exerted their warm patronage; those in his native North condemn him, and save their crowns; Pope admits of no interview, but lends his name, and bestows half a crown for a-

volume of poetry, which he did not want; the Poet wearies kindness, and would extort charity even from brother-poets; petitions Lords and Ladies; and, as his wants grow on him, his shame decreases.

How the scene has changed in a few months! He acknowledges to a friend, that "his heart was broke through the misfortunes he had fallen under;" he declares "he feels himself near the borders of death." In moments like these he probably composed the following lines, awfully addressed,

#### AD CÆLUM!

"Good heaven! this mystery of life explain,  
Nor let me think I bear the load in vain;  
Lest, with the tedious passage cheerless grown,  
Urg'd by despair, I throw the burden down."

But the torture of genius when all its

passions are strained on the rack, were never more pathetically expressed than in the following letter :

“ SIR,

“ If you was ever touched with a sense of humanity, consider my condition; what *I am*, my proposals will inform you; what *I have been*, Sidney-college in Cambridge can witness; but what *I shall be* some few hours hence, I tremble to think — spare my blushes — I have not enjoyed the common necessaries of life for these two days, and can hardly hold to subscribe myself,

“ Yours, &c.”

The picture is finished — it admits not of another stroke. Such was the complete misery which Savage, Boyse, Chatterton, and more innocent spirits devoted to Literature, have endured — but not long — for they must perish in their youth!



HENRY CAREY was one of our most popular poets : he, indeed, has unluckily met with only dictionary critics, or what is as fatal to genius, the cold undistinguishing commendation of grave men on subjects of humour, wit, and the lighter poetry. The works of CAREY do not appear in any of our great collections, where Walsh, Duke, and Yalden, slumber on their thrones.

Yet CAREY was a true son of the Muses, and the most successful writer in our language. He is the Author of several little national poems. In early life he successfully burlesqued the affected versification of Ambrose Philips, in his baby poems ; to which he gave the fortunate appellation of “ *Namby Pamby*, a panegyric on the new versification ;” a term descriptive in sound of these chiming

follies, and now adopted in the style of criticism. Carey's "Namby Pamby" was at first considered by Swift as the satirical effusion of Pope, and by Pope as the humourous ridicule of Swift. His ballad of "Sally in our Alley" was more than once commended for its nature by Addison, and is sung to this day. Of the national song, "God save the King," he was the author both of the words and the musick. He was very successful on the stage, and wrote admirable burlesques of the Italian Opera, in "The Dragon of Wantley," and "The Dragoness;" and the mock tragedy of "Chrononhotonthologos," is not forgotten. Among his poems, lie still concealed several original pieces; those which have a political turn are particularly good, for the politics of CAREY were those of a Poet and a Patriot.

I refer the politician who has any taste for poetry and humour, to "The Grumble-tonians, or the Dogs without doors, a Fable," very instructive to those grown-up folks, "The Ins and the Outs." "Carey's Wish" is in this class; and, as the purity of election remains still among the desiderata of every true Briton, a poem on that subject by the patriotic Author of our national hymn, of "God save the King," may be acceptable\*.

\* "CAREY'S WISH.

"Curs'd be the wretch that's bought and sold,  
 And barter liberty for gold;  
 For when Election is not free,  
 In vain we boast of liberty:  
 And he who sells his single right,  
 Would sell his country, if he might.  
 When Liberty is put to sale  
 For wine, for money, or for ale,

To the ballad of "Sally in our Alley," CAREY has prefixed an argument, so full of nature, that the song may hereafter derive an additional interest from its simple origin. The Author assures the reader,

The sellers must be abject slaves,  
 The buyers vile designing knaves ;  
 A proverb it has been of old,  
 The Devil 's bought but to be sold.

This maxim in the Statesman's school  
 Is always taught, *divide and rule*.  
 All parties are to him a joke :

While zealots foam, he fits the yoke.  
 Let men their reason once resume ;  
 'Tis then the Statesman's turn to fume.

Learn, learn, ye Britons, to unite ;  
 Leave off the old exploded bite ;  
 Henceforth let Whig and Tory cease,  
 And turn all party-rage to peace ;  
 Rouze and revive your ancient glory ;  
 Unite, and drive the world before you."

that the popular notion that the subject of his ballad had been the noted Sally Salisbury, is perfectly erroneous, he being a stranger to her name at the time the song was composed.

“ As innocence and virtue were ever the boundaries of his Muse, so in this little poem he had no other view than to set forth the beauty of a chaste and disinterested passion, even in the lowest class of human life. The real occasion was this; a shoemaker’s prentice, making holiday with his sweetheart, treated her with a sight of Bedlam, the puppet-shews, the flying chairs, and all the elegancies of Moorfields; from whence, proceeding to the Farthing Pye-house, he gave her a collation of buns, cheesecakes, gammon of bacon, stuffed beef, and bottled ale; through all which scenes the Author dodged them (charmed with the simplicity of their courtship), from whence he drew this little sketch of Nature;

but, being then young and obscure, he was very much ridiculed for this performance; which, nevertheless, made its way into the polite world, and amply recompensed him by the applause of the divine Addison, who was pleased (more than once) to mention it with approbation."

Poor CAREY, the delight of the Muses, and delighting with the Muses, experienced all their trials and all their treacheries. It had been better for him, as he once sung in "The Poet's Resentment," to have been sincere while he put the rhymes to these lines :

"Far, far away then chase the Harlot Muse,  
Nor let her thus thy noon of life abuse ;  
Mix with the common crowd, unheard, unseen,  
And if again thou tempt'st the vulgar praise,  
Mayst thou be crown'd with Birch instead of  
Bays!"

At the time that this Poet could neither walk the streets, nor be seated at the convivial board, without listening to his own songs and his own music — for in truth, the whole nation was echoing his verse, and crowded theatres were clapping to his wit and humour — while this very man himself, urged by his strong humanity, had founded a “Fund for decayed Musicians” — at this moment was poor CAREY himself so broken-hearted, and his own common comforts so utterly neglected, that, in despair, not waiting for Nature, to relieve him from the burthen of existence, he laid violent hands on himself; and when found dead, had only a half-penny in his pocket! Such was the fate of the author of some of the most popular pieces in our language! He left a son, who inherited his misery, and a gleam of his genius.

## THE MISERIES

### OF THE FIRST ENGLISH COMMENTATOR.

THE present article is connected with the former one on the Calamities of Laborious Authors.

Dr. ZACHARY GREY, the editor of *Hudibras*, is the father of our modern commentators. His case is rather peculiar, for I know not whether the father, by an odd anticipation, was doomed to suffer for the sins of his children, or whether his own have been visited on the third generation; it is certain that never was an author more overpowered by the attacks he received, from the light and indiscriminating shafts of ignorant wits. He was ridiculed and abused for having assisted us to comprehend the



wit of an author, which at this day would have been nearly lost to us; and whose singular subject involved persons and events which required the very thing he gave, — historical and explanatory notes.

A first thought, and all the danger of an original invention, which is always imperfectly understood by the superficial, was poor Dr. GREY'S merit. He was modest and laborious, and he had the sagacity to discover what Butler wanted, and what the public required. His project was a happy thought, in the Commentator of a singular work which has scarcely a parallel in modern literature, if we except the *Satyre Menippée* of the French, which is, in prose, the exact counterpart of *Hudibras* in rhyme, for our rivals have had the same State Revolution, in which the same dramatic personages

passed over their national stage; with the same incidents, in the civil wars of the ambitious Guises, and the citizen-reformers. They, too, found a Butler, though in prose, a Grey in Duchat, and, as well as they could, a Hogarth. This edition, which appeared in 1711, might have served as the model of Grey's Hudibras.

It was, however, a happy thought in our Commentator, to turn over the authors, and to collect the events and discover the personages from the contemporaries of Butler; to read what the Poet read, to observe what the poet observed. This was at once throwing himself and the reader back into an age, of which even the likeness had disappeared, and familiarising us with distant objects, which had been lost to us in the haze and mists of time. For this, not only a new mode of travelling, but a

new road, was to be opened; the secret history, the fugitive pamphlet, the obsolete satire, the ancient comedy — such were the many curious volumes whose dust was to be cleared away, to cast a new radiance on the fading colours of a moveable picture of manners; the wittiest ever exhibited to mankind. This new mode of research, even at this moment, is imperfectly comprehended, still ridiculed even by those who could never have understood a writer who will only be immortal, in the degree he is comprehended — and his wit could not have been felt but for the laborious curiosity of him whose “reading” has been too often aspersed for “such reading”

“As was never read.”

GREY was outrageously attacked by all the wits, first by Warburton, in his preface to

Shakespeare, who declares, that "he hardly thinks there ever appeared so execrable a heap of nonsense under the name of Commentaries as hath been lately given us on a certain satyric poet of the last age." It is odd enough, Warburton had himself contributed towards these very notes, but, for some cause which has not been discovered, had quarrelled with Dr. Grey. I will venture a conjecture on this great Conjectural Critic. — Warburton was always meditating to give an edition of his own of our old writers, and the sins he committed against Shakespeare he longed to practise on Butler, whose times were, indeed, a favourite period of his researches. Grey had anticipated him — and though Warburton had half reluctantly yielded the few notes he had prepared, his proud heart sickened when he beheld the amazing

subscription Grey obtained for his first edition of *Hudibras*; he received for that work £1500\* — a proof that this publication was felt as a want by the public.

Such, however, is one of those blunt dogmatic censures in which Warburton abounds, to impress his readers with the weight of his opinions; this great man wrote more for effect than any other of our Authors, as appears by his own or some friend's confession, that if his edition of *Shakespeare* did no honour to that Bard, this was not the design of the Commentator — which was only to do honour to himself by a display of his own exuberant erudition.

The livelier Fielding, who wrote to be poignantly witty, in his preface to his

\* Cole's MSS.

Journey to Lisbon, has a fling at the gravity of our Doctor. "The laborious, much-read Dr. Z. GREY, of whose redundant notes on Hudibras, I shall only say, that it is, I am confident, the single book extant in which above 500 Authors are quoted, not one of which could be found in the collection of the late Dr. Mead." Mrs. Montague, in her Letters, severely characterises the miserable father of English Commentators; she wrote in youth and spirits, with no knowledge of books, and *before* even the unlucky Commentator had published his work, but Wit is the bolder by anticipation. — She observes, that "his dulness may be a proper ballast for doggrel; and it is better that his stupidity should make jest dull, than serious and sacred things ridiculous;" alluding to his numerous controversial tracts.

Such then are the hard returns which some authors are doomed to receive as the rewards of useful labours from those who do not even comprehend their nature; a Wit should not be admitted as a Critic till he had first proved, by his gravity, or his dulness if he chuses, that he has some knowledge; for it is the privilege and nature of wit to write fastest and best, on what it least understands. Knowledge could only encumber and confine its flights.

## THE LIFE OF AN AUTHORESS.

OF all the sorrows in which the female character may participate, there are few more affecting than that of an Authoress; often insulated and unprotected in society — with all the sensibility of the sex, to encounter miseries which break the spirits of men; and the inconveniences arising from that delicacy which trembles when it quits its retirement.

My acquaintance with an unfortunate lady of the name of ELIZA RYVES, was casual and interrupted; yet I witnessed the bitterness of “hope deferred, which maketh the heart sick.” She sunk, by the slow wastings of grief, into a grave



which probably does not record the name of its Martyr of Literature.

She was descended from a family of distinction in Ireland; but, as she expressed it, "she had been deprived of her birth-right by the chicanery of law." In her former hours of tranquillity she had published some elegant odes, had written a tragedy, and comedies; all which remained in MS. In her distress, she looked up to her pen as a source of existence; and an elegant genius, and a woman of polished manners, commenced the life of a female trader in Literature.

Conceive the repulses of a modest and delicate woman in her attempts of appreciating the value of a manuscript with its purchaser. She has frequently returned from the booksellers to her dreadful solitude to hasten to her bed — in all the

bodily pains of misery, she has sought in uneasy slumbers a temporary forgetfulness of griefs which were to recur on the morrow. Elegant Literature is always of doubtful acceptance with the public, and ELIZA RYVES came at length to try the most masculine exertions of the pen. She wrote for one newspaper much political matter; but the proprietor was too great a politician for the writer of politics, for he only praised the labour he never paid; much poetry for another, in which, being one of the correspondents of Della Crusca, in payment of her verses she got nothing but verses; the most astonishing exertion for a female pen was the entire composition of the historical and political portion of some Annual Register. So little profitable were all these laborious and original efforts, that every day did not bring its

“daily bread.” Yet even in her poverty her native benevolence could make her generous ; for she has deprived herself of her meal, to provide an unhappy family with one, who lodged above her.

Advised to adopt the mode of translation, and being ignorant of the French language, she retired to an obscure lodging at Islington, which she never quitted till she had produced a good version of Rousseau’s “Social Compact,” Raynal’s “Letter to the National Assembly,” and finally translated De la Croix’s “Review of the Constitutions of the principal States in Europe,” in two large volumes, with intelligent Notes. All these works, so much at variance with her taste, left her with her health much broken, and a mind which might be said to have nearly survived the body.

Yet even at a moment so unfavourable, her ardent spirit engaged in a translation of Froissart. At the British Museum I have seen her conning over the magnificent and voluminous MS. of the old Chronicler, and by its side Lord Berners's version, printed in the reign of Henry VIII. It was evident that his lordship was employed as a spy on Froissart, to inform her of what was going forward in the French camp; and she soon perceived, for her taste was delicate, that it required an ancient lord and knight, with all his antiquity of phrase, to break a lance with the still more antient chivalric Frenchman. The familiar elegance of modern style failed to preserve the picturesque touches, and the *naive* graces of the Chronicler, who wrote as the mailed knight combated — roughly or gracefully.

as suited the tilt or the field. She vailed to Lord Berners; while she felt it was here necessary to understand old French, and then to write in old English\*. During these profitless labours Hope seemed to be whispering in her lonely study. Her comedies had been in possession of the Managers of the Theatres during several years. They had too much merit to be rejected, perhaps too little to be acted. Year passed over year, and the last still repeated the treacherous promise of its brother. The mysterious arts of procrastination are by no one so well systematised as by the theatrical Manager, nor its secret sorrows so deeply felt as by the Dramatist. One of her comedies, "The Debt of Honour," had been warmly

\* This version of Lord Berners has been lately reprinted.

approved, at both Theatres — where probably a copy of it may still be found. To the honour of one of the Managers, he presented her with a hundred pounds on his acceptance of it. Could she avoid then flattering herself with an annual harvest?

But even this generous gift, which involved in it such golden promises, could not for ten years preserve its delusion. “I feel,” said ELIZA RYVES, “the necessity of some powerful patronage, to bring my comedies forwards to the world with *eclat*, and secure them an admiration, which, should it even be deserved, is seldom bestowed, unless some leading judge of literary merit gives the sanction of his applause; and then the world will chime in with his opinion, without taking the trouble to inform themselves whether it be founded in justice or partiality.” She

never suspected that her comedies were not comic!—but who dare hold an argument with an ingenuous mind, when it reasons from a right principle, with a wrong application to itself? It is true that a writer's connexions have often done a great deal for a small Author, and enabled some favourites of literary fashion to enjoy an usurped reputation; but it is not so evident that Eliza Ryves was a comic writer, although, doubtless, she appeared another Menander to herself. And thus an Author dies in a delusion of self-flattery!

The character of ELIZA RYVES was rather tender and melancholy; than brilliant and gay; and like the bruised perfume — breathing sweetness when broken into pieces. She traced her sorrows in a work of fancy, where her feelings were at least as active as her imagination. It is a

small volume, entitled "The Hermit of Snowden," a tale, formed on a very delicate, but not uncommon act of the mind of a man of fastidious refinement. Albert having felt, when opulent and fashionable, a passion for Lavinia, meets the kindest return; but, having imbibed an ill opinion of women from his licentious connections, he conceived they were slaves of passion, or of avarice. He wrongs the generous nature of Lavinia, by suspecting her of mercenary views; hence arises the perplexities of the hearts of both. Albert affects to be ruined, and spreads the report of an advantageous match. Lavinia feels all the delicacy of her situation; she loves, but "she never told her love." She seeks for her existence in her literary labours, and perishes in want.



In the character of Lavinia, our Authoress, with all the melancholy sagacity of genius, foresaw and has described her own death! The dreadful solitude to which she was latterly condemned, when in the last stage of her poverty; her frugal mode of life; her acute sensibility; her defrauded hopes; and her exalted fortitude. She has here formed a register of all that occurred in her solitary existence. I will give one scene,—to me it is pathetic—for it is like a scene at which I was present.

“Lavinia’s lodgings were about two miles from town, in an obscure situation. I was shewed up to a mean apartment where Lavinia was sitting at work, and in a dress which indicated the greatest œconomy. I enquired what success she had met with in her dramatic pursuits? She waved her head, and, with a

melancholy smile, replied, “ that her hopes of ever bringing any piece on the stage were now entirely over ; for she found that more interest was necessary for the purpose than she could command ; and that she had for that reason laid aside her comedy for ever !” While she was talking, came in a favourite dog of Lavinia’s, which I had used to caress. The creature sprang to my arms, and I received him with my usual fondness. Lavinia endeavoured to conceal a tear which trickled down her cheek. Afterwards she said, Now that I live entirely alone, I show Juno more attention than I had used to do formerly. *The heart wants something to be kind to.*—And it consoles us for the loss of society, to see even an animal derive happiness from the endearments we bestow upon it.”

Such was ELIZA RYVES! not beautiful nor interesting in her person, but, with a mind of fortitude, susceptible of all the

delicacy of feminine softness ; and virtuous amidst her despair. She presented me, a short time before her death, with the following stanzas. The verse is elegant and musical, but the circumstance is much more interesting than the verse.

## A SONG,

By ELIZA RYVES.

A new-fallen lamb, as mild Emmeline past,  
 In pity she turn'd to behold,  
 How it shiver'd and shrunk from the merciless  
 blast,  
 Then fell all benumb'd with the cold.

She rais'd it, and, touch'd by the innocent's fate,  
 Its soft form to her bosom she prest ;  
 But the tender relief was afforded too late,  
 It bleated, and died on her breast.

The moralist then, as the corse she resign'd,  
And, weeping, spring-flowers o'er it laid,  
Thus mus'd—"So it fares with the delicate  
mind,  
To the tempests of fortune betray'd.

"Too tender, like thee, the rude shock to  
sustain,  
And denied the relief which would save;  
'Tis lost, and when pity and kindness are vain,  
Thus we dress the poor sufferer's grave!"

*To the Character of ANTHONY WOOD,  
page 241, the following*

APOLOGY

FOR THE

ATHENÆ OXONIENSES,

WITH AN IDEA OF LITERARY HISTORY,

*may be considered as a supplementary note.*

WOOD's *Athenæ Oxonienses* is a history of near a thousand of our native authors; he paints their characters, and enters into the spirit of their writings. This labour of an entire life, stands like a rude and solitary column in the desert of our Literary History\*. But authors of this com-

\* Johnson's biography of the Poets, and a few scattered works composed in the same spirit, have laid the foundations of a nobler style of Literary History in our own country.

plexion, and works of this nature, are liable to be slighted; for the fastidious are petulant, the volatile inexperienced, and those who cultivate a single province in literature, are disposed too often to lay all others under a state of interdiction. My solitary column may be said to be built with rubbish.

WARBURTON, in a work thrown out in the heat of unchastised youth, and afterwards withdrawn from public inquiry, has said of the *Athenæ Oxonienses*,

“ Of all those writings given us by the learned Oxford antiquary, there is not one that is not a disgrace to letters; most of them are so to common sense, and some even to human nature. Yet how set out! how tricked! how adorned! how extolled\*!”

\* In his “ Critical and Philosophical Enquiry into the Causes of Prodigies.” This book became exceed-

So early in his life was Warburton a Warburtonian; always writing for himself, and never for the public, he cared little to instruct, while he sought to surprise; as he wrote on Shakespeare, not to illustrate the Poet, but to display his own paradoxical erudition; and on the Divine Legation, to startle the world by a paradox he grew himself so weary of carrying on, that he would not complete the work. But the elegant Historian of our Poetry censures Anthony for "his poverty of

ingly rare, for Warburton used every effort to suppress it. The dedication to Sir Robert Sutton (his first useful patron) is written against all dedications, while the author is steeped to the very lips in the charges he brings against others. RALPH sarcastically observed, "The Colossus himself creeps between the legs of the late Sir Robert Sutton; in what posture, or for what purpose, need not be explained."

style, by which he degrades every thing\*.”

A little variance between two great men!

WARBURTON'S indiscriminate fury is an attack on literary history itself, as much as on the historian; but at a maturer period even Warburton himself declared that “the most agreeable subject in the world is literary history †.”

Warton, indeed, often mentions our author with asperity; and Anthony has incurred all the disgrace our poets can heap on him; for his incision-pen never cut so deep as in the flesh of a Bard. But the wits of the Elizabethan age, and in Anthony's own times, were a banditti of libertines; they were assassinated in brothel-frays, they died with surfeits at brothel-

\* History of English Poetry, vol. III. p. 28.

† In a letter to Dr. Birch, preserved in Mr. Nichols's Life of Bowyer.



feastings; and they lived by cheaterly, obscenity, and wit. Such were Robert Greene, George Peele, Tom Nash, Edward Gayton, and others, all whose unprincipled lives would be as instructive to young authors, as the Old Bailey biography is said to have occasionally terrified a young rogue into penitence. WARTON, who loved genius, and willingly forgot its errors, could never pardon honest Anthony, a rough moralist, his anti-poetical language — of which take these instances. WOOD says of GEORGE PEELE,

“When or where he died, I cannot tell; for so it is, and always hath been, that most poets die poor; and consequently obscurely; and a hard matter it is to trace them to their graves.”

And of GAYTON, a voluminous wit, the author of “Pleasant Notes on Don Quixote,” in folio, “his master-piece,” says WOOD:

“ He lived in a sharking condition, and wrote trite things merely to get bread for him and his wife. After he was restored to his place, on the King’s return in 1660, having gotten an itch in scribbling, followed that sometimes, but more the vices of Poets, so improvident, that he had but one farthing in his pocket when he died.”

And of Robert Greene,

“ He wrote to maintain that high and loose course of living which Poets generally follow.”

Such were the crabbed fruits of this critical tree, at which a true son of the Muses turned away, without admiring the wildness and the vigour of Nature, which expanded in its redundant boughs.

But I am to roll back far heavier obloquy, that presses down the name of ANTHONY WOOD. It will startle the reader,

when he finds that **WOOD** describes **JOHN LOCKE** as “a prating, clamorous, turbulent fellow;” and **MILTON** as “a villainous leading incendiary.” Great men are as freely censured as little ones in Anthony’s rough page. Such opinions on such men have roused indignation — yet these very opinions confirm the integrity of his mind. The modern critic leaves his task undone, who neglects to transform himself into a contemporary of the author, and glide into the times he animadverts on. The late editor of “*Theatrum Poetarum*,” for these free strictures, wreaks his sentimental vengeance on the manes of old Anthony, as “a tasteless, but useful drudge.”

Milton’s was a name more connected with political than with poetical feelings, in the times of **WOOD**; even at a later period, Toland, when he wrote the life of Milton,

was severely censured for "meddling with Milton's books, and reviving his sentiments, or the memory of those quarrels in which he was engaged." The objectionable remark on Milton, the modern editor produces, is only incidental, and not inserted in the elaborate article of Milton which Anthony has consecrated to the Poet, composed with minute curiosity, and a warmth of commendation of his genius, rather unusual: our chief knowledge of Milton we owe to Wood. Is it not from honest Anthony we learn that

"Milton was more admired abroad, and by foreigners, than at home, and was much visited by them. Some of whom have, out of pure devotion, gone to Bread-street to see the house and chamber where he was born."

The eloquence of Johnson scarcely affects us more, than the homely narrative

of honest Anthony, who hated the man, while he told the truth that eulogized Milton above all his contemporaries!

Old Anthony has received many a fatal stroke from other respectable assailants. His merits were disputed, in his own times, by opposite parties. Yet why has public opinion made *honesty* and *Anthony* meet together so closely? Why is he often described by this enviable epithet? How has it happened that the writers of a party which Anthony Wood abhorred, frequently refer to him in their own favour? His sincerity is at least as great as his errors, which are sometimes only errors to us — to him they never were!

So much for the rude but spirited father of our Literary History, whose individual character will illustrate this note.

As for LITERARY HISTORY itself, it has still much freshness, and with us is only

breaking from the bud. We have had no Bayle, and we lost Warton at the critical moment when his genius was opening the fairy land of Literary History, in that of Poetry. Of Literary History JOHNSON declared "it was what he most loved," and feelingly opens the biography of our Poets, with the complaint of "the penury of English Biography." Biography is, however, but one province of Literary History—in the mind of the philosophic writer, it branches into many delightful associations.

LITERARY HISTORY has been created in our times, and is one of the important results of that union of philosophy and taste which has been so progressive; and it will rise into importance, the more its nature shall be comprehended, and its productions more skilfully formed. The history of BOOKS and AUTHORS, the one forming the most ingenious of human labours, and

the other including the greatest or the most absurd of men, develops the varieties of those characters, which act on, and are reciprocally acted on by, the manners and genius of the age. It is the public and the private history of every people — for authors are to be found in all the classes of Society; and it is often their civil and political history, because the leading characters in every nation are usually literary men themselves, or what is not less important, their patrons or their persecutors. It includes, in its wide circle, some of the most pleasing provinces of so many other studies; for the grand æras of invention in the progress of the arts, and the illustration of the permanent national character, and its evanescent manners, are only preserved in books, the records of men's feelings, and of passing





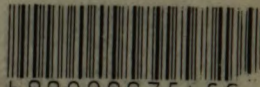








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