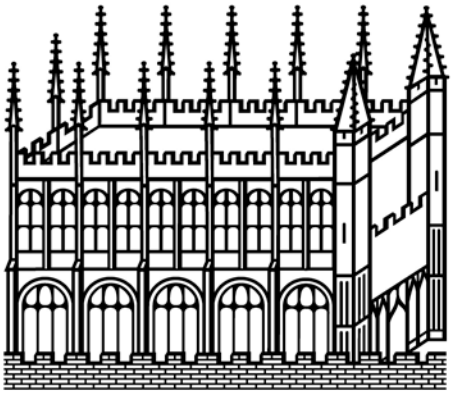

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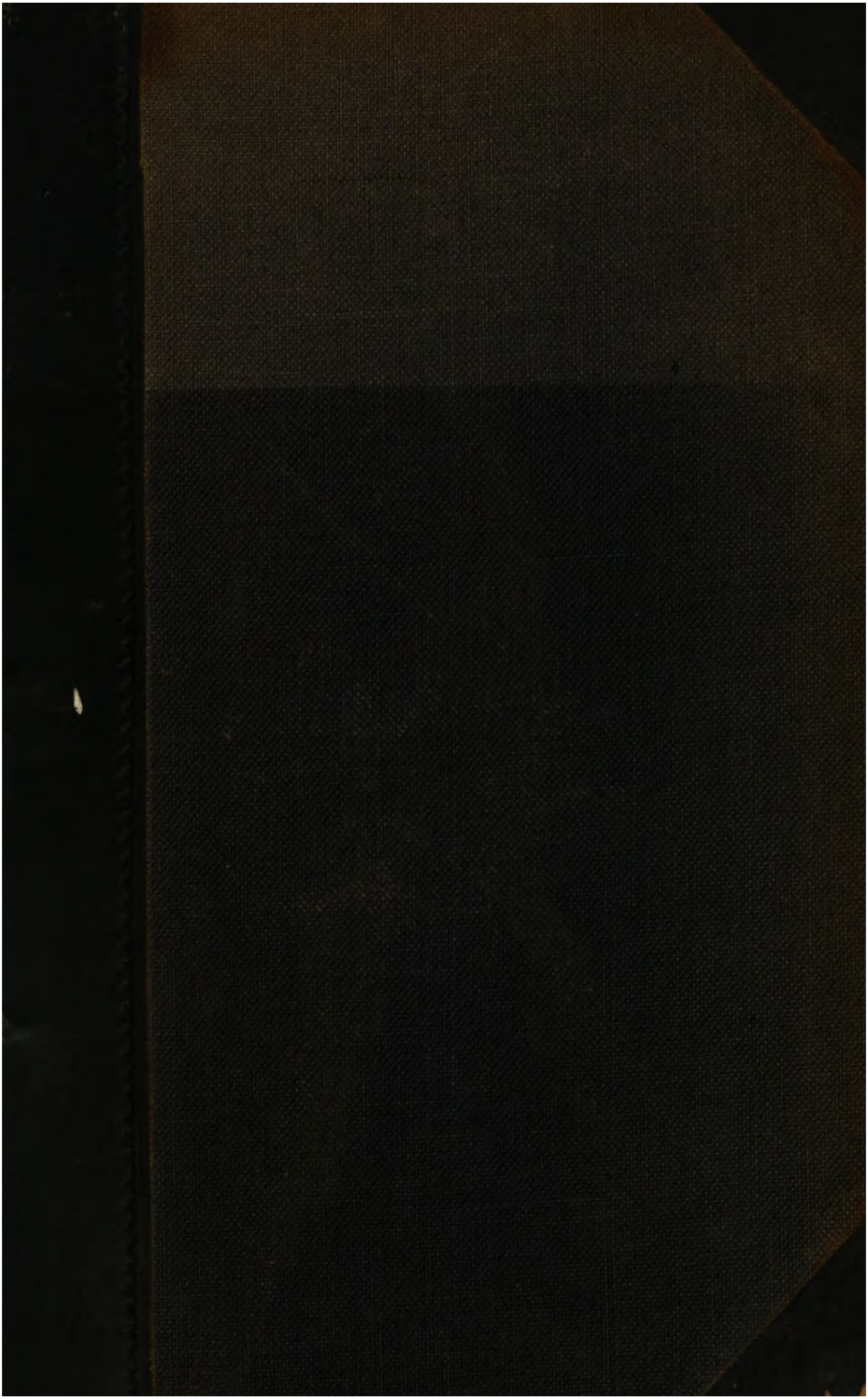

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ROBERT MONTGOMERY

AND

HIS REVIEWERS.

WITH

SOME REMARKS ON THE PRESENT STATE

OF

English Poetry,

AND ON

THE LAWS OF CRITICISM.

Examenve improbum in illa
Castiges trutina: nec te quæsiveris extra.
PERSIUS.

Curandum in primis ne magna injuria fiat
Fortibus * * * * spoliatis arma supersunt.
JUVENAL.

By EDWARD CLARKSON,

Author of Lectures on the Pyramids and Hieroglyphical Language, delivered at Scott's Hall, in 1811, and published in the *Classical Journal*; 'On the Portland Vase—Pluto,' in the *Pamphleteer*; 'Herwald De Wake'; &c. &c.

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ROBERT MONTGOMERY

AND

HIS REVIEWERS.

THE poems of Robert Montgomery have caused some stir in public opinion; they have rapidly run through an unprecedented number of editions, and, altogether, produced deeper excitement, provoked more notice, and suddenly elicited more contemporary fame, than those of any poet since the death of Lord Byron. They have confirmed the favourable judgment and warranted the sanguine anticipations of those critics (*quorum pars fui*) who in the *Age Reviewed* * hailed the promising dawn of a rising poet. What the author of this pamphlet thought of Mr. Montgomery's *débût*, may be seen in the subjoined extracts from a Daily

* I take for granted that this powerful Juvenalian sketch (for it is but a sketch—the foot of the coming Hercules,) characterised as it is by great talent, and by many faults—by much of the virtuous indignation, and by too much of the censorious indiscretion of youth, is Mr. Robert Montgomery's. It has not been acknowledged by him, but it may be fairly inferred that he would have repudiated the ownership so repeatedly attributed to him, had it not been his. Proofs of the ownership might, indeed, be adduced.

and also from a Weekly paper*. In speaking of it, he went farther than in writing, for he boldly proclaimed to several persons, influential both in point of literary taste and literary property,—'This is the only man who has appeared, since Byron's death, capable—if he desert not himself—of filling the vacant Parnassian chair.'

The great popularity of Mr. Robert Montgomery's next work, the *Omnipresence of the Deity*, which passed through ten editions with unequalled rapidity, demonstrated that the public, in no small measure, sympathized with that appreciation and corroborated that verdict. In none of Mr. Montgomery's subsequent works have I found occasion to revise or retract my original unbiassed judgment. On the contrary, they have convinced me that the poet is possessed of that true, original, creative power which constitutes the *matériel* of a genius of the first order. His productions exhibit the *mens divinior* of true poetry; and, great resources as Mr. Montgomery has already displayed—wonderfully great, con-

* 'This is a most extraordinary work;—a production of the highest order of poetical talent; the pungency and gripe of the satire have not been equalled since the time of Byron or Pope; the general attack on vice and folly is dashing, spirited, and triumphant; and the poetical vituperation sometimes rises to the sublime, and is then perfectly appalling.'—*British Traveller.*

'Astounding power of satire, with a facility of versification seldom surpassed.' I added here a reproof on the uncalled for and too wide embrace of its literary censures; and I concluded, 'Against the author's moral denunciations we have nothing to object; in this respect we say to him—"*i pede fausto!*" '—*Sunday Times.*

sidering his youth,—it is manifest that even greater treasures are yet to be derived from the same poetical mine, when more matured experience shall have enabled him to sink deeper shafts in its yet unexplored vein. This much has been elegantly and truly affirmed of his poetry: there is no immoral alloy in the brilliant ore he produces; it is not necessary to disengage it from its arsenic, in order to give it steady value and circulation.

Satan—boldly daring as the title and conception are—appears to me the best of Mr. Montgomery's poems. It is at once more defined in outline, more magnificent in effect, and more finished in detail; more affluent in imagery, and more vigorous in reasoning, more logically analytical in its thoughts, and yet more sonorously eloquent in its diction. The *monodramatic character* of SATAN has been either wilfully or unintentionally mistaken. It is an original and unique creation of the poet, as much so as is the Prometheus of Greek tragedy. It is distinct from the coarse and vulgar Mephistophiles, the menial and harmless devil of Marlow;—nor is it less distinct from the devilish sceptic, Goethe's Mephistophiles—devilish in everything, whether mirthful or scoffing—whether he depreciates, despises, or detests. His self-concentered and self-torturing research are equally distinct from the too elevated pride and the too godlike sublimity of 'Milton's hero,'*

* Dryden.

and still more so from the character of Lord Byron's Lucifer—a spirit *dephlogisticated* of his vulgar elementary flames, and nearly as innocent of bad intentions (*Cain*, p. 16) as the *nonchalant* and quiet-loving gods of Lucretius. Mr. Montgomery's *Satan* is a deeply-reasoned abstraction, logically and metaphysically consistent—a personification of the greatest of the archangels fallen—still vividly alive to the perceptions of eternal beauty—not fallen in intellect, though debased in morals,—and therefore more intensely wrung with remorse and despair for the ambitious folly which divorced him so irrevocably from the 'fair and good.'

Besides the above mistake, which seems to call for early explanation, an extraordinary collision of opinion among the critics has been caused by this work—a collision stimulating to curiosity and worthy of inquiry. In plain truth, night and day were never more opposed than some of the critical strictures of contemporary writers, which will be found set forth, in their strongest contrasts of light and shade, in the course of the succeeding examination. The discrepancy has given occasion to this commentary. How and whence does it arise? Unwilling to impute motives to any gentleman connected with the critical bench of the commonwealth of letters, while I disclaim them myself, the inquiry is, as it were, forced upon the reading public—how comes it, that of two equally-judging and unbiassed persons (for such I am bound, by courtesy and custom, to consider them in the first instance),

one should pronounce the shield of Haco to be gold, the other maintain it to be lead? Is THERE NO UNVARYING STANDARD OF CRITICAL TASTE AND LAW? If there be not, the whole 'pride, pomp, and circumstance' of criticism are worse than useless. It must, however, be confessed, that, besides the wish to obtain some decision on this point, I have thus far a personal feeling in the inquiry, that my taste as a reader, and my judgment as a critic, are committed in the question. My opinion has been so publicly and unequivocatingly pronounced, that my character for the above qualifications must stand by the verdict in favour of Mr. Robert Montgomery's admitted pre-eminence, or fall with his fall to a lower grade than his admirers are willing to admit—that of the common 'mob of poets;'* a low grade in regard to the extraordinary number of its participators, but not so in regard to the extraordinary average merits of each individual of the class. The public judgment, conferring eminence, as it were, by acclamation on Mr. Montgomery, is also compromised. Personally, I am no further interested in the question. When I gave the preceding quoted opinions on the latent merits of the author of the *Age Reviewed* I neither knew his *name* nor his *person;* I could not, therefore, be *interested* by any feeling but that of an adherence to truth. In fact, the approval was decidedly against my interest. To those who are familiar

* 'Turba, enim, sumus.'—*Horace.*

with the proprietary diplomacy of the republic of letters, and the conflicting interests it creates and guards, this hint will be enough, and I shall add no more. I merely refer to the subject to show that, having preferred truth to interest, as one of the jurymen on this great question—claiming, in conformity with English law, to be final judge of the judge, I cannot be challenged, on the score of partiality or venality. I stand '*rectus in curia.*' So far it is an auspicious augury for the weight of such evidence as it may be my province to adduce in Mr. Montgomery's favour, that, in adducing it, I cannot be accused or suspected of even the *amiable* bias of private friendship;—amiable, I say, though not strictly just; although even Ulysses, when urged, by the wrong of malicious and envious detraction to a general challenge of the Phœnicians, excepts his friend:

> With all but brave Laodamas contend—
> A *friend is sacred;* and I style him friend.

The private question is, Was I, although impartial, wrong in judgment when giving this unequivocal and disinterested opinion? The general question is, Was the public wrong, which almost instantly confirmed it? Great names in literature have pronounced Robert Montgomery to be a great and original poet. Were these also wrong? Shall the new and splendid idol, whose future golden head was even predicted, when only the silver *torso* was apparent, be unpedestalled from its niche in the temple of Fame, and de-

clared to stand only on feet of base metal and perishable clay?

The multiplication of attacks on Mr. Montgomery since I began this appeal, induces me to add a few words to these prefatory remarks. How has Mr. Montgomery offended? may be asked by men of probity, whom fortune happily has preserved from worldly knowledge of the social rancour with which worldliness is imbued. I will tell them briefly: he has offended envy deeply by talent and success. Talent alone is an offence; but, combined with success, unpardonable. His youth has been declared to be a crime; it appears to be a greater crime that a youth should adore his God. Altogether this is a dire accumulation of offence! But the pile is not complete—his name is Montgomery. Here, I am afraid, nothing will wash out the Ethiopian spot. Should he deny, disguise, or withhold his name? Or should he seek more favouring sympathy from some of his anonymous assailants by assuming another? Imitation is an insinuated compliment, and may earn a return.

It is said that some of the gentlemen who have lately attacked him have hitherto been his warmest admirers and friends. They are not their friends who impute to them the breach of friendship. But this I do not believe; little minds were never friendly to great, nor bad writers to good: it is against the nature of things.

It is a curious circumstance, that all the more vio-

lent of Mr. Montgomery's latter critical assailants concur in the confession of envy as their motive. Not less than three or four begin with this reasoning: Here is Mr. Montgomery, a young man suddenly acquiring unusual public favor, when so many talented individuals are suffering the pangs of obscurity; therefore, we hate, we are indignant, &c. &c.; and it comes to this, we must pull him down, *per fas et nefas*. But it is a still more curious circumstance, that Dennis, and the heroes of the Dunciad, admitted the same unworthy motive of envy as the cause of their combined attack on Pope. Here is a similar passage from Dennis*, who had previously affirmed that he attacked the *Essay on Criticism* on account of the 'approbation it met with.'

'I can safely affirm that I never attacked his writings unless they had *success* infinitely beyond their merit. This, though an empty, has been a *popular* scribbler. The *epidemic* madness of the times has given him *reputation*.'

Now Dennis was really a man of talent, and a critic well versed in critical laws, as he has shown in his forcible and just critique on that tame and cold, but elaborate performance, Addison's *Cato*. He therefore sinned against his conscience when he made his justice subservient to his passions in censuring Pope; and notwithstanding his talent, his injustice reacted on himself, and finally crushed him. Another curious circumstance is

* Preface to Dennis's Remarks on Pope's Homer.

that almost all the verbal scurrilities which have been vented on Montgomery by his angry assailants, 'coxcomb, ass, nincompoop,' &c., of which a pretty literary bouquet might be collected, are the same as those which were lavished on Pope, who, among other names, as appears from the preface to the Dunciad, had been called 'a little affected hypocrite, a beast, a wild beast, a monster, a wild Indian, a Jesuit, an ass, a monk, a little ass, a hunch-backed toad,' and a 'crocodile.' His writings are 'insipid,'—'wretched rhapsody,'—'heap of common-place;' his thoughts are 'crude' and 'lame evasions,' his verse 'limping,' and his 'diction obscure,' &c. &c.*

Yet what has been the result of this phrenzied vituperation of bustling littleness? Pope's fame remains unsullied and untouched, while the luckiest of the conspiring calumniators have found shelter in oblivion from the eternal gibbet of their colleagues. '*Oh! in rebus inane!*'

Dismissing these personalities, it is my intention, in the succeeding pages, to show, First, That there is an invariable standard of admitted and long-established critical law, by the test of which all works ought to be tried, and by which the sentences of contemporary reviewers ought to be governed; and, Second, That, tried by such test, Mr. Montgomery must be admitted to belong to a high grade in poetical literature. In order to define and settle this grade, it will be ne-

* Preface to the Dunciad.

cessary to prove the merit of his writings by internal evidence, and by bringing them to the test of comparison with preceding or existing poets. But first, in order to clear the ground, with the above view of definitively marking out his relative poetical position, it will be requisite to subvert or annul the arguments of those critical antagonists to his poetical station, whom, coldly supine, or probably nonexistent at the first promising dawn of his reputation, the light and heat of his progressive rise to the zenith appear to have animated or engendered.

> When first wit's sun too powerful beams displays,
> He draws up vapours which obscure its rays;
> But e'en those clouds at last adorn its way,
> Reflect new glories, and augment the day.

I BELIEVE it may be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that the judgment of criticism on Mr. Montgomery's poems, up to the period of the publication of *Satan*, was all but unanimous. There were some exceptions to that unanimity, in quarters of little weight, after the success of his poems had demonstrated, that public favor concurred with the acclamation of critical distinction. A different fate has attended the publication of *Satan*, which, notwithstanding some few defects, (and what mortal work can be without them ?—for

> Whoever hopes a perfect work to see,
> Hopes what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er can be)—

is superior to the others in the originality and sublimity of its conception, but more especially in the profuse power exhibited in its execution. But the judgments of the critics upon it are diametrically opposed—a suspicious phenomenon, worthy of investigation ; for free as the literary republic is and should be, the whole reading public are interested in preventing the predominance of anarchy.

> When *two authorities* are up,
> *Neither supreme*, how soon *Confusion*
> May enter 'twixt the gap of both!

The *London Literary Gazette* is opposed, on this occasion, to the *Edinburgh Literary Journal;* and

Fraser's Magazine to the *Imperial**. Many others have laboured hard to shew the venomous potency of their criticisms; but it would be mercy to let them rest in oblivion, distinguished as they are for nought but their intrinsic want of preponderance, when weighed against the *all but* uniform decision of the town and provincial press. The warring influences are probably as unequally matched as those which contended on the plains of Illium; but the feeble may, at least, 'show fight' in both cases, incited by the god of poetry on the one side, and the goddess of science and criticism on the other. The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, reviewing *Satan*, says, that

* Among other contrasts I might have opposed the *Edinburgh Literary Gazette* to the *Dublin Literary Gazette*, but without calling into question their relative talents, this would only uselessly enlarge the field of inquiry. It is not for the sake of giving undue importance to *Fraser's Magazine* and the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, that I confine myself in this section of my subject to them, but because, first, they are really the most talented of all Montgomery's assailants; second, they concentrate all the charges which the others bring against him, and thereby save me the trouble, and the reader the irksomeness, of a devious chase after various literary insects, which, after all, it might be deemed unmanly to crush; for—

Who breaks a butterfly upon the wheel?

Again; these two periodicals are appealed to by their friends, with shouts of triumph, as the most able and triumphant of Mr. Montgomery's adversaries—as, in short, settling the question. It is to be hoped that the other minor reviewers and magazine-writers who have attacked him, will be so polite as to permit my marshalling their more light-armed squad of reasonings under these Coriphæi. Of a few, not wishing to speak ill of the *dead*, I shall say nothing. It would be still more cruel to express harshness against some which are even now suffering the pangs, and emitting the death-rattle of departing life; or against others, whose hopelessly *suspended animation* no effort of any *Humane* Society could restore.

Mr. Montgomery's sins are 'vagueness and bombast.' The critic admits that some parts of Mr. Montgomery's poetry are 'decidedly above par;' and that he has, beyond a doubt, a portion of the divine *afflatus;* he extracts some noble passages, 'Byron at Rome,' and the 'Dying Painter;' and he sums up his view by affirming, that Mr. Robert Montgomery is to be 'classed among the *minor aspirants* for poetical reputation,'—a boon imparted, doubtless, as a favor, but conveying, in fact, a terrible sentence: for, as Horace says, neither gods nor men can tolerate poetical mediocrity; and to be classed among

The mob of gentlemen who write with ease,

is a favor which individuals of far less intellectual calibre than Mr. Robert Montgomery, preferring utter obscurity, would (howbeit, good-humouredly and with polite thanks) repel. Such a repudiation would be echoed, I apprehend, by a larger number of well-read and well-judging, though not *scribbling* persons, than the horn-blowers of this age of inflated pretence would give credit for being in existence. The coteries have little knowledge of the limitless worlds of thinking intensity which exist beyond the narrow boundaries of their little twinkling orbits. *Pas même Académicien,* is a self-denying boast, which multitudes of vigilant, but silent, unswayed and unswayable critics would glory in sharing with Piron.

The opinion of the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* has been stated. Hear now the opposite testimony of the

London Literary Gazette—a testimony of undoubted superiority, derived from talent, influence, the experience resulting from a long and prosperous career, and the responsibility adhering to success *.

"To aim at the highest honours of literature and the highest flight of genius, is an attempt in which even to fail would be a proud distinction. But Mr. Montgomery has displayed wonderful powers; and if he has sunk at all, it has been beneath the overwhelming magnitude and sublimity of his subject. Can we doubt that our illustrations will greatly exalt the already high reputation of the youthful author?"

What the nature of that reputation is, in the opinion of the editor, may be seen in the following extract from his review of the *Omnipresence*.

'We have no hesitation in ranking *The Omnipresence of the Deity* in the very highest class of English sacred poesy. It reflects a new lustre on the name of Montgomery; and well deserves the utmost favour, both of religious and poetical readers. He has the soul to attempt, and the capacity to reach, the nobler, the noblest, inspirations of the Muse. On our part,

* The cool judgment, sagacious tact, unpurchaseable truth, and manly force of the *Times*, have been equally enlisted in Mr. Montgomery's favor with the Horatian playfulness and searching keenness of this literary periodical, of which it is but just to add (especially with reference to several years past), that as it never allows political considerations to colour or misdirect its critiques, so the most microscopic eye of jealous scrutiny cannot detect in them a proprietary influence —a great praise, when its great proprietary stake and connexions are considered.

we are free to say, that in this effusion, Mr. Montgomery, yet a very young man, has attained a pitch of excellence far beyond what even his warmest friends could have anticipated within so short a period. It is indeed a magnificent and sublime composition; and if there are still to be detected some of the critical imperfections incident to early years, they are infinitely more than atoned for by the beauty and genius of the whole.'

Proceed we now to the next pair of literary duellists, whose battle is to preserve or snatch away his god-created arms from our new poetical Patroclus, or to descry where the unfitting Achillean panoply may "let in Fate.' *Frazer's Town and Country Magazine*, in the midst of many vague and vaguely-ordered objections, accuses Mr. Montgomery '*of running after, and catching hold of thinly-scattered ideas.*' 'Now,' adds the critic, 'this last is evident in all Mr. Montgomery's writings; and he has come forward a half-educated young man, and one, consequently, but *crudely constructed* in his mind, to speak to us, and instruct us in the high duties enjoined us by our religion—the high themes of revelation, of first sin, of atonement, of redemption, and a future life.'

On the other hand, the *Imperial Magazine*, conducted by an editor not less excellent as a moral writer, than impartial and discriminating as a critic, and moreover, *not anonymous*, says:—

'His (Mr. Montgomery's) *reasonings are clear*

and natural, his feelings impassioned, indignant, and humane; his accusations against Britons more than merited, and his *lines dignified, glowing, and harmonious*. His description of India is full of vigour. Her mountains, capabilities, and the superstitions of her inhabitants, are encircled with wreaths of poetic laurels. Ancient Rome rises before us in hoary grandeur, and the mind is awakened to pensive reflection, on contrasting her former with her present degraded state.'

The editor then quotes lines which he pronounces to be '*majestic*' and '*awful*;' others as marked by '*felicitous composition*;' others as distinguished by '*inimitable pathos*;' and he sums up his analysis with these words:—

'This poem embraces a *vast fund* of materials, which are at once *diversified* and *important*. The sentiments are *bold, masculine, and energetic*. The language is *always harmonious*, frequently *elegant*, and sometimes *sublime*. It is a work which *genius may be proud to own*, and one which will *augment*, rather than diminish, *the author's reputation*.'

Having submitted this extraordinary collision to the reader, I may be permitted to add, that in order not to distract and tire his attention, I have refrained from widening the sphere and deepening the shadows of the contrast, by not bringing the *Omnipresence*, as well as *Satan*, into the arena, and by limiting the tilters to four. After this he will probably agree with

me, that there must be 'something more in this than natural, if philosophy can find it out.' Difficulty of decision on abstruse subjects, or in embryo arts, has been the usual shelter of ordinary minds in ordinary cases from the justly-merited public laugh;

Who shall decide when doctors disagree?

But in a case like criticism, which has settled and recognised laws to refer to—which begins by a *petitio principii*—its superior competency to instruct the instructed, in a nation where the 'schoolmaster' is so conspicuously 'abroad,'—whose essence (or it is a useless impertinence) is a law-supported *unity* of judgment—in such a case, to exhibit so glaring a *disunity*, is, to say the least of it, not very reputable, nor calculated to obtain much public respect.

But men of judgment may take different views, and honourably differ. Granted. It will be readily admitted, that the highest poetical genius is a scarce endowment, and its appearance a rare occurrence:

Like angel visits—few and far between.

It, moreover, addresses itself (and must of necessity, in the first instance) to the superior few—the intellectual minority. Hence the limited chances of discovering the first heliacal emersion of a new poetical star from the lower belt of the vulgar horizon. But the reading public are jealous, and ought to be so, of the visual competency and vigilance of its critical guide. The critic's character implies this competency

and vigilance. The critic should at least have an eye capable of discerning the *real advent*, and rejecting the *spurious avatar*.

Criticism, which spontaneously undertakes, ought not to fail in this duty; since it is provided, as stated, with *unerring laws*, by which to guide its decisions. Should it fail in neglect of, or in opposition to these laws, and be equivocal or contradictory, what is to be inferred, but either that the above laws are rejected through spleen, or neglected through ignorance, or (a worse alternative) that some undue influence is operating on the critic's judgment? Objections, at all events, might be politely made; not only as harshness, flippancy, or insult, naturally produce retorts as harsh, and cause suspicion, but as they betray or excite angry feeling—a feeling totally at variance with the essential property of criticism—calm and unimpassioned judgment:—

> 'Tis not enough your counsel should be *true;*
> Blunt truths more mischief than two falsehoods do;
> Without good breeding truth is disapproved;
> That only makes superior sense beloved.

Besides politeness and good breeding, some of Mr. Montgomery's assailants appear to me wanting in another quality, requisite to the due relishing of his works. The subjects chosen by Mr. Montgomery, as they embrace the highest point of the sublime, so they require a steady elevation, difficult to all but the true poet, and liable to be mistaken by some readers, as well as writers, for inflation. Sympathy with the writer and

his subject are consequently requisite. All the standard writers on criticism, and especially Longinus (on the Sublime, section 7), teach, that in order to relish or appreciate the more elevated beauties of an author, the reader must prepare himself by feeling or awaking this sympathy. Without this prepared feeling, many of Shakspeare's sublimest passages would appear turgid and inflated. Pope says to the same effect—

> A perfect judge will read each work of wit
> In the *same spirit* which the author writ.

And again,

> Nor lose for each *malignant, dull delight,*
> The gen'rous feeling to be pleased with wit.

From the highest reviews, on account of their original sin, an ineradicable political purpose—from the lowest, on account of ignorance or venality—little of just criticism could be expected by common sense. But from the middle class of reviews, appositely placed between the froth and the dregs, the public do expect (and in some splendid instances are not disappointed) the robust virtue and nourishing vigour of independent truth. But when, in a review of this class, an editor possessing so fearfully responsible a name as Mr. Campbell, can, with the *nonchalant* simplicity, or *insouciant* frankness of a matter of course, admit, as he has done lately, that he scarcely dipped into a most important work, to the deceptive (therefore) criticism of which he lends his great name

—that he, moreover, struck out a *just* censure (in *his* view just) in order to *favour a friend;* and that, in doing so, he indirectly contributed (I take his own view still) to back-stab, as it were, under a cloak, the feