CONVERSATIONS

WITH

AN AMBITIOUS STUDENT

IN ILL HEALTH:

WITH OTHER PIECES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"PELHAM," "EUGENE ARAM," &c. &c.

E. Bulwer Lytton

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. & J. HARPER,

NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET.

AND SOLD BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

1832.

PREFACE

BY THE PUBLISHERS.

The "Conversations" which form the greater part of the succeeding pages were originally published in the London New Monthly Magazine, during the years 1830 and 1831, and while that periodical was yet edited by Mr. Campbell. They were received with great approbation in England, and many of them were copied in various publications on this side of the Atlantic, where the interest they excited and the favour they obtained, were not less, or less general, than in the land of their origin. Until now, however, they have not in either country been given to the public in a collected form; and in the United States it is believed that it would be difficult, if not almost impossible, to obtain a complete copy,—some of the Conversations having never been republished here, and those which were, having appeared singly, at intervals, and in different publications.

These considerations, and the great merit of the pieces themselves,—which although very distinct in their character, have been by the public voice pronounced in no respect inferior to the other writings of Mr. Bulwer,—added to the almost unrivalled popularity of his works, have induced the Publishers to take some pains to procure the whole series for publication; which, therefore, they now offer to the reader, together with several other articles from the same pen, but of a more diversified and less didactic character, some of which have not before been published in America; trusting that the whole will be found to constitute a collection not unworthy of the talents and reputation of the author, or of a measure of approbation as cordial and general as that which has heretofore been so liberally awarded to the results of his literary efforts.

New-York, May, 1832.

CONVERSATIONS.

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WITH

AN AMBITIOUS STUDENT IN ILL HEALTH.

I HAVE always loved the old form of dialogue; not, indeed, so much for investigating truth, as for speaking of truths, after an easy yet not uncritical or hasty fashion. More familiar than the essay, more impressed with the attraction of individual character, the dialogue has also the illustrious examples of old—to associate the class to which it belongs with no commonplace or ignoble recollections. It may perhaps be still possible to give to the lighter and less severe philosophy a form of expression at once dramatic and unpedantic. I have held of late some conversations that do not seem to me altogether uninteresting, with a man whom I have long considered of a singular and original character. I have obtained his permission to make these conversations public: perhaps, of all modes of effecting this object, a periodical work may afford the best. The subjects treated on, the manner of treating them, may not be deemed of sufficient importance for publication in a separate form. Besides—and to say the truth—I have always set a high value on the dignity of a book. It seems to me necessary that a book, be it only a novel (I say *only*, in compliance with the vulgar), should illustrate some great moral end: it should be a maxim brightened into a picture. The conversations I am about to record are far too desultory to realize this character. They are scattered and broken in themselves—scattered and broken be the method of their publication. Perhaps, indeed, they would remain altogether unretailed, were it not for my friend's conviction that the seal is set upon the limit of his days, and did I not see sufficient evidence in his appearance to forbid me to hope that he can linger many months beyond the present date. To his mind, whatever be its capacities, its cultivation, its aspirings, all matured and solid offspring is forbidden. These fugitive tokens of all he acquired, or thought, or felt, are, if we read aright human probabilities, the sole testimony that he will leave behind him; not a monument, but at least a few leaves, scarcely withered we will hope in one day, upon his grave. I feel a pain in writing the above words, but will he?—No!—or he has wronged himself. He looks from the little inn of his mortality, and anticipates the long summer journey before him; he repines not to-day that he must depart to-morrow.

On Saturday last, November 13th, I rode to L——'s habitation, which is some miles from my own home. The day was cold enough, but I found him in his room, with the windows open, and feeding an old favourite in the shape of a squirrel, that had formerly been a tame companion. L——, on arriving at his present abode, had released it; but it came from the little copse in front of the windows every day to see its former master, and to receive some proof of remembrance from his good-natured hospitality.

CONVERSATION THE FIRST.

"After all," said L——, "though the short and simple annals of the poor are often miserable enough, no peasant lives so wretched a life as the less noble animals, whom we are sometimes tempted to believe more physically happy. Observe how uneasily this poor wretch looks around him. He is subject to perpetual terror from a large Angola cat that my housekeeper chooses to retain in our domestic service, and that has twice very nearly devoured my nervous little hermit. In how large a proportion of creatures is existence composed of one ruling passion—the most agonizing of all sensations—fear! No; human life is but a Rembrandt kind of picture at the best; yet we have no cause to think there are brighter colours in the brute world. Fish are devoured by intestinal worms; birds are subject to continual sickness, some of a very torturing nature. Look at this ant-hill, what a melancholy mockery of our kind—what eternal wars between one hill and another—what wrong—what violence! You know the red ants invade the camps of the black, and bear off the young of these little negroes to be slaves to their victors. When I see throughout all nature the same miseries, the same evil passions, whose effects are crime with us, but whose cause is instinct with the brutes, I confess I feel a sort of despondence of our ultimate doom in this world: I almost feel inclined to surrender the noblest earthly hope that man ever formed, and which is solely the offspring of modern times—the hope of human perfectibility."

A. You have inclined, then, to the eloquent madness of Condorcet and De Staël! You have believed, then, in spite of the countless ages before us, ages in which the great successions of human kind are recorded by the Persian epitome of universal history, "They were born, they were wretched, they died!" —you have believed, despite of so long, so uniform, so mournful an experience, despite, too, our physical conformation, which, even in the healthiest and the strongest, subjects the body to so many afflictions, and therefore the temper to so many infirmities—you have believed that we yet may belie the past, cast off the slough of crimes, and, gliding into the full light of knowledge, become as angels in the sight of God—you believe, in a word, that even on this earth, by progressing in wisdom we may progress to perfection.

L. What else does the age we live in betoken? Look around; not an inanimate object, not a block of wood, not a bolt of iron,

> "But doth suffer an *earth*-change
> Into something rich and strange."

Wherever man applies his intellect, behold how he triumphs. What marvellous improvements in every art, every ornament, every luxury of life! Why not these improvements ultimately in life itself? Are we "the very fiend's archmock," that we can reform every thing, save that which will alone enable us to enjoy our victory—the human heart? In vain we grasp all things without, if we have no command within. No! Institutions are mellowing into a brighter form; with institutions the character will expand: it will swell from the weak bonds of our foibles and our vices; and if we are fated never to become perfect, we shall advance at least, and eternally, towards perfectibility. The world hath had two Saviours—one Divine, and one human; the first was the Founder of our religion, the second the propagator of our knowledge. The second, and I utter nothing profane, it ministers to the first—the second is the might of the PRESS. By that, the father of all safe revolutions, the author of all permanent reforms—by that, man will effect what the first ordained—the reign of peace, and the circulation of love among the great herd of man.

A. Our conversation has fallen on a topic graver than usual; but these times give, as it were, a solemn and prophetic tone to all men who *think*, and are not yet summoned to act. I feel as if I stood behind a veil stretched across another and an unknown world, and waited in expectation and yet in awe the hand that was to tear it away.

L. Ay, I envy you at times (but not always) the long and bright career that, for the first time in the world, is opened to a wise man's ambition; you may live to tread it; you have activity and ardour; and, whether you fall or rise, the step forward you will at least adventure. But I am the bird chained, and the moment *my* chain is broken my course is heavenward and not destined to the earth. After all, what preacher of human vanities is like the flesh, which is yet their author! Two years ago my limbs were firm, my blood buoyant—how boundless was my ambition! Now my constitution is gone—and so perish my desires of glory. Let me see, A——; you and I entered the world together.

A. Yes, yet with what different tempers!

L. True: you were less versatile, more reserved, more solidly ambitious, than myself; your tone of mind was more solemn, mine more eager; life has changed our dispositions, because it has altered our frames. That was a merry year, our first of liberty and pleasure—but when the sparkle leaves the cup how flat is the draught! society is but the tinkling cymbal, and the gallery of pictures, the moment we discover that there is no love there. What makes us so wise as our follies?—the intrigues, the amours, that degrade us while enacted, enlighten us when they are passed away. We have been led, as it were, by the pursuit of a glittering insect to the summit of a mountain, and we see the land of life stretched below.

A. Yet shall we not exclaim with Boileau,

"Souvent de tous nos maux la raison est le pire?"

These delusions were pleasant—

L. To remember. They were wearisome and unprofitable while we actually indulged in them; a man plays the game of women with manifold disadvantages if he bring any heart to the contest: if he discover, with Marmontel's Alcibiades, that he has not been really loved, how deeply is he wounded—*if* he *has* been really loved, how bitterly may he repent. Society is at war with all love except the connubial; and if that passion which is the adventurous—the romantic—be not in itself a crime, our laws have made it so.

A. But the connubial love? How beautiful that is in reality, though so uninteresting to behold!

L. It loses its charm with me the moment I remark, what I always do remark, that though the good pair may be very kind to each other on the whole, they have sacrificed respect to that most cruel of undeceivers, Custom. They have some little gnawing jest at each other; they have found out every weakness in each other; and, what is worse, they have found out the sting to it. The only interesting, and, if I may contradict Rochefoucault, the only *delicious* marriages are those in which the husband is wise enough to see very little of his wife; the absence of the morning prevents *ennui* in the evening, and frequent separations conquer the evil charm of custom.

A. Thus it is that an ardent imagination so often unfits us for the real enjoyments of domestic attachment—custom blunts the imagination more than it wearies the temper. But you had some bright moments in your first year of the world—I remember you the admired of all, the admirer of how many!

L. I was young, rich, well born; I rode well, I wrote verses, and I had an elastic and gay temper. See all my claims to notice! But the instant my high spirits forsook me, society cooled. It is not quite true that adventitious claims alone, unless of the highest order, give one a permanent place in the charmed circle of the Armidas of our age. Society is a feast where every man must contribute his quota, and when our seat at the table is noted as the home of silence and gloom, we are soon left to enjoy our meditations alone. Besides, the secret of fashion is to surprise, and never to disappoint. If you have no reputation for wit, you may succeed without it; if you have, people do not forgive you for falling below their expectations; they attribute your silence to your disdain; they see the lion, and are contented to go away, to abuse him, and to see him no more.

A. I have often been surprised to remark you so contented with silence, whom I have known in some circles so—shall I say?—brilliant.

L. There is no mystery in my content; it is in spite of myself. I have always preached up the *morality* of being gay; if I do not practise it, it is because I cannot. About two years ago my spirits suddenly fled me. In vain I endeavoured to rally them; in vain I forced myself into the world; in vain "I heard music, and wooed the smile of women;" a sort of stupor seized and possessed me; I have never in mixed society been able, since that time, to shake it off; since then, too, I have slowly wasted away without any visible disease, and I am now literally dying of no disorder but the inability to live. Speaking of wit, I met at dinner a few weeks ago M—— and W—— I——, and two or three other persons, eminent, and deservedly, both for wit and for humour. One of them, I think M——, said, somebody or other had wit but no humour; it was asserted, on the other hand, that the person spoken of had humour but no wit. I asked the disputants to define the difference between wit and humour, and of course they were struck dumb.

A. No rare instance of the essence of dispute, which consists in making every one allow what nobody understands.

L. Perhaps so; but really, to understand a thing thoroughly is less necessary than you or I think for. Each of the disputants knew very well what he meant, but he could not explain; the difference was clear enough to serve his own mind as a guide, but, not being analyzed, it was not clear enough to be of use to others. Wit is the philosopher's quality, by-the-way—humour the poet's; the nature of wit relates to things, humour to persons. Wit utters brilliant truths, humour delicate deductions from the knowledge of *individual* character; Rochefoucault is witty, the Vicar of Wakefield is the model of humour.

A. While you define I could dispute your definition—shall I?

L. Not in conversation, we shall end in talking nonsense; metaphysical disputes on paper are very well, but spoken disputes are only good in special pleading.

A. When we were at Cambridge together, do you remember how the young pedants of our time were wont to consider that all intellect consisted in puzzling or setting down each other?

L. Ay, they thought us very poor souls, I fancy, for being early wise, and ridiculing what they thought so fine; but that love of conversational argument is less the mode now than in our grandfathers' time; then it made a celebrity. You see the intellectual Nestors of that time still very anxious to engage you. G——n is quite offended with me for refusing to argue Helvetius's system with him in a close carriage.

"Strangulat inclusus dolor atque exæstuat intus."

A. The true spirit of conversation consists in building on another man's observation, not overturning it; thus, the wit says, "apropos of your remark;" and the disagreeable man exclaims, "I cannot agree with you."

Here our discourse was interrupted by the entrance of a female relation of L——'s; she came with his medicine; for, though he considers himself beyond human aid, he does not affect to despise the more sanguine hopes of those attached to him. "Let them think," said he, "that they have done all they could for me: my boat is on the water, it is true; but it would be ill-natured if I did not loiter a little on the strand. It seems to me, by-the-way, a singular thing that among persons about to die we note so little of that anxious, intense, restless curiosity to know what will await them beyond the grave, which, with me, is powerful enough to conquer regret. Even the most resigned to God, and the most assured of revelation, know not, nor can dream of the *nature* of the life, of the happiness, prepared for them. They know not *how* the senses are to be refined and sublimated into the faculties of a spirit; they know not *how* they shall live, and move, and have their being; they know not whom they shall see, or what they shall hear; they know not the colour, the capacity, of the glories with which they are to be brought face to face. Among the many mansions which is to be theirs? All this, the matter of grand and of no irreverent conjecture—all this, it seems to me, so natural to revolve—all this I revolve so often that the conjecture incorporates itself into a passion, and I am impatient to pass the ebon gate, and be lord of the eternal secret. Thus, as I approach nearer to death, Nature and the face of things assume a more solemn and august aspect. I look upon the leaves, and the grass, and the water, with a sentiment that is scarcely mournful; and yet I know not what all else it may be called, for it is deep, grave, and passionate, though scarcely sad. I desire, as I look on those, the ornaments and children of earth, to know whether, indeed, such things I shall see no more—whether they have no likeness, no archetype in the world in which my future home is to be cast; or whether they *have* their images above, only wrought in a more wondrous and delightful mould. Whether, in the strange land that knoweth neither season nor labour, there will not be, among all its glories, something familiar. Whether the heart will not recognise somewhat that it has known, somewhat of 'the blessed household tones,' somewhat of that which the clay loved and the spirit is reluctant to disavow. Besides, to one who, like us, has made a thirst and a first love of knowledge, what intenseness, as well as divinity, is there in that peculiar curiosity which relates to the extent of the knowledge we are to acquire. What, after all, is Heaven but a transition from dim guesses and blind struggling with a mysterious and adverse fate to the fulness of all wisdom—from ignorance, in a word, to knowledge—but knowledge of what order? Thus, even books have something weird and mystic in their speculations, which, some years ago, my spirit was too encumbered with its frame to recognise; for what of those speculations shall be true—what false? How far has our wisdom gone towards the arcanum of a true morality; how near has some daring and erratic reason approached to the secret of circulating happiness round the world? Shall he whom we now contemn as a visionary be discovered to have been the inspired prophet of our blinded and deafened race? and shall he whom we now honour as the lofty saint, or the profound teacher, be levelled to the propagator and sanctifier of narrow prejudices; the reasoner in a little angle of the great and scarce-discovered universe of truth; the moral Chinese, supposing that his empir fills the map of the world, and placing under an interdic the improvements of a nobler enlightenment?"

A. But to those—and how many are there?—wh doubt of the future world in itself, this solace of conjectur must be but a very languid and chilled exertion of th mind.

L. I grant it. I am not referring to the herd, whethe of one faith or another, or of none. I have often pleas myself with recalling an anecdote of Fuseli—a wonderfu man, whose capacities in this world were only a tithe par developed; in every thing of his, in his writings a well as his paintings, you see the mighty intellect strug gling forth with labour and pain, and with only a par tial success; and feeling this himself—feeling this con test between the glorious design and the crippled powe —I can readily penetrate into his meaning in the repl I am about to repeat. Some one said to him, "Do yo really believe, Mr. Fuseli, in the future existence of th soul?"—"I don't know," said Fuseli, "whether *yo* have a soul or no, but, by God! I know that *I* have.' And really, were it not for the glorious and all-circlin compassion expressed by our faith, it would be a littl difficult to imagine that the soul, that title-deed to im mortality, were equal in all—equal in the dull, una wakened clod of flesh which performs the offices tha preserve itself, and no more, and in the bright an winged natures with which we sometimes exalt ou own, and which seem to have nothing human abou them but the garments (to use the Athenian's* familia metaphor) which they wear away. You will smile a my pedantry, but one of the greatest pleasures I anti cipate in arriving at home—as the Moravian sectarian so endearingly call heaven—is to see Plato, and lear if he had ever been, as he himself imagined, and I an ready to believe, in a brighter world before he descende to this. So bewitching is the study of that divine ge nius, that I have often felt a sort of jealous envy of th living Platonist—Taylor; a man who seems to hav

* Socrates.

devoted a whole life to the contemplation of that mystical and unearthly philosophy. My ambition—had I enjoyed health—would never have suffered me to have become so dreaming a watcher over the lamp in another's tomb; but my imagination would have placed me in an ideal position, that my restlessness forbade me in reality. This activity of habit, yet love of literary indolence—this planning of schemes and conquests in learning, from which one bright smile from Enterprise would decoy me, when half begun, made C—— call me, not unaptly, "the most extraordinary reader he ever knew—*in theory*." I see, by-the-by, that you are leaning upon the "Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury," —will you open the page in which I have set a mark? We were speaking of the soul, and that page expresses a very beautiful and eloquent, if not very deep, sentiment on the subject. Will you read it?

A. Certainly.—"As in my mother's womb,* that formatrix which formed my eyes, ears, and other senses did not intend them for that dark and noisome place—but, as being conscious of a better life, made them as fitting organs to apprehend and perceive those things which occur in this world,—*so* I believe, since my coming into this world, my soul hath formed or produced certain faculties, which are almost as useless for this life as the above-named senses were for the mother's womb; and these faculties are Hope, Faith, Love, and Joy, since they never rest or fix on any transitory or perishing object in this world—as extending themselves to something farther than can be here given, and, indeed, acquiesce only in the perfect Eternal and Infinite."

L. It is fine—is it not?

A. Yes. It is a proof that the writer *has* felt that vague something which carries us beyond the world. To discover the evidence of that feeling is one of my first tasks in studying a great author. How solemnly it burns through Shakspeare! with what a mournful and austere grandeur it thrills through the yet diviner Milton! how peculiarly it has stamped itself in the

* I am not sure that I retail this passage *verbatim*. I committed it to memory, and I cannot now obtain the book by which to collate my recollection.

pages of our later poets—Wordsworth, Shelley, and even the more alloyed and sensual, and less benevolent verse of Byron. But this feeling is rarely met in any of the Continental poets, except, if I am informed rightly, the Germans.

L. Ay; Goëthe has it. To me there is something very mysterious and spiritual about Goëthe's genius; even that homely and plain sense with which, in common with all master-minds, he so often instructs us, and which is especially evident in his Memoirs, is the more effective from some delicate and subtle beauty of sentiment with which it is always certain to be found in juxtaposition.

A. I remember a very delicate observation of his in "Wilhelm Meister," a book which had a very marked influence upon my own mind; and, though the observation may seem commonplace, it is one of a nature very peculiar to Goëthe:—"When," he remarks, "we have despatched a letter to a friend which does not find him, but is brought back to us, what a singular emotion is produced by breaking open our own seal, and conversing with our altered self as with a third person."

L. There is something ghost-like in the conference, something like a commune with one's wraith.

A. You look in vain among the works of Scott for a remark like that.

L. Is the accusation fair? You look in vain in the "Wilhelm Meister" for the gorgeous painting of "Ivanhoe." But I confess myself no idolater of the "Waverley" novels; nor can I subscribe to the justice of advancing them beyond the wonderful poetry that preceded them. All Scott's merits seem to me especially those of a poet; and, when you come to his prose writings, you have the same feelings, the same descriptions, the same scenes, with the evident disadvantage of being stripped of a style of verse peculiarly emphatic, burning, and original. Where, in all the novels, is there a scene that, for rapidity, power, and the true lightning of the poet, if I may use the phrase, equals that in "Rokeby," not often quoted now, in which Bertrand Risingham enters the church:—

"The outmost crowd have heard a sound,
Like horse's hoof on harden'd ground," &c.
Rokeby, canto 6, stanza 32.

ene, very celebrated for its compression and bold
:ing, is to be found in the "Bride of Abydos:"—

"One bound he made, and gain'd the strand."
Bride of Abydos, canto 2, stanza 24.

pare the two. How markedly the comparison is vour of Scott. In a word, he combines in his po- all the merits of his prose; and the demerits of atter—the trite moral, the tame love, the want of athy with the great herd of man, the aristocratic ingly prejudice, either vanish from the poetry or ne a graceful and picturesque garb. I venture ophesy that the world will yet discover that they overrated one proof of his mighty genius, at the nse of an unjust slight to another. Yes, his poetry with its own light. A reviewer in the "Edin-' observes, that "in spirit, however different in , Shakspeare and Scott convey the best idea of er." The resemblance of Shakspeare to Homer not, indeed, trace; but that of Scott to the great k I have often and often noted. Scott would have lated Homer wonderfully, and in his own ballad e.

Have you seen his work on Demonology?

No. I hear his explainings away are ingenious; am far from disbelieving in ghosts. I hold the r in doubt: the proper state of the mind in all s where evidence and experience are not positive.

Are you in earnest?

Perfectly.

Have you seen a ghost, then?

You may smile, but I am not certain whether I or not.

The story, the story.

It must not be retailed, then.

It shall not.*

e reader will forgive me for allowing the above sentences to stand; they rious, as showing a peculiar infirmity of character. L—— is quite

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A. Of all enthusiasts, the painter Blake seems to have been the most remarkable. With what a hearty faith he believed in his faculty of seeing spirits and conversing with the dead! And what a delightful vein of madness it was—with what exquisite verses it inspired him!

L. And what engravings! I saw, a few days ago, a copy of the "Night Thoughts," which he had illustrated in a manner at once so grotesque, so sublime—now by so literal an interpretation, now by so vague and disconnected a train of invention, that the whole makes one of the most astonishing and curious productions which ever balanced between the conception of genius and the raving of positive insanity. I remember two or three, but they are not the most remarkable. To these two fine lines—

> "'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
> And ask them what report they bore to heaven,"

he has given the illustration of one sitting and with an earnest countenance conversing with a small shadowy shape at his knee, while other shapes of a similar form and aspect are seen gliding heavenward, each with a scroll in its hands. The effect is very solemn. Again, the line—

> "Till Death, that mighty hunter, earths them all,"

is bodied forth by a grim savage with a huge spear, cheering on fiendish and ghastly hounds, one of which has just torn down, and is griping by the throat, an unfortunate fugitive: the face of the hound is unutterably death-like.

The verse—

> "We censure Nature for a span too short,"

obtains an illustration, literal to ridicule.—A bearded man of gigantic stature is spanning an infant with his finger and thumb. Scarcely less literal, but more impressive, is the engraving of the following:—

"When Sense runs savage, broke from Reason's chain,
And sings false peace till smother'd by the pall!"

You perceive a young female savage, with long locks, wandering alone, and exulting; while above, two bodiless hands extend a mighty pall, that appears about to fall upon the unconscious rejoicer.

A. Young was fortunate. He seems almost the only poet who has had his mere metaphors illustrated and made corporeal.

L. What wonderful metaphors they are; sometimes trite, familiar, commonplace—sometimes bombast and fantastic, but often how ineffably sublime. Milton himself has not surpassed them. But Young is not done justice to, popular as he is. He has never yet had a critic to display and make current his most peculiar and emphatic beauties.

A. We can, to be sure, but ill supply the place of such a critic; but let us, some day or other, open his "Night Thoughts" together, and make our comments.

L. It will be a great pleasure to me. Young is, of all poets, the one to be studied by a man who is about to break the golden chains that bind him to the world—this gloom, then, does not appal or deject; for it is the gloom of this earth we are about to leave, and casts not a single shadow over the heaven which it contrasts—the dark river of his solemn and dread images sweeps the thoughts onward to eternity. We have no desire even to look behind; the ideas he awakens are, in his own words, "the pioneers of Death;" they make the road broad and clear; they bear down those "arrests and barriers," the affections; the goal, starred and luminous with glory, is placed full before us; everything else with which he girds our path afflicts and saddens. We recoil, we shudder at life; and as children that in tears and agony at some past peril bound forward to their mother's knee, we hasten, as our comfort and our parent, to the bosom of Death.

CONVERSATION THE SECOND.

When I called on L—— the third day after the conversation I have attempted to record, though with the partial success that must always attend the endeavour to retail dialogue on paper, I found him stretched on his sofa, and evidently much weaker than when I had last seen him. He had suffered the whole night from violent spasms in the chest, and, though now free from pain, was labouring under the exhaustion which follows it. But nothing could wholly conquer in him a certain high-wrought, rather than cheerful elasticity of mind, and in illness it was more remarkable than in health; for I know not how it was, but in illness his thoughts seemed to stand forth more prominent, to grow more transparent, than they were wont in the ordinary state of the body. He had also of late, until his present malady, fallen into an habitual silence, from which only at moments he could be aroused. Perhaps now, however, when all his contemplations were bounded to a goal apparently near at hand, and were tinged with the grave (though in him no gloomy) colours common to the thoughts of death—that secret yearning for sympathy—*that desire to communicate*—inherent in man, became the stronger for the short date that seemed allowed for their indulgence. Wishes long hoarded, reflections often and deeply revolved, finding themselves cut off from the distant objects which they had travailed to acquire, seemed wisely to lay down their burthen, and arrest their course upon a journey they felt they were never destined to complete. "I have been reading," said L——, (after we had conversed for some minutes about himself) "that divine work on 'The Advancement of Learning.' What English writer (unless it be Milton in his prose works), ever lifted us from this low earth like Bacon? How shrink before his lofty sentences all the meagre consolation and trite commonplace of lecturers and preachers,—it is, as he has beautifully expressed it, upon no '*waxen wings*' that he urges the mind through the great courses of heaven. He makes us feel less earthly in our desires, by making us imagine ourselves *wiser;* the love of a divine knowledge inspires and exalts us. And so nobly has he forced even our ignorance to contribute towards enlarging the soul—towards increasing our longings after immortality, that he never leaves us, like other philosophers, with a sense of self-littleness and dissatisfaction. With the same hand that limits our progress on earth, he points to the illimitable glories of heaven. Mark how he has done this in the passage I will read to you. As he proceeds in his sublime vindication of knowledge, 'from the discredits and disgraces it hath received all from ignorance, but ignorance, severally acquired, appearing sometimes in the zeal and jealousy of divines; sometimes in the severity and arrogance of politicians; sometimes in the errors and imperfections of learned men themselves.' Proceeding in this august and majestical defence, he states the legitimate limits of knowledge as follows:—'First, that we do not so place our felicity in knowledge as to forget our mortality; secondly, that we make application of our knowledge to give ourselves repose and contentment, not distaste or repining; thirdly, that we do not presume, by the contemplation of Nature, to attain to the mysteries of God.' After speaking of the first two limits, he comes as follows to the last:—'And for the third point, it deserveth to be a little stood upon, and not to be lightly passed over; for if any man shall think, by view and inquiry into these sensible and material things, to attain that light whereby he may reveal unto himself the nature or will of God, then indeed is he spoiled by vain philosophy; for the contemplation of God's creatures and works produceth (*having regard to the works and creatures themselves*) knowledge; but (*having regard to God*) no perfect knowledge, but wonder, which is broken knowledge.

And therefore (note how wonderfully this image is translated, and how beautifully applied) it was most aptly said by one of Plato's school, 'that the sense of man carrieth a resemblance with the sun, which, as we see, openeth and revealeth all the celestial globe; but then again it obscureth the stars and celestial globe: so doth the sense discover natural things, but it darkeneth and shutteth up divine.' Tell me now, and speak frankly, not misled by the awe and antique splendour of the language alone,—tell me whether you do not feel in the above passages, not humbled by your ignorance, but transported and raised by its very conviction? for, by leaving the mysteries of heaven, and heaven alone, unpenetrated by our knowledge, what do we, in reality, but direct the secret and reverent desires of our hearts to that immortal life which shall put the crown upon the great ambition of knowledge, and reveal those mysteries which are shut out from us in this narrow being? Here then there is nothing to lower us in our imaginations,—nothing to chill us in the ardour of our best aspirings,—nothing to disgust us with the bounds of knowledge, or make us recoil upon ourselves with the sense of vanity, of emptiness, of desolation. It is this —this peculiar prerogative of the conviction of our inborn immortality, to take away from us that bitterness at the checks and arrests of knowledge, of which the wise of all ages have complained,—to give wings to our thoughts at the very moment they are stopped on their earthly course,—to ennoble us from ourselves at the moment when self languishes and droops: it is this prerogative, I say, which has always seemed to me the greatest advantage which a thinking man, who believes in our immortality, has over one who does not. And though, fortunately for mankind and for all real virtue, the time is rapidly passing away for attempting to measure the conduct of others by the proportion in which their opinions resemble our own, yet it must be confessed, that he who claims this prerogative has a wonderful advantage over him who rejects it—in the acquisition of noble and unworldly thoughts—in the stimulus to wisdom, and the exalting of the affections, the visions, and the desires! It seems to me as if not only the Form, but the SOUL of Man was made 'to walk erect, and to look upon the stars,'"

A. (after some pause) Whether or not that it arises from this sentiment, common (however secretly nursed) to the generality of men; this sentiment, that the sublimest sources of emotion and of wisdom remain as yet unknown, there is one very peculiar characteristic in all genius of the highest order, viz. even its loftiest attempts impress us with the feeling that a vague but glorious "SOMETHING" inspired or exalted the attempt, *and yet remains unexpressed.* The effect is like that of the spire, which, by insensibly tapering into heaven, owes its pathos and its sublimity to the secret thoughts with which that heaven is associated.

L. Yes; and this, which you say justly is the characteristic of the loftiest order of genius, is that token and test of sublimity so especially insisted upon by the ancients, who, perhaps, in consequence of the great scope left by their religion to inquiry, were more impressed with the sentiment we speak of than is common to the homelier sense, and the satisfied and quiet contemplations of the moderns. The illustrious friend of Zenobia* has made it a characteristic of the true sublime to leave behind it something more to be contemplated than is expressed; and again, Pliny, speaking of painters, observes, I think of Timanthes, "that in his works something more† than was painted was understood, and that when his art was at the highest, the genius was beyond the art." It is this which especially designates the poetry of Young.

A. Whom we were to criticise.

L. Yes; but not to-day. My mood is brighter than that of the poet, whose soul walketh in the valley of *the shadow* of death. Let us enter upon our task when we can both feel thoroughly satisfied with the consola-

* Longin. Sect. 7.

† "In unius hujus operibus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur; et cum sit ars summa, ingenium tamen ultra artem est."

tions of his gloom, and forget the darkness around in the stars "which he calls to listen."* What news is there stirring in this lower world?

Here we talked for some time on the aspect of affairs, the administration, the disturbances in the country. I told him of a distinguished contemporary of ours at Cambridge, who had just been placed in Parliament on account of his talents. L—— spoke at large on his own ambition to enter a public career. "I think," said he, "if I had even at this moment the opportunity to do so, the activity, the zeal, the stimulus, which the change would produce might yet save my life. I feel now as if certain sources of emotion dammed up were wasting my heart away with a suppressed ebb and flow, as if all my keenest energies were perishing in their scabbard with their own rust. I should not, were I plunged into action, have time to die. As it is, I feel like the old sage, who covered his face with his cloak, and sate himself down, waiting for death.

A. But why not enter public life then at once?

L. Look at me. Am I in a state to canvass some free borough? to ride here—to walk there—to disguise —to bustle—to feast—to flatter—to lie?

A. But your relation, Lord L——?

L. Has offered me a seat if I will support his party, the old tories.

A. And your college friend, Lord ——?

L. Has forgotten me; yet none more than he will grieve, for an hour at least, when I am dead. Let me return to my image of the sage and his cloak; I have always thought it one of the most affecting anecdotes in history. When Pericles, hearing of the determination of the philosopher, (who you remember was his preceptor Anaxagoras) hastened to the spot where he sat, and tarried for the last release; he implored the sage in a late and unavailing grief to struggle with his approaching fate, and to baffle the gathering death. "Oh, Pericles," said the old man, stung by the memory of long neglect, and in a feeble and dying voice, as he

* "And call the stars to listen."—*Young's Night Thoughts.*

just lifted his face from his mantle, "they who need the lamp do not forget to feed it with oil."

Returning to the excitement and the animation of the political world around; how strangely falls the sound of tumult on the ear of one who is about to die—how strange doth it seem to behold life so busy and death so near. It is this contrast which, I own, gives me the most mournful, though vague and reluctantly acknowledged, feelings that I experience; it gives me a dejection, an envy; my higher and more soaring thoughts desert me, I become sensible only of my weakness, of my want of use, in this world where all are buckling to their armour, and awaiting an excitation, an enterprise, and a danger. I remember all my old ambition —my former hopes—my energies—my anticipations: I see the great tides of action sweep over me, and behold myself not even wrestling with death, but feel it gather and darken upon me, unable to stir or to resist. I could compare myself to some neglected fountain in a ruined city: amid the crumbling palaces of Hope, which have fallen around me, the waters of my life ooze away in silence and desolation.

L——'s voice faltered a little as he spoke, and his dog, whether, as I often think, there is in that animal an instinct which lets him know by a look, by a tone of voice, when the object of his wonderful fidelity and affection is sad at heart; his dog, an old pointer, which he had cherished for many years, and was no less his companion in the closet than it had once been in the chase, came up to him and licked his hand. I own this little incident affected me, and the tears rushed into my eyes. But I was yet more softened when I saw that L——'s tears were falling fast over the honest countenance of the dog; I knew well what was passing in his mind—no womanly weakness—no repining at death; of all men he had suffered most, and felt most keenly, the neglect and perfidy of friends; and, at that moment, he was contrasting a thousand bitter remembrances with the simple affection of that humble companion. I never saw L—— *weep* before, though I have seen him in trying afflictions, and though his emotions are so easily excited that he never utters a noble thought or reads a touching sentiment in poetry but you may perceive a certain moisture in his eyes, and a quiver in his lips.

Our conversation drooped after this, and though I staid with him for some hours longer, I do not remember any thing else that day in our meeting that was worth repeating.

CONVERSATION THE THIRD.

I CALLED on L—— the next day; K——, one of the few persons he admits, was with him; they were talking on those writers who have directed their philosophy towards matters of the world: who have reduced wisdom into epigrams, and given the goddess of the grove and the portico the dress of a lady of fashion. "Never, perhaps," said K——, "did Virtue, despite the assertion of Plato that we had only to behold in order to adore her, attract so many disciples to wisdom as wit has done. How many of us have been first attracted to reason, first learned to think, to draw conclusions, to extract a moral from the follies of life, by some dazzling aphorism from Rochefoucault or La Bruyere. Point, like rhyme, seizes at once the memory and the imagination; for my own part, I will own frankly, that I should never have known what it was to reflect—I should never have written on Political Economy—I should never have penetrated into the character of my rogue of a guardian, and saved my fortune by a timely act of prudence—I should never have chosen so good a wife—nay, I should never have been L——'s friend, if I had not, one wet Sunday at Versailles, stumbled upon Rochefoucault's maxims: from that moment *I thought*, and I thought very erroneously and very superficially for some time, but the habit of thinking by degrees cures the faults of its noviciateship; and I often bless Rochefoucault as the means which redeemed me from a life of extravagance and debauchery, from the clutches of a rascal, and made me fond of rational pursuits and respectable society. Yet how little would Rochefoucault's book seem likely, to the shallow declaimer on the heartlessness of its doctrines, to produce so good an effect.

A. Yes, the faults of a brilliant writer are never dangerous on the long run, a thousand people read his work who would read no other; inquiry is directed to each of his doctrines, it is soon discovered what is sound and what is false; the sound become maxims, and the false beacons. But your dull writer is little conned, little discussed. Debate, that great winnower of the corn from the chaff, is denied him; the student hears of him as an authority, reads him without a guide, imbibes his errors, and retails them as a proof of his learning. In a word, the dull writer does not attract to wisdom those indisposed to follow it: and to those disposed he bequeaths as good a chance of inheriting a blunder as a truth.

L. I will own to you very frankly that I have one objection *to beginning to think*, from the thoughts of these worldly inquirers. Notwithstanding Rochefoucault tells us himself, with so honest a gravity, that he had "les sentimens belles," and that he approved "extrêmement les belles passions," his obvious tendency is not to ennoble; he gives us the exact world, but he does not excite us to fill its grand parts; he tells us the real motives of men, but he does not tell us also the better motives with which they are entwined, and by cultivating which they can be purified and raised. This is what I find not to blame, but to lament in most of the authors who have very shrewdly, and with a felicitous and just penetration, unravelled the vices and errors of mankind. I find it in La Bruyere, in Rochefoucault, and even in the more weak and tender Vauvenargues, whose merits have, I think, been so unduly

ingly perish; they stretch forth their arms, as it w
from their ruined and falling prison-house—they y
for expansion and release. 'Is it,' as that divine, the
often sullied nature, at once the luminary and the
con to English statesmen, has somewhere so touchi
asked; 'is it that we grow more tender as the mo
of our great separation approaches, or is it that
who are to live together in another state (for friend
exists not but for the good) begin to feel more stro
that divine sympathy which is to be the great bon
their future society?'"*

I could have answered this remark by an allusic
the change in the physical state; the relaxation ir
red by illness; the helplessness we feel when sick,
the sense of dependence, the desire to *lean somew*
that it occasions. But I had no desire to chill or lc
the imaginative turn of reasoning to which L——
inclined, and after a little pause he continued: "
men who have ardent affections, there seems to m
medium between public life and dissatisfaction.
public life those affections find ample channel:
become benevolence, or patriotism, or the spirit of p
—or, finally, attaching themselves to things, not
sons, concentrate into ambition. But in private
who, after the first enthusiasm of passion departs,
possessed of a fervent and tender soul, is ever
tented with the return it meets? A word, a gla
chills us; we ask for too keen a sympathy; we
selves grow irritable that we find it not—the irritab
offends; that is given to the temper which in realit
the weakness of the heart—accusation, dispute, c
ness, succeed. We are flung back upon our
breasts, and so comes one good or one evil—we g
devout or we grow selfish. Denied vent among
fellows, the affections find a refuge in heaven, or
centre in a peevish and lonely contraction of heart,
self-love becomes literally, as the forgotten LEE
expressed it generally,

* Bolingbroke's Letters to Swift.

'The axletree that darts through all the frame.'

This inevitable alternative is more especially to be noted in women; their affections are more acute than ours, so also is their disappointment. It is thus you see the credulous fondness of the devotee, or the fossilized heart of the solitary crone, where, some thirty years back, you would have witnessed a soul running over with love for all things, and the yearning to be loved again! Ah! why, why is it that no natures are made wholly alike? why is it that of all blessings we long the most for sympathy? and of all blessings it is the one which none (or the exceptions are so scanty as not to avail) can say, after the experience of years and the trial of custom, that they have possessed. Milton, whose fate through life was disappointment—disappointment in his private ties and his public attachments—Milton, who has descended to an unthinking posterity as possessing a mind, however elevated, at least austere and harsh, has in one of his early Latin poems expressed this sentiment with a melancholy and soft pathos, not often found in the golden and Platonic richness of his youthful effusions in his own language:—

'Vix sibi quisque parem de millibus invenit unum;
Aut si fors dederit tandem non aspera votis
Illum inopina dies—qua non speraveris hora
Surripit—eternum linquens in sæcula damnum.'*

"And who is there that hath not said to himself, if possessed for a short time of one heart entirely resembling and responding to his own—who has not said to himself daily and hourly, '*This* cannot last?' Has he not felt a dim, unacknowledged dread of death? has he not, for the first time, shrunk from penetrating into the future? has he not become timorous and uneasy? is he not like the miser who journeys on a road begirt with a thousand perils, and who yet carries with him

* Which may be thus prosaically translated:
"Scarce one in thousands meets a kindred heart;
Or if no harsh fate grant, at last, his dreams,
Comes Death; and in the least foreboded hour,
Bequeaths the breast an everlasting blank."

his all? Alas! there was a world of deep and true feeling in that expression, which, *critically* examined, is but a conceit. Love 'hath, indeed, made his best interpreter a sigh.'"*

A. Say what we will of Lord Byron, and thinking men are cooling from the opinion first passed upon him, no poet hath touched upon more of the common and daily chords of our nature.

L. His merits have undoubtedly been erroneously ranked and analyzed; but we will speak of him more at large when I come to my history; for I shall have to mention the effect produced on my mind by his poems, and the opinion I have formed of them now that the effect has passed away. Nothing seems to me more singular in the history of imitation than the extraordinary misconception all Lord Byron's imitators incurred with respect to the strain they attempted to echo. The great characteristics of Lord Byron are vigour, nerve—the addressing at once the common feelings and earthly passions—never growing mawkish, never girlishly sentimental—never, despite of all his digressions, encouraging the foliage to the prejudice of the fruit. What are the characteristics of all the imitators?—they are weak—they whine—they address *no* common passion—they heap up gorgeous words—they make pyramids of flowers—they abjure vigour—they talk of appealing "to the few congenial minds"—they are proud of wearying you, and consider the want of interest the proof of a sublime genius. Byron, when he complains, is the hero who shows his wounds; his imitators are beggars in the street, who cry, "Look at these sores, sir!" In the former case there is pathos, because *there is admiration* as well as pity; in the latter there is disgust, because there is at once contempt for the practised whine and the feigned disease. A man who wishes now to succeed in poetry must be imbued deeply with the spirit of this day, not that of the past. He must have caught the mighty inspiration which is breathing

* Byron

throughout the awakened and watchful world. With enthusiasm he must blend a common and plain sense; he must address the humours, the feelings, and the understandings of the middle as well as the higher orders; he must find an audience in Manchester and Liverpool. The aristocratic gloom, the lordly misanthropy, that Byron represented, have perished amid the action, the vividness, the *life* of these times. Instead of sentiment, let shrewd wit or determined energy be the vehicle; instead of the habits and moods of a few, let the great interests of the many be the theme.

A. But in this country the aristocracy yet make the first class of readers into whose hands poetry falls; if *they* are not conciliated, the book does not become the fashion—if not the fashion, the middle orders will never read it.

L. But can this last?—can it even last long? Will there be no sagacious, no powerful critic, who will drag into notice what can fall only into a temporary neglect? I say temporary, for you must allow that whatever addresses the multitude through *their* feelings, or their *everlasting interests*, must be destined to immortality: the directors, the lovers of the multitude, glad of an authority, will perpetually recur to its pages—attention directed to them, fame follows. To prophesy whether or not, in these times, a rising author will become illustrious, let me inquire only, after satisfying me of his genius, how far he is the servant of Truth—how far he is willing to turn all his powers to her worship—to come forth from his cherished moods of thought, from the strongholds of mannerism and style—let me see him disdain no species of composition that promotes her good, now daring the loftiest, now dignifying the lowest—let me see him versatile in the method, but the same in the purpose—let him go to every field for the garland or the harvest, but be there but one altar for all the produce! Such a man cannot fail of becoming great; through envy, through neglect, through hatred, through fortune, he will win his way; he will neither falter nor grow sick at heart; he will feel, in every privation, in every disappointment, the certainty of his reward; he will indulge enthusiasm, nor dread ridicule; he will brandish the blade of satire, nor fear the enmity it excites. By little and little, men will see in him who fights through all obstacles a champion and a leader. When a principle is to be struggled for, on him they will turn their eyes; when a prejudice is to be stormed, they will look to see his pennant wave the first above the breach. Amid the sweeping and gathering deluge of ages, he shall be saved, for TRUTH is the indestructible and blessed ark to which he hath confided his name!

CONVERSATION THE FOURTH.

In order to make allowance for much of the manner and the matter of L——'s conversation, I must beg the reader to observe how largely the faculties of the imagination enter even into those channels of his mind from which (were the judgment thoroughly sound) all that is merely imaginative would be the most carefully banished. In L——'s character, indeed, whatever may be his talents, there was always a string loose, something morbid and vague, which even in perceiving one could scarcely contemn, for it gave a tenderness to his views, and a glow of sentiment to his opinions, which made us love him better, perhaps, than if his learning and genius had been accompanied with a severer justness of reasoning. For my own part, I, who hate the world and seldom see any thing that seems to me, if rightly analyzed, above contempt, am often carried away in spite of myself by his benevolence of opinion, and his softening and gentle order of philosophy. I often smile, as I listen to his wandering and platonic conjectures on our earthly end and powers, but I am not sure that the smile is in disdain, even when his reasoning appears the most erratic.

I reminded L——, when I next saw him, of his promise, in our last conversation, to give me a sketch of his early history. I wished it to be the history of his mind as well as his adventures; in a word, a literary and moral, as well as actual narrative,—"MEMOIR OF A STUDENT." The moment in which I pressed the wish was favourable. He was in better spirits than usual, and free from pain; the evening was fine, and there was that quiet cheerfulness in the air which we sometimes find toward the close of one of those mild days that occasionally relieve the severity of an English winter.

THE CONFESSIONS OF AN AMBITIOUS STUDENT.

"You know," said L——, commencing his story, "that I was born to the advantage of a good name, and of more than a moderate opulence; the care of my education, for I was an orphan, devolved upon my aunt, a maiden-lady, of some considerable acquirement and some very rare qualities of heart. Good old woman! how well and how kindly I remember her, with her high cap and 'kerchief, the tortoiseshell spectacles, that could not conceal or injure the gentle expression of her eyes—eyes above which the brow never frowned. How well too I remember the spelling-book, and the grammar, and (as I grew older) the odd volume of Plutarch's Lives, that always lay, for *my* use and profit, on the old dark table beside her chair. And something better, too, than spelling and grammar, ay, and even the life of Caius Marius, with that grand and terrible incident in the memoir which Plutarch has so finely told, of how the intended murderer, entering the great Roman's hiding-chamber, as he lay there, stricken by years and misfortune, saw through the dim and solemn twilight of the room the eye of the purposed victim fall like a warning light upon him, while a voice exclaimed, 'Darest thou, man, to slay Caius Marius?' and how the stern Gaul, all awe-stricken and amazed, dropped the weapon, and fled from the chamber; better, I say, even than spelling and grammar, and these fine legends of old were certain homely precepts with which my good aunt was wont to diversify the lecture. Never to tell a lie, never to do a mean action, never to forsake a friend, and never to malign a foe; these were the hereditary maxims of her race, and these she instilled into my mind, as something, which if I remembered, even the sin of forgetting how to spell words in eight syllables might be reasonably forgiven me.

"I was sent to school when I was somewhat about seven years old, and I remained at that school till I was twelve, and could construe Ovid's Epistles. I was then transplanted to another, better adapted to my increased years and wisdom. Thither I went with a notable resolution, which greatly tended in its consequences to expand my future character. At my first academy, I had been so often and so bitterly the victim of the exuberant ferocity of the elder boys, that I inly resolved, the moment I was of an age and stature to make any reasonable sort of defence, to anticipate the laws of honour, and never put up, in tranquil endurance, with a blow. When, therefore, I found myself at a new school, and at the age of twelve years, I saw (in my fancy) the epoch of resistance and emancipation which I had so long coveted. The third day of my arrival I was put to the proof; I was struck by a boy twice my size—I returned the blow—we fought, and I was conquered, but he never struck me again. That was an admirable rule of mine, if a boy has but animal hardihood; for, for one sound beating one escapes at least twenty lesser ones, with teasings and tormentings indefinitely numerous into the bargain. No boy likes to engage with a boy much less than himself, and rather than do so, he will refrain from the pleasure of tyrannizing. We cannot, alas! in the present state of the world, learn too early the great wisdom of resistance. I carried this rule, however, a little too far, as you shall see. I had never been once touched, once even chidden by the master, till one day, when I was about fifteen, we had a desperate quarrel, ending in my expulsion.

was a certain usher in the school, a very pink attern of ushers. He was hard to the lesser boys, had his favourites among them,—fellows who s called him Sir, and offered him oranges. To the higher school he was generally courteous, was a part of his policy to get himself invited by one or the other of us during the holydays. is purpose he winked at many of our transgres- allowed us to give feasts on a half-holyday, and othing if he discovered a crib* in our possession. h, to the mistress, he was meekness in a human . Such humble and sleek modesty never ap- d before in a pair of drab inexpressibles and long s. How he praised her pudding on a Sunday! he extolled her youngest dunce on his entrance Greek! how delicately he hinted at her still exist- harms, when she wore her new silk gown at the church! and how subtlely he alluded to her gen- fluence over the rigid doctor! Some how or other, en the usher and myself there was a feud; we d on each other not lovingly; he said I had set ys against him, and I accused him, in my own of doing me no good service with the fat school- ess. Things at length came to an open rupture. evening, after school, the usher was indulging lf with one of the higher boys in the gentle recre- of a game at draughts. Now, after school, the lroom belonged solely and wholly to the boys; it a wet afternoon, and some half-a-dozen of us ed into a game not quite so quiet as that the was engaged in. Mr. —— commanded silence! ompanions were awed—not so myself; I insisted r right to be as noisy as we would out of school. loquence convinced them, and we renewed the . The usher again commanded silence; we af- l not to hear him. He rose; he saw me in the f rebellion.

Mr. L——,' cried he, 'do you hear me, sir? ice!'

e cant word at schools for a literal translation of some classic author.

"'I beg pardon, sir; but we have a right to the schoolroom after hours; especially of a wet evening.'

"'Oh! very well, sir; very well; I shall report you to the doctor.' So saying, the usher buttoned up his nether garment, which he had a curious custom of unbracing after school, especially when engaged in draughts, and went forthwith to the master. I continued the game. The master entered. He was a tall, gaunt, lame man, very dark in hue, and of a stern Cameronian countenance, with a cast in his eye.

"'How is this, Mr. L——?' said he, walking up to me; 'how dared you disobey Mr. ——'s orders?'

"'Sir! his orders were against the custom of the school.'

"'Custom, sir; and who gives custom to this school but myself? You are insolent, Mr. L——, and you don't know what is due to your superiors.'

"'Superiors!' said I, with a look at the usher. The master thought I spoke of himself; his choler rose, and he gave me a box on the ear.

"All my blood was up in a moment; never yet, under that roof, had I received a blow unavenged on the spot. I had fought my way in the school, step by step, to the first rank of pugilistic heroism. Those taller and more peaceable than myself hated me, but attacked not; these were now around me exulting in my mortification; I saw them nudge each other with insolent satisfaction; I saw their eyes gloat and their features grin. The master had never before struck a boy in my class. The insult was tenfold, because unparalleled. All these thoughts flashed across me. I gathered myself up, clenched my fist, and, with a sudden and almost unconscious effort, I returned, and in no gentle manner, the blow I had received. The pedagogue could have crushed me on the spot; he was a remarkably powerful man. I honour him at this moment for his forbearance; at that moment I despised him for his cowardice. He looked thunderstruck, after he had received so audacious a proof of my contumacy; the blood left, and then gushed burningly back to, his ow cheek. 'It is well, sir," said he, at length; low me!' and he walked straight out of the schooln. I obeyed with a mechanical and dogged sullen-. He led the way into the house, which was deied from the schoolroom; entered a little dingy it parlour, in which only once before (the eve of my appearance under his roof) had I ever set foot; ioned me also within the apartment; gave me one n, contemptuous look; turned on his heel; left the n; locked the door, and I was alone. At night the dservants came in, and made up a bed on a little k horsehair sofa. There was I left to repose. next morning came at last. My breakfast was ight me, in a mysterious silence. I began to be afed by the monotony and dulness of my seclusion. oked carefully round the little chamber for a book, at length, behind a red tea-tray, I found one. It —I remember it well—it was Beloe's Sexagenarian. ave never looked into the book since, but it made siderable impression on me at the time,—a dull ancholy impression, like that produced on us by a y, drizzling day; there seemed to me then a stagt quiet, a heavy repose about the memoir which dened me with the idea of a man writing the biophy of a life never enjoyed, and wholly unconscious it had not been enjoyed to the utmost. It is very ly that this impression is not a just one, and were I ead the work again it might create very different sations. But I recollect that I said, at some pase or another, with considerable fervour, 'Well, I will er devote existence to becoming a scholar.' I had finished the book, when the mistress entered, as if ting for a bunch of keys, but in reality to see how I employed; a very angry glance did she cast upon poor amusement with the Sexagenarian, and about minutes after she left the room, a servant entered demanded the book. The reading of the Sexageian remains yet unconcluded, and most probably will remain to my dying day. A gloomy evening and a pless night succeeded; but early next morning a ring was heard at the gate, and from the window of my dungeon I saw the servant open the gate, and my aunt enter and walk up the little strait ribbon of gravel that intersected what was termed the front garden. In about half an hour afterward the doctor entered with my poor relation, the latter in tears. The doctor had declared himself inexorable; nothing less than my expulsion would atone for my crime. Now my aunt was appalled by the word expulsion; she had heard of boys to whom expulsion had been ruin for life; on whom it had shut the gates of college, the advantages of connexion, the fold of the church, the honours of civil professions; it was a sound full of omen and doom to her ear. She struggled against what she deemed so lasting a disgrace. I remained in the dignity of silence, struck to the heart by her grief and reproaches, but resolved to show no token of remorse.

"'Look, ma'am,' cried the doctor, irritated by obstinacy; 'look at the young gentleman's countenance: do you see repentance there?' My aunt looked, and I walked to the window to hide my face. This finished the business, and I returned home that day with my aunt; who saw in me a future outcast, and a man undone for life, for want of a proper facility in bearing boxes on the ear.

"Within a week from that time I was in the house of a gentleman, who professed not to keep a school, but to take pupils,—a nice distinction, that separates the schoolmaster from the tutor. There were about six of us, from the age of fifteen to eighteen. He undertook to prepare us for the university, and with him, in real earnest, I, for the first time, began *to learn*. Yes; *there* commenced an epoch both in my mind and heart,—I woke to the knowledge of books and also of myself. In one year I passed over a world of feelings. From the child I rose at once into the man. But let me tell my story methodically; and first, as to the education of the intellect. Mr. S—— was an elegant and graceful scholar, of the university *calibre*, not deeply learned, but intimately acquainted with the ities and the subtleties of the authors he had read, know, A——, what authors a university scholar does l, and those which he neglects. At this time it is those most generally neglected that I am least imectly acquainted; but it was not so then, as you suppose. Before I went to Mr. S——'s, I cery never betrayed any very studious disposition; ordinary and hackneyed method of construing, and ing, and learning by heart, and making themes, se only possible excellence was to be unoriginal, verses, in which the highest beauty was a dexterous iarism;—all this had disgusted me betimes, and I *ked* lessons with the same avidity as the rest of my . It became quite and suddenly different with Mr. —. The first day of my arrival, I *took up* the lea of Euripides. Into what a delightful recreadid S—— manage to convert the task I had hiththought so wearisome,—how eloquently he dwelt each poetical expression,—how richly he illustrated y beauty, by comparisons and contrasts from the es of other poets! What a life he breathed into dull lecture! How glowingly, as if touched by a d, was the Greek crabbed sentence, hitherto breathout of lexicons and grammars, exalted into the fresh and the glory of the poet. Euripides was the of the divine spirits of old who taught me to burn the dreams of fiction; and so great and deep is gratitude, that at this day I read his plays more n than I do even those of Shakspeare, and imagine beauties speak to me from that little old worn edi, in which I then read him, that are dumb and lifeto every heart but my own. I now studied with a frame of mind: first, I began to admire—then to ll upon what I admired—then to criticise, or somees to imitate. Within two years I had read and dered over the works of all the Greek and Latin ts, historians, orators! the pages of the philosophers ie were shut to me. The divine lore of Plato, and hard and grasping intellect of the Stagyrite, S—— not undertake to decipher and expound. I except, indeed, those hackneyed and petty portions of the latter through which every orthodox schoolman pushes his brief but unwilling way. You recollect that passage in Gibbon's Memoirs, in which he subjoins, with a pedant's pleasing ostentation, the list of the books he had read, I think, within a year. Judge of the gratification to my pride, when, chancing to meet with this passage, I found that my labours in this department had at least equalled those of the triumphant historian.

"I had been a little more than a year with S——, and a fit, one bright spring morning, came over me—a fit of poetry. From that time the disorder increased, for I indulged it; and though such of my performances as have been seen by friendly eyes have been looked upon as mediocre enough, I still believe that if ever I could win a lasting reputation, it would be through that channel. Love usually accompanies poetry, and, in my case, there was no exception to the rule.

"There was a slender, but pleasant brook, about two miles from S——'s house, to which one or two of us were accustomed, in the summer days, to repair to bathe and saunter away our leisure hours. To this favourite spot I one day went alone, and crossing a field which led to the brook, I encountered two ladies, with one of whom, having met her at some house in the neighbourhood, I had a slight acquaintance. We stopped to speak to each other, and I saw the face of her companion. Alas! were I to live ten thousand lives, there would never be a moment in which I could be alone—nor sleeping, and that face not with me!

"My acquaintance introduced us to each other. I walked home with them to the house of Miss D—— (so was the strange, who was also the younger, lady, named). The next day I called upon her: the acquaintance thus commenced did not droop; and, notwithstanding our youth—for Lucy D—— was only seventeen, and I nearly a year younger—we soon loved, and with a love which, full of poesy and dreaming, as from our age it necessarily must have been, was not less durable nor less heartfelt than if it had arisen from the deeper and more earthly sources in which later life only hoards its affections.

"Oh, God! how little did I think of what our young folly entailed upon us! We delivered ourselves up to the dictates of our hearts, and forgot that there was a future. Neither of us had any ulterior design; we did not think—poor children that we were—of marriage, and settlements, and consent of relations. We touched each other's hands, and were happy; we read poetry together—and when we lifted up our eyes from the page, those eyes met, and we did not know why our hearts beat so violently; and at length, when we spake of love, and when we called each other Lucy and ——; when we described all that we had thought in absence—and all we had felt when present—when we sat with our hands locked each in each—and at last, growing bolder, when in the still and quiet loneliness of a summer twilight we exchanged our first kiss, we did not dream that the world forbade what seemed to us so natural; nor—feeling in our own hearts the impossibility of change—did we ever ask whether this sweet and mystic state of existence was to last for ever!

"Lucy was an only child; her father was a man of wretched character. A profligate, a gambler—ruined alike in fortune, hope, and reputation, he was yet her only guardian and protector. The village in which we both resided was near London; there Mr. D—— had a small cottage, where he left his daughter and his slender establishment for days, and sometimes for weeks together, while he was engaged in equivocal speculations—giving no address, and engaged in no professional mode of life. Lucy's mother had died long since of a broken heart—(that fate, too, was afterward her daughter's)—so that this poor girl was literally without a monitor or a friend, save her own innocence—and, alas! innocence is but a poor substitute for experience. The lady with whom I had met her had known her mother, and she felt compassion for the child. She saw her constantly, and sometimes took her to her own house, whenever she was in the neighbourhood; but that was not often, and only for a few days at a time. Her excepted, Lucy had no female friend.

"Was it a wonder, then, that she allowed herself to meet me?—that we spent hours and hours together?—that she called me her only friend—her brother as well as her lover? There was a peculiarity in our attachment worth noticing. Never, from the first hour of our meeting to the last of our separation, did we ever say an unkind or cutting word to each other. Living so much alone—never meeting in the world—unacquainted with all the tricks, and doubts, and artifices of life, we never had cause for the jealousy and the reproach, the sharp suspicion, or the premeditated coquetry, which diversify the current of loves formed in society—the kindest language, the most tender thoughts, alone occurred to us. If any thing prevented her meeting me, she never concealed her sorrow, nor did I ever affect to chide. We knew from the bottom of our hearts that we were all in all to each other—and there was never any disguise to the clear and full understanding of that delicious knowledge. Poor—poor Lucy! what an age seems to have passed since that time! How dim and melancholy, yet, oh!—how faithful, are the hues in which that remembrance is clothed? When I muse over that time, I start, and ask myself if it was real, or if I did not wholly dream it—and with the intenseness of the dream, fancy it a truth. Many other passages in my life have been romantic, and many, too, coloured by the affections. But this short part of my existence is divided utterly from the rest—it seems to have no connexion with all else that I have felt and acted—a strange and visionary wandering out of the living world—having here no being and no parallel.

"One evening we were to meet at a sequestered and lonely part of the brook's course, a spot which was our usual rendezvous. I waited considerably beyond the time appointed, and was just going sorrowfully away when she appeared. As she approached, I saw that she was in tears—and she could not for several moments speak for weeping. At length I learned that her father had just returned home, after a long absence—that he had announced his intention of immediately quitting their present home and going to a distant part of the country, or—perhaps even abroad.

"And this chance so probable, so certain—this chance of separation had never occurred to us before! We had lived in the Happy Valley, nor thought of the strange and desert lands that stretched beyond the mountains around us! I was stricken, as it were, into torpor at the intelligence. I did not speak, or attempt, for several moments, to console her. At length we sat down under an old tree, and Lucy it was who spoke first. I cannot say whether Lucy was beautiful or not, nor will I attempt to describe her; for it has seemed to me that there would be the same apathy and triteness of heart necessary, to dwell coldly upon that face and figure—which are now dust—as it would ask in a bridegroom widowed ere the first intoxication was over, to minute an item every inch and article in his bridal chamber. But putting her outward attractions wholly aside, there was something in Lucy's sweet and fine voice which would have filled me with love, even for deformity; and now, when quite forgetting herself, she thought only of comfort and hope for me, my love to her seemed to grow and expand, and leave within me no thought, no feeling, that it did not seize and colour.—It is an odd thing in the history of the human heart, that the times most sad to experience are often the most grateful to recall; and of all the passages in our brief and checkered love, none have I clung to so fondly or cherished so tenderly, as the remembrance of that desolate and tearful hour. We walked slowly home, speaking very little, and lingering on the way—and my arm was round her waist all the time. Had we fixed any scheme—formed any plan for hope?—none! We were (and felt ourselves—nor struggled against the knowledge)—we were playthings in the hands of fate. It is only in after-years that wisdom (which is the gift of prophecy) prepares us for, or delivers us from destiny! There was a little stile at the entrance of the garden round

Lucy's home, and sheltered as it was by trees and bushes, it was there, whenever we met, we took our last adieu—and there that evening we stopped, and lingered over our parting words and our parting kiss—and at length, when I tore myself away, I looked back and saw her in the sad and gray light of the evening still there, still watching, still weeping! What, what hours of anguish and gnawing of heart must one, who loved so kindly and so entirely as she did, have afterward endured.

"As I lay awake that night, a project, natural enough, darted across me. I would seek Lucy's father, communicate our attachment, and sue for his approbation. We might, indeed, be too young for marriage—but we could wait, and love each other in the mean while. I lost no time in following up this resolution. The next day, before noon, I was at the door of Lucy's cottage—I was in the little chamber that faced the garden, alone with her father.

"A boy forms strange notions of a man who is considered a scoundrel. I was prepared to see one of fierce and sullen appearance, and to meet with a rude and coarse reception. I found in Mr. D—— a person who early accustomed—(for he was of high birth)—to polished society, still preserved, in his manner and appearance, its best characteristics. His voice was soft and bland; his face, though haggard and worn, retained the traces of early beauty; and a courteous and attentive ease of deportment had been probably improved by the habits of deceiving others, rather than impaired. I told our story to this man, frankly and fully. When I had done, he rose; he took me by the hand; he expressed some regret, yet some satisfaction, at what he had heard. He was sensible how much peculiar circumstances had obliged him to leave his daughter unprotected; he was sensible, also, that from my birth and future fortunes, my affection did honour to the object of my choice. Nothing would have made him so happy, so proud, had I been older—had I been my own master. But I and he, alas! must be aware that my friends and guardians would never consent to my forming any engagement at so premature an age, and they and the world would impute the blame to him; for calumny (he added in a melancholy tone) had been busy with his name, and any story, however false or idle, would be believed of one who was out of the world's affections.

"All this, and much more, did he say; and I pitied him while he spoke. Our conference then ended in nothing fixed; but—he asked me to dine with him the next day. In a word, while he forbade me at present to recur to the subject, he allowed me to see his daughter as often as I pleased: this lasted for about ten days. At the end of that time, when I made my usual morning visit, I saw D—— alone; he appeared much agitated. He was about, he said, to be arrested. He was undone for ever—and his poor daughter!—he could say no more—his manly heart was overcome, and he hid his face with his hands. I attempted to console him, and inquired the sum necessary to relieve him. It was considerable; and on hearing it named, my power of consolation I deemed over at once. I was mistaken. But why dwell on so hackneyed a topic as that of a sharper on the one hand, and a dupe on the other? I saw a gentleman of the tribe of Israel—I raised a sum of money, to be repaid when I came of age, and that sum was placed in D——'s hands. My intercourse with Lucy continued; but not long. This matter came to the ears of one who had succeeded my poor aunt, now no more, as my guardian. He saw D——, and threatened him with penalties, which the sharper did not dare to brave. My guardian was a man of the world; he said nothing to me on the subject, but he begged me to accompany him on a short tour through a neighbouring county. I took leave of Lucy only for a few days, as I imagined. I accompanied my guardian—was a week absent—returned—and hastened to the cottage: it was shut up—an old woman opened the door—they were gone, father and daughter, none knew whither!

"It was now that my guardian disclosed his share in this event, so terribly unexpected by me. He unfolded the arts of D——; he held up his character in its true light. I listened to him patiently while he proceeded thus far; but when, encouraged by my silence, he attempted to insinuate that Lucy was implicated in her father's artifices,—that she had lent herself to decoy, to the mutual advantage of sire and daughter, the inexperienced heir of considerable fortunes,—my rage and indignation exploded at once. High words ensued. I defied his authority—I laughed at his menaces—I openly declared my resolution of tracing Lucy to the end of the world, and marrying her the instant she was found. Whether or not that my guardian had penetrated sufficiently into my character to see that force was not the means by which I was to be guided, I cannot say; but he softened from his tone at last—apologized for his warmth—condescended to sooth and remonstrate—and our dispute ended in a compromise. I consented to leave Mr. S——, and to spend the next year, preparatory to my going to the university, with my guardian: he promised, on the other hand, that if, at the end of that year, I still wished to discover Lucy, he would throw no obstacles in the way of my search. I was ill contented with this compact; but I was induced to it by my firm persuasion that Lucy would write to me, and that we should console each other, at least, by a knowledge of our mutual situation and our mutual constancy. In this persuasion, I insisted on remaining six weeks longer with S——, and gained my point; and that any letter Lucy might write might not be exposed to any officious intervention from S——, or my guardian's satellites, I walked every day to meet the postman who was accustomed to bring our letters. None came from Lucy. Afterward I learned that D——, whom my guardian had wisely bought, as well as intimidated, had intercepted three letters which she had addressed to me, in her unsuspecting confidence—and that she only ceased to write when she ceased to believe in me.

"I went to reside with my guardian. A man of a hospitable and liberal turn, his house was always full of guests, who were culled from the most agreeable circles in London. We lived in a perpetual round of amusement; and my uncle, who thought I should be rich enough to afford to be ignorant, was more anxious that I should divert my mind than instruct it. Well, this year passed slowly and sadly away, despite of the gayety around me, and at the end of that time I left my uncle to go to the university; but I first lingered in London to make inquiries after D——. I could learn no certain tidings of him, but heard that the most probable place to find him was at a gaming-house in K—— Street. Thither I repaired forthwith. It was a haunt of no delicate and luxurious order of vice; the chain attached to the threshold indicated suspicion of the spies of justice; and a grim and sullen face peered jealously upon me before I was suffered to ascend the filthy and noisome staircase. But my search was destined to a brief end. At the head of the *Rouge et Noir* table, facing my eyes the moment I entered the evil chamber, was the marked and working countenance of D——.

"He did not look up—no, not once, all the time he played: he won largely—rose with a flushed face and trembling hand—descended the stairs—stopped in a room below where a table was spread with meats and wine —took a large tumbler of Madeira, and left the house. I had waited patiently—I had followed him with a noiseless step—I now drew my breath hard, clenched my hands, as if to nerve myself for a contest, and as he paused a moment under one of the lamps, seemingly in doubt whither to go, I laid my hand on his shoulder, and uttered his name. His eyes wandered with a leaden and dull gaze over my face before he remembered me. *Then* he recovered his usual bland smile and soft tone. He grasped my unwilling hand, and inquired with the tenderness of a parent after my health. I did not heed his words. 'Your daughter?' said I, convulsively.

"'Ah! you were old friends,' quoth he, smiling:

'you have recovered that folly, I hope. Poor thing! she will be happy to see an old friend. You know, of course—'

"'What?' for he hesitated.

"'That Lucy is married!'

"'Married!' and as that word left my lips, it seemed as if my very life, my very soul, had gushed forth also in the sound. When—oh! when, in the night-watch and the daily yearning, when, whatever might have been my grief, or wretchedness, or despondency, when had I dreamed, when imaged forth even the outline of a doom like this? Married! my Lucy, my fond, my constant, my pure-hearted, and tender Lucy! Suddenly all the chilled and revolted energies of my passions seemed to react, and rush back upon me. I seized that smiling and hollow wretch with a fierce grasp. 'You have done this—you have broken her heart—you have crushed mine! I curse you in her name and my own!—I curse you from the bottom, and with all the venom of my soul!—Wretch! wretch!' and he was as a reed in my hands.

"'Madman,' said he, as at last he extricated himself from my gripe, 'my daughter married with her free consent, and to one far better fitted to make her happy than you. Go, go—I forgive you—I also was once in love, and with *her* mother!'

"I did not answer—I let him depart.

"Behold me now, then, entered upon a new stage of life—a long, sweet, shadowy train of dreams, and fancies, and forethoughts of an unreal future was for ever past. I had attained suddenly to the end of that period which is as a tale from the East, 'a tale of glory and of the sun.' A startling and abrupt truth had come upon me in the night, and unawares! I was awakened, and for ever—the charm had fallen from me; and I was as other men! The little objects of earth—the real and daily present—the routine of trifles—the bustle and the contest—the poor employment and the low ambition—these were henceforth to me as to my fellow-kind. I was brought at once into the actual world;

and the armour for defence was girded round me as by magic; the weapon adapted to hardship and to battle was in my hand. And all this had happened—love—disappointment—despair—wisdom—while I was yet a boy!

"It was a little while after this interview—but I mention it now, for there is no importance in the quarter from which I heard it—that I learned some few particulars of Lucy's marriage. There was, and still is, in the world's gossip, a strange story of a rich, foolish man, awed as well as gulled by a sharper, and of a girl torn to a church with a violence so evident that the priest refused the ceremony. But the rite was afterward solemnized by special license, in private, and at night. The pith of that story has truth, and Lucy was at once the heroine and victim of the romance. Now, then, I turn to a somewhat different strain in my narrative.

"You, A——, who know so well the habits of a university *life*, need not be told how singularly monotonous and contemplative it may be made to a lonely man. The first year I was there I mixed, as you may remember, in none of the many circles into which that curious and motley society is split. I formed, or rather returned to my old passion for study; yet the study was desultory, and wanted that system and vigour on which you have, at a later time, complimented my lettered ardour. Two or three books, of a vague and unmellowed philosophy, fell in my way, and I fed upon their crude theories. We live alone, and we form a system; we go into the world, and we see the errors in the systems of others. To judge and to invent are two opposite faculties, and are cultivated by two opposite modes of life, or, as Gibbon has expressed it, 'conversation enriches the understanding, but solitude is the school of genius.'

"My only recreation was in long and companionless rides; and in the flat and dreary country around our university, the cheerless aspect of nature fed the idle melancholy at my heart. In the second year of my college life I roused myself a little from my seclusion, and rather by accident than design—you will remember that my acquaintance was formed among the men considered most able and promising of our time. I appeared but to poor advantage among these young academicians, fresh as they were from public schools; their high animal spirits for ever on the wing—ready in wit and argument—prone now to laugh at trifles, and now earnestly to dispute on them—they stunned and confused my quiet and grave habits of mind. I have met the most brilliant of these men since, and they have been astonished, and confessed themselves astonished, even at the little and meager reputation I have acquired, and at whatsoever conversational ability I can now, though only by fits and starts, manage to display. They compliment me on my improvement: they mistake—my intellect is just the same—I have improved only in the facility of communicating its fruits. In the summer of that year I resolved to make a bold effort to harden my mind and conquer its fastidious reserve; and I set out to travel over the north of England, and the greater part of Scotland, in the humble character of a pedestrian tourist. Nothing ever did my character more solid good than that experiment. I was thrown among a thousand varieties of character; I was continually forced into bustle and action, and into *providing for myself*—that great and indelible lesson towards permanent independence of character.

"One evening, in an obscure part of Cumberland, I was seeking a short cut to a neighbouring village through a gentleman's grounds, in which there was a public path. Just within sight of the house (which was an old, desolate building, in the architecture of James the First, with gable-ends and dingy walls, and deep-sunk, gloomy windows), I perceived two ladies at a little distance before me; one seemed in weak and delicate health, for she walked slowly and with pain, and stopped often as she leaned on her companion. I lingered behind, in order not to pass them abruptly; presently they turned away towards the house, and I saw them no more. Yet that frail and bending form, as I soon afterward learned—that form which I did not recognise—which, by a sort of fatality, I saw only in a glimpse, and yet for the last time on earth,—that form—was the wreck of Lucy D——!

"Unconscious of this event in my destiny, I left that neighbourhood, and settled for some weeks on the borders of the lake Keswick. There, one evening, a letter, redirected to me from London, reached me. The handwriting was that of Lucy; but the trembling and slurred characters, so different from that graceful ease which was wont to characterize all she did, filled me, even at the first glance, with alarm. This is the letter—read it—you will know then what I have lost:—

"'I write to you, my dear, my unforgotten L——, the last letter this hand will ever trace. Till now, it would have been a crime to write to you; perhaps it is so still—but dying as I am, and divorced from all earthly thoughts and remembrances, save yours, I feel that I cannot quite collect my mind for the last hour until I have given you the blessing of one whom you loved once; and when that blessing is given, I think I can turn away from your image, and sever willingly the last tie that binds me to earth. I will not afflict you by saying what I have suffered since we parted—with what anguish I thought of what *you* would feel when you found me gone—and with what cruel, what fearful violence I was forced into becoming the wretch I now am. I was hurried, I was driven, into a dreadful and bitter duty—but I thank God that I have fulfilled it. What, what have I done, to have been made so miserable throughout life as I have been! I ask my heart, and tax my conscience—and every night I think over the sins of the day; they do not seem to me heavy, yet my penance has been very great. For the last two years, I do sincerely think that there has not been one day which I have not marked with tears. But enough of this, and of myself. You, dear, dear L——, let me turn to you! Something at my heart tells me that you have not forgotten that we were once the world to each other, and even through the changes and the glories of a man's life, I think you will not forget it. True, L——, that I was a poor, and friendless, and not too well-educated girl, and altogether unworthy of your destiny; but you did not think so then—and when you have lost me, it is a sad, but it is a real comfort, to feel that that thought will never recur to you. Your memory will invest me with a thousand attractions and graces I did not possess, and all that you recall of me will be linked with the freshest and happiest thoughts of that period of life in which you first beheld me. And this thought, dearest L——, sweetens death to me—and sometimes it comforts me for what has been. Had our lot been otherwise—had we been united, and had you survived your love for me, (and what more probable!) my lot would have been darker even than it has been. I know not how it is—perhaps from my approaching death—but I seem to have grown old, and to have obtained the right to be your monitor and warner. Forgive me, then, if I implore you to think earnestly and deeply of the great ends of life; think of them as one might think who is anxious to gain a distant home, and who will not be diverted from his way. Oh! could you know how solemn and thrilling a joy comes over me as I nurse the belief, the certainty, that we shall meet at length, and for ever! Will not that hope also animate you, and guide you unerring through the danger and the evil of this entangled life?

"'May God bless you, and watch over you—may He comfort, and cheer, and elevate your heart to Him! Before you receive this *I* shall be no more—and my love, my care for you will, I trust and feel, have become eternal.—Farewell! 'L. M.'

"The letter," continued L——, struggling with his emotions, "was dated from that village through which I had so lately passed; thither I repaired that very night—Lucy had been buried the day before! I stood upon a green mound, and a few, few feet below, separated from me by a scanty portion of earth, mouldered that heart which had loved me so faithfully and so well!

"Oh, God! what a difference throughout the whole of this various and teeming earth a single DEATH can effect! Sky, sun, air, the eloquent waters, the inspiring mountain-tops, the murmuring and glossy wood, the very

'Glory in the grass, and splendour in the flower,'—

do these hold over us an eternal spell? Are they as a part and property of an unvarying course of nature? Have they aught which is unfailing, steady—*same* in its effect? Alas! their attraction is the creature of an accident. One gap, invisible to all but ourself in the crowd and turmoil of the world, and every thing is changed. In a single hour, the whole process of thought, the whole ebb and flow of emotion, may be revulsed for the rest of an existence. Nothing can ever seem to us as it did: it is a blow upon the fine mechanism by which we think, and move, and have our being—the pendulum vibrates aright no more—the dial hath no account with time—the process goes on, but it knows no symmetry or order;—it was a single stroke that marred it, but the harmony is gone for ever!

"And yet I often think that that shock which jarred on the mental, renders yet softer the moral nature. A death that is connected with love unites us by a thousand remembrances to all who have mourned: it builds a bridge between the young and the old; it gives them in common the most touching of human sympathies; it steals from nature its glory and its exhilaration, not its tenderness. And what, perhaps, is better than all, to mourn deeply for the death of another loosens from ourself the petty desire for, and the animal adherence to, life. We have gained the end of the philosopher, and view, without shrinking, the coffin and the pall.

"For a year my mind did not return to its former pursuits: my scholastic ambition was checked at once. Hitherto I had said, 'if I gain honours, *she* will know it:' *now*, that object was no more. I could not even bear the sight of books: my thoughts had all curdled into torpor—a melancholy listlessness filled and oppressed me—the *truditur dies die*—the day chasing day without end or profit—the cloud after cloud over the barren plain—the breath after breath across the unmoved mirror—these were the sole types and images of my life. I had been expected by my friends to attain some of the highest of academical rewards; you may imagine that I deceived their expectations. I left the university and hastened to London. I was just of age. I found myself courted, and I plunged eagerly into society. The experiment was perilous; but in my case it answered. I left myself no time for thought: gambling, intrigue, dissipation, these are the occupations of polished society; they are great resources to a wealthy mourner. The 'man' stirred again within me; the weakness of my repinings gradually melted away beneath the daily trifles of life; perpetual footsteps, though the footsteps of idlers, wore the inscription from the stone. I said to my heart, 'why mourn when mourning is but vanity, and to regret is only to be weak? let me turn to what life has left, let me struggle to enjoy.'

"Whoever long plays a part ends by making it natural to him. At first I was ill at ease in feigning attention to frivolities; by degrees frivolities grew into importance. Society, like the stage, gives rewards intoxicating in proportion as they are immediate: the man who has but to appear behind the lamps of the orchestra to be applauded, must find all other species of fame distant and insipid; so with society. The wit and the gallant can seldom covet praise, which, if more lasting, is less *present* than that which they command by a word and a glance. And having once tasted the éclat of social power, they cannot resist the struggle to preserve it. This, then, grew my case, and it did me good, though it has done others evil. Life again presented to me an object; and, in a little time, I was yet more riveted to the world we live in, by, not a love, but, in the phrase of the day, a *liaison*. I shall pass over this part of my memoirs very briefly; for I wish to come to what, as yet, I have but slightly touched on, my *literary* history. This tie was the result of circumstance, not design: the lady was a star in the great world, *exigeante*, handsome, warm-hearted, yet not unselfish. It lasted about six months, and then snapped for ever! And now the London season was over: summer was upon us in all its later prodigality. I was no longer mournful, but I was wearied. Ambition, as I lived with the world, again dawned upon me. I said, when I saw the distinction mediocrity had acquired, 'Why content myself with satirizing the claim?—why not struggle against the claimant?' In a word, I again thirsted for knowledge and coveted its power. Now comes the main history of *the Student*;—but I have fatigued you enough for the present."

CONVERSATION THE FIFTH.

"It was observed by Descartes," said L—— (as we renewed, a day or two after our last conversation, the theme we had then begun), "'that in order to improve the mind, we ought less to learn than to contemplate.' In this sentence lies the use of retirement. There are certain moments when study is peculiarly grateful to us: but in no season are we so likely to profit by it, as when we have taken a breathing-time from the noise and hubbub of the world when the world has wearied us. Behold me, then, within a long day's journey from London, in a beautiful country, an old house, and a library collected with great labour by one of my forefathers, and augmented in more modern works at the easy cost of expense by myself.

"The first branch of letters to which I directed my application was moral philosophy; and the first book I seized upon was Helvetius. I know of no work so fascinating to a young thinker as the 'Discours de l'Esprit:' the variety, the anecdote, the illustration, the graceful criticism, the solemn adjuration, the brilliant point that characterize the work, and render it so attractive, not as a treatise only, but a composition, would alone make that writer delightful to many who mistake the end of his system, and are incapable of judging its wisdom in parts; and, in spite of one metaphysical error, its admirable utility as a code of morals."

A. You think so highly, then, of Helvetius? His merits are not merely a scholastic question of letters. Though not extensively popular in himself, Helvetius must be considered the great apostle of a philosophy ably advocated in England, and every day increasing in its disciples.

L. Let us, then, pause a moment upon this writer. His metaphysical error is in supposing all men born with the same capacity; in resolving all effects of character and genius to education. For, in the first place, the weight of proof being thrown upon him, he does not prove the fact; and, secondly, if he did prove it, neither we nor his system would be a whit the better for it: for the utmost human and possible care in education cannot make all men alike;* and whether a care above humanity could do so is, I apprehend, of very little consequence in the eyes of practical and sensible beings. Yet even this dogma has been beneficial, if not true: for the dispute it occasioned obliged men to examine, and *to allow* the wonders that education *can* effect, and *the general* features in common which a common mode of education can bestow upon a people;—grand truths, to which the human race will owe all that is feasible in its progress towards amelioration! But passing from this point, and steering from the metaphysical to the

* For chance being included in Helvetius's idea of education, and, indeed, according to him (Essay iii. Chap. i.), "making the greatest share of it," it is evident that we must agree in what he himself almost immediately afterward says, viz. "That no persons being placed exactly in the same circumstances, no person *can* receive exactly the same education"—*id est*, no persons can be exactly the same—the question then is reduced to a mere scholastic dispute. As long as both parties agree that no persons *can* be made exactly the same, it matters very little from what quarter comes the impossibility.

more plainly moral portion of his school, let us see whether he has given to that most mystical word VIRTUE its true solution. We all know the poetical and indistinct meanings with which the lofty soul of Plato, and the imitative jargon of his followers, clothed the word —a symmetry, a harmony, a beautiful abstraction, invariable, incomprehensible—that is the Platonic virtue. Then comes the hard and shrewd refining away of the worldly school. "What is virtue here," say they, "is vice at our antipodes: the laws of morals are arbitrary and uncertain—

'Imposteur à la Mecque, et prophète à Médine;'*

there is no permanent and immutable rule of good; virtue is but a dream." Helvetius is the first who has not invented, but rendered popular, this great, this useful, this all-satisfying interpretation, "Virtue is the habitude of directing our actions to the public good; the love of virtue is but the desire of the general happiness; virtuous actions are those which contribute to that happiness." In this clear and beautiful explanation all contradictions are solved: actions may be approved in one country, condemned in another, yet this interpretation will remain unchanged in its truth. What may be for the public good in China may not be so in the Hebrides; yet, so long as we consult the public good, wheresoever we are thrown, our intentions are virtuous. We have thus, in every clime, one star always before us; and, without recurring to the dreams of Plato, we are not driven, by apparent inconsistencies, to find virtue itself a dream. "The face of Truth is not less fair and beautiful for all the counterfeit visors which have been put upon her."†

A. And it is from this explanation of the end of virtue that Bentham has deduced his definition of the end of government. Both tend to the public good; or, in yet broader terms, the greatest happiness of the greatest number. It is a matter worthy of much pondering, to think that the end of virtue and the end of good government can only have the same explanation.

* Voltaire, Mahomet, Let. 1. † Shaftesbury.

L. Yes; and hence a surpassing merit in Helvetius! —more than any reasoner before him: he united public virtues with private. Though so excellent, so exemplary himself, in the minor charities and graces of life, he forbore, like egotistical preachers, to dwell upon *them:* they are less important to mankind than the great principles of public conduct—principles which rule states and enlighten them. It was a noble truth at that time, the father of how much that is inestimable now, to proclaim, "that, in order to perfectionize our moral state, legislators had two methods: the first, to unite private interests to the general interest; the other, to advance the progress and diffusion of intellect." This is a maxim the people should wear in their hearts.

A. Yes; before Helvetius, moralists were in league with the ills that are: they preached to man to amend himself, not to amend his laws, without which all amelioration is partial. To what use would it be to tell the modern Greeks not to lie? Give them a code, in which to lie would be to sin against self-interest.

L. The form of government gives its tone to popular opinion. It is in proportion as popular opinion honours or neglects a virtue, that that virtue is popularly followed. In commercial countries, wealth is respectability; in despotic countries flattery is considered wisdom: the passions lead men to action, and the passions are excited according to the reward proposed to them. These are grave and weighty truths: we are to thank Helvetius if they are now known.

A. And passing from his morals, how fine are his critical remarks—how acute his knowledge of the world —how delicate his appreciation of the noble and the just!

L. For instance, what a perfect example of a refined idea (viz. an idea, the naturalness and beauty of which requires some attention to discover) he selects from Molière. Harpagon suspects his valet of having robbed him, and not finding any thing in his pocket, says, "Give me what thou hast stolen—*without searching!*" (Rends moi, sans te fouiller, ce que tu m'as volé.)

A. And in a previous chapter, how beautiful an illustration has he gleaned from the oriental fables, in order to show the grace with which the imagination may invest a sentiment. A happy lover, by the following allegory, attributes to his mistress, and to his love for her, the qualities admired in himself:—

"I was one day in the bath; an odoriferous piece of earth passed from the hand of one I loved into my own. 'Art thou,' said I to it, 'art thou musk—art thou amber?'—'Nay,' it replied, 'I am but a piece of the common earth; but I have come in contact with the rose; her fragrance imbued me; without her I should still be but a piece of the common earth!'"

L. I wish, indeed, that these sparkling and beautiful ornaments that so thickly, even to redundance, bestrew his works, would induce readers who shun a dry book on morals to enter upon his. No work can be more useful* to Englishmen at this moment: no work contains clearer elucidations of those truths for which they are now daily contending: no work would more serve to ennoble our national character—to lift us from the sordid and low desires of our bartering and huckstering spirit of pounds and pence—lift us to the comprehension of the objects of a true glory: no work, in a word, can more tend to exalt our little, domestic, higgling, narrow virtues, into a lofty and generous code.

A. And yet this writer is supposed by the shallow sentimentalists and canting *Scottists* of the hour, to be of a school that debases and degrades.

L. Because he has taken men from their own delusions, and taught them, that in order to avoid a deluge, it is better to learn honesty than to erect a Babel.

A. But I have diverted you from the thread of your narrative. To what new studies did your regard for Helvetius direct you?

L. It did not immediately lead to new studies; but gave a more solid direction to those I had formerly indulged. I had, as I mentioned, been before addicted to

* And this persuasion must be my apology for detailing at such length criticisms which must appear to many readers not a little tedious.

abstract speculation; but it was of a dreamy and wild cast. I now sought to establish philosophy on the basis of common sense. I recommenced, then, a stern and resolute course of metaphysical study, giving, indeed, a slighter attention to the subtleties which usually occupy the student, than to the broader principles on which the spirit of human conduct and our daily actions do secretly depend. Moral philosophy is the grandest of all sciences: metaphysics, abstracted from moral philosophy, is at once the most pedantic and the most frivolous. Hominem delirum qui verborum minutiis rerum frangit pondera. Slowly and reluctantly did I turn from the consideration of motives to that of actions —from morals to history. Volney has said, in his excellent lectures, that the proper state of mind for the examination of history, is that in which we "hold the judgment in suspense." This truth is evident; yet they who allow the doctrine when couched in the above phrase might demur if the phrase were a little altered; and, instead of a suspension of judgment, we spoke of a *state of doubt*. It is true! in this state, a state of "investigating doubt," history *should* be studied. In doubt, all the faculties of the mind are aroused—we sift, we weigh, we examine—every page is a trial to the energies of the understanding. But confidence is sleepy and inert. If we make up our minds beforehand to believe all we are about to read, the lecture glides down the memory without awakening one thought by the way. We may be stored with dates and legends; we may be able to conclude our periods by a fable about Rome; but we do not feel that we have reasoned as well as read. Our minds may be fuller, but our intellects are not sharper than they were before; we have studied, but not investigated:—to what use is investigation to those who are already persuaded? There is the same difference between the advantage of history to him who weighs, because he mistrusts, and to him who discriminates nothing, because he believes all, as there is between the value of a commonplace book and a philosophical treatise. The first may be more full of facts than the latter, but the latter is facts turned to use. It is this state of rational doubt which a metaphysical course of study naturally induces. It is, therefore, *after* the investigation of morals that we should turn to history. Nor is this all the advantage which we derive from the previous study of morals. History were, indeed, an old almanac to him who knows neither what is right, what wrong; where governments have been wise, where erroneous. History, regarded in the light of political utility, is, to quote Volney again, "a vast collection of moral and social experiments, which mankind make involuntarily and very expensively on themselves." But we must know the principles of the science before we can apply the experiments.

A. And yet, while the real uses of history are philosophical, a mere narrator of facts is often far better than a philosophical historian.

L. Because it is better to reflect for ourselves than to suffer others to reflect for us. A philosopher has a system; he views things according to his theory; he is unavoidably partial; and, like Lucian's painter, he paints his one-eyed princes in profile.

A. It is especially in our language that the philosophical historians have been most dangerous. No man can give us history through a falser medium than Hume and Gibbon have done.

L. And this not only from the inaccuracy of their facts, but their general way of viewing facts. Hume tells the history of a faction, and Gibbon the history of oligarchies—the people, the people are altogether omitted by both. The fact is, neither of them had seen enough of the mass of men to feel that history should be something more than a chronicle of dynasties, however wisely chronicled it be: they are fastidious and graceful scholars; their natural leanings are towards the privileged elegancies of life: eternally sketching human nature, they give us, perhaps, a skeleton tolerably accurate—it is the flesh and blood they are unable to accomplish: their sympathies are for the courtly—their minds were not robust enough to feel sympathies with the undiademed and unlaurelled tribes: each most pretends to what he most wants—Hume, with his smooth affectation of candour, is never candid—and Gibbon, perpetually philosophizing, is never philosophical.

A. Tacitus and Polybius are not easily equalled.

L. And why? Because both Tacitus and Polybius had seen the world in more turbulent periods than our historians have done; the knowledge of their kind was not lightly printed, but deeply and fearfully furrowed, as it were, upon their hearts; their shrewd, yet dark wisdom, was the fruit of a terrible experience. Gibbon boasts of the benefit he derived for his History from being a captain in the militia; it was from no such holyday service that Polybius acquired *his* method of painting wars. As the Megalopolitan passed through his stormy and bold career; as he learned rough lessons in the camp, and imbued himself with the cold sagacity which the diplomatic intrigues he shared both required and taught, he was slowly hoarding that mass of observation, that wonderful intuition into the true spirit of facts, that power of seeing at a glance the improbable, and through its clouds and darkness seizing at once upon the truth, which characterize the fragments of his great history, and elevate what in other hands would have been but a collection of military bulletins, into so estimable a manual for the statesman and the civilian. And when we glance over the life of the far greater Roman, we see no less palpably how much the wisdom of the closet was won by the stern nature of those fields of action in which he who had witnessed the reign of a Domitian was cast. When we grow chained to his page by the gloomy intenseness of his colourings—when crime after crime, in all the living blackness of those fearful days, arises before us—when in his grasping apothegms the fierce secrets of kings lie bared before us—when in every sentence we shudder at a record—in every character we mark a portent, yet a mirror of the times,—we feel at once how necessary to that force and fidelity must have been the severity and darkness of his experience. Through action, toil, public danger, and public honours, he sought his road to philosophy,* a road beset with rapine and slaughter; every slave that fell graved in his heart a warning, every horror he experienced animated and armed his genius. Saturate with the spirit of his age, his page has made it incarnate for posterity—actual, vivified, consummate, and entire. If, indeed, it be dread and ghastly, it is the dread and ghastliness of an unnatural life. Time has not touched it with a charnel touch. The magician has preserved the race in their size and posture, motionless, breathless; in all else, unchanged as in life.

A. It is a great loss to our language that Bolingbroke never fulfilled what seems to have been the intention of his life, and the expectation of his friends—viz. the purpose so often alluded to in his Letters, of writing a History.

L. Yes; from all he has left us, he seems to have been pre-eminently qualified for the task: his thoughts so just, yet so noble; his penetration into men so keen; his discernment of true virtue so exact!

A. He gave, certainly, its loftiest shape to the doctrine of Utility, and is the real father of that doctrine in England.†

L. Returning from these criticisms on historians to the effect which history produces, I cannot but think that its general effect tends rather to harden the heart against mankind. Its experience, so long, so consistent, so unvarying, seems a silent and irresistible accuser of the human species. Men have taken the greatest care to preserve their most unanswerable vilifier. All forms of government, however hostile to each other, are alike in one effect—the general baseness of the governed. What differs the boasted Greece from the contemned

* It is a great proof of the wisdom the world had taught him, that though he differed with Pliny on all political and public views, the difference never impaired their private friendship.

† The Utilitarians have quite overlooked their obligations to Lord Bolingbroke:—they do not seem to be aware with what a life and majesty he transferred their doctrine from morals to politics.

Persia?—the former produces some hundred names which the latter cannot equal. True! But what are a few atoms culled from the sea-sands?—what a few great men to the happiness of the herd? Are not the Greek writers, the Greek sages, more than all others, full of contempt for the mass around them?—the fraud, the ingratitude, the violence, the meanness, the misery of their fellow-beings—do not these make the favourite subject of ancient satire and ancient declamation? And even among their great men, how few on whose merits history can at once decide!—how few unsullied, even by the condemnation of their own time. Plutarch says that the good citizens of Athens were the best men the world ever produced; but that her bad citizens were unparalleled for their atrocities, their impiety, their perfidy. Let us look over even the good citizens Plutarch would select, and, judging them by the rules of their age, how much have the charitable still left to forgive! Were I to select a personation of the Genius of Athens, I would choose Themistocles; a great warrior and a wise man, resolute in adversity, accomplished in expedients, consummate in address. Reverse the portrait: he begins his career by the most unbridled excesses; he turns from them, it is said—to what?—to the grossest flattery of the multitude: the people he adulates at first, he continues to rule by deceiving; he has recourse to the tricks and arts of superstition to serve the designs and frauds of ambition.* He governs professedly as a quack.† He thinks first of destroying his allies, and, baffled in that, contents himself with plundering them. Not naturally covetous, he yet betrays his host (Timocreon the Rhodian) for money. Vain, as well as rapa-

* When he was chosen admiral by the Athenians, he put off all affairs, public and private, to the day that he was about to embark, in order that he might appear, in having a great deal of business to transact, with a greater dignity and importance (Plutarch). It is quite clear that all the business thus deferred must have been very badly done, and thus a trick to preserve power was nobler and better in his eyes than a care for the public advantage.

† As an evidence how little the wisdom of the chiefs had descended to the deliberations of the people,—viz. how little the majority profited by their form of government—we find that when an Athenian orator argued a certain point too closely with Themistocles, the people stoned him, and the women stoned his wife. So much for free discussion among the ancients.

cious, he lavishes in ostentation what he gains by meanness. Lastly—"linking one virtue with a thousand crimes"—he completes his own character, and consummates the illustration he affords of the spirit of his country, by preserving to the last (in spite of his hollow promises of aid to the Barbarian, in spite of his resentment) his love to his native city—a passion that did not prevent error, nor baseness, nor crime, exerted in her cause—but prevented all hostility against her. The most selfish, the most crafty, the most heartless of men destroyed himself, rather than injure Greece.

A. Leaving his life a proof that patriotism is a contracted and unphilosophical feeling; it embraces but a segment of morals. Philanthropy is the only consistent species of public love. A patriot may be honest in one thing, yet a knave in all else—a philanthropist sees and seizes the *whole* of virtue.

L. And it is by philanthropy, perhaps (a modern affection), that we may yet add a more pleasing supplement to the histories of the past. This hope can alone correct the feeling of despair for human amendment, which history otherwise produces: we can, alas! only counteract the influence of past facts by recurring to the dreams of enthusiasts for the future; by clinging to some one or other of those dreams; and by a hope that, if just, is at least unfounded by any example in gone ages: that by the increase of knowledge, men will *approach* to that political perfection which does not depend alone on the triumphs of art, or the advance of sciences—which does not depend alone on palaces, and streets, and temples, and a few sounding and solemn names, but which shall be felt by the common herd, viz. by the *majority* of the people: felt by them in improved comfort; in enlightened minds; in consistent virtues; in effects, we must add, which no causes have hitherto produced. For why study the mysteries of legislation and government? Why ransack the past, and extend our foresight to distant ages? if our skill can only improve, as hitherto it has only improved, the condition of oligarchies; if it can only give the purple and the palace to the few—if it must leave in every state the degraded many to toil, to sweat, to consume the day in a harsh and steril conflict with circumstance for a bare subsistence; their faculties dormant; their energies stifled in the cradle; strangers to all that ennobles, refines, exalts; if at every effort to rise they are encountered by a law, and every enterprise darkens with them into a crime; if, when we cast our eyes among the vast plains of life, we see but one universal arena of labour, bounded on all sides by the gibbet, the hulks, the wheel, the prison; all ignorance, prejudice, bloodshed, sin;—if this state is to endure for ever on earth, why struggle for a freedom which a few only can enjoy—for an enlightenment, which can but call forth a few luminous sparks from an atmosphere of gloom: for a political prosperity which props a throne, and gives steeds to a triumphal car, and animates the winged words of eloquence, or the golden tomes of verse, or the lofty speculation of science—and yet leaves these glories and effects but as fractions that weigh not one moment against the incalculable sum of human miseries? Alas! if this be the eternal doom of mortality, let us close our books, let us shut the avenues to our minds and hearts, let us despise benevolence as a vanity, and speculation as a dream. Let us play the Teian with life, think only of the Rose and Vine, and since our most earnest endeavours can effect so little to others, let us not extend our hopes and our enjoyments beyond the small and safe circle of Self! No: man must either believe in the perfectibility of his species, or virtue and the love of others are but a heated and objectless enthusiasm.

A. And this hope, whether false or true, gains ground daily.

L. I must own, that until it broke upon me I saw nothing in learning but despondency and gloom. As clouds across the heaven, darkening the light, and fading one after the other into air, seemed the fleeting shadows which Philosophy had called forth between the Earth and Sun. If, day after day, in my solitary retreat, I pondered over the old aspirations of sages, with the various jargon with which, in pursuit of truth, they have disguised error, I felt that it was not to teach myself to be wise, but to learn to despair of wisdom. What a waste of our power—what a mockery of our schemes seemed the fabrics they had erected—the Pythagorean unity and the Heraclitan fire to which that philosopher of wo reduced the origin of all things. And the "*Homoomeria*" and primitive "intelligence" of Anaxagoras; and the affinity and discord of Empedocles, and the atoms of Epicurus, and the bipart and pre-existent soul which was evoked by Plato: was there not something mournful in the wanderings and chimeras of these lofty natures?—fed as they were in caves and starry solitudes, and winged by that intense and august contemplation, which they of the antique world were alone able to endure. And when, by a sounder study, or a more fortunate train of conjecture, the erratic enterprise of their knowledge approached the truth—when Democritus, for a moment, and at intervals, eyes by a glimmering light the true courses of the heavenly host—or when Aristippus, amid the roseate and sparkling errors of his creed, yet catches a glimpse of the true doctrine of morals and the causes of human happiness—or when the lofty Zeno and the sounder Epicurus, differing in the path, meet at length at the true goal—and then again start forth into delusion; their very approach to truth, so momentary and partial, only mocks the more the nature of human wanderings,—"caput ac fontem ignorant, divinant, ac delirant omnes."* Couple then the records of Philosophy with those of History; couple the fallacies of the wise with the sorrow and the sufferings of the herd, and how dark and mournful is our knowledge of the past, and therefore our prospects of the future! And how selfish does this sentiment render our ambition for the present! How vain seem the mighty struggle and small fruit of those around us! Look at this moment at the agitation and ferment of the world—with what pretence can

* Erasmi Colloquia; Hedonius et Spudæus.

they who believe that the past is the mirror of the future lash themselves into interest for any cause or principle, save that immediately profitable to self! To them, if deeply and honestly acquainted with history and the progress of knowledge—to them how vain must seem the struggles and aspirations of the crowd! Why do the people imagine a vain thing? Why the hope and the strife of the rejoicing Gaul; or the slow murmur that foretels irruption through the bright lands of Italy? Why should there be blood spilt in the Vistula? or why should the armed Belgian dispute for governments and kings? Why agitate *ourselves* for a name—an ideal good? These orations, and parchments, and meetings, and threats, and prayers—this clamour for "reform,"—how miserable a delusion must it seem to him who believes that the *mass* of men must for ever be "the hewers of wood and drawres of water!" To them no change raises the level of existence; famine still urges on to labour—want still forbids knowledge. What matters whether this law be passed, or that fleet be launched, or that palace built, their condition is the same; the happiest concurrence of accident and wisdom brings *them* but a greater certainty of labour. A free state does not redeem them from toil, nor a despotism increase it. So long as the sun rises and sets, so long must their bread be won with travail, and their life "be rounded" with the temptation to crime. It seems, therefore, to me, impossible for a wise and well-learned man to feel *sincerely*, and without self-interest, for the public good, unless he believe that laws and increased knowledge will at length, however gradually, devise some method of raising the great multitude to a nearer equality of comfort and intelligence with the few; that human nature is capable of a degree of amelioration that it seems never hitherto to have reached; and that the amelioration will be felt from the surface to the depth of the great social waters, over which the spirit shall move. The republics of old never effected this object. To expect it, society must be altered as well as legislation. It is for this reason that I feel glad, with an ingenious and admirable writer,* that even theory is at work: I am glad that inquiry wanders, even to the fallacies of Owen, or the chimeras of St. Simon. Out of that inquiry good may yet come; and some future Bacon overturn the axioms of an old school, polluted, not redeemed, by every new disciple. To the man who finds it possible to entertain this hope, how different an aspect the world wears! Casting his glance forward, how wondrous a light rests upon the future! the farther he extends his vision, the brighter the light. Animated by a hope more sublime than wishes bounded to earth ever before inspired, he feels armed with the courage to oppose surrounding prejudice, and the warfare of hostile customs. No sectarian advantage, no petty benefit is before him; he sees but the regeneration of mankind. It is with this object that he links his ambition, that he unites his efforts and his name! From the disease, and the famine, and the toil around, his spirit bursts into prophecy, and dwells among future ages; even if in error, he luxuriates through life in the largest benevolence, and dies—if a visionary—the visionary of the grandest dream.

CONVERSATION THE SIXTH.

It is a singularly pretty spot in which L—— resides. Perhaps some of the most picturesque scenery in England is in the neighbourhood of London, and as I rode the other day, in the early April, along the quiet lane which branches from the main road to L——'s house, Spring never seemed to me to smile upon a lovelier prospect. The year had broken into its youth as with a sudden and hilarious bound. A few days before, I had passed along the same road—all was sullen and wintry—the March wind had swept along dry hedges and

* The Author of Essays on the Publication of Opinion, &c.

leafless trees—the only birds I had encountered were two melancholy sparrows in the middle of the road—too dejected even to chirp: but now a glory had passed over the earth—the trees were dight in that delicate and lively verdure which we cannot look upon without feeling a certain freshness creep over the heart. Here and there thick blossoms burst in clusters from the fragrant hedge, and (as a schoolboy pranked out in the hoops and ruffles of his grandsire) the white thorn seemed to mock at the past winter by assuming its garb. Above, about, around—all was in motion, in progress, in joy—the birds, which have often seemed to me like the messengers from earth to heaven—charged with the homage and gratitude of Nature, and gifted with the most eloquent of created voices to fulfil the mission;—the birds were upon every spray, their music upon every breath of air. Just where the hedge opened to the left, I saw the monarch of English rivers glide on his serene and silver course—and in the valley on either side of his waters, village, spire, cottage, and, at rarer yet thick intervals, the abodes of opulence looked out among the luxuriant blossoms and the vivid green by which they were encircled. It was a thoroughly English scene. For I have always thought that the peculiar characteristic of English scenery is a certain air of content. There is a more serene and happy smile on the face of an English landscape than is found in any which, far more rich and voluptuous in its features, I have admired in other countries.

Presently I came to the turn of the lane which led at once to L——'s house—in a few minutes I was at the gate. Within, the grounds, though not extensive, have the appearance of being so—the trees are of great size, and the turf is broken into many a dell and hollow, which gives the ground a park-like appearance. The house is quaint and old-fashioned (not Gothic or Elizabethan) in its architecture; it seems to have been begun at the latter period of the reign of James the First, and to have undergone sundry alterations, the latest of which might have occurred at the time of Anne. The old brown bricks are covered with jessamine and ivy, and the room in which L—— generally passes his day looks out upon a grove of trees, among which, at every opening, are little clusters and parterres of flowers And in this spot, half-wood, half-garden, I found my friend, seduced from his books by the warmth and beauty of the day, seated on a rustic bench, and surrounded by the numerous dogs which, of all species and all sizes, he maintains in general idleness and favour.

"I love," said L——, speaking of these retainers, "like old Montaigne, to have animal life around me. The mere consciousness and sensation of existence is so much stronger in brutes than in ourselves, their joy in the common air and sun is so vivid and buoyant, that I (who think we should sympathize with all things if we would but condescend to remark all things) feel a contagious exhilaration of spirits in their openness to pleasurable perceptions. And how happy, in reality, the sentiment of life is!—how glorious a calm we inhale in the warm sun!—how rapturous a gladness in the fresh winds!—how profound a meditation, a delight in the stillness of 'the starry time!'—how sufficient alone to make us happy is external nature, were it not for these eternal cares that we create for ourselves. Man would be happy but that he is forbidden to be so by men. The most solitary persons have always been the least repining."

A. But then their complacency arises from the stagnation of the intellect—it is indifference, not happiness.

L. Pardon me, I cannot think so. How many have found solitude not only, as Cicero calls it, the pabulum of the mind, but the nurse of their genius! How many of the world's most sacred oracles have been uttered, like those of Dodona, from the silence of deep woods! Look over the lives of men of genius,—how far the larger proportion of them have been passed in loneliness. No, for my part I think solitude has its reward both for the dull and the wise;—the former are therein more sensible to the mere animal enjoyment which is *their* only source of happiness; the latter are not (by the irritation, the jealousy, the weariness, the round of small cares, which the crowd produces) distracted from that contemplation and those pursuits which constitute the chief luxury of their life, and the το καλον of their desires. There is a feeling of escape, when a man who has cultivated his faculties rather in thought than action finds himself, after a long absence in cities, returned to the *spissa nemora domusque Nympharum*, which none but himself can comprehend. With what a deep and earnest dilation Cowley luxuriates in that, the most eloquent essay perhaps in the language!—although, as a poet, the author of the Davideis was idolized far beyond his merits by a courtly audience, and therefore was not susceptible, like most of his brethren, of that neglect of the crowd which disgusts our hearts by mortifying our vanity. How calm, how august, and yet how profoundly joyful is the vein with which he dwells on the contrast of the town and the country! "We are here among the vast and noble scenes of Nature. We are there among the pitiful shifts of policy. We walk here in the light and open ways of Divine bounty. We grope there in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice!"

A. There is a zest even in turning from the harsher subjects, not only of life, but of literature, to passages like these! How these green spots of the poetry of sentiment soften and regenerate the heart!

L. And so, after wading through the long and dry details which constitute the greater part of history, you may conceive the pleasure with which I next turned to that more grateful way of noting the progress of nations —the history of their literature.

A. I thank you for renewing the thread broken off in our last conversation. We had been speaking of the reflections which history awakened in your mind. That necessary (and yet how seldom a useful) study was followed then by the relaxation of more graceful literature.

L. Yes, and in the course of this change a singular effect was produced in my habits of mind. Hitherto I had read without much emulation. Philosophy, while it soothes the reason, damps the ambition. And so few among historians awaken our more lively feelings, and so little in history encourages us to pass the freshness of our years in commemorating details at once frivolous to relate and laborious to collect, that I did not find myself tempted by either study to compose a treatise or a record. But Fiction now opened to me her rich and wonderful world—I was brought back to early (and early are always aspiring) feelings—by those magical fascinations which had been so dear to my boyhood. The sparkling stores of wit and fancy, the deep and various mines of poesy, stretched before me, and I was covetous! I desired to possess, and to reproduce. There is a German legend of a man who had resisted all the temptations the earth could offer. The demon opened to his gaze the marvels beneath the earth. Trees effulgent with diamond fruits, pillars of gold, and precious stones. Fountains with water of a million hues, and over all a floating and delicious music instead of air. The tempter succeeded:—envy and desire were created in the breast that had been calm till then. This weakness was a type of mine!—I was not only charmed with the works around me, but I became envious of the rapture which they who created them must, I fancied, have enjoyed. I recalled that intense and all-glowing description which De Staël has given in her Essay on Enthusiasm, of the ecstasy which an author enjoys, not in the publication, but the production of his work. Could Shakspeare, I exclaimed, have composed his mighty Temple to Fame, without feeling, himself, the inspiration which consecrated the fame? Must he not have enjoyed, above all the rest of mankind, every laugh that rang from Falstaff, or every moral that came from the melancholy Jaques? Must he not have felt the strange and airy rapture of a preternatural being, when his soul conjured up the Desert Island, the Caliban, and the Ariel? Must he not have been intoxicated with a gladness, lighter and more delicate, yet, oh, more exquisite and rich, than any which the merriment of earth can father, when his fancy dwelt in the summer-noon under the green boughs with Titania, and looked on the ringlets of the fairies, dewy with the kisses of the flowers? And was there no delight in the dark and weird terror with which he invoked the grisly Three, "so withered and so wild in their attire," who, in foretelling, themselves created the bloody destinies of Macbeth?—So far from believing, as some have done, that the feelings of genius are inclined to sadness and dejection—it seemed to me *vitally necessary* to genius to be vividly susceptible to enjoyment. The poet in prose or verse—the creator—can only stamp his images forcibly on the page in proportion as he has forcibly felt, ardently nursed, and long brooded over them. And how few among the mass of writings that float down to posterity are not far more impregnated with the bright colourings of the mind, than its gloomier hues. Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, Goëthe, Voltaire, Scott—and, perhaps, a lower grade—Cervantes, Fielding, Le Sage, Molière. What a serene and healthful cheerfulness! nay, what a quick and vigorous zest for life are glowingly visible in all!—It is with a very perverted judgment that some have fastened on the few exceptions to the rule, and have asserted that the gloom of Byron or the morbidity of Rousseau characterize, not the individual, but the tribe. Nay, even in these exceptions, I imagine that, could we accurately examine, we should find, that the capacity to enjoy strongly pervaded their temperament, and made out of their griefs a luxury!—Who shall say whether Rousseau breathing forth his reveries, or Byron tracing the pilgrimage of Childe Harold, did not more powerfully feel the glory of the task, than the sorrow it was to immortalize? Must they not have been exalted with an almost divine gladness, by the beauty of their own ideas, the melody of their own murmurs, the wonders of their own art? Perhaps we should find that Rousseau did not experience a deeper pleasure, though it might be of a livelier hue, when he dwelt on his racy enjoyment of his young and pedestrian excursion, than when in his old age, and his benighted but haunted mood, he filled the solitude with imaginary enemies, and bade his beloved lake echo to self-nursed woes. You see, then, that I was impressed, erroneously or truly, with the belief that in cultivating the imagination I should cultivate my happiness. I was envious, not so much of the fame of the ornaments of letters, as of the enjoyment they must have experienced in acquiring it. I shut myself in a closer seclusion, not to study the thoughts of others, but to imbody my own. I had been long ambitious of the deepest hoards of learning. I now became ambitious of adding to the stores of a lighter knowledge.

A. And did you find that luxury in ideal creation which you expected?

L. I might have done so, but I stopped short in my apprenticeship.

A. And the cause?

L. Why, one bright day in June, as I was sitting alone in my room, I was suddenly aroused from my revery by a sharp and sudden pain, that shot through my breast, and when it left me I fainted away. I was a little alarmed by this circumstance, but thought the air might relieve me. I walked out, and ascended a hill at the back of the house. My attention being now aroused and directed towards myself, I was startled to find my breath so short that I was forced several times to stop in the ascent. A low, short cough, which I had not heeded before, now struck me as a warning, which I ought to prepare myself to obey. That evening, as I looked in the glass, for the first time for several weeks with any care in the survey, I perceived that my apprehensions were corroborated by the change in my appearance. My cheeks were fallen, and I detected in their natural paleness that hectic which never betrays its augury. I saw that my days were numbered, and I lay down to my pillow that night with the resolve to prepare for death. The next day when I looked over my scattered papers,—when I saw the mighty schemes I had commenced, and recalled the long and earnest absorption of all my faculties, which even that commencement had required,—I was seized with a sort of despair. It was evident that I could now perform nothing great, and as for trifles, ought they to occupy the mind of one whose eye was on the grave?—There was but one answer to this question. I committed my fragments to the flames; and now there came, indeed, upon me a despondency I had not felt before. I saw myself in the condition of one who, after much travail in the world, has found a retreat, and built himself a home, and who in the moment he says to his heart "now thou shalt have rest!" beholds himself summoned away. I had found an object—it was torn from me—my staff was broken, and it was only left to me to creep to the tomb, without easing by any support the labour of the way. I had coveted no petty aim—I had not bowed my desires to the dust and mire of men's common wishes—I had bade my ambition single out a lofty end, and pursue it by generous means. In the dreams of my spirit, I had bound the joys of my existence to this one aspiring hope, nor had I built that hope on the slender foundations of a young inexperience—I had learned, I had thought, I had toiled, before I ventured in my turn to produce. And now, between myself and the fulfilment of schemes that I had wrought with travail, and to which I looked for no undue reward—there yawned the eternal gulf. It seemed to me as if I was condemned to leave life at the moment I had given to life an object. There was a bitterness in these thoughts which it was not easy to counteract. In vain I said to my soul, "Why grieve?—Death itself does not appal thee.—And after all, what can life's proudest objects bring thee better than rest?" But we learn at last to conquer our destiny, by surveying it; there is no regret which is not to be vanquished by resolve. And now, when I saw myself declining day by day, I turned to those more elevating and less earthly meditations, which supply us, as it were, with wings, when the feet fail. They have become to me dearer than the dreams which they succeeded, and they whisper to me of a brighter immortality than that of Fame.

CONVERSATION THE SEVENTH.

"I KNOW not," said L——, "what the presentiment of certain death may effect in changing the thoughts and the feelings of other men; but in me the change was instantaneous and complete. Sometimes, in the evening, we see a cloud on which the setting sun has rested, and has coloured it with gold and vermeil: we look again some minutes afterward, and the glory is gone; all is cold and gray. That cloud was to me the image of life. The bright delusion that one moment had made the vapour so lovely, vanished the next; and I now cared not how soon it might melt away into air —oh! might I rather say into heaven!

"With a sigh I closed my more worldly studies. I abandoned at once the labours destined never to know completion, and I surrendered my whole heart to the contemplation of *that* futurity which was not denied me. Yet even here one thought startled me: it aroused the doubt, and I bent myself sternly to wrestle with what it roused. And whom has that doubt not startled? Who, at least, in whom faith is the creature of reason, and who has applied himself dispassionately and seriously to consider the elements of his nature and the causes of his hope? You guess what I refer to; we have often conversed on it."

A. The existence of evil in the world, the crime triumphant, and the virtue dejected?

L. Exactly. This has been, in all ages, the chief cause of skepticism—to such skeptics as are both reflective and sincere. Yet, while I was sadly revolving this truth, a light seemed to break from the heart of the cloud, and in this very source of discontent below I saw a proof of futurity beyond.

A. Indeed: that will be a new step in theological science.

L. I will explain shortly: but you must give me your whole attention. I come first to an old problem. This world is. It must, therefore, have been created, or it must always have existed. If created, it must have been created either by chance or by design. Now which of these three conjectures is the most probable? First, that the world always existed; secondly, that it was formed by chance; or, thirdly, that it was created by design? You know the old argument of Clarke, in proof that matter cannot be eternal, and that the world, therefore, could not always have existed; but, unhappily, no metaphysician ever read that argument without detecting its fallacies. Fortunately, however, we do not require metaphysics to prove that the world has not always existed. That truth is proved by physical science. Geology makes it probable; astronomy makes it certain. There must come a time when, in the ordinary course of nature, light alone would destroy the world.* If there is a time when it must end, there must have been a time when it begun. And we come then to the two next suppositions,—if the world has not always existed, was it commenced by chance, or created by design? Which is the more probable conjecture? Let us take the daily evidence of our senses. Does chance, in what we see around us, ever create one uniform, harmonious, unchangeable system? If we see a clock, if we see a house, and we are told the house and the clock were made by chance, by a concurrence of atoms, by nothing intelligent, or contriving in itself, should we not cry out, "This is a ridiculous fable; every thing that our experience affords as testimony contradicts it." Is the universe less pregnant with art and design than the clock or the house? Is there less harmony in the changes of the season, in the life of the tides, in the mechanism of nature, than in the handiwork of man, which, however skilful, however wondrous, an accident deranges, a blow destroys?

* Singularly enough, the "Edinburgh Review," for October, 1831, has taken up exactly this view of the question. This paper was written months before that Review appeared.

But what ever stops—what convulsion, what incident ever arrests the august regularity of creation, the motion of the stars, the appointed progress of vegetable life? Wherever we look on external nature, we see developed in perfection all that answers to our fullest conception of the word "design." And is it not, then, an easy and an irresistible conjecture, that by design the world was created? But design at once necessarily implies something active, intelligent, and living. And lo! this is our elementary notion of a God!

Having proceeded so far, the rest of my argument is simple. This Being, or this Power, *is*, then! What are its unavoidable attributes? Let us dismiss the word "infinite:" it puzzles, and is not necessary: but That which created this universe must be, according to all our notions of wisdom, greatly wise—wise above all dream of comparison, beyond the wisest of us, who spend our lives in examining Its works, and can only discover new harmonies without piercing to the cause. According to the same notions, it must likewise be greatly powerful—powerful in the same ratio beyond the power of humanity. This Being, then, is greatly wise and greatly powerful! Is It benevolent? Let us hear what Paley says. He is great on this point. Perhaps it is one of the best passages in a work rarely indeed profound, but always clear. I have never heard even a plausible answer to it.

"Contrivance proves design, and the predominant tendency of the contrivance indicates the disposition of the designer. The world abounds with contrivances; and all the contrivances which we are acquainted with are directed to beneficial purposes. Evil no doubt exists; but is never, that we can perceive, the object of contrivance. Teeth are contrived to eat, not to ache: their aching now and then is incidental to the contrivance; perhaps inseparable from it; or even, if you will, let it be called a defect in the contrivance; but it is not the object of it. This is a distinction which well deserves to be attended to. In describing implements of husbandry, you would hardly say of a sickle that it is made to cut the reaper's fingers, though, from the construction of the instrument and the manner of using it, this mischief often happens. But if you had occasion to describe instruments of torture or execution, this engine, you would say, is to extend the sinews; this to dislocate the joints; this to break the bones; this to scorch the soles of the feet. Here pain and misery are the very objects of the contrivance. Now nothing of this sort is to be found in the works of nature. We never discover a train of contrivance to bring about an evil purpose. No anatomist ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain and disease; or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, this is to irritate; this is to inflame; this duct is to convey the gravel to the kidneys; this gland to secrete the humour which forms the gout. If by chance he come at a part of which he knows not the use, the most he can say of it is, that it is useless; no one ever suspects that it is put there to incommode, to annoy, or torment."

The general contrivance, then, is benevolent; and the benevolence of the Unseen Being is thus proved. Now, then, we have the three attributes,—wisdom, power, benevolence. So far I have said little that is new: now for my corollary. If a being be greatly wise, greatly powerful, and also benevolent, it *must* be just. For injustice springs only from three causes; either because we have not the wisdom to perceive what is just, or the power to enforce it, or the benevolence to will it. Neither of these causes for injustice can be found in a Being wise, powerful, benevolent; and thus justice is unavoidably a fourth attribute of its nature. But the justice is not visible in *this world.* We bow to the wisdom; we revere the power; we acknowledge the benevolence; the justice alone we cannot recognise. The lowest vices are often the most triumphant, and sorrow and bitterness are the portions of virtue. Look at the beasts as well as mankind; *they* offend not; yet what disease and misery! Again: How implicitly are we the creatures of circumstance! What can be more unjust than such an ordination?—to be trained to crime from our childhood, as the sons of offenders often are, and to suffer its penalties from following an education we could not resist. How incompatible with all that we know of justice! It is in vain to answer that this is not a very general rule; that, in the majority of human instances, virtue and self-interest are one. This is quite sufficient argument for the foundation of human codes and an earthly morality; but it is not a sufficient argument for the justice, in this world, of a Being so much greater and wiser than ourselves. It is the *misfortune* of mankind that we must adopt general rules, and disregard individual cases. And why? Because *our* wisdom and *our* power cannot be so consummate, so complete, as to embrace individual cases. Not so with a Being whose wisdom and whose power are not measured by our low standards. The justice is not visible here in the same proportion as the other attributes. But we have proved, nevertheless, that justice *must* exist: if not visible here, it must be visible elsewhere. What is that elsewhere?—AN HEREAFTER!

A. Your deductions are ingenious enough, and, I believe, new. But recollect, the same argument from which you would deduce an hereafter to man is equally applicable to the brute tribe. For, as you rightly observe, injustice and the power of evil are no less visibly displayed in their lot upon earth than they are in the fate of mankind.

"I was about to come to that point, and" (continued L——, with that beautiful and touching smile which I never saw upon any other human countenance; a smile full of the softness, the love, the benevolence, the visionary, the dreaming benevolence of his character—a benevolence that often betrays—but with how tender a grace! the progress of his judgment),—"and" (continued L——) "for my part, I often please myself with fancying that the 'Poor Indian,'

'Who thinks, admitted to the equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company,'

is not so 'untutored' by the great truths and pr ments of Nature as we imagine. It does not rev reason, no nor my pride, to believe that there n an Eden in the future as well as in the past—a g where the lion may lie down with the lamb; and may be at last a blessed suspension of the Uni Law, that holds this world together—the Law tl things shall prey upon each other;—the Lav makes earth one stupendous slaughter-house, and the countless tribes of creation in one family c lence and death. But when we see what evil among the wild things of Nature—not a fish that s not a bird that flies, not an insect that springs one hour, and perishes the next—that is not sub the most complicated and often the most agonizi riety of disease; when we see some whole tribe marked for sustenance to others, and a life of per fear, the most dreadful of all curses, consummat a violent and torturing death;—why should we tl incompatible with the nature of God, that if repa is due to *us*, reparation should be due also to *then* own I find nothing irrational in the supposition! A the many mansions of our Father's house, there is for all his creatures. And often when I conside many noble and endearing traits, even in a dog, w call forth by kindness, which with all things is th sort of education, I am at a loss to know wh should give to the human clod the germ of an i tality which we would deny to creatures subject same passions, rich in the same instincts, cond often to greater miseries, open to fewer pleasure yet capable of all of good or useful that their ph organization will permit. No! wherever there i there should from the hands of a just Being be r tion also; and if this be true, all that partake of this world have some sort of claim to another."

CONVERSATION THE EIGHTH.

I have not omitted what, in the eyes of many, will not redound much to the credit of L——'s understanding; but the general reader will not be sorry to find in that character even weakness, so long as the weakness may be amiable and endearing; and, after all, I am not drawing the portraiture of one singular only for his genius. When Johnson believed in ghosts, it may be pardonable for an obscure scholar to believe in a more kindly exertion of the Supreme Power than pride willingly allows; and though I cannot say I share in all L——'s opinions, I am certainly at a loss to decide whether, in looking to the great attributes of God, it is more easy to believe that there is certain damnation for the Deist, or possible atonement to the poor creatures of the field and air.

And now I saw L—— daily, for his disease increased rapidly upon him, and I would not willingly have lost any rays of that sun that was so soon to set for ever. Nothing creates within us so many confused and strange sentiments as a conversation on those great and lofty topics of life or nature which are rarely pleasing, except to Wisdom which contemplates, and Genius which imagines;—a conversation on such topics with one whose lips are about to be closed for an eternity. This thought impresses even common words with a certain sanctity; what, then, must it breathe into matters which, even in ordinary times, are consecrated to our most high-wrought emotions and our profoundest hopes? It is this which gives to the Phædo of Plato such extraordinary beauty. The thoughts of the wisest of the heathens on the immortality of the soul must always have been full of interest; but uttered in a prison, at the eve of death,—the light of another world already reposes on them!

I saw, then, L—— daily, and daily he grew more resigned to his fate; yet I cannot deny that there were moments when his old ambition would break forth—when the stir of the living world around him—when action, enterprise, and fame, spoke loudly to his heart; moments when he wished to live on, and the deep quiet of the grave seemed to him chilling and untimely; and —reflect,—while we were conversing on these calm and unearthly matters, what was the great world about? Strife and agitation—the stern wrestle between things that have been and the things to come—the vast upheavings of society—the revolution of mind that was abroad—was not this felt, even to the solitary heart of that retirement in which the lamp of a bright and keen existence was wasting itself away?

"I remember," said L——, one evening, when we sat conversing in his study; the sofa wheeled round; the curtains drawn; the table set, and the night's sedentary preparations made; "I remember hearing the particulars of the last hours of an old acquaintance of mine, a lawyer, rising into great eminence in his profession—a resolute, hard-minded, scheming, ambitious man. He was attacked in the prime of life with a sudden illness; mortification ensued; there was no hope; he had some six or seven hours of life before him, and no more. He was perfectly sensible of his fate, and wholly unreconciled to it. 'Come hither,' he said to the physician, holding out his arm (he was a man of remarkable physical strength); 'look at these muscles; they are not wasted by illness; I am still at this moment in the full vigour of manhood, and you tell me I must die!' He ground his teeth as he spoke. 'Mark, I am not resigned; I will battle with this enemy;' and he raised himself up, called for food and wine, and died with the same dark struggles and fiery resistance that he would have offered in battle to some imbodied and palpable foe. Can you not enter into his feelings? I can most thoroughly.—Yes," L—— renewed, after a short pause, "I ought to be deeply grateful that my mind has been filed down and conciliated to what is inevitable by the gradual decay of my physical powers; the spiritual habitant is not abruptly and violently expelled from its mansion; but the mansion itself becomes ruinous, and the inmate has had time to prepare itself for another. Yet when I see you all about me, strong for the race and eager for the battle, —when, in the dead of a long and sleepless night, images of all I might have done, had the common date of life been mine, start up before me, I feel as a man must feel who sees himself suddenly arrested in the midst of a journey, of which all the variety of scene, the glow of enterprise, the triumph of discovery were yet to come. It is like the traveller who dies in sight of the very land that he has sacrificed the ease of youth and the pleasures of manhood to reach. But these are not the reflections I ought to indulge—let me avoid them. And where can I find a better refuge for my thoughts than in talking to you of this poem, which, long ago, we said we would attempt to criticise, and which of all modern works, gloomy and monotonous as it seems to men in the flush of life, offers the calmest and most sacred consolation to those whom life's objects should no longer interest?"

A. You speak of "The Night Thoughts?" Ay, we were to have examined that curious poem, which has so many purchasers, and has been honoured with so few critics. Certainly, when we remember the day in which it appeared, and the poetry by which it has been succeeded, it is worthy of a more ample criticism than, with one exception, it has received.

"It is very remarkable," said L——, willingly suffering himself to sink into a more commonplace vein, "how great a difference the spirit of poetry in the last century assumes, when breathed through the medium of blank verse, and in that of rhyme. In rhyme, the fashion of poetry was decidedly French, and artificial; polish, smoothness, point, and epigram are its prevailing characteristics; but in blank verse, that noble metre, introduced by Surrey, and perfected by Shakspeare, the old genius of English poetry seems to have

We all know how much the same classic adulterations mingle with the English Helicon at a later period; how little even the wits of the time of Charles the Second escape the hereditary taint. Sedley's mistresses are all Uranias and Phillises. Now he borrows a moral from Lycophron, and next he assures us, in one of the prettiest of his songs, that

> 'Love still has something of the sea
> From whence his mother rose.'

Dryden, whose excellence never lay greatly in an accurate taste, though in his admirable prose writings he proves that he knew the theory while he neglected the practice, is less painfully classical and unseasonably mythological than might have been expected; and as from his time the school of poetry became more systematically copied from a classical model, so it became less eccentric in its classical admixtures. Pope is at once the most Roman of all our poets, and the least offensive in his Romanism. I mention all this to prove, that when we find much that is borrowed, and often awkwardly borrowed, from ancient stores, ancient names, and ancient fables, in those poets of the last century whom I shall take the license to call preeminently English, we must not suppose that they are, from that fault, the less national; nay, that very aptitude to borrow, that very leaning to confuse their present theme with the incongruous ornaments of a country wholly opposite from our own, are almost, on the contrary, a testimony how deeply they were imbued with that spirit which belonged to the most genuine of their predecessors.

"Among the chief characteristics of our English poetry are great minuteness and fidelity in rural description—a deep melancholy in moral reflection, coupled with a strong and racy aptitude to enjoy the sweets of life as well as to repine at the bitters—a glowing richness, a daring courage of expression, and a curious love of abrupt change in thought and diction; so that the epigrammatic and the sublime, the humorous and the grave, the solemn and the quaint, are found in a juxtaposition the most singular and startling; as much the reverse of the severe simplicity of the true ancient schools as possible, and having its resemblance, and that but occasionally, and in this point alone, in the Italian.*

"In the middle of the last century, the three greatest of the poets in blank verse are Akenside, Thomson, and Young. Of these three the last I consider the *most* thoroughly English in his muse; but with the exception of that extreme love of blending extremes which I have noted before, the two former are largely possessed of the great features of their national tribe. Pope's pastorals were written at so early an age that it would not be fair to set them in comparison to 'Thomson's Seasons' if Pope's descriptions of scenery had ever undergone any change in their spirit and conception, in proportion as he added to the correct ear of his youth—the bold turn, the exquisite taste, the incomparable epigram, and even (witness the prologue to 'Cato') the noble thought and the august image, which adorn the poetry of his maturer years; but however Pope improved in all else, his idea, his notion of rural description always remained pretty nearly the same—viz. as trite as it could be. And this, an individual failing, was the failing also of his school—the eminent failing of the French school to this very day. Well then, Pope having fixed upon Autumn as the season of a short pastoral, chooses 'tuneful Hylas' for his songster, and telling us first, that

> 'Now setting Phœbus shone serenely bright,
> And fleecy clouds were strewed with purple light.'

"'Tuneful Hylas,' then, thus

> 'Taught rocks to weep and made the mountains groan.'

* Critics not acquainted with our early literature have imagined this mixture of grave and gay the offspring of late years; nay, some have actually attributed its origin in England to Byron's imitations from the Italian.

'Now bright Arcturus glads the teeming grain,
Now golden fruits on loaded branches shine,
And grateful clusters swell with floods of wine;
Now blushing berries paint the yellow grove,
Just gods! shall all things yield returns but love?'

"Now these lines are very smooth, and, for th at which they were composed, surprisingly co They are as good, perhaps, as any thing in 'Les dins' of Delille, but there is not a vestige of E poetry in them—not a vestige. Thomson woul have written them at any age, and Pope would have polished them more had he written them wh published the 'Dunciad,' *i. e.* as I said before, i same year in which Thomson published the 'Sum But thus begins the poet of the 'Seasons' wit 'Autumn:'—

'Crowned with the sickle, and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on——
*   *   *   *   *   *
——broad, brown, below
Extensive harvests hang the heavy head,
Rich, silent, deep they stand! for not a gale
Rolls its light billows o'er the bending plain,
A calm of plenty!'

"Again, how fine what follows! Wordsworth more true to Nature. He speaks of the Autumn f

——'Expanding far
The huge dusk, gradual, swallows up the plain,
Vanish the woods—the dim-seen river seems
Sullen and slow to roll the misty wave,
Even in the height of noon oppress'd, the sun
Sheds weak——
——Indistinct on earth,
Seen through the turbid air, beyond the life
Objects appear; and wildered o'er the waste
The shepherd stalks gigantic—till at last
Wreathed dun around, in deeper circles still
Successive, closing sits the general fog
Unbounded o'er the world, and mingling thick,
A formless gray confusion covers all.'

"This is *description!*—and this is national!—this is nglish!—albeit it was the Tweed,

'Whose pastoral banks first heard *that* Doric reed.'

"Again, too, in another vein—that inclination to oop from the grave to the low—which, as I have nted, is less frequently displayed in Thomson than in oung (in Akenside it is scarcely, if at all, noticeable)—is is English. A fox-hunter's debauch,—

'Set ardent in
For serious drinking,——
* * * * *
——confused above
Glasses and bottles, pipes and gazetteers,
As if the table even itself was drunk,
Lie a wet broken scene, and wide below
Is heaped the social slaughter, where astride
The lubber power in filthy triumph sits,——,
Perhaps some doctor *of tremendous paunch*
Awful and deep, *a black abyss of drink,*
Outlives them all!' &c.

"These are passages which would be rarely found the same poem in any other language than ours—l the spirit that pervades blank verse such as this, altogether different from that which reigned over the itemporaneous rhymes of the day. It breathes of , of action, of the open air, of the contemplative lk in the fields at eve, or the social hearth at night. t the genius of rhyme lived in London—talked with irtiers—made love and witticisms in a breath—'bab d about green fields' in a dusty closet—and when it lked into print, it was never without a bag-wig and a ord.

'The 'Seasons' were completed in 1730. Four-n years afterward appeared Akenside's 'Pleasures Imagination:' it is a great poem; but Akenside's oits and profession and education all conspired to rob of the freshness and zest that the subject claimed. was a physician, a warm political controversialist, elegant scholar (his Latin is better than much which is more celebrated); and, above all, he was a pedant in the Greek philosophy. All this tended to unanglicise his poem, and make it infinitely too scholastic, and certainly neither in vigour or richness of expression, in close description, in sublimity, in terseness, in avoidance of cold generalities, is he to be put on a par with Thomson or Young. But still if you compare his blank verse with his own rhyme, or with that of Johnson's 'London' (which, though I do not remember the exact date it was published, must have appeared somewhere about that period), you find the native muse more visible, more at liberty in the blank verse, than the other and more crippled metre. I mention Johnson in particular, for the genius of both was scholastic and didactic. Both thought of the ancients—the one copied from Juvenal, the other imagined from Lucretius. The passages I shall quote from each are strictly classical. But one is of the old English race of classical description—it breathes of Spenser and of Milton—the other was the antinational, the new, the borrowed, the diluted, the classical description, which steals the triteness of old, without its richness. One takes the dress—the other the jewels. Thus Johnson:—

'Couldst thou resign the park and play, content,
For the fair banks of Severn or of Trent;
There mightst thou find some elegant retreat,
Some hireling senator's deserted seat,
And stretch thy prospects o'er the smiling land,
For less than rent the dungeons of the Strand;
There prune thy walks, support thy drooping flowers,
Direct thy rivulets, and twine thy bowers,
And while thy grounds a cheap repast afford,
Despise the dainties of a venal lord;
There every bush with nature's music rings,
There every breeze bears health upon its wings:
On all thy hours security shall smile,
And bless thine evening walk, and morning toil.'

"Now then for Akenside. He has burst into an apostrophe on Beauty, (with Johnson it would have been Venus!) and after asking whether she will fly—

'With laughing Autumn to the Atlantic isles,'—

The poet adds—

'Or wilt thou rather stoop thy vagrant plume
Where gliding through his daughter's honoured shades
The smooth Peneus from his glassy flood
Reflects purpureal Tempe's pleasant scene—
Fair Tempe!—haunt beloved of sylvan powers
Of Nymphs and Fauns, where in the golden age
They played in secret on the shady brink
With ancient Pan. While round their *choral* steps
Young hours and genial gales with constant hand
Showered blossoms, odours, showered ambrosial dews,
And Spring's elysian bloom!'

"Here all is classic—antique—Grecian—it might be translation from Euripides. But how different the e in this page to the cold resuscitation of dry bones Johnson. Johnson, who despised the fine ballads hich make the germ of all that is vivid and noble in r poetry, could not have comprehended the difference tween the genuine antique and the mock. They th have filled their vases from the old fountain '*splen-lior vitro*;' but the vase of one is the Etruscan shape and that of the other is a yellow-ware utensil from eet-street. But now, having somewhat prepared rselves by the short survey—retrospective and con-nporaneous—that we have thus taken of English etry, we come at once to Young—a man whose ındeur of thought, whose sublimity of expression, ıose wonderful power of condensing volumes into a e, place him, in my opinion, wholly beyond the reach any of his contemporaries, and enable him to com-e the various and loftiest characteristics of prose and 'se;—enable him to equal now a Milton in the im-ial pomp of his imagery, and now a Tacitus in the n grasp of his reflection."

A. There seems to have been in Young's mind a narkable turn towards the ambitious. His poetry l his life equally betray that certain loftiness of desire l straining after effect, which, both in composition l character, we term ambitious.

L. It is rather a curious anecdote in literary history that the austere Young should have attempted to enter Parliament under the auspices of that profligate bankrupt of all morality, public and private, Philip Duke of Wharton. Had he succeeded, what difference might it have made, not only in Young's life, but in his character! Is it not on the cards that the grandest of all theological poets (for neither Milton nor Dante are in reality theological poets, though they are often so called) might have become, in that vicious and jobbing age of parliamentary history, a truckling adventurer or an intriguing placeman?

A. The supposition is not uncharitable when we look to his after-life, and see his manœuvres for ecclesiastical preferment. For my own part, I incline to suspect that half the sublime melancholy of the poet proceeded from the discontent of the worldling.

L. It is certainly possible that not even the loftiest sentiments—the fullest mind—the most devout and solemn fervour of religion, may suffice to chase away the poor and petty feelings that in this artificial world fasten themselves around the heart, and are often the base causes of the most magnificent efforts of genius. The blighting of a selfish ambition produced the Gulliver of Swift—and possibly also deepened the ebon dies of the verse of Young. A morbid discontent—an infirmity of constitution—breathed its gloom into the "Rasselas" of Johnson, and the "Childe Harold" of him who loved to be compared with Johnson. When the poet flies, after any affliction in the world, to his consolatory and absorbing art, he is unaware that that affliction which inspires him is often composed of the paltriest materials. So singular and complex, in short, are the sources of inspiration, so completely and subtly are the clay and the gold moulded together, that, though it may be a curious metaphysical pleasure to analyze, and weigh, and sift the good and the evil therein, it is not a labour that is very wise in us to adopt. Let us drink into our souls the deep thought and lofty verse of Lucretius, without asking what share belonged to the filter and what to the genius.

We may remark that the contemplation exhibited in the poetry of the ancients turns usually towards a gay result, and sighs forth an Epicurean moral—the melancholy is soft, not gloomy, and brightens up at its close.

> "———Vina liques, et spatio brevi
> Spem longam reseces; dum loquimur, fugerit invida
> Ætas; carpe diem quàm minimùm credula postero."

Life is short—while we speak it flies—enjoy, then, the present, and forget the future: such is the chief moral of ancient poetry, a graceful and a wise moral—indulged beneath a southern sky, and well deserving the phrase applied to it—"the philosophy of the garden"—telling us of the brief and fleeting life of the flowers that surround us, only to encourage us to hang over their odours while we may. But it must be observed that this the more agreeable shape of melancholy is more remarkable among the Romans than the Greeks. Throughout the various philosophies of the latter the dark and saddening doctrine of an irresistible Fate flows like a bitter stream; and an unrelieved and heavy despondency among the less popular of the remains of Greek poesy often comes in startling contrast to the gayer wisdom of that more commonly admired. Turn from Anacreon to the fragments of Mimnermus, collected by Stobæus—it is indeed turning from the roses to the sepulchre beneath. "Life is short—we learn from the gods neither evil nor good—the black fates are before us—death and old age at hand. Not one among mortals whom Jupiter heaps not with afflictions," &c. It is chiefly from this more sombre order of reflection that the English contemplative writers deduce their inspiration. Lord Sackville, in the "Mirror of Magistrates," may furnish no inadequate notion of the exaggerating extent to which we have carried despondency. He therein makes Sorrow in hell, introducing the reader to the principal characters in our history! With our earlier writers Young was intimately acquainted and deeply imbued. But of all great poets his plagiarisms are the least naked. Drummond says—

"This world a hunting is;
The prey poor Man—the Nimrod fierce is Death."

And Young at once familiarizes and exalts the image—

"I see the circling hunt of noisy men
Burst law's enclosure, leap the mounds of right,
Pursuing and pursued, each other's prey—
Till Death, that mighty Hunter, earths them all."

The love of common and daily images is very remarkable in Young; but when we come to examine the works of the greater poets, we shall generally be surprised to find that those poets who abound in the most lofty and far-fetched images invariably furnish also the most homely. It is the genius in whom we miss the one that avoids the other. We may be quite sure when we open Shakspeare that the sublimest metaphor will be in the closest juxtaposition with what in any one else we should not hesitate to call the most vulgar—

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time:
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death—*Out—out, brief candle!*"

It is too much the cry to accuse Young, as a peculiarity in his genius, of being too bombastic, and turgid, and peregrinate in his metaphors—fond of conceits and addicted to exaggeration. Doubtless he is so; but as the man in the play exclaims, "Your great geniuses can never say a thing like other people"—and it certainly is noticeable, though commonplace or uninvestigating critics have said the contrary, that in all modern literature it is the loftiest order of genius that will furnish examples of the most numerous exaggerations and the most grotesque conceits. Among the Italians we all know how prevalent they are. Even the cold rules of the French drama do not banish them, and Corneille, still beyond all comparison the grandest of the French poets, is also the most addicted to extravagances.

"Ma plus douce esperance est de perdre l'espoir,"*

is one among a thousand. You recollect, of course, those extravagances which Addison selects from Milton, and the many others in that great poet which Addison did not select; in short, when we blame Young for a want of strict taste in his metaphors, we blame him for no fault peculiar to himself, but one which he shares with the greatest poets of modern times in so remarkable a degree that it almost seems a necessary part of their genius. And I am not quite certain whether, after all, it is they or we the critics who are in the wrong. I think that had a list of their conceits been presented to Milton and to Young, they would have had a great deal to say in their defence. Certainly, by-the-way, Dr. Johnson, in his hasty and slurring essay on Young's poetry, has not been fortunate in the instances of conceits which he quotes for reprobation. For example, he says of a certain line applied to Tyre in Young's Merchant, "Let burlesque try to go beyond him." The line is this—

"Her merchants princes, and *each deck a throne!*"

It is at least doubtful whether the words that seem so ridiculous to Johnson do not, on the contrary, body forth a very bold and fine image; and it is quite certain that the critic might have selected at least a hundred far more glaring specimens of conceit or tumidity. One great merit in Young, and also one great cause of his exaggerations, is his habit of imbodying feelings, his fondness of personifying. For instance:—

"My Hopes and Fears
Start up alarmed, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—on what? a fathomless abyss."

This vivifying the dread inmates of the human heart, and giving the Dark Invisible a shape and action, is singularly fine in the above passage. Again:—

* The Cid

"Thought—busy Thought—too busy for my peace—
Through the dark postern of Time long elapsed,
Led softly by the stillness of the night,
Led like a murderer——
——meets the ghosts
Of my departed Joys.

There is here a dim and sepulchral life breathed into the Thought that wanders and the Joy it meets, that belongs only to the highest order of creative poetry; and sometimes a few lines testifying of this sublime power will show as prolific and exuberant an invention as that which calls forth the beings of the Drama and the Epic—as the Greeks often conveyed their most complicated similes in one epithet. It is scarcely possible to conceive a more solemn and august example of this faculty than where afterward he calls his sorrow itself into a separate existence, and says—

"Punctual as lovers to the moment sworn,
I keep an assignation with my Wo."

But if this great proneness to personify produces so much that is the greatest in Young—it produces also that which criticism condemns as the lowest. For instance, you will smile at the following verses:

"————Who can take
Death's portrait true—*the tyrant never sat.*"

* * * * *
* * * * *

"Rude thought runs wild in contemplation's field,
Converse the *manège* breaks it to the bit.

* * * * *
* * * * *

——He's at the door,
Insidious Death—should his strong hand *arrest,*
No composition sets the prisoner free."

It is the same habit of personification which, I think, on looking over Milton and Shakspeare, you will find mainly produce the same fault (if fault it really be) in them.

That power of the Greeks to which I have alluded of conveying the most complicated images by a *word*, belongs also to Young in a greater degree than to any poet *since* his time. As where he exclaims—

"Much wealth how little worldlings can enjoy;
At best it *babies* us with endless toys."

ınd again—a finer instance—

"Mine" (*joys*) "died with thee, Philander; thy last sigh
Dissolved the charm; the disenchanted earth
Lost all her lustre. Where her glittering towers,
Her golden mountains where? all darkened down
To naked waste—a dreary vale of years.—
The great *Magician's* dead!"

Here the whole contents of the preceding lines—the hole power of friendship—the whole victory of death, e summed up at once in the words

"The great MAGICIAN'S dead!"

Nothing, indeed, throughout the whole poem is more markable in Young than his power of condensation. e gathers up a vast store of thought, and coins the hole into one inestimable sentence. He compresses e porosities of language, and imbodies a world of eaning in a single line. And it is indeed remarkable, at a writer possessing this power to so unrivalled a ;gree should ever subject himself with justice to the ıarge of tumidity.

But what place in our literature is to be assigned to 'oung? At present his position is vague and uncer-in. Like many other of our poets, his merits are cknowledged, but his station undecided. Shall we lace him before Pope? Pope's admirers would be tartled at the presumption. Below Goldsmith? Few rould assert the "Deserted Village" to be a greater ›oem than the "Night Thoughts." What is his exact ank? I confess that I should incline to place it on a 'ery lofty eminence. In a word, I should consider the

"Night Thoughts," altogether, the finest didactic poem in the language. The greatest orders of poetry, we all allow, are the epic and the dramatic. I am at a loss to say whether, *in general*, lyrical or didactic poetry should be placed next; but I am sure that, *in our country*, didactic poetry takes the precedence. None of our lyrists have equalled our great didactic writers; and with us, the order itself of lyrical writing seldom aspires beyond the graceful. But it must be understood that there is sometimes a great difference between the rank of the poem and that of the poet; many writings of great excellence can pile up a higher reputation than one work of the greatest. Both Voltaire and Scott depend, not only on the quality, but the quantity of their productions for their fame. When the public were crying out that the Author of "Waverley" was writing too much and too fast, they did not perceive that even his bad works contributed to swell the sum of his glory, by proving the fertility of his genius. And to them may be well applied the words applied to another—"He would not have effected such great things, if his errors had been less numerous." So, although I consider the "Night Thoughts" a poem entitled to rank immediately below the "Paradise Lost," I am far from contending that Young should rank as a poet immediately next to Milton. I think the "Night Thoughts" a more sustained, solemn, and mighty poem than the "Childe Harold;" but when I recall all the works that accompany the latter—produce of the same fiery and teeming mind—the dark tale of "Lara"—the sweetness of the "Prisoner of Chillon"—the daring grandeur of "Cain," and, above all, the rich, nervous humour—the deep mastery of the living world that breathes a corporeal life into the shadows of the "Don Juan," I am at no loss to allow Byron to be a greater genius, and a greater poet, than Young.

A. But you really think the "Night Thoughts" finer than the "Harold."

L. So much so, that I doubt if the finest parts of "Childe Harold"—the most majestic of its reflections, ıd the most energetic of its declamation—are not und in those passages which have been (perhaps instinctly and unconsciously) borrowed from Young.

A. Byron always admired the "Night Thoughts" to olatry, and his favourite play was "The Revenge."

L. The fault of the "Childe Harold" is as a whole. here is no grandeur in its conception. Every novel the Minerva Press furnishes a similar idea of the ro and the plan. A discontented young nobleman, ted and jaded, setting out on his travels—turn the nception as you will, it comes always to that in plain d sober reality. But this poor and hackneyed concepn the Poet has hid in so magnificent a robe, and corated with such a costly profusion of gems, that it atters little to the delight and interest of the reader. ill, in judging of it as a great poem, we must remember that in the most important part of a great em it is deficient. But the conception of the "Night oughts," for a didactic poem, is unutterably grand. aged and bereaved mourner stands alone with the ad—the grave his scene—the night his canopy—and ie, death, eternity—the darkest, the loftiest objects human hope and human intellect, supply his only emes. Here, at this spot, and at this hour, commencing his strain with a majesty worthy of its aims d end, he calls upon

"Silence and Darkness, solemn sisters, twins
From ancient Night, who nurse the tender thought
To Reason, and on reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man!
Assist me: I will thank you in the grave—
The grave, your kingdom————"

ollowing the course of the sombre inspiration that he jures, he then passes in a vast review before him, in e presence of the stars, and above the slumbers of e dead, the pomps and glories of the world—the iled and shadowy forms of Hope—the dim hosts of emory—

"The Spirit walks of each departed Hour,
And smiles an angel, or a fury frowns—"

Standing upon the grave—the creations of two worlds are around him, and the gray hairs of the mourner become touched with the halo of the prophet. It is the time and spot he has chosen wherein to teach us, that dignify and consecrate the lesson: it is not the mere human and earthly moral that gathers on his tongue. The conception hallows the work, and sustains its own majesty in every change and wandering of the verse. And there is this greatness in his theme—dark, terrible, severe—hope never deserts it! It is a deep and gloomy wave, but the stars are glassed upon its bosom. The more sternly he questions the world, the more solemnly he refers its answer to Heaven. Our bane and antidote are both before him; and he only arraigns the things of Time before the tribunal of Eternity. It is this, which to men whom grief or approaching death can divest of the love and hankerings of the world, leaves the great monitor his majesty, but deprives him of his gloom. Convinced with him of the vanities of life, it is not an ungracious or unsoothing melancholy which confirms us in our conviction, and points with a steady hand to the divine SOMETHING that awaits us beyond;

"The darkness aiding intellectual light,
And sacred silence whispering truths divine,
And truths divine converting pain to peace."

I know not whether I should say too much of this great poem if I should call it a fit Appendix to "Paradise Lost." It is the Consolation to that Complaint. Imagine the ages to have rolled by since our first parents gave earth to their offspring, who sealed the gift with blood, and bequeathed it to us with toil:—imagine, after all that experience can teach—after the hoarded wisdom and the increasing pomp of countless generations—an old man, one of that exiled and fallen race, standing among the tombs of his ancestors, telling us their whole history, in his appeals to the living heart, and holding out to us, with trembling hands, the only comfort which Earth has yet discovered for its cares and sores—the anticipation of Heaven! To me that picture completes all that Milton began. It sums up the Human History, whose first great chapter he had chronicled; it preacheth the great issues of the Fall; it shows that the burning light then breathed into the soul lives there still, and consummates the mysterious record of our mortal sadness and our everlasting hope. But if the conception of the "Night Thoughts" be great, it is also uniform and sustained. The vast wings of the inspiration never slacken or grow fatigued. Even the humours and conceits are of a piece with the solemnity of the poem—like the grotesque masks carved on the walls of a cathedral, which defy the strict laws of taste, and almost inexplicably harmonize with the whole. The sorrow, too, of the poet is not egotistical, or weak in its repining. It is the Great One Sorrow common to all human nature—the deep and wise regret that springs from an intimate knowledge of our being, and the scene in which it has been cast. The same knowledge, operating on various minds, produces various results. In Voltaire, it sparkled into wit: in Goëthe, it deepened into a humour that belongs to the sublime; in Young it generated the same high and profound melancholy as that which produced the inspirations of the Son of Sirach, and the soundest portion of the philosophy of Plato. It is, then, the conception of the poem, and its sustained flight, which entitle it to so high a rank in our literature. Turn from it to any other didactic poem, and you are struck at once by the contrast—you are amazed at once by its greatness. "The Seasons" shrink into a mere pastoral; the "Essay on Man" becomes French and artificial; even the "Excursion" of Wordsworth has I know not what of childish and garrulous, the moment they are forced into a comparison with the solemn and stern majesty of the "Night Thoughts."

There is another merit in the "Night Thoughts;" apart from its one great lesson, it abounds in a thousand minor ones. Forget its conception—open it at random, and its reflections, its thoughts, its worldly wisdom alone may instruct the most worldly.' It is strange, indeed, to find united in one page the sublimity of Milton and the point of La Bruyeré. I know of no poem, except the Odyssey, which in this excels the one before us. Of insulated beauties, what rich redundance! The similes and the graces of expression with which the poem is sown are full of all the lesser wealth of invention. How beautiful, in mere diction, is that address to the flowers:—

> "Queen lilies, and ye painted populace,
> Who dwell in fields and lead ambrosial lives."

So, too, how expressive the short simile,

> "————————like our shadows,
> Our wishes lengthen as our sun declines."

What—but here I must pause abruptly, or I should go on for ever; for the poet is one who strikes the superficial even more on opening a single page at random than in reviewing the whole in order. Only one word, then, upon the author himself. Ambition he certainly possessed; and, in spite of all things, it continued with him to the last. His love of ambition perhaps deepened, in his wiser moments, his contempt of the world: for we are generally disappointed before we despise. But the purer source of his inspiration seems to have been solemnly and fervently felt throughout life. At college he was distinguished for his successful zeal in opposing the unbelief of Tindal. In literature, some of his earliest offerings were laid upon the altar of God. In the pulpit, where he was usually a powerful and victorious preacher, he is recorded to have once burst into tears on seeing that he could not breathe his own intense emotion into the hearts of a worldly audience. Naturally vain, he renounced the drama, in which he had gained so great a reputation, when he entered the church; and though called covetous, he afterward gave—when his play of "The Brothers" several years rward was acted, not the real proceeds of the play it was not successful), but what he had imagined ht be the proceeds—a thousand pounds, to the proation of the Gospel abroad. A religious vein disuished his private conversation in health and mand, no less than his reflections in sorrow, and his ughts at the approach of death. May we hope with ı that the cravings of his heart were the proof of an eafter—

> "That grief is but our grandeur in disguise,
> And discontent is immortality."

ile we admire his genius, let us benefit from its ob-t; while we bow in homage before the spirit that tole the music from the spheres to sooth their godis;" while we behold aghast the dread portrait he has wn of Death, noting from his grim and secret stand follies of a wild and revelling horde of bacchanals; ile we shudder with him when he conjures up the h-fiend from his lair; while we stand awed and athless beneath his adjuration to Night,—

> "Nature's great ancestor, Day's elder born,
> And fated to survive the transient sun;"

us always come back at last to his serene and holy isolation :—

> "Through many a field of moral and divine
> The muse has strayed, and much of sorrow seen
> In human ways, and much of false and vain,
> Which none who travel this bad road can miss;
> O'er friends deceased full heartily she wept,
> Of love divine the wonders she displayed;
> Proved man immortal; showed the source of joy;
> The grand tribunal raised; assigned the bounds
> Of human grief. In few, to close the whole,
> The moral muse has shadowed out a sketch
> Of most our weakness needs believe, or do,
> In this our land of travail and of hope,
> For peace on earth, or prospect of the skies."

I have given the substance—and, as far as I could remember, the words of my friend's remarks—the last conversation I ever held with him on his favourite poet—or indeed upon any matters merely critical. And although the reader, attached to more worldly literature, may not agree with L—— as to the high and settled rank in which the poem thus criticised should be placed—I do not think he will be displeased to have had his attention drawn for a few moments towards one, at least, among the highest, but not most popular of his country's poets. At this solemn time, too, of the year, the graver and the holier thoughts of life can scarcely be considered strangers altogether uninvited and unwelcome. And as for the rest—it is not perhaps amiss to refresh ever and anon our critical susceptibilities to genius—its defects and its beauties, by recurring to those departed writers, who—being past the reach of our petty jealousies—may keep us, as it were, in the custom to praise without envy and blame without injustice. And I must confess, moreover, that it appears to me a sort of duty we owe to the illustrious dead, to turn at times from the busier and more urgent pursuits of the world—and to water from a liberal urn the flowers or the laurels which former gratitude planted above their tombs.

It was a fine morning at the end of last August, and I rode leisurely to L——'s solitary house; his strength had so materially declined during the few days past, that I felt a gloomy presentiment that I was about to see him for the last time. He had always resolved, and I believe this is not uncommon with persons in his disease, not to take to his bed until absolutely compelled. His habitual amusements, few and tranquil, were such that he could happily continue them to the last, and his powers of conversation, naturally so rich and various, were not diminished by the approach of death; perhaps they were only rendered more impressive by the lowered tones of the sweetest of human voices, or the occasional cough that mingled, as it were, his theories on this world with a warning from the next. I have observed that as in old people the memory becomes the strongest of the faculties, so it also does with those whom mortal sickness equally with age detaches from the lengthened prospects of the future. Forbidden the objects from without, the mind turns within for its occupation, and the thoughts, formerly impelled towards hope, nourish themselves on retrospection. Once I had not noted in L—— that extraordinary strength of memory—the ready copiousness of its stores—that he now seemed to display. His imagination had been more perceptible than his learning—now every subject on which we conversed elicited hoards of knowledge, always extensive and often minute—of which perhaps he himself had been previously unconscious. It is a beautiful sight, even in the midst of its melancholy, the gradual passing away of one of the better order of souls—the passions lulled as the mind awakens, and a thousand graces of fortitude and gentleness called forth by the infirmities of the declining frame. The character assumes a more intellectual, a more ethereal complexion; and our love is made a loftier quality by our admiration, while it is softened by our pity.

Full of these reflections, I arrived at the house of my dying friend. "My master, sir," said the old servant, "has passed but a poor night; he seems in low spirits this morning, and I think he will be glad to see you, for he has inquired repeatedly what o'clock it was, as if time passed heavily with him." The old man wiped his eyes as he spoke, and I followed him into L——'s study. The countenance of the invalid was greatly changed even since I last saw him. The eyes seemed more sunken, and the usual flush of his complaint had subsided into a deep transparent paleness. I took his hand, and he shook his head gently as I did so. "The goal is nearly won!" said he faintly, but with a slight smile. I did not answer, and he proceeded after a short pause—"It has been said that 'life is a jest;' it is a very sorry one, and unlike jests in general,—its dulness is the greater as we get to the close. At the end of a long illness it is only the dregs of a man's spirit that are left him. People talk of the moral pangs that attend the death-bed of a sinner—as well might they talk of the physical weakness of a dying wrestler. The mental and the physical powers are too nearly allied for us fairly to speculate on the fidelity of the one while the other declines. Happy in my case that the endurance if not the elasticity of my mind lingers with me to the last! I was looking over some papers this morning, which were full of my early visions, aspirations of fame, and longings after immortality. I am fortunate that time is not allowed me to sacrifice happiness to these phantoms. A man's heart must be very frivolous if the possession of fame rewards the labour to attain it. For the worst of reputation is, that it is not palpable or present—we do not feel, or see, or taste it. People praise us behind our backs, but we hear them not: few before our faces, and who is not suspicious of the truth of such praise? What *does* come before us perpetually in our career of honours is the blame, not praise—the envy, not esteem. Every review, if in letters,—every newspaper, if in politics, erects itself into, not our worshipper, but our censor. We receive justice as one believed guilty is discovered to have been innocent—only after death."

"Ay," said I, "but after a little while the great man learns to despise the abuse which is not acknowledged to be just."

"In proportion as he despises abuse," answered he, "he will despise praise—if the one gives no pain, the other will give no pleasure; and thus the hunt after honours will be but a life of toil without a reward, and entail the apathies of obscurity without its content."

"But consider, there is the reward of our own heart which none can take away—our proud self-esteem, and, if you will, our fond appeal to the justice of an after-age."

"But our self-esteem—our self-applause may be equally, perhaps more securely, won in obscurity than in fame; and as to posterity, what philosophical, what moderately wise man can seriously find pleasure for the present in reflecting on the praises he can never hear? No, say what we will, you may be sure that ambition is an error:—its wear and tear of heart are never recompensed—it steals away the freshness of life—it deadens its vivid and social enjoyments—it shuts our soul to our own youth—and we are old ere we remember that we have made a fever and a labour of our raciest years. There is, and we cannot deny it, a certain weary, stale, unprofitable flatness in all things appertaining to life; and, what is worse, the more we endeavour to lift ourselves from the beaten level, the keener is our disappointment. It is thus that true philosophers have done wisely when they have told us to cultivate our reason rather than our feelings—for reason reconciles us to the daily things of existence—our feelings teach us to yearn after the far, the difficult, the unseen,

> 'Clothing the palpable and the familiar
> With golden exhalations of the dawn.'

But 'the golden exhalations' last not—our fancies make the opium of our life, the rapture and the vision—the languor and the anguish. This is an old remark. Poets eternally complain of the same truth. But what, when we come deeply to consider of it—what a singular fatality is that which makes it unwise to cultivate our divinest emotions! We bear within us the seeds of greatness; but suffer them to spring up, and they overshadow both our sense and our happiness! Note the errors of mankind! how mysteriously have they sprung from the desire to be higher than we are. As the banyan-tree springs aloft only to return to the mire—we would climb to the heaven and find ourselves once more in the dust. Thus, looking up to the starred and solemn heavens,* girt with the vast solitudes of unpeopled Nature—hearkening to the 'live thunder,' or suffering the nightly winds to fill their hearts with a thousand

* "She, mid the lightning's blaze and thunder's sound,
When rocked the mountains and when groaned the ground,
She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray
To powers unseen and mightior far than they."—Pope.

mysterious voices—mankind in the early time felt the inspiration of something above them; they bowed to the dark *afflatus;* they nourished the unearthly dream; and they produced—what?—SUPERSTITION! The darkest and foulest of moral demons sprang from their desire to shape forth a God, and their successors made earth a hell by their efforts to preserve the mysteries and repeat the commands of Heaven!

"How beautiful, how high were those desires in man's heart which lifted it up to the old Chaldæan falsehoods of astrology. Who can read at this day of those ancient seers, striving to win from the loveliest and most glorious objects given to our survey the secrets of men and empires, the prodigies of time, the destinies of the universe, without a solemn and stirring awe, an admiration at the vast conception even of so unwise a dream? Who first thought of conning the great page of Heaven?—who first thought that in those still, and cold, and melancholy orbs—our chronicles were writ? Whoever it was, his must have been a daring and unearthly soul; but the very loftiness of its faculties produced ages of delusion, and priestcraft, and error to the world. Leave for one moment the chain of the petty KNOWN—give wings to the mind—let the Aspiring loose—and what may be the result? How rarely aught but a splendid folly! As the fireworks that children send forth against a dark sky—our ambition burns, and mounts, and illumes for one moment the dim vault of the uncomprehended space, but falls to the earth quenched of its lustre—brilliant, but useless—ascending, but exploring not—a toy to all, but a light to none."

"There is one ambition," said I, "which you do not mean thus to characterize—the ambition of philanthropy—the desire more

'To raise the wretched than to rise:'

and you, I know, who believe in human perfectibility, can appreciate at a higher value that order of ambition."

"You kindly remind me," said L——, "of one of the greatest consolations with which a man, who has any warmth or benevolence of heart, can depart this world—the persuasion that he leaves his species gradually progressing towards that full virtue and generalized happiness which his noblest ambition could desire for them. Night, according to the old Egyptian creed, is the dark mother of all things; as ages leave her, they approach the light. That which the superficial dread is in reality the Vivifier of the world—I mean the everlasting Spirit of Change. And figuring forth unconsciously to themselves this truth, the Egyptians, we are told by Porphyry, represented their demons as floating upon the waters,—for ever restless and evoking the great series of mutabilities. Yet who lightly cares to take upon himself the fearful responsibility of shaking the throned opinions of his generation, knowing that centuries may pass before the good that is worked shall compensate for the evil done? This fear, this timidity of conscience it is that makes us cowards to the Present, and leaves the great souls that should lead on Reform inert and sluggish, while the smaller spirits, the journeymen of Time, just creep up inch by inch to what Necessity demands, leaving the world ages and ages behind that far goal which the few, in heart, and eye, and speculation, have already reached."

A. One of the strange things that happen daily is this—men who the most stir the lives of others lead themselves the most silent and balanced life. It is curious to read how Känt, who set the mind of Germany on fire with the dim light of mysticism, himself lived on from day to day the mere creature of his habits, and performing somewhat of the operations of the horologe, that in its calm regularity leads the blind million—to portion out in new and wild dreams the short span of existence. So with *all* philosophers, all poets—how wonderful the contrast between the quiet of their existence and the turbid effects they produce! This, perhaps secretly to ourselves, makes the great charm in visiting the tranquil and still retreats from whence the oracles of the world have issued—the hermitage of Eremonville—the fortress of Wartenburg; the one where Rousseau fed his immortal fancies—the other whence burst, from the fiery soul of Luther, the light that yet lives along the world:—what reflections must the silence and the mouldering stone awaken, as we remember the vivid and overflowing hearts of the old inhabitants! Plato and his cave are, to all ages, the type and prophecy of the philosopher and his life.

L. Few, my friend, think of all the lofty and divine hopes that the belief in immortality opens to us. One of the purest of these is the expectation of a more entire intelligence—of the great gift of conversing with all who have lived before us—of questioning the past ages and unravelling their dark wisdom. How much in every man's heart dies away unuttered! How little of what the sage knows does the sage promulge! How many chords of the lyre within the poet's heart have been dumb to the world's ear! All this untold, uncommunicated, undreamed-of hoard of wisdom and of harmony, it may be the privilege of our immortality to learn. The best part of genius the world often knows not—the Plato buries much of his lore within his cave—and this, the High Unknown, is our heritage. With these thoughts," continued L——, "you see how easy it is for the parting soul to beautify and adorn Death! With how many garlands we can hang the tomb! Nay, if we begin betimes, we can learn to make the prospect of the grave the most seductive of human visions—by little and little we wean from its contemplation all that is gloomy and abhorrent—by little and little we hive therein all the most pleasing of our dreams. As the neglected genius whispers to his muse, 'Posterity shall know thee, and *thou* shalt live when I am no more,' we find in this hallowed and all-promising future a recompense for every mortification, for every disappointment, in the present. It is the belief of the Arabs, that to the earliest places of human worship there clings a guardian sanctity—there the wild bird rests not, there the wild beast may not wander; it is the blessed spot on which the eye of God dwells and which man's best memories preserve. As with the earliest place of worship, so is it with the latest haven of repose—as with the spot where our first imperfect adoration was offered up, our first glimpses of divinity indulged, so should it be with that where our full knowledge of the Arch-Cause begins, and we can pour forth a gratitude no longer clouded by the troubles and cares of earth. Surely if any spot in the world be sacred, it is that in which grief ceases, and from which, if the harmonies of creation, if the voice within our hearts, if the impulse which made man so easy a believer in revelation, if these mock and fool us not with an everlasting lie, we spring up on the untiring wings of a pangless and seraphic life—those whom we loved, around us; the aspirings that we nursed, fulfilled; our nature, universal intelligence—our atmosphere, eternal love!"

In discourses of this sort the day wore to its close, and when will the remembrance of that day ever depart from me! It seemed to me, as we sat by the window, the sun sinking through the still summer air, the leaves at rest, but how full of life, the motes dancing upon the beam, the birds with their hymns of love, and every now and then the chirp of the grasshopper—

> "That evening reveller who makes
> His life an infancy and sings his fill;"—

as we so sat, and looking upon the hushed face of our mother Nature, I listened to the accents of that wild and impassioned wisdom, so full of high conjecture and burning vision, and golden illustration, which belonged to him for whom life was closing, I could have fancied that the world was younger by some two thousand years, and that it was not one of this trite and dull age's children that was taking his farewell of life; but rather one of the sage enthusiasts of that day when knowledge was both a passion and a dream, when the mysteries of the universe and the life to come were thought the most alluring of human themes, and when, in the beautiful climates of the West, the sons of wisdom crept out to die among the trees they had peopled with divinities, and yielded their own spirit to the Great Soul of which it was a part, and which their mysterious faith had made the Life and Ruler of the world.* For I think, nay, I feel assured, that those, the high sons of the past philosophy, have neither in their conduct nor their manner of thought been fully appreciated by that posterity that treads lightly over the dust of what once was life. They wandered wildly, but their wanderings were "not of the earth, earthly;" and they possessed more of that power, and beauty, and majesty, and aspiration, which *are* the soul—they had less of the body, and more of spirit, than all the priests have dreamed of while they railed against the earthliness of paganism, from the cherubic paradise of tithes. For religion, Christ's religion, the beautiful, the saving, is not fenced round with the hedges of glebe land, or doled forth in the cold hypocrisies of pulpited orthodoxy. Religion and priests have the same connexion with each other as justice and attorneys. And now the sun sank, and

"Maro's shepherd star
Watched the soft silence with a loving eye."†

"Above all things deeply interesting to the heart," said L——, as we continued our various thread of talk, "in every time and age, has been the theory of ghosts and apparitions—the return of the dead to earth. With the solemn secrets, which the living pine to know, clinging around them—the evidence borne by such return, that the human feeling and the human memory exist beyond the grave—the dread transgression of the customary law by which the dead sleep to sight—and their dreams the eye may follow not—these cannot fail to engross the whole mind of one who once admits the possibility of such an event."

A. I have met with a man who not only deposes to

* But Phornutus, by Jupiter, understands the Soul of the world, he writing thus concerning him, ὥσπερ δὲ ἡμεῖς, &c. "As we ourselves are governed by a soul, so hath the world, in like manner, a soul that containeth it, and this is called Zeus, being the cause of life to all things that live," &c.—*Cudworth*, vol. i. p. 529.

† Milton, a poem. By the author of "Eugene Aram," &c.

have seen the ghost of his dearest friend at the hour in which he died, at the distance of several hundred miles, but who also brings a second eyewitness of the same apparition. The story of Sir John Sherbrooke is well known and authenticated. It is rather strange that these tales do not die away equally with those of sorcerers and witches, but that they occur to the present age, with enlightened men to vouch for their truth.

"And I," said L——, solemnly, "might almost be classed among such witnesses. Listen! About the time when I became first aware that my doom was fixed, I had been reading some old letters of *hers*—you know whom I refer to—and with my heart full of them, it was some time before I could fall asleep. I did so at last—and she came to me in my dreams, wan, yet not as with death's hues—but exceeding fair and lovely, fairer than in life—and she spoke to me of a thousand things that had passed between us, and told me (for I was yet a doubter) that Love lived beyond the grave; and then methought that her voice changed, and it was rather as the strain of some tender but solemn music, such as we hear in cathedrals, than the sound of a human voice; and in this strain she went on, telling me of what she now felt and knew, and of the mysteries of her present life. I strove, while I listened, to impress these upon my memory; but the words were *like* an air heard the first time, that leaves a delicious indistinctness on the soul, which haunts us, but which we cannot ourselves repeat. Yet since, as I have sat alone at night, and thought of what may *be*, certain broken and fitful images, as of recollection, have come across me, and I have fancied I could trace them to that night. And I thought that when she had done, I said, in the tumult and impatience of my heart, 'This is but a dream!' and she answered, 'It is more.' And I exclaimed, 'Give me a sign that it *is* more, and that to-morrow I may still believe so!' And I thought that she smiled, and assured me of a certain sign; and—and—on the morrow, I awoke, and the sign was given me!

"Of what nature was it?" said I, curiously though incredulously.

"That," replied L——, speaking with great agitation, "that I cannot reveal. I know what you are about to say—you think you could resolve it to natural and ordinary causes. Probably; but I seeking diligently —*cannot!* nor would I now, in the last hours of my life, have it so explained away. It has been to me a comfort and a hope—I have nursed it fondly—I have linked around it many pleasant dreams:—it may be a superstition; but when a man's life is at its last sands, such harmless superstition can injure none—not even himself. Nor," said L——, speaking more collectedly, "would I relate the secret to you, impressed as it is with my faith, lest, if you could *not* reason away its possibility, it might hanker restlessly in your mind, the parent of a thousand other superstitions. As it is, you will naturally suppose me unduly credulous; and even in wondering and guessing, will not believe."

I endeavoured to persuade L—— out of his resolution, but could not succeed—and my endeavouring gave him pain; in fact, I could see that he was, when the glow of narration had died away, a little sorry and a little ashamed of a weakness not worthy of him, though natural to his imaginative and brooding temperament of mind.

"Do you remember," said L——, drawing me away from the subject, "a story in one of the old English chronicles, how a bird flew into the king's chamber, when the king was conversing with some sage upon the nature of the soul? 'Behold!' said the sage, 'it is like that bird while within this room; you can note its flight and motions, but you know not whence it came ere it entered, nor can you guess whither it shall fly when it leaves this momentary lodging.'"

It chanced, somewhat curiously, that, as L—— spoke, a small bird—I know not of what name or tribe, for I am not learned in ornithology—suddenly alighted on the turf beneath the window, and though all its fellow-songsters were already hushed, poured forth a long, loud, sweet lay, that came, in the general silence, almost startlingly on the ear. "Poor bird!" said L——, musingly, "it is thy farewell to one who, perhaps, has given thee food for thy little ones, and whose hand is well-nigh closed. And," continued he, after a short pause—and lifting up his eyes, he gazed long and earnestly around the scene, now bathed in all the darkening but tender hues of the summer night—"and shall I be ungrateful to that power which has, since my boyhood, fed my thoughts—the wanderers of the heart—have *I* no farewell for that Nature whom, perhaps, I behold for the last time? O, unseen Spirit of Creation! that watchest over all things—the desert and the rock, no less than the fresh water bounding on like a hunter on his path, when his heart is in his step—or the valley girded by the glad woods, and living with the yellow corn—to *me*, thus sad and baffled, thou hast ministered as to the happiest of thy children!—thou hast whispered tidings of unutterable comfort to a heart which the world sated while it deceived! Thou gavest me a music, sweeter than that of palaces, in the mountain wind!—thou badest the flowers and the common grass smile up to me as children to the face of their father! —Like the eye of a woman first loved to the soul of the poet was the face of every soft and never-silent star to me! Nature! my mother Nature! as the infant in the harsh slavery of schools pines for home, I yearned within the dark walls of cities, and amid the hum of unfamiliar men, for thy sweet embrace—and thy bosom whereon to lay my head, and weep wild tears at my will! I thank thee, Nature, that thou art round and with me to the last! Not in the close thoroughfares of toil and traffic—not tethered to a couch, whence my eyes, asking for thee, would behold only those dim walls which are the dying man's worst dungeon, or catch through the lattice the busy signs and crowded tenements of the unsympathizing herd—not *thus* shall my last sigh be rendered up to the Great Fount of Life! To the mystic moment when the breath flutters and departs, thy presence will be round me, and the sentiment of thy freedom bathe my soul like a fresh air! Farewell thou, and thy thousand ministrants and children!—every leaf that quivers on the bough—every dewdrop that sparkles from the grass,—every breeze that animates the veins of earth, are as friends, that I would rather feel around my death-bed than the hollow hearts and ungenial sympathies of my kind! O Nature, farewell! if we are reunited, can I feel in a future being thy power, and thy beauty, and thy presence more intensely than I have done in this?"

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When I was about to take leave of L—— for the night, he asked me, in a meaning voice, to stay with him a little longer: "The fact is," said he, "that Dr. —— implies a doubt whether I shall see another day; so be with me at least till I fall asleep. I mean," added he, smiling, "not in the metaphoric, but the literal sense of the word."

Accordingly, when he retired for the night, I sat by his bedside, and we continued to converse, for he wished it, though but by fits and starts: he gave me several instructions as to his burial, and as to various little bequests, not mentioned in his formal testament. While indifferent to the companionship of men, he had never been ungrateful for their affection: the least kindness affected him sensibly, and he was willing in death to show that he had not forgotten it. Indeed I have observed, that the more we live out of the world, the more little courtesies, such as in the crowd are unheeded, are magnified into favours—true, that the same process of exaggeration occurs in respect to petty affronts or inconsiderate slights. The Heart never attains the independence of the Mind.

Before the window, which looked out into the garden, the dark tops of the trees waved mournfully to and fro: and above, in deep relief, was the sky, utterly cloudless, and all alive with stars. "My eyes are very heavy," said L——; "close the curtains round my head." I did so, and crept softly into the next room, where the nurse sat dozing in a large chair by the fire-side.

"Does he sleep, sir?" said she, waking up as I approached.

"He will shortly," said I; "he seems inclined to it."

"Poor gentleman! he will soon be out of his sufferings," said the nurse; and she therewith took a huge pinch of snuff.

Yes! this is the world's notion. With what wondrous ingenuity they shift off the pain of regret! A friend, a brother, nay, a son dies—they thank God he is out of his afflictions! In one sense they are right. They make the best of their own short summer, and do not ask the cloud to stay longer than sufficient to call up the flowers or refresh the soil. Yet this is a narrow view of the subject of death. A bright genius disappears—a warm heart is stilled, and we think only (when we console ourselves) of the escape of the individual from his bed of pain. But ought we not to think of the loss that the world—that our whole race sustains? I believe so. How many thoughts which might have flashed conviction on the universe will be stricken for ever dumb by the early death of one being! What services to earth might the high purity, the deep knowledge, the ardent spirit of L—— have effected! But this we never think of. "Poor gentleman!" quoth the nurse, "he will soon be out of his sufferings!" and therewith she took a huge pinch of snuff.—My God! what shallow self-comforters we are!

"He is a good gentleman!" said she again, turning round to the fire; "and so fond of dumb animals. Cæsar, sir, the dog Cæsar, is it at the foot of the bed, as usual?—ay, I warrant he lies there, sir, as still as a mouse. I am sure them creturs know when we are sick or not. Ah! sir, how the dog will take on, when—" and the nurse, breaking off, applied again to her snuff-box.

HE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD

IN

MEN AND BOOKS.

ALTY and its symbols were abolished in France.
wman of wild beasts had (the pride of his flock)
mense Bengal tiger, commonly called the *Royal*
. What did our showman do?—Why, he knew
orld, and he changed the name of the beast from
igre Royal to the *Tigre National!* Horace Wal-
vas particularly charmed with this anecdote, for
ew the world as well as the showman. It is ex-
hese little things—the happy turn of a phrase—a
imed pleasantry, that no unobservant man ever
of, and that, while seeming humour, are in reality
m. There are changes in the veins of wit, as in
thing else. Sir William Temple tells us that on
turn of Charles II. none were more out of fashion
he old Earl of Norwich, who was esteemed the
st wit of the time of Charles the First. But it is
that the Earl of Norwich must have wanted know-
of the world; he did not feel, as by an instinct,
e showman, how to vary an epithet—he stuck to
st to his *tigre royal!*

is knowledge of the world baffles our calculations
oes not always require experience. Some men
o it intuitively; their first step in life exhibits the
profound mastery over the minds of their contem-
es—the same subtle consideration—the same
ous address, as distinguish the close of their ca-

reer. Congreve had written his comedies at twenty-five; the best anecdotes of the acuteness of Cyrus are those of his boyhood. I should like, above all things, a veracious account of the childhood of Talleyrand. What a world of shrewdness may he have vented in trundling his hoop! Shakspeare has given us the madness of Hamlet the youth, and of Lear the old man —but there is a far deeper wisdom in the young man's thoughts than those of the old man.

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

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

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

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

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

* Let me mention two political writers of the present day—men equally remarkable for their wit and wisdom—Sidney Smith and the editor of the "Examiner," Mr. Fonblanque; barring, may I say it? a little affectation of pithiness—the latter writer is one of the greaest masters of that art which makes "words like sharp swords" that our age has produced. And I cannot help adding, in common with many of his admirers, an earnest hope that he may leave the world a more firm and settled monument of his great abilities than the pages of any periodical can afford.

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

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

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

"I have something troubles me," says Pellagrin.

"What's that?" asks his friend.

"The people," replies Pellagrin, "will say, as we go along, '*thou art the properer fellow!*'"*

* Suckling's plays abound also in passages of singular beauty of diction

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

In Rousseau every sentence Lord Edouard utters is full of beauty, and sometimes of depth, and yet those sentences give us no conception of the utterer himself. The expressions are all soul, and the character is all clay—nothing can be more brilliant than the sentiments or more heavy than the speaker.

In fact, it is not often that the graver writers have succeeded in plot and character as they have done in the allurement of reflection or the graces of style. While Goldsmith makes us acquainted with all the personages of his unrivalled story—while we sit at the

and elegance of thought. I will quote one which seems to me to contain one of the most beautiful compliments a woman ever received. Orsabrin, a seaman, *if I recollect right*, says to Reginella—

"Have you a name too?

Reginella. Why do you ask?

Orsabrin. Because I'd call upon it in a storm,

And save a ship from perishing sometimes."

threshold in the summer evenings, and sympathize with the good Vicar in his laudable zeal for monogamy —while ever and anon we steal a look behind through the lattice, and smile at the gay Sophia, who is playing with Dick, or fix our admiration on Olivia, who is practising an air against the young Squire comes—while we see the sturdy Burchell crossing the stile, and striding on at his hearty pace, with his oak cudgel cutting circles in the air—nay, while we ride with Moses to make his bargains, and prick up our ears when Mr. Jenkinson begins with "Ay, sir! the world is in its dotage"—while in recalling the characters of that immortal tale, we are recalling the memory of so many living persons with whom we have dined, and walked, and chatted—we see in the gloomy Rasselas of Goldsmith's sager contemporary a dim succession of shadowy images without life or identity, mere machines for the grinding of morals, and the nice location of sonorous phraseology.

That delightful egotist—half good-fellow, half sage, half rake, half divine, the pet gossip of philosophy, the —in one word—inimitable and unimitated Montaigne, insists upon it in right earnest, with plenty to support him, that *continual* cheerfulness is the most indisputable sign of wisdom, and that her estate, like that of things in the regions above the moon, is always calm, cloudless, and serene. And in the same essay he recites the old story of Demetrius the grammarian, who, finding in the Temple of Delphos a knot of philosophers chatting away in high glee and comfort, said, "I am greatly mistaken, gentlemen, or by your pleasant countenances you are not engaged in any very profound discourse." Whereon Heracleon answered the grammarian with a "Pshaw, my good friend! it does very well for fellows who live in a perpetual anxiety to know whether the future tense of the verb *Ballo* should be spelled with one *l* or two, to knit their brows and look solemn; but we who are engaged in discoursing true philosophy, are cheerful as a matter of course!" Ah, those were the philosophers who had read the world aright; give me

Heracleon the magician, for a fellow who knew wh
was about when he resolved to be wise. And yet,
all, it is our constitution, and not our learning, that n
us one thing or the other,—grave or gay—live
severe!

For my own part I candidly confess, that in sp
all my endeavours, and though all my precepts ru
contrary way, I cannot divest myself at times of a
tain sadness when I recall the lessons the world
taught me. It is true that I now expect little or no
from mankind, and I therefore forgive offences ag
me with ease; but that ease which comes from
tempt is no desirable acquisition of temper. I sh
like to feel something of my old indignation at e
vice, and my old bitterness at every foe.

After all, as we know, or fancy that we know,
kind, there is a certain dimness that falls upon
glory of all we see. We are not so confiding of
trust—and that is no petty misfortune to some of
without growing perhaps more selfish, we contrac
circle of our enjoyments. We do not hazard—w
not venture as we once did. The sea that rolls b
us proffers to our curiosity no port that we have
already seen. About this time, too, our amb
changes its character—it becomes more a thing
custom than of ardour. We have begun our care
shame forbids us to leave it; but I question whe
any man, moderately wise, does not see how sma
the reward of pursuit. Nay, ask the oldest, the
hackneyed adventurer of the world, and you will fin
has some dream at his heart, which is more cheri
than all the honours he seeks—some dream per
of a happy and serene retirement, which has lain a
breast since he was a boy, and which he will n
realize. The trader and his retreat at Highgate
but the type of Walpole and his palace at Hough
The worst feature in our knowledge of the worl
that we are wise to little purpose—we penetrate
hearts of others, but we do not satisfy our own. E
wise man feels that he ought not to be ambitious

·tous, nor subject to emotion—yet the wisest go on ıg and burning to the last. Men who have de- ned most against ambition have been among the t ambitious; so that at the best we only get wise he sake of writing books which the world seldom till we are dead—or of making laws and speeches :h, when dead, the world hastens to forget. "When s done, human life is at the greatest and the best like a froward child, that must be played with and oured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, then the care is over."*

* Sir William Temple.

(From the Edinburgh Review—No. CIV.)

A Comparative View of the Social Life of England and France, from the Restoration of Charles the Second to the French Revolution. By the Editor of Madame du Deffand's Letters.

The French and the English can no longer be accused of that mutual contempt which furnishes the preliminary ground of remark to the writer of the agreeable work before us. After a jealousy of eight hundred years, we have begun to conquer our prejudices and recant our opinions; and we are now contented to glean from the customs and manners of our neighbours, benefits somewhat more important than the innovations in caps, or the improvements in cookery, which formed pretty nearly the limit of that portion of our forefathers' ambition which was devoted to the imitation of "our hereditary foes." Late events have put the finishing stroke to popular prejudice; and we have now, of two extremes, rather to guard against the desire blindly to copy, than the resolution zealously to contemn. Those national sentiments, "grave, with a bright disdain," of *Monsieur* and *soupe maigre*, which gave so patriotic a character to the British theatre, never more will awaken a sympathizing gallery to

"The loud collision of applauding *hands*."

But the character of the people, and the spirit of society, in the two countries are still, in many respects, remarkably different. When a French mob are excited, they clamour for glory—when an English mob are inclined to be riotous, they are thirsty for beer. At a contested election, the feelings of the working classes must necessarily be strongly excited. The harangues to their understandings—the addresses to their interests—the artifices for their affections—the congregating together—the conference—the discussion—the dispute—the spirit of party,—these, if any emotions, might well be supposed to call forth the man from himself, to excite, to their inmost depth, his generous as well as angry sympathies, and, warming him from all selfish considerations, to hurry him into even a blind and rash devotion for the cause he adopts, and a disdain, which no lure can soften, for that which he opposes. And so, indeed, to the uninitiated spectator it may appear; but how generally is that noisy ardour the result of a purchase—how many, in such a time and in such scenes, will grow inebriate on the hospitality of one, with the intention of voting for another—how large the number of those to whom you speak of retrenchment and reform, who remain unmoved till the bribe is hinted, and the vote, callous to the principles, is suborned by the purse! When, in the late general election, a patriotic adventurer was engaged in attempting to open (as the phrase is) a close borough, one of his most strenuous supporters, declaiming on the vileness of the few privileged voters in receiving thirty pounds each for their votes, added, with the air of a man of delicate conscience,—"But if you open the borough, sir, we will do it for five!"

But leaving, for the present, the graver discussions connected with the effects of our civil institutions, it is our intention to make a few observations on that Spirit of Society which is formed among the higher classes, and imitated among those possessing less aristocratical distinction.

The great distinction of *fashion* in France, as it was—and in England as it is—we consider to be this. In the former country the natural advantages were affected, in the latter we covet the acquired. There the aspirants to fashion pretended to wit—here they pretend to wealth. In this country, from causes sufficiently obvious, social reputation has long been measured by the extent of a rent-roll; respectability has been another word for money; and the point on which competitors have been the most anxious to vie with each other has been that exact point in which personal merit can have the least possible weight in the competition. The ambition of the French gallant, if devoted to a frivolous object, was at least more calculated to impress society with a graceful and gay tone than the inactive and unrelieved ostentation of the English pretender. And those circles to which a *bon mot* was the passport could scarcely fail to be more agreeable than circles in which, to be the most courted, it is sufficient to be the first-born. A Frenchman had, at least, one intellectual incentive to his social ambition;—to obtain access to the most fashionable was to obtain access to the most pleasant, the most witty circles in the capital. But to enjoy the most difficult society of London is to partake of the insipidity of a decorated and silent crowd, or the mere sensual gratification of a costly dinner.

To give acerbity to the tone of our fashion—while it is far from increasing its refinement—there is a sort of negative opposition made by the titled aristocrats to that order from which it must be allowed the majority have sprung themselves. Descended, for the most part, from the unpedigreed rich, they affect to preserve from that class circles exclusive and impassable. Fashion to their heaven is like the lotus to Mahomet's; it is at once the ornament and the barrier. To the opulent, who command power, they pretend, while worshipping opulence, to deny *ton;* a generation passes, and the proscribed class have become the exclusive. "Si le financier manque son coup, les courtisans disent de lui,—c'est un bourgeois, un homme de rien, un malôtru: S'il réussit, ils lui demandent sa fille."* This mock contest, in which riches ultimately triumph, encourages the rich to a field in which they are ridiculous till they conquer; and makes the one race servile, that the race succeeding may earn the privilege to be insolent. If the merchant or the banker has the sense to prefer the station in which he is respectable, to attempting success in one that destroys his real eminence, while it apes a shadowy distinction, his wife, his daughters, his son in the Guards, are not often so wise. If one class of the great remain aloof, another class are sought, partly to defy, and partly to decoy;—and ruinous entertainments are given, not for the sake of pleasure, but with a prospective yearning to the columns of the *Morning Post*. They do not relieve dulness, but they render it pompous; and instead of suffering wealth to be the commander of enjoyment, they render it the slave to a vanity that, of all the species of that unquiet passion, is the most susceptible to pain. Circles there are in London, in which to be admitted is to be pleased and to admire; but those circles are composed of persons above the fashion, or aloof from it. Of those where that tawdry deity presides would it be extravagant to say that existence is a course of strife, subserviency, hypocrisy, meanness, ingratitude, insolence, and mortification; and that to judge of the motives which urge to such a life, we have only to imagine the wish to be every where in the pursuit of nothings?

Fashion in this country is also distinguished from her sister in France by our want of social enthusiasm for genius. It showed, not the power of appreciating his talents, but a capacity for admiring the more exalted order of talents (which we will take leave to say is far from a ridiculous trait in national character), that the silent and inelegant Hume was yet in high request

* *Les Caractères de* La Bruyère.

in the brilliant coteries of Paris. In England, the enthusiasm is for distinction of a more sounding kind. Were a great author to arrive in London, he might certainly be neglected; but a petty prince could not fail of being eagerly courted. A man of that species of genius which amuses—not exalts—might indeed create a momentary sensation. The oracle of science—the discoverer of truth, might be occasionally asked to the *soirées* of some noble Mæcenas; but every drawing-room, for one season at least, would be thrown open to the new actress, or the imported musician. Such is the natural order of things in our wealthy aristocracy, among whom there can be as little sympathy with those who instruct, as there must be gratitude to those who entertain, till the entertainment has become the prey of satiety, and the hobbyhorse of the new season replaces the rattle of the last.

Here, we cannot but feel the necessity of subjecting our gallantry to our reason, and inquiring how far the indifference to what is great, and the passion for what is frivolous, may be occasioned by the present tone of that influence which women necessarily exercise in this country, as in all modern civilized communities. Whoever is disposed to give accurate attention to the constitution of fashion (which fashion in the higher classes is, in other words, the spirit of society) must at once perceive how largely that fashion is formed, and how absolutely it is governed, by the gentler sex. Our fashion may indeed be considered the aggregate of the opinions of our women. In order to account for the tone that fashion receives, we have but to inquire into the education bestowed upon women. Have we, then, instilled into them those public principles (as well as private accomplishments) which are calculated to ennoble opinion, and to furnish their own peculiar inducements of reward to a solid and lofty merit in the opposite sex? Our women are divided into two classes—

the domestic and the dissipated. The latter em[
their lives in the pettiest intrigues, or at best in a ro
of vanities that usurp the name of amusements. Wo
of the highest rank alone take much immediate sh
in politics; and that share, it must be confessed, bri
any thing but advantage to the state. No one
assert that these soft aspirants have any ardour for
public—any sympathy with measures that are pure
unselfish. No one will deny that they are the firs
laugh at principles which, it is but just to say,
education we have given them precludes them f
comprehending,—and to excite the parental emoti
of the husband, by reminding him that the advancem
of his sons requires interest with the minister.
domestic class of women are not now, we suspect
numerous as they have been esteemed by specula
on our national character. We grant their merits
once; and we inquire if the essence of these merits
not made to consist in the very refraining from
attempt to influence public opinion,—in the very ig
rance of all virtues connected with the community
if we shall not be told that the proper sphere o
woman is private life, and the proper limit to her
tues the private affections. Now, were it true t
women did not influence public opinion, we should
silent on the subject, and subscribe to all those cha
ing commonplaces on retiring modesty and househ
attractions that we have so long been accustomed
read and hear. But we hold, that feminine influen
however secret, is unavoidably great; and, owing
this lauded ignorance of public matters, we hold it a
to be unavoidably corrupt. It is clear that women
the class we speak of, attaching an implied blame
the exercise of the reasoning faculty, are necessa
the reservoir of unexamined opinions and establish
prejudices,—that those opinions and prejudices col
the education they give to their children, and t

advice they bestow upon their husbands. We allow them to be the soothing companion and the tender nurse—(these are admirable merits—these are all their own)—but in an hour of wavering between principle and interest, on which side would their influence lie?—would they inculcate the shame of a pension, or the glory of a sacrifice to the public interest? On the contrary, how often has the worldly tenderness of the mother been the secret cause of the tarnished character and venal vote of the husband; or, to come to a pettier source of emotion, how often has a wound, or an artful pampering, to some feminine vanity, led to the renunciation of one party advocating honest measures, or the adherence to another subsisting upon courtly intrigues! In more limited circles, how vast that influence in forming the national character, which you would deny because it is secret!—how evident a proof of the influence of those whose minds you will not enlarge, in that living which exceeds means,—so pre-eminently English—so wretched in its consequences—so paltry in its object! Who shall say that the whole comfortless, senseless, heartless system of ostentation which pervades society, has no cause—not in women, if you like—but in the education we give them?

We are far from wishing that women, of what rank soever, should intermeddle with party politics, or covet the feverish notoriety of state intrigues, any more than we wish they should possess the universal genius ascribed to Lady Anne Clifford by Dr. Donne, and be able to argue on all subjects, "from predestination to slea silk." We are far from desiring them to neglect one domestic duty, or one household tie; but we say—for women as for men—there is no sound or true morality, where there is no knowledge of—no devotion to—public virtue. In the education women receive, we would enlarge their ideas to the comprehension of political integrity; and in the variety of events with which life tries the honesty of men, we would leave to those principles we have inculcated—unpolluted as they would be by the close contagion of party—undisturbed by the heat and riot of action—that calm influence which could then scarcely fail to be as felicitous and just as we deem it now not unoften unhappy and dishonouring. But of all the inducements to female artifice and ambition, our peculiar custom of selling our daughters to the best advantage is the most universal. We are a match-making nation. The system in France, and formerly existent in this country, of betrothing children, had at least with us one good effect among many bad. If unfriendly to chastity in France, it does not appear to have produced so pernicious an effect in England; but while it did not impair the endearments of domestic life, it rendered women less professionally hollow and designing at that period of life when love ceases to encourage deceit; it did not absorb their acutest faculties in a game in which there is no less hypocrisy requisite than in the amours of a Dorimont or a Belinda—but without the excuse of the affections. While this custom increases the insincerity of our social life, it is obvious that it must react also on its dulness; for wealth and rank, being the objects sought, are the objects courted; and thus, another reason is given for crowding our circles with important stolidity, and weeding them of persons poor enough to be agreeable—and because agreeable—dangerous and unwelcome.

Would we wish, then, the influence of women to be less? We will evade the insidious question—We wish it to be differently directed. By contracting their minds, we weaken ourselves; by cramping their morality, we ruin our own; as we ennoble their motives, society will rise to a loftier tone—and even Fashion herself may be made to reward glory as well as frivolity. Nay, we shall not even be astonished if it ultimately encourages, with some portion of celebrity and enthusiasm, the man who has refused a bribe, or conferred some great benefit on his country, as well as the idol of Crockford's, or the heir to a dukedom.

It is somewhat remarkable, that that power of ridicule so generally cultivated as a science in France has scarcely exercised over the tone of feeling in that country so repressing an influence as it has among ourselves. It never destroyed in the French the love of theatrical effect; and even in the prevalence of those heartless manners formed under the old *régime*, it never deterred them from avowing romantic feeling, if uttered in courtly language. Nay, it was never quite out of fashion to affect a gallant sentiment, or a generous emotion; and the lofty verse of Corneille was echoed with enthusiasm by the courtiers of a Bourbon, and the friends of a Pompadour. But here, a certain measured and cold demeanour has been too often coupled with the disposition to sneer, not only at expressions that are exaggerated, but at sentiments that are noble. Profligacy in action surprises, shocks, less than the profession of exalted motives, uttered in conversation, when, as a witty orator observed, "the reporters are shut out, and there is no occasion 'to humbug.'" We confess that we think it a bad sign when lofty notions are readily condemned as bombast, and when a nation not much addicted to levity, or even liveliness, is, above all others, inclined to ridicule the bias to magnify and exalt. A shoeblack of twelve years old, plying his trade by the Champs Elysées, was struck by a shoeblack four years younger. He was about to return the blow—an old fruitwoman arrested his arm, exclaiming, "Have you then no greatness of soul?" Nothing could be more bombastic than the reproof. Granted. But who shall say how far such bombast influenced the magnanimity of the labouring classes in that late event, which was no less a revolution in France, than the triumph of the human species? Exaggeration of sentiment can rarely, as a national trait, be dangerous. With men of sense it unavoidably settles into greatness of mind; but moral debasement,—a sneer for what is high,—a disbelief of what is good,—is the very worst symptom a people can display.

The influence which it is the natural province of the Drama to exert towards the exalting the standard of sentiment and opinion, is not, at this time, it will readily be allowed, very efficacious in counterbalancing the worldly and vulgar tendency to degrade. Tragedy sleeps side by side with the Epic; and the loftier shapes of Comedy have dwindled into Farce, that most dwarfish imp of all the varieties of dramatic humour. The stage seems even to have relinquished the most common, though not the least moral, of its prerogatives, viz. to hold the mirror to existing customs, and to correct folly by exhibiting it. We question, indeed, whether that power has ever been largely exercised—whether the drama has ever visibly and truly bodied forth the image of the times—since the plastic and unappreciated genius of Jonson adapted his various knowledge of the past to a portraiture of his own period even too individual and exact. The Restoration—so pernicious for the most part to what was most excellent in political truths—was little more favourable to whatsoever was noble in the provinces of literary fiction. The stage was lowered to clumsy and graceless imitations from the French, and reflected the grossness and vice of the court—not the manners or morals of that people over whom the contagion of the court was far from extensive. Seeking its food from a form of society, artificial alike in its vices and its customs, the Comedy of that day, despite its lavish and redundant wit, rarely touched upon a single chord dedicated to simplicity or nature And to believe that the literary Aretins—the dramatizing Don Raphaels of the Restoration—represented or influenced their age, were to believe that they found, or made, the countrymen of Vane and Bradshaw, of Falkland and of Derby, a community of sharpers rioting in a metropolis of brothels. The remarkable contrast that the delicate and somewhat emasculate refinement of the celebrated periodicals in the reign of Anne present to the indecency even then characteristic of the stage, and the universal and instantaneous impression they produced—so far deeper than that created by any of the licentious comedies of the day—will be quite sufficient to convince those who remember that the brilliancy and rapidity of literary success are proportioned to the exactness with which the literary effort accords with some popular train of feeling deeply felt, but not hitherto commonly expressed, that the stage did not, at that period, represent the manners of the contemporaries of Addison much more faithfully than, in the preceding times, it had reflected the tone of feeling common to the contemporaries of Russell and Sidney. Coming to a period nearer the present, it can scarcely be asserted that even the exquisite humour of Goldsmith, or still less the artificial and exuberant wit of Sheridan, were exercised in giving a very peculiar and marked representation of their times,—whatever they might effect in exhibiting certain aspects of society as common in one nation of Europe as another,—since the masterpieces of their genius, the attempt to show "the form and pressure of the age," has not been made with any tolerable success. And should any novelty (not arising from the claims of the *actor*) now attract to the theatre—we must thank Germany for a superstition—France for a farce—Siam for an elephant—or England for a scene. The influence attributed of old to the stage has passed into new directions: Novels represent manners, and Periodicals opinions. The higher, the more abstruse, the more extended branches of morals, are but slightly and feebly cultivated. Thus, little of general influence is left to that part of litera ture which *teaches*—save what may be exercised by publications adapted to the immediate necessity, preju dice, or caprice of the times, and by cheap works ad dressed to the people,—elementary, if intended for thei understanding—declamatory, if for their passions.

It would be a matter of speculation deserving a large notice than we can afford it here, to inquire how fa our national literature is influenced by the place whicl our literary men hold in society. That men of letters do not enjoy in England their legitimate and proper rank is a common and trite complaint. There is doubtless, something equivocal in their station. An English author of but moderate eminence at home is often astonished at the respect paid to him abroad. Political power—the chief object of desire with us—leaves to that direction of intellect which does not command it but a moderate and lukewarm homage. Fashion may indeed invest the new author with a momentary eclat; but the "lion" loses his novelty, and the author ceases to be courted. We recollect to have heard one of the most brilliant and successful writers of the day exclaim, that he would rather, for the gratification of social vanity, be a dull, but officious, member of Parliament, than enjoy his own high and popular reputation as an author. The vanity of authors is not, then, confined to their profession, which does not bring them a reward sufficiently palpable and present. Led, like the rest of their countrymen, by the rage of fashion, they long for the reputation of being admitted to brilliant society, rather than the consideration accorded to them in literary circles. One effect, at least, not favourable to the higher and purer branches of composition, is produced by this uneasiness and yearning. Straining for the effect, the glitter, or the novelty that will render them "the fashion," they give to literature a feverish and exaggerated cast. They grasp at the humour, sometimes the frivolity, of the moment, and endeavour to hurry the serene and dignified glories of literature into a succession of "lucky hits." Two other effects noticeable, we think, among English men of letters, may be derived from the same cause. First, the want of that social brilliancy which is generally the characteristic of a Frenchman eminent in literature. When one of our most popular moralists observed, "that he never knew a man of sense a general favourite," he uttered a sentiment peculiarly adapted to charm the English. In France every man of sense would have aspired to be a general favourite, and every man of literary distinction might have won easily enough to that ambition. But here intellect alone does not produce fashion, and the author, failing to attain it, affects the privilege of railing, and the right to be disappointed. This dissatisfaction at the place destined to the nature of his exertions—this consciousness of enjoying neither that station of honour nor that method of being honoured which he has been taught to covet—is almost necessarily destructive to the self-confidence and self-complacency without which no man makes a great proficiency in the graces of society or the courageous profession of a wit. The second effect produced by the desire to shine in other circles than their own is, we think, visible in the scattered and desultory manner with which our literary men encounter each other; they do not herd closely together. There is not among them that intimate knot and union which was, and is, characteristic of the authors and *beaux esprits* of Paris, and produces so remarkable an influence on their works,—giving to their philosophy the graces of animated conversation, and colouring their style with that air of life, and fulness of *worldly* knowledge, which, whatever be the changes and caprices of their literature, invariably remain, sometimes the staple, and almost always the predominant characteristic. When Helvetius produced that celebrated work, so rich in anecdote illustration, and isolated brilliancies of remark, he was accused of merely collecting, and forming into a whole the opinions current in the circles with which he mixed every day. It would be somewhat difficult for an English philosopher to subject himself, with any semblance of justice, to a similar accusation.

It would be a little unjust to quit our subject without saying any thing upon what we consider improvements in the condition of society; the more especially, as some points, that appear to us worthy of praise, have been the subject of vulgar complaint. We hear, for instance, much pathetic lamentation on the decline of country hospitality, at a time when that "first cousin to a virtue" seems more deserving of commendation than at any period referred to by its detractors.

In what did the hospitality of the last century consist? An interchange of dinner visits between country neighbours,—a journey some half a dozen miles over wretched roads, and a return home some eight hours afterward, with the footman drunk, the coachman more drunk, and the master most drunk. Hospitality, in a word, was, a profusion of port wine; and the host welcomed his friends by ruining their constitutions. Houses, much less conveniently arranged than at present, were not often capable of affording accommodation, for days together, to visiters from a distance. Few, comparatively speaking, were the guests who found their way from the metropolis to these rustic receptacles of Silenus; and the strangers were then stared at for their novelty, or ridiculed for their refinement—oracles to the silly, and butts to the brutal. What an improvement in the present tone of country hospitality! Instead of solemn celebrations of inebriety—instead of jolting at one hour through the vilest of lanes, to return at another from the most senseless of revels,—improved roads facilitate the visits of neighbours, improved houses accommodate a greater number of guests, and an improved hospitality gives to both a welcome reception, without endangering their health or making war on their reason. The visiters are more numerous; the victims less. To give a dinner, and to receive a gentleman from London, are not the events in a squire's life that they were in the last century. At stated periods of the year the house is filled with persons who can be cultivated as well as manly; and improvements in opinions are thus circulated throughout the country, as well as improvements in gunlocks.

So far, indeed, from the tone of society in the country being, as formerly, considerably below that in the metropolis, it is now perhaps more graceful and courteous. The host, dissatisfied with his station in London, beholds his acres and his hall, rises into a great man in his province, and, content with the tokens of his own consequence, naturally grows complaisant to others. The petty vying and the paltry cringing are no longer necessary—the heartburn of fashion ceases—there is no compromise of comfort and nature for the attainment of wearisome and artificial objects; even the coldness, the distraction, and the formality incident to London coteries subside with the causes; and that tone of general equality which the most courtly circles can alone establish in a capital becomes the easy and natural characteristic of the manners in a country mansion.

Another main feature in the aspect of society is the improvement and multiplicity of clubs. That the luxuries of these houses render husbands less domestic, and impart to sons notions disproportionate to their fortune, have been made very common and vulgar grounds of attack. With regard to the first, we will own frankly that that mere animal habit which would confine men to the narrow circle of their firesides, and render it a misdemeanor to seek rational intercourse abroad, might, we think, be lessened, without operating in any way to the disadvantage of society. But, in fact, so rigid a domesticalness exists little among the classes for which clubs are as yet chiefly instituted. We fear, that at those witching hours of night in which the gentleman is at his club the lady and her daughter, so far from deploring his absence at home, are enjoying themselves at the ball or the *soirée*. The latter charge is equally ridiculous. That all men are not rich enough to enjoy a good house, airy rooms, new publications, the constant society of their acquaintances, and the decent pleasures of the table, is a grievance very much to be lamented; but that when men can obtain these advantages without being rich there should be any harm in enjoying them, because they are not rich,—or that they should be more discontented with a small room because they have the power of quitting it for a large room whenever they please,—are notions in metaphysics with which we cannot agree. Besides, while the principle of a club is economy, its temptations are not those of extravagance; while a young man is enabled by its organization to save half his income, he meets there little that could allure him to spend the other half. The more attached he becomes to the quiet and orderly habits of a club life, the less he will feel inclined towards the expenses of that dissipation to which the routine of a club life is so opposed. A third objection sometimes urged against clubs would be serious indeed, were it generally founded in truth, viz. the custom of gaming. But gaming is not practised in the great majority of clubs, especially those lately established. In the few notorious for the support of that vice, the usual advantages of a club, viz. economy, the facility of intellectual conversation, &c. are not found; they are gaming-houses, in a word, with a more specious name; and we willingly surrender them, without a word of defence, to the indignation of their impugners.

The increase of clubs we think favourable to the growth of public principle. By the habits of constant intercourse, truths circulate, and prejudices are frittered away. "Nothing," observes that great writer* in whom we scarcely know which to admire the most, the brilliant imagination or the quiet rationality,—"nothing more contributes to maintain our common sense than living in the universal way with multitudes of men;" and, let us add, that it not only maintains our common sense, but diminishes the selfishness of our motives. In the close circle of private life, public matters are rarely and coldly discussed. In public, they form the chief topic; and made interesting, first, as the staple of conversation, they assume, at length, an interest and a fascination in themselves.

We cannot quit our subject without adverting to that tone of consideration and respect towards the great bulk of the people which especially characterizes the present time, and was almost a stranger to the past. Even in the ancient democracies, in which the flattery of the people was the science of power,—even among the later Paladins of Chivalry,—"rough to the haughty, but gentle to the low"—mirrors not less of courtesy than valour—the tone alike of literature and philosophy breathes with a high contempt for the emotions and opinions of the vulgar. Among the Greeks—the crowd—the herd—the people—their fickleness—their violence—their ingratitude, furnished the favourite matter to scornful maxims and lordly apothegms. Taking their follies and their vices as the common subject for notice, where do we find their virtues panegyrized, or their characters dispassionately examined? And in the models of chivalry, the "doffing to the low" was but the insult of condescension; the humble were not to be insulted, because they were not to be feared. But

* Goëthe.

the instant the aspirer of plebeian birth attempted to rise against the decrees of fortune, the instant he affected honour or distinction, he was "audacious varlet" and "presuming caitiff." The tender and accomplished author of the *Arcadia*, that noble work in which Chivalry appears in its most romantic and lovely shape, evidently esteems it the proof of a thoughtful and lofty mind to disdain the multitude, and rise beyond a regard for their opinion. Were it not something profane to accuse so glorious a benefactor as Shakspeare of any offence, it might, perhaps, be justly observed, that while his works abound with pithy sarcasms on the foibles of the common people, they have never brought into a strong light their nobler qualities; even the virtues accorded them are the mere virtues of servants, and rarely aspire beyond fidelity to a master in misfortune. While, in his mighty page, the just and impartial mirror has been held to almost every human secret of character among the higher and middle classes of life, how little have the motives and conduct of the great mass (beyond what are contemptible) been sifted and examined; how many opportunities* of displaying their firmness, their fortitude, their resistance to oppression, of sympathizing with their misfortunes and their wrongs, have been passed over in silence, or devoted rather to satire than to praise! But not now, thank God, is it the mode, the cant, to affect a disdain of the vast majority of our fellow-creatures,—an unthinking scorn for their opinions or pursuits: the philosophy of past times confused itself with indifference; the philosophy of the present rather seeks to be associated with philanthropy.

It may be worth while to some future inquirer to ascertain what share of the general disposition to which we refer may be attributed to writers now little remembered, and, in their own time, not unjustly condemned.

* In the Historical Plays.

It is the glorious doom of literature, that the evil perishes and the good remains. Even when the original author of some healthy and useful truth is forgotten, the truth survives, transplanted to works more calculated to purify it from error, and perpetuate it to our benefit. Nor can we tell how much we now owe of the tendency to enlighten and consult the people—how much of broad and rational opinion—to certain heated and vague enthusiasts of the last century. Time has consigned to oblivion the wild theories and the licentious morals that clouded, in their works, the temper towards benevolence and the desire of freedom. But time has ripened what was no less the characteristic of their writings—a disposition to unrobe the "solemn plausibilities" that hid their interests from the people; to reduce to its just estimate the value of military glory; to direct analysis to the end and nature of governments, and to consider above the rest those classes of society hitherto the most contemned. Amid the tumults and portents of the time, we hail this disposition as the best safeguard to one order, and the surest augury to the other; in proportion as it increases, society triumphs against whatever may oppose its welfare in prejudice or in custom; reform becomes at once tranquil and universal; the necessity of revolutions is superseded, and what once was enforced by violence is effected by opinion.

Meanwhile, in whatsoever channels may be open to the honest ambition of literature, we trust that those who have the power to influence the bias of popular sentiment will inculcate what has too long been the subject of jest or incredulity, viz. the glory of promoting public interests; and the necessity, in order to bring virtue from the hearth to the forum, of calling forth from their present obscurity and neglect those rewards to exertion which confer, if they be but rightly considered, a deeper respect than wealth, and an honour more lofty than titles. 14*

DE LINDSAY.

'Man walketh in a vain shadow: and disquieteth himself in vain!"

There is one feeling which is the earliest-born with us—which accompanies us throughout life, in the gradations of friendship, love, and parental attachment—and of which there is scarcely one among us who can say, "It has been realized according to my desire." This feeling is the wish to be loved—loved to the amount of the height and the fervour of the sentiments we imagine that we ourselves are capable of imbodying into one passion. Thus, who that hath nicely weighed his own heart will not confess that he has never been fully satisfied with the love rendered to him, whether by the friend of his boyhood, the mistress of his youth, or the children of his age. Yet even while we reproach the languor and weakness of the affection bestowed on us, we are reproached in *our* turn with the same charge; and it would seem as if we all—all and each—possessed within us certain immortal and spiritual tendencies to love which nothing human and earth-born can wholly excite; they are instincts which make us feel a power never to be exercised, and a loss doomed to be irremediable.

The simple, but singular story which I am about to narrate, is of a man in whom this craving after a love beyond the ordinary loves of earth, was so powerful and restless a passion, that it became in him the source of all the errors and the vices that have usually their origin in the grossness of libertinism; led his mind through the excess of dissipation to the hardness of depravity—and when at length it arrived at the fruition of dreams so wearying and so anxious—when with that fruition, virtue long stifled by disappointment seemed slowly, but triumphantly to awake—betrayed him only into a punishment he had almost ceased to deserve, and hurried him into an untimely grave, at the very moment when life became dear to himself, and appeared to promise atonement and value to others.

Rupert de Lindsay was an orphan of ancient family and extensive possessions. With a person that could advance but a slight pretension to beauty, but with an eager desire to please, and a taste the most delicate and refined, he very early learned the art to compensate by the graces of manner for the deficiencies of form; and before he had reached an age when other men are noted only for their horses or their follies, Rupert de Lindsay was distinguished no less for the brilliancy of his *ton* and the number of his conquests, than for his acquirements in literature and his honours in the senate. But while every one favoured him with envy, he was, at heart, a restless and disappointed man.

Among all the delusions of the senses—among all the triumphs of vanity, his ruling passion, to be really, purely, and deeply loved, had never been satisfied. And while this leading and master-desire pined at repeated disappointments, all other gratifications seemed rather to mock than to console him. The exquisite tale of Alcibiades, in Marmontel, was applicable to him. He was loved for his adventitious qualifications, not for himself. One loved his fashion, a second his fortune; a third, he discovered, had only listened to him out of pique at another; and a fourth accepted him as her lover because she wished to decoy him from her friend. These adventures, and these discoveries, brought him disgust; they brought him, also, knowledge of the world; and nothing hardens the heart more than that knowledge of the world which is founded on a knowledge of its vices,—made bitter by disappointment, and misanthropical by deceit.

I saw him just before he left England, and his mind then was sore and feverish. I saw him on his return, after an absence of five years in the various courts of Europe, and his mind was callous and even. He had then reduced the art of governing his own passions, and influencing the passions of others, to a system; and had reached the second stage of experience, when the deceived becomes the deceiver. He added to his former indignation at the vices of human nature, scorn for its weakness. Still many good, though irregular impulses, lingered about his heart. Still the appeal, which to a principle would have been useless, was triumphant when made to an affection. And though selfishness constituted the system of his life, there were yet many hours when the system was forgotten, and he would have sacrificed himself at the voice of a single emotion. Few men of ability, who neither marry nor desire to marry, live much among the frivolities of the world after the age of twenty-eight. And De Lindsay, now waxing near to his thirtieth year, avoided the society he had once courted, and lived solely to satisfy his pleasures and indulge his indolence. Women made his only pursuit and his sole ambition: and now, at length, arrived the time when, in the prosecution of an intrigue, he was to become susceptible of a passion; and the long and unquenched wish of his heart was to be matured into completion.

In a small village not far from London, there dwelt a family of the name of Warner; the father, piously termed Ebenezer Ephraim, was a merchant, a bigot, and a saint; the brother, simply and laically christened James, was a rake, a boxer, and a good fellow. But *she*, the daughter, who claimed the chaste and sweet name of Mary, simple and modest, beautiful in feature and heart, of a temper rather tender than gay, saddened by the gloom which hung for ever upon the home of her childhood, but softened by early habits of charity and benevolençe, unacquainted with all sin even in thought, loving all things from the gentleness of her nature, finding pleasure in the green earth, and drinking innocence from the pure air, moved in her grace and holiness amid the rugged kindred, and the stern tribe among whom she had been reared, like Faith sanctified by redeeming love, and passing over the thorns of earth on its pilgrimage to heaven.

In the adjustment of an ordinary amour with the wife of an officer in the —— regiment, then absent in Ireland, but who left his *gude woman* to wear the willow in the village of T——, Rupert saw, admired, and coveted the fair form I have so faintly described. Chance favoured his hopes. He entered one day the cottage of a poor man, whom, in the inconsistent charity natural to him, he visited and relieved. He found Miss Warner employed in the same office; he neglected not his opportunity; he addressed her; he accompanied her to the door of her home; he tried every art to please a young and unawakened heart, and he succeeded. Unfortunately for Mary, she had no one among her relations calculated to guide her conduct, and to win her confidence. Her father, absorbed either in the occupations of his trade or the visions of his creed, of a manner whose repellant austerity belied the real warmth of his affections, supplied but imperfectly the place of an anxious and tender mother; nor was this loss repaired by the habits still coarser, the mind still less soft, and the soul still less susceptible, of the fraternal rake, boxer, and good fellow.

And thus was thrown back upon that gentle and feminine heart all the warmth of its earliest and best affections. Her nature was love; and though in all things she had found wherewithal to call forth the tenderness which she could not restrain, there was a vast treasure as yet undiscovered, and a depth beneath that calm and unruffled bosom, whose slumber had as yet never been broken by a breath. It will not, therefore, be a matter of surprise that De Lindsay, who availed himself of every opportunity—De Lindsay, fascinating in manner and consummate in experience,—soon possessed a dangerous sway over a heart too innocent for suspicion, and which, for the first time, felt the luxury of being loved. In every walk, and her walks hitherto had always been alone, Rupert was sure to join her; and there was a supplication in his tone, and a respect in his manner, which she felt but little tempted to chill and reject. She had not much of what is termed dignity; and even though she at first had some confused idea of the impropriety of his company, which the peculiar nature of her education prevented her wholly perceiving, yet she could think of no method to check an address so humble and diffident, and to resist the voice which only spoke to her in music. It is needless to trace the progress by which affection is seduced. She soon awakened to the full knowledge of the recesses of her own heart, and Rupert, for the first time, felt the certainty of being loved as he desired. "Never," said he, "will I betray that affection; she has trusted in me, and she shall not be deceived; she is innocent and happy, I will never teach her misery and guilt!" Thus her innocence reflected even upon him, and purified his heart while it made the atmosphere of her own. So passed weeks, until Rupert was summoned by urgent business to his estate. He spoke to her of his departure, and he drank deep delight from the quivering lip and the tearful eye with which his words were received. He pressed her to his heart, and her unconsciousness of guilt was her protection from it. Amid all his sins, and there were many, let this one act of forbearance be remembered.

Day after day went on its march to eternity, and every morning came the same gentle tap at the post-office window, and the same low tone of inquiry was heard; and every morning the same light step returned gayly homewards, and the same soft eye sparkled at the lines which the heart so faithfully recorded. I said every morning, but there was one in each week which brought no letter—and on Monday Mary's step was listless, and her spirit dejected—on that day she felt as if there was nothing to live for.

She did not strive to struggle with her love. She read over every word of the few books he had left her, and she walked every day over the same ground which had seemed fairy-land when with him; and she always passed by the house where he had lodged, that she might look up to the window where he was wont to sit. Rupert found that landed property, where farmers are not left to settle their own leases, and stewards to provide for their little families, is not altogether a sinecure. He had lived abroad like a prince, and his estate had not been the better for his absence. He inquired into the exact profits of his property; renewed old leases on new terms; discharged his bailiff; shut up the roads in his park, which had seemed to all the neighbourhood a more desirable way than the turnpike conveniences; let off ten poachers, and warned off ten gentlemen; and, as the natural and obvious consequences of these acts of economy and inspection, he became the most unpopular man in the county.

One day Rupert had been surveying some timber intended for the *axe;* the weather was truly English, and changed suddenly from heat into rain. A change of clothes was quite out of Rupert's ordinary habits, and a fever of severe nature, which ended in delirium, was the result. For some weeks he was at the verge of the grave. The devil and the doctor do not always agree, for the moral saith that there is no friendship among the wicked. In this case the doctor was ultimately victorious, and his patient recovered. "Give me the fresh air," said Rupert, directly he was able to resume his power of commanding, "and bring me whatever letters came during my illness." From the pile of spoiled paper from fashionable friends, country cousins, county magistrates, and tradesmen who take the liberty to remind you of the trifle which has escaped your recollection,—from this olio of precious conceits Rupert drew a letter from the Irish officer's lady, who, it will be remembered, first allured Rupert to Mary's village, acquainting him that she had been reported by some d——d good-natured friend to her husband, immediately upon his return from Ireland. Unhappily, the man loved his wife, valued his honour, and was of that unfashionable temperament which never forgives an injury. He had sent his Achates twice during Rupert's illness to De Lindsay Castle, and was so enraged at the idea of his injurer's departing this life by any other means than his bullet, that he was supposed in consequence to be a little touched in the head. He was observed to walk by himself, sometimes bursting into tears, sometimes muttering deep oaths of vengeance; he shunned all society, and sat for hours gazing vacantly on a pistol placed before him. All these agreeable circumstances did the unhappy fair one (who picked up her information second hand, for she was an alien from the conjugal bed and board) detail to Rupert with very considerable pathos.

"Now then for Mary's letters," said the invalid; "no red-hot Irishman there, I trust;" and Rupert took up a large heap, which he had selected from the rest as a child picks the plums out of his pudding by way of a regale at the last. At the perusal of the first three or four letters he smiled with pleasure; presently his lips grew more compressed, and a dark cloud settled on his brow. He took up another—he read a few lines—started from his sofa. "What ho, there!—my carriage and four directly!—lose not a moment!—Do you hear me?—Too ill, do you say!—never so well in my life! —Not another word, or——My carriage, I say, instantly!—Put in my swiftest horses! I must be at T—— to-night before five o'clock!" and the order was obeyed.

To return to Mary. The letters which had blessed her through the livelong days suddenly ceased. What could be the reason?—was he faithless—forgetful—ill? Alas! whatever might be the cause, it was almost equally ominous to her. "Are you sure there are none?" she said, every morning, when she inquired at the office, from which she once used to depart so gayly; and the tone of that voice was so mournful, that the gruff postman paused to look again, before he shut the lattice and extinguished the last hope. Her appetite and colour daily decreased; shut up in her humble and fireless chamber, she passed whole hours in tears, in reading and repeating, again and again, every syllable of the letters she already possessed, or in pouring forth in letters to him, all the love and bitterness of her soul. "He *must* be ill," she said at last; "he never else could have been so cruel!" and she could bear the idea no longer. "I will go to him—I will sooth and attend him—who can love him, who can watch over him like me!" and the kindness of her nature overcame its modesty, and she made her small bundle, and stole early one morning from the house. "If he should despise me," she thought; and she was almost about to return, when the stern voice of her brother came upon her ear. He had for several days watched the alteration in her habits and manners, and endeavoured to guess at the cause. He went into her room, discovered a letter in her desk which she had just written to Rupert, and which spoke of her design. He watched, discovered, and saved her. There was no mercy or gentleness in the bosom of Mr. James Warner. He carried her home; reviled her in the coarsest and most taunting language; acquainted her father; and after seeing her debarred from all access to correspondence or escape, after exulting over her unupbraiding and heart-broken shame and despair, and swearing that it was vastly theatrical, Mr. James Warner mounted his yellow Stanhope, and went his way to the Fives Court. But these were trifling misfortunes, compared with those which awaited this unfortunate girl

There lived in the village of T—— one Zacharias Johnson, a godly man and a rich, moreover a saint of the same chapter as Ebenezer Ephraim Warner; his voice was the most nasal, his holding forth the most unctuous, his aspect the most sinister, and his vestments the most threadbare of the whole of that sacred tribe. To the eyes of this man there was something comely in the person of Mary Warner: he liked her beauty, for he was a sensualist; her gentleness, for he was a coward; and her money, for he was a merchant. He proposed both to the father and to the son; the daughter he looked upon as a concluding blessing sure to follow the precious assent of the two relations. To the father he spoke of godliness and scrip,—of the delightfulness of living in unity, and the receipts of his flourishing country house; to the son he spoke the language of kindness and the world—he knew that young men had expenses—he should feel too happy to furnish Mr. James with something for his innocent amusements, if he might hope for his (Mr. James's) influence over his worthy father: the sum was specified and the consent was sold. Among those domestic phenomena, which the inquirer seldom takes the trouble to solve, is the magical power possessed by a junior branch of the family over the main tree, in spite of the contrary and perverse direction taken by the aforesaid branch. James had acquired and exercised a most undue authority over the paternal patriarch, although in the habits and sentiments of each there was not one single trait in common between them. But James possessed a vigorous and unshackled, his father a weak and priest-ridden mind. In domestic life, it is the mind which is the master. Mr. Zacharias Johnson had once or twice, even before Mary's acquaintance with Rupert, urged his suit to Ebenezer; but as the least hint of such a circumstance to Mary seemed to occasion her a pang which went to the really kind heart of the old man, and as he was fond of her society, and had no wish to lose it; and as, above all, Mr. James had not yet held those conferences with Zacharias which ended in the alliance of their interests, —the proposal seemed to Mr. Warner like a lawsuit to the Lord Chancellor, something rather to be talked about than to be decided. Unfortunately, about the very same time in which Mary's proposed escape had drawn upon her the paternal indignation, Zacharias had made a convert of the son; James took advantage of his opportunity, worked upon his father's anger, grief, mercantile love of lucre, and saint-like affection to sect, and obtained from Ebenezer a promise to enforce the marriage—backed up his recoiling scruples, preserved his courage through the scenes with his weeping and wretched daughter, and, in spite of every lingering sentiment of tenderness and pity, saw the very day fixed which was to leave his sister helpless for ever.

It is painful to go through that series of inhuman persecutions, so common in domestic records; that system which, like all grounded upon injustice, is as foolish as tyrannical, and which always ends in misery, as it begins in oppression. Mary was too gentle to resist; her prayers became stilled; her tears ceased to flow; she sat alone in her "helpless, hopeless brokenness of heart," in that deep despair which, like the incubus of an evil dream, weighs upon the bosom, a burden and a torture from which there is no escape nor relief. She managed at last, within three days of that fixed for her union, to write to Rupert, and get her letter conveyed to the post.

"Save me," it said in conclusion,—"I ask not by what means, I care not for what end,—save me, I implore you, my guardian angel. I shall not trouble you long—I write to you no romantic appeal:—God knows that I have little thought for romance, but I feel that I shall soon die, only let me die unseparated from you—*you*, who first taught me to live, be near me, teach me to die, take away from me the bitterness of death. Of all the terrors of the fate to which they compel me, nothing appears so dreadful as the idea that I may then no longer think of you and love you. My hand is so cold that I can scarcely hold my pen, but my head is on fire. I think I could go mad if I would—but I will not, for then you could no longer love me. I hear my father's step—oh, Rupert!—on Friday next—remember—save me, save me!"

But the day, the fatal Friday arrived, and Rupert came not. They arrayed her in the bridal garb, and her father came up stairs to summon her to the room, in which the few guests invited were already assembled. He kissed her cheek; it was so deathly pale, that his heart smote him, and he spoke to her in the language of other days. She turned towards him, her lips moved, but she spoke not. "My child, my child!" said the old man, "have you not one word for your father!"—"Is it too late?" she said; "can you not preserve me yet?" There was relenting in the father's eye, but at that moment James stood before them. His keen mind saw the danger; he frowned at his father—the opportunity was past. "God forgive you!" said Mary, and cold, and trembling, and scarcely alive, she descended to the small and dark room, which was nevertheless the state chamber of the house. At a small table of black mahogany, prim and stately, starched and whaleboned within and without, withered and fossilized at heart by the bigotry and selfishness, and ice of sixty years, sat two maiden saints: they came forward, kissed the unshrinking cheek of the bride, and then, with one word of blessing, returned to their former seats and resumed their former posture. There was so little appearance of life in the persons caressing and caressed, that you would have started as if at something ghastly and supernatural—as if you had witnessed the salute of the grave. The bridegroom sat at one corner of the dim fire-place, arrayed in a more gaudy attire than was usual with the sect, and which gave a grotesque and unnatural gayety to his lengthy figure and solemn aspect. As the bride entered the room, there was a faint smirk on his lip, and a twinkle in his half-shut and crossing eyes, and a hasty shuffle in his unwieldy limbs, as he slowly rose, pulled down his yellow waistcoat, made a stately genuflexion, and regained his seat. Opposite to him sat a little lank-haired boy, about twelve years old, mumbling a piece of cake, and looking with a subdued and spiritless glance over the whole group, till at length his attention riveted on a large dull-coloured cat sleeping on the hearth, and whom he durst not awaken even by a murmured ejaculation of "Puss!"

On the window-seat, at the farther end of the room, there sat, with folded arms and abstracted air, a tall military-looking figure, apparently about forty. He rose, bowed low to Mary, gazed at her for some moments with a look of deep interest, sighed, muttered something to himself, and remained motionless, with eyes fixed upon the ground, and leaning against the dark wainscoat. This was Monkton, the husband of the woman who had allured Rupert to T——, and from whom he had heard so threatening an account of her liege lord. Monkton had long known Zacharias, and, always inclined to a serious turn of mind, he had lately endeavoured to derive consolation from the doctrines of that enthusiast. On hearing from Zacharias, for the saint had no false notions of delicacy, that he was going to bring into the pale of matrimony a lamb which had almost fallen a prey to the same wolf that had invaded his own fold, Monkton expressed so warm an interest, and so earnest a desire to see the reclaimed one, that Zacharias had invited him to partake of the bridal cheer.

Such was the conclave—and never was a wedding party more ominous in its appearance. "We will have," said the father, and his voice trembled, "one drop of spiritual comfort before we repair to the house of God. James, reach me the holy book." The Bible was brought, and all, as by mechanical impulse, sank upon their knees. The old man read with deep feeling some portions of the Scriptures calculated for the day; there was a hushed and heartfelt silence; he rose—he began an extemporaneous and fervent discourse. How earnest and breathless was the attention of his listeners! the very boy knelt with open mouth and thirsting ear. "Oh, beneficent Father," he said, as he drew near to his conclusion, "we do indeed bow before thee with humbled and smitten hearts. The evil spirit hath been among us, and one who was the pride, and the joy, and the delight of our eyes, hath forgotten thee for awhile; but shall she not return unto thee, and shall we not be happy once more? Oh, melt away the hardness of that bosom which rejects thee and thy chosen for strange idols, and let the waters of thy grace flow from the softened rock. And now, oh Father, let thy mercy and healing hand be upon this thy servant (and the old man looked to Monkton), upon whom the same blight hath fallen, and whose peace the same serpent hath destroyed." Here Monkton's sobs were audible. "Give unto him the comforts of thy holy spirit; wean him from the sins and worldly affections of his earlier days, and both unto him and her who is now about to enter upon a new career of duty, vouchsafe that peace which no vanity of earth can take away. From evil let good arise; and though the voice of gladness be mute, and though the sounds of bridal rejoicing are not heard within our walls, yet grant that this day may be the beginning of a new life, devoted unto happiness, to virtue, and to thee!" There was a long pause—they rose—even the old women were affected. Monkton returned to the window, and throwing it open leaned forward as for breath. Mary resumed her seat, and there she sat motionless and speechless. Alas! her very heart seemed to have stilled its beating. At length James said (and his voice, though it was softened almost to a whisper, broke upon that deep silence as an unlookedanother—on the evening of the third, the wicked had ceased to trouble, and the weary was at rest.

It is not my object to trace the lives of the remaining actors in this drama of real life—to follow the broken-hearted father to his grave—to see the last days of the brother consume amid the wretchedness of a jail, or to witness, upon the plea of insanity, the acquittal of Henry Monkton—these have but little to do with the thread and catastrophe of my story. There was no romance in the burial of the lovers—death did not unite those who in life had been asunder. In the small churchyard of her native place, covered by one simple stone, whose simpler inscription is still fresh, while the daily passions and events of the world have left memory but little trace of the departed, the tale of her sorrows unknown, and the beauty of her life unrecorded, sleeps Mary Warner.

And they opened for Rupert de Lindsay the mouldering vaults of his knightly fathers; and amid the banners of old triumphs and the escutcheons of heraldic vanity, they laid him in his palled and gorgeous coffin!

I attempt not to extract a moral from his life. His existence was the chase of a flying shadow, that rested not till it slept in gloom and for ever upon his grave!

MONOS AND DAIMONOS.

A LEGEND.

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

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

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

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

I commenced my pilgrimage—I pierced the burning sands—I traversed the vast deserts—I came into the enormous woods of Africa, where human step never trod, nor human voice ever startled the thrilling and intense solemnity that broods over the great solitudes, as it brooded over chaos before the world was! There the primeval nature springs and perishes, undisturbed and unvaried by the convulsions of the surrounding world; the leaf becomes the tree, lives through its uncounted ages, falls and moulders, and rots and vanishes, unwitnessed in its mighty and mute changes, save by the wandering lion, or the wild ostrich, or that huge serpent—a hundred times more vast than the puny boa that the cold limners of Europe have painted, and whose bones the vain student has preserved, as a miracle and marvel. There, too, as beneath the heavy and dense shade I couched in the scorching noon, I heard the trampling as of an army, and the crush and fall of the strong trees, and beheld through the matted boughs the behemoth pass on its terrible way, with its eyes burning as a sun, and its white teeth arched and glistening in the rabid jaw, as pillars of spar glitter in a cavern; the monster to whom only those waters are a home, and who never, since the waters rolled from the

Dædal earth, has been given to human gaze and wonder but my own! Seasons glided on, but I counted them not; they were not doled to me by the tokens of man, nor made sick to me by the changes of his base life, and the evidence of his sordid labour. Seasons glided on, and my youth ripened into manhood, and manhood grew gray with the first rose of age; and then a vague and restless spirit fell upon me, and I said in my foolish heart, "I will look upon the countenances of my race once more!" I retraced my steps—I recrossed the wastes—I re-entered the cities—I took again the garb of man; for I had been hitherto naked in the wilderness, and hair had grown over me as a garment. I repaired to a seaport, and took ship for England.

In the vessel there was one man, and only one, who neither avoided my companionship nor recoiled at my frown. He was an idle and curious being, full of the frivolities, and egotisms, and importance of them to whom towns are homes, and talk has become a mental aliment. He was one pervading, irritating, offensive tissue of little and low thoughts. The only meanness he had not was fear. It was impossible to awe, to silence, or to shun him. He sought me for ever; he was as a blister to me, which no force could tear away; my soul grew faint when my eyes met his. He was to my sight as those creatures which from their very loathsomeness are fearful as well as despicable to us. I longed and yearned to strangle him when he addressed me! Often I would have laid my hand on him, and hurled him into the sea to the sharks, which, lynx-eyed and eager-jawed, swam night and day around our ship; but the gaze of many was on us, and I curbed myself, and turned away, and shut my eyes in very sickness; and when I opened them again, lo! he was by my side, and his sharp, quick voice grated, in its prying, and asking, and torturing accents, on my loathing and repugnant ear! One night I was roused from my sleep by the screams and oaths of men, and I hastened on deck: we had struck upon a rock. It was a ghastly, but, oh Christ! how glorious a sight! Moonlight still and calm—the sea sleeping in sapphires; and in the midst of the silent and soft repose of all things, three hundred and fifty souls were to perish from the world! I sat apart, and looked on, and aided not. A voice crept like an adder's hiss upon my ear; I turned, and saw my tormentor; the moonlight fell on his face, and it grinned with the maudlin grin of intoxication, and his pale blue eye glistened, and he said, "We will not part even here!" My blood ran coldly through my veins, and I would have thrown him into the sea, which now came fast and fast upon us; *but the moonlight was on him, and I did not dare to kill him.* But I would not stay to perish with the herd, and I threw myself alone from the vessel and swam towards a rock. I saw a shark dart after me, but I shunned him, and the moment after he had plenty to sate his maw. I heard a crash, and mingled with a wild burst of anguish, the anguish of three hundred and fifty hearts that a minute afterward were stilled, and I said in my *own* heart, with a deep joy, "*His* voice is with the rest, and we *have* parted!" I gained the shore, and lay down to sleep.

The next morning my eyes opened upon a land more beautiful than a Grecian's dreams. The sun had just risen, and laughed over streams of silver, and trees bending with golden and purple fruits, and the diamond dew sparkled from a sod covered with flowers, whose faintest breath was a delight. Ten thousand birds with all the hues of a northern rainbow blended in their glorious and growing wings, rose from turf and tree, and loaded the air with melody and gladness; the sea, without a vestige of the past destruction upon its glassy brow, murmured at my feet; the heavens without a cloud, and bathed in a liquid and radiant light, sent their breezes as a blessing to my cheek. I rose with a refreshed and light heart; I traversed the new home I had found; I climbed upon a high mountain, and saw that I was in a small island—it had no trace of man—and my heart swelled as I gazed around and cried aloud in my exultation, "I shall be alone again!" I descended the hill: I had not yet reached its foot, when I saw the figure of a man approaching towards me. I looked at him, and my heart misgave me. He drew nearer, and I saw that my despicable persecutor had escaped the waters, and now stood before me. He came up with a hideous grin and his twinkling eye; and he flung his arms round me,—I would sooner have felt the slimy folds of the serpent,—and said, with his grating and harsh voice, "Ha! ha! my friend, we shall be together still!" I looked at him with a grim brow, but I said not a word. There was a great cave by the shore, and I walked down and entered it, and the man followed me. "We shall live so happily here," said he, "we will never separate!" And my lip trembled, and my hand clenched of its own accord. It was now noon, and hunger came upon me; I went forth and killed a deer, and I brought it home and broiled part of it on a fire of fragrant wood; and the man eat, and crunched, and laughed, and I wished that the bones had choked him; and he said, when we had done, "We shall have rare cheer here!" But I still held my peace. At last he stretched himself in a corner of the cave and slept. I looked at him, and saw that the slumber was heavy, and I went out and rolled a huge stone to the mouth of the cavern, and took my way to the opposite part of the island; it was my turn to laugh then! I found out another cavern; and I made a bed of moss and leaves, and I wrought a table of wood, and I looked out from the mouth of the cavern and saw the wide seas before me, and said "Now I shall be alone!"

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

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

I said to the man, "Rise, and follow me!" So he rose, and I saw that of all my food he had left only the bones. "Shall this thing reap and I sow?" thought I, and my heart felt to me like iron.

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

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

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

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

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

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

So two days passed, and I *was* alone. On the third

I went after my prey; the noon was hot, and I was wearied when I returned. I entered my cavern, and behold the man lay stretched upon my bed. "Ha! ha!" said he, "here I am; I was so lonely at home that I have come to live with you again!"

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

At these words my rage returned; I dashed the man to the ground, and I put my foot upon his breast, and my hand upon his neck; and he struggled for a moment—and was dead! I was startled: and as I looked upon his face I thought it seemed to revive; I thought the cold blue eye fixed upon me, and the vile grin returned to the livid mouth, and the hands which in the death-pang had grasped the sand, stretched themselves out to me. So I stamped on the breast again, and I dug a hole in the shore, and I buried the body. "And now," said I, "I am alone at last!" And then *the sense of loneliness*, the vague, vast, comfortless, objectless sense of desolation passed into me. And I shook—shook in every limb of my giant frame, as if I had been a child that trembles in the dark; and my hair rose, and my blood crept, and I would not have staid in that spot a moment more if I had been made young again for it. I turned away and fled—fled round the whole island; and gnashed my teeth when I came to the sea, and longed to be cast into some illimitable desert, that I might flee on for ever. At sunset I returned to my cave—I sat myself down on one corner of the bed, and covered my face with my hands—I thought I heard a noise: I raised my eyes, and, as I live, I saw on the other end of the bed the man whom I had slain and buried. There he sat, six feet from me, and nodded to me, and looked at me with his wan eyes and laughed. I rushed from the cave—I entered a wood—I threw myself down—there opposite to me, six feet from my face, was the face of that man again! And my courage rose, and I spoke, but he answered not. I attempted to seize him, he glided from my grasp, and was still opposite, six feet from me as before. I flung myself on the ground, and pressed my face to the sod, and would not look up till the night came on and darkness was over the earth. I then rose and returned to the cave: I laid down on my bed, and the man lay down by me; and I frowned and tried to seize him as before, but I could not, and I closed my eyes, *and the man lay by me.* Day passed on day, and it was the same. At board, at bed, at home and abroad, in my up-rising and down-sitting, by day and at night, there, by my bedside, six feet from me, and no more, was that ghastly and dead thing. And I said, as I looked upon the beautiful land and the still heavens, and then turned to that fearful comrade, "I shall never be alone again!" And the man laughed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And I saw the feet of the dead thing trace one word upon the sand; and the word was—NEVER.

TOO HANDSOME FOR ANY THING.

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

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

"And why, love?"

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

"And that 's true enough, my dear!" said the schoolmaster's wife.

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

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

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

The Lord Chancellor dined there that day: Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was introduced to him; his Lordship was a little, rough-faced, beetle-browed, hard-featured man, who thought beauty and idleness the same thing —and a parchment skin the legitimate complexion for a lawyer.

"Send him to the bar!" said he; "no, no, that will never do!—Send him into the army; he is much too handsome to become a lawyer."

"And that 's true enough, my Lord!" said the mother. So they bought Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy a cornetcy in the —— Regiment of Dragoons.

Things are not learned by inspiration. Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy had never ridden at school, except when he was hoisted; he was, therefore, a very indifferent horseman; they sent him to the riding-school, and every body laughed at him.

"He is a d——d ass!" said Cornet Horsephiz, who was very ugly; "A horrid puppy!" said Lieutenant St. Squintem, who was still uglier; "If he does not ride better, he will disgrace the regiment!" said Captain Rivalhate, who was very good-looking; "If he does not ride better, we will cut him!" said Colonel Everdrill, who was a wonderful martinet; "I say, Mr. Bumpemwell (to the riding-master), make that youngster ride less like a miller's sack."

"Pooh, sir, *he* will never ride better."

"And why the d——l will he not ?"

"Bless you, Colonel, he is a great deal too handsome for a cavalry officer!"

"True!" said Cornet Horsephiz.

"Very true!" said Lieutenant St. Squintem.

"We must cut him!" said the Colonel.

And Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was accordingly cut.

Our hero was a youth of susceptibility—he quitted the —— Regiment, and challenged the Colonel. The Colonel was killed!

"What a terrible blackguard is Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy!" said the Colonel's relations.

"Very true!" said the world.

The parents were in despair!—They were not rich; but our hero was an only son, and they sponged hard upon the crabbed old uncle.

"He is very clever," said they both, "and may do yet."

So they borrowed some thousands from the uncle, and bought his beautiful nephew a seat in Parliament.

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was ambitious, and desirous of retrieving his character. He fagged like a dragon —conned pamphlets and reviews—got Ricardo by heart —and made notes on the English constitution.

He rose to speak.

"What a handsome fellow!" whispered one member.

"Ah, a coxcomb!" said another.

"Never do for a speaker!" said a third, very audibly.

And the gentlemen on the opposite benches sneered and *heared!*—Impudence is only indigenous in Milesia, and an orator is not made in a day. Discouraged by his reception, Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy grew a little embarrassed.

"Told you so!" said one of his neighbours.

"Fairly broke down!" said another.

"Too fond of his hair to have any thing in his head," said a third, who was considered a wit.

"Hear, hear!" cried the gentlemen on the opposite benches.

Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy sat down—he had not shone; but, in justice, he had not failed. Many a first-rate speaker had begun worse; and many a county member had been declared a phœnix of promise upon half his merit.

Not so thought the heroes of corn laws.

"Your Adonises never make orators!" said a crack speaker with a wry nose.

"Nor men of business either," added the chairman of a committee, with a face like a kangaroo's.

"Poor devil!" said the civilest of the set. "He's a deused deal too handsome for a speaker! By Jove, he is going to speak again—this will never do; we must cough him down!"

And Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy was accordingly coughed down.

Our hero was now seven or eight-and-twenty, handsomer than ever, and the adoration of all the young ladies at Almack's.

"We have nothing to leave you," said the parents, who had long spent their fortune, and now lived on the credit of having once enjoyed it.—"You are the handsomest man in London; you must marry an heiress."

"I will," said Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy.

Miss Helen Convolvulus was a charming young lady, with a hare-lip and six thousand a-year. To Miss Helen Convolvulus then our hero paid his addresses.

Heavens! what an uproar her relations made about the matter. "Easy to see his intentions," said one; "a handsome fortune-hunter, who wants to make the best of his person!"—"Handsome is that handsome does," says another; "he was turned out of the army, and murdered his Colonel!"—"Never marry a beauty," said a third; "he can admire none but himself."—"Will have so many mistresses," said a fourth;—"Make you perpetually jealous," said a fifth;—"Spend your fortune," said a sixth;—"And break your heart," said a seventh.

Miss Helen Convolvulus was prudent and wary. She saw a great deal of justice in what was said; and was sufficiently contented with liberty and six thousand a-year, not to be highly impatient for a husband; but our heroine had no aversion to a lover; especially to so handsome a lover as Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy. Accordingly, she neither accepted nor discarded him; but kept him on hope, and suffered him to get into debt with his tailor, and his coach-maker, on the strength of becoming Mr. Fitzroy Convolvulus. Time went on, and excuses and delays were easily found; however, our hero was sanguine, and so were his parents. A breakfast at Chiswick and a putrid fever carried off the latter, within one week of each other; but not till they had blessed Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, and rejoiced that they had left him so well provided for.

Now, then, our hero depended solely upon the crabbed old uncle and Miss Helen Convolvulus;—the former, though a baronet and a satirist, was a banker and a man of business:—he looked very distastefully at the Hyperian curls and white teeth of Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy.

"If I make you my heir," said he, "I expect you will continue the bank."

"Certainly, sir!" said the nephew.

"Humph!" grunted the uncle, "a pretty fellow for a banker!"

Debtors grew pressing to Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy, and Mr. Ferdinand Fitzroy grew pressing to Miss Helen Convolvulus. "It is a dangerous thing," said she, timidly, "to marry a man so admired,—will you always be faithful?"

"By heaven!" cried the lover—

"Heigho!" sighed Miss Helen Convolvulus, and Lord Rufus Pumilion entering, the conversation was changed.

A MANUSCRIPT FOUND IN A MAD-HOUSE.

I AM the eldest son of a numerous family,—noble in birth, and eminent for wealth. My brothers are a vigorous and comely race,—my sisters are more beautiful than dreams. By what fatality was it that I alone was thrust into this glorious world distorted, and dwarf-like, and hideous,—my limbs a mockery, my countenance a horror, myself a blackness on the surface of creation,—a discord in the harmony of nature, a living misery, an animated curse? I am shut out from the aims and objects of my race;—with the deepest sources of affection in my heart, I am doomed to find no living thing on which to pour them. Love!—out upon the world—I am its very loathing and abhorrence: friendship turns from me in disgust; pity beholds me, and withers to aversion. Wheresoever I wander, I am encompassed with hatred as with an atmosphere. Whatever I attempt, I am in the impassable circle of a dreadful and accursed doom. Ambition—pleasure—philanthropy—fame—the common blessing of social intercourse—are all as *other* circles, which *mine* can touch but in *one* point, and that point is torture. I have knowledge to which the wisdom of ordinary sages is as dust to gold;—I have energies to which relaxation is pain;—I have benevolence which sheds itself in charity and love over a worm! For what—merciful God!—for what are these blessings of nature or of learning?—The instant I employ them, I must enter among men: the moment I enter among men, my being blackens into an agony. Laughter grins upon me—terror dogs my steps;—I exist upon poisons, and my nourishment is scorn!

At my birth the nurse refused me suck; my mother saw me and became delirious; my father ordered that I should be stifled as a monster. The physicians saved my life—accursed be they for the act! One woman—she was old and childless—took compassion upon me; she reared and fed me. I grew up—I asked for something to love; I loved every thing: the common earth—the fresh grass—the living insect—the household brute;—from the dead stone I trod on, to the sublime countenance of man, made to behold the stars, and to scorn *me*;—from the noblest thing to the prettiest—the fairest to the foulest—*I* loved them *all!* I knelt to my mother, and besought her to love me—she shuddered. I fled to my father,—and he spurned me! The lowest minion of the human race, that had its limbs shapen and its countenance formed, refused to consort with me;—the very dog (I only dared to seek out one that seemed more rugged and hideous than its fellows), the very dog dreaded me, and slunk away!—I grew up lonely and wretched; I was like the reptile whose prison is the stone's heart,—immured in the eternal penthouse of a solitude to which the breath of fellowship never came;—girded with a wall of barrenness, and flint, and doomed to vegetate and batten on my own suffocating and poisoned meditations. But while this was my *heart's* dungeon, they could not take from the *external* senses the sweet face of the Universal Nature;—they could not bar me from commune with the voices of the mighty Dead. Earth opened to me her marvels, and the volumes of the wise their stores. I read—I mused—I examined—I descended into the deep wells of Truth—and mirrored in my soul the holiness of her divine beauty. The past lay before me like a scroll; the mysteries of this breathing world rose from the present like clouds;—even of the dark future, experience shadowed forth something of a token and a sign; and over the wonders of the world I hung the intoxicating and mingled spells of poesy and of knowledge. But I could not without a struggle live in a world of love, and be the only thing doomed to hatred. "I will travel," said I, "to other quarters of the globe. All earth's tribes have not the proud stamp of angels and of gods, and among its infinite variety I may find a being who will not sicken at myself." I took leave of the only one who had not loathed me—the woman who had given me food, and reared me up to life. She had now become imbecile, and doting, and blind;—so she did not disdain to lay her hand upon my distorted head, and to bless me. "But better," she said, even as she blessed me, and in despite of her dotage,—"better that you had perished in the womb!" And I laughed with a loud laugh when I heard her, and rushed from the house.

One evening, in my wanderings, as I issued from a wood, I came abruptly upon the house of a village priest. Around it, from a thick and lofty fence of shrubs which the twilight of summer bathed in dew, the honeysuckle, and the sweetbriar, and the wild rose sent forth those gifts of fragrance and delight which were not denied even unto me. As I walked slowly behind the hedge, I heard voices on the opposite side; they were the voices of women, and I paused to listen. They spoke of love, and of the qualities which should create it.

"No," said one, and the words, couched in a tone of music, thrilled to my heart,—"no, it is not beauty which I require in a lover; it is the mind which can command others, and the passion which would bow that mind unto me. I ask for genius and affection. I ask for nothing else."

"But," said the other voice, "you could not love a monster in person, even if he were a miracle of intellect and of love!"

"I could," answered the first speaker, fervently; "if I know my own heart, I could. You remember the fable of a girl whom a monster loved! *I* could have loved *that* monster."

And with these words they passed from my hearing; but I stole round, and through a small crevice in the fence, beheld the face and form of the speaker, whose words had opened, as it were, a glimpse of Heaven to my heart. Her eyes were soft and deep,—her hair, parting from her girlish and smooth brow, was of the hue of gold,—her aspect was pensive and melancholy,—and over the delicate and transparent paleness of her cheek, hung the wanness, but also the eloquence, of thought. To other eyes she might not have been beautiful,—to mine, her face was as an angel's. Oh! lovelier far than the visions of the Carian, or the shapes that floated before the eyes of the daughters of Delos, is the countenance of one that bringeth to the dark breast the first glimmerings of hope! From that hour my resolution was taken; I concealed myself in the wood that bordered her house; I made my home with the wild fox in the cavern and the shade; the daylight passed in dreams and passionate delirium,—and at evening I wandered forth, to watch afar off her footstep; or creep through the copse, unseen, to listen to her voice; or through the long and lone night to lie beneath the shadow of her house, and fix my soul, watchful as a star, upon the windows of the chamber where she slept. I strewed her walks with the leaves of poetry, and at midnight I made the air audible with the breath of music. In my writings and my songs, whatever in the smooth accents of praise, or the burning language of passion, or the liquid melodies of verse, could awaken her fancy or excite her interest, I attempted. Curses on the attempt! May the hand wither!—may the brain burn! May the heart shrivel, and parch like a leaf that a flame devours—from which the cravings of my ghastly and unnatural love found a channel, or an aid!

I told her in my verses, in my letters, that I had overheard her confession. I told her that I was more hideous than the demons which the imagination of a Northern savage had ever bodied forth;—I told her that I was a thing which the daylight loathed to look upon; —but I told her, also, that I adored her: and I breathed both my story and my love in the numbers of song, and sung them to the silver chords of my lute, with a voice which belied my form, and was not out of harmony with nature. She answered me,—and her answer filled the air, that had hitherto been to me a breathing torture, with enchantment and rapture. She repeated, that beauty was as nothing in her estimation—that to her all loveliness was in the soul. She told me that one who wrote as I wrote—who felt as I felt—could not be loathsome in her eyes. She told me that she could love me, be my form even more monstrous than I had portrayed it. Fool!—miserable fool that I was, to believe her! So, then, shrouded among the trees, and wrapped from head to foot in a mantle, and safe in the oath by which I had bound her not to seek to penetrate my secret, or to behold my form before the hour I myself should appoint arrived—I held commune with her in the deep nights of summer, and beneath the unconscious stars; and while I unrolled to her earnest spirit the marvels of the mystic world, and the glories of wisdom, I mingled with my instruction the pathos and the passion of love!

"Go," said she, one night, as we conferred together, and through the matted trees I saw—though she beheld me not—that her cheek blushed as she spoke; "Go,—and win from others the wonder that you have won from me. Go, pour forth your knowledge to the crowd; go, gain the glory of fame—the glory which makes man immortal—and then come back, and claim me,—I will be yours!"

"Swear it!" cried I.

"I swear!" she said; and as she spoke the moonlight streamed upon her face, flushed as it was with the ardour of the moment and the strangeness of the scene; her eye burned with a steady and deep fire—her lip was firm—and her figure, round which the light fell like the glory of a halo, seemed indistinct and swelling, as it were, with the determinate energy of the soul. I gazed—and my heart leaped within me;—I answered not—but I stole silently away: for months she heard of me no more.

I fled to a lonely and far spot,—I surrounded myself once more with books. I explored once more the arcana of science; I ransacked once more the starry regions of poetry; and then upon the mute page I poured the thoughts and the treasures which I had stored within me! I sent the product, without a name, upon the world: the world received it; approved it; and it became fame. Philosophers bowed in wonder before my discoveries; the pale student in cell and cloister pored over the mines of learning which I had dragged into day; the maidens in their bowers blushed and sighed, as they drank in the burning pathos of my verse. The old and the young,—all sects and all countries, united in applause and enthusiasm for the unknown being who held, as they averred, the Genii of wisdom and the Spirits of verse in mighty and wizard spells, which few had ever won, and none had ever blended before.

I returned to *her*,—I sought a meeting under the same mystery and conditions as of old,—I proved myself that unknown whose fame filled all ears and occupied all tongues. Her heart had foreboded it already! I claimed my reward! And in the depth and deadness of night, when not a star crept through the curtain of cloud and gloom—when not a gleam struggled against the blackness—not a breath stirred the heavy torpor around us—that reward was yielded. The dense woods and the eternal hills were the sole witnesses of our bridal;—and girt with darkness as with a robe, she leaned upon my bosom, and shuddered not at the place of her repose!

Thus only we met,—but for months we *did* meet, and I was blessed. At last, the fruit of our ominous love could no longer be concealed. It became necessary, either that I should fly with her, or wed her with the rites and ceremonies of man—as I had done amid the more sacred solemnities of nature. In either case, disclosure was imperious and unavoidable;—I took therefore that which gratitude ordained. Beguiled by her assurances—touched by her trust and tenderness—maddened by her tears—duped by my own heart—I agreed to meet her, and for the first time openly reveal myself—at the foot of the altar!

The appointed day came. At our mutual wish, only two witnesses were present, besides the priest and the aged and broken-hearted father, who consented solely to our singular marriage because mystery was less terrible to him than disgrace. *She* had prepared them to see a distorted and fearful abortion,—but—ha! ha! ha!—she had not prepared them to see *me!* I entered:—all eyes but *hers* were turned to me,—a unanimous cry was uttered—the priest involuntarily closed the book, and muttered the exorcism for a fiend—the father covered his face with his hands, and sunk upon the ground—the other witnesses—ha! ha! ha! (it was rare mirth) rushed screaming from the chapel! It was twilight—the tapers burned dim and faint—I approached my bride—who, trembling and weeping beneath her long veil, had not dared to look at me. "Behold me!"—said I—"my bride, my beloved!—behold thy husband!"—I raised her veil—she saw my countenance glare full upon her—uttered one shriek, and fell senseless on the floor. I raised her not—I stirred not—I spoke not. I saw my doom was fixed, my curse complete;—and my heart lay mute, and cold, and dead within me, like a stone! Others entered, they bore away the bride. By little and little, the crowd assembled, to gaze upon the monster in mingled derision and dread;—*then* I recollected myself and arose. I scattered them in terror before me, and uttering a single and piercing cry, I rushed forth, and hid myself in the wood.

But at night, at the hour in which I had been accustomed to meet her, I stole forth again. I approached the house, I climbed the wall, I entered the window; I was in her chamber. All was still and solitary; I saw not a living thing there; but the lights burned bright and clear. I drew near to the bed; I beheld a figure stretched upon it—a taper at the feet, and a taper at the head,—so there was plenty of light for me to see my bride. She was a corpse! I did not speak—nor faint—nor groan;—but I laughed aloud. Verily, it is a glorious mirth, to behold the only thing one loves, stiff, and white, and shrunken, and food for the red, playful, creeping worm! I raised my eyes, and saw upon a table near the bed something covered with a black cloth. I lifted the cloth, and beheld—ha! ha! ha!—by the foul fiend—a dead—but beautiful likeness of myself! A little infant monster! The ghastly mouth, and the laidley features—and the delicate, green, corpse-like hue—and the black shaggy hair—and the horrible limbs, and the unnatural shape—there—ha! ha!—there they were—my wife and my child! I took them both in my arms—I hurried from the house—I carried them into the wood. I concealed them in a cavern—I watched over them—and lay beside them,—and played with the worms—that played with them—ha! ha! ha!—it was a jovial time that, in the old cavern!

And so, when they were all gone but the bones, I buried them quietly, and took my way to my home. My father was dead, and my brothers hoped that I was dead also. But I turned them out of the house, and took possession of the titles and the wealth. And then I went to see the doting old woman who had nursed me; and they showed me where she slept—a little green mound in the churchyard—and I wept—oh, so bitterly! I never shed a tear for my wife—or—ha! ha! ha!—for my beautiful child!

And so I lived *happily* enough for a short time; but at last they discovered that I was the unknown philosopher—the divine poet whom the world rung of. And the crowd came—and the mob beset me—and my rooms were filled with eyes—large, staring eyes, all surveying me from head to foot—and peals of laughter and shrieks wandered about the air, like disimbodied and damned spirits———and I was never alone again!

THE END.

FAMILY LIBRARY.

The publishers of the Family Library, anxious to obtain and to deserve the favourable opinion of the public, with pleasure embrace the present opportunity to express their warm and sincere thanks for the liberal patronage which has been bestowed upon their undertaking, and their determination to do all that lies in their power to merit its continuance. For some time previous to the commencement of the Family Library, they had entertained thoughts and wishes of reducing the quantity of merely fictitious writings, which the reading public had made it their interest to issue from their press; and they were conscious that this could only be done by substituting for them works that should be equally entertaining and more instructive. The difficulty was to find an adequate supply of books possessing these requisites. At this time the attention of English philanthropists and authors was strongly turned to the general dissemination of useful knowledge by means of popular abridgments, convenient in form, afforded at low prices, and as much as possible simplified in style, so as to be accessible as well to the means as to the comprehension of "the people," in contradistinction to the educated and the wealthy. The result has been the production of numerous collections, embracing well written works treating of almost every department of art and science, and, by their simplicity, clearness, and entire freedom from technicality, exactly calculated to attract and compensate the attention of the general reader. From these collections, with additions and improvements, and such alterations as were necessary to adapt the work to the taste and wants of the American public, Harper's Family Library has been composed; and it is with pride and pleasure that the publishers acknowledge the distinguished favour with which it has been received. The approbation and support that have already been bestowed upon it are greater than have ever been conferred upon any work of a similar character published in the United States; and the sale of every succeeding volume still demonstrates its continually increasing popularity. In several instances gentlemen of wealth and of excellent judgment have been so much pleased with the character of the Library, that they have purchased numbers of complete sets as appropriate and valuable gifts to the families of their less opulent relatives; and others have unsolicited, been active in their endeavours to extend its circulation among their friends and acquaintances. With these strong inducements to persevere, the publishers are resolved to prosecute their undertaking with additional zeal, energy, and circumspection. What has been done they desire their patrons to consider rather in the light of an experiment, than a specimen of what they hope and intend to accomplish: they freely and gratefully acknowledge that the circulation and popularity of the Family Library are now such as to justify them in disregarding expense, and to demand from them every care and every exertion. It shall be their study to make such arrangements as shall warrant them in assuring the friends and patrons of the Library that the forthcoming volumes, instead of decreasing in interest and value, will be found still more deserving of the support and approbation of the public than those which have preceded them.

In order to render it thus meritorious, the proprietors intend incorporating in it hereafter, selections of the best productions from the various other Libraries and Miscellanies now publishing in Europe. Several well-known authors have been engaged to prepare for it also works of an American character; and *the Family Library, when completed, will include a volume on every useful and interesting subject* not embraced in the other "Libraries" now preparing by the same publishers. The entire series will be the production of authors of eminence, who have acquired celebrity by their literary labours, and whose names, as they appear in succession, will afford the surest guarantee for the satisfactory manner in which the subjects will be treated.

With these arrangements, the publishers flatter themselves that they will be able to offer to the American public a work of unparalleled *merit* and *cheapness*, forming a body of literature which will obtain the praise of having instructed many, and amused all; and, above every other species of eulogy, of being fit to be introduced to the domestic circle without reserve or exception.

The Dramatic Series of the Family Library will consist principally of the works of those Dramatists who flourished contemporaneously with Shakspeare, in which all such passages as are inconsistent with modern delicacy will be omitted. The number of volumes will be limited, and they will be bound and numbered in such a manner as to render it not essentially necessary to obtain them to complete a set of the Family Library.

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"The publishers have hitherto fully deserved their daily increasing reputation by the good taste and judgment which have influenced the selections of works for the Family Library."—*Albany Daily Advertiser*

"The Family Library—A title which, from the valuable and entertaining matter the collection contains, as well as from the careful style of its execution, it well deserves. No family, indeed, in which there are children to be brought up, ought to be without this Library, as it furnishes the readiest resources for that education which ought to accompany or succeed that of the boarding-school or the academy, and is infinitely more conducive than either to the cultivation of the intellect."—*Monthly Review.*

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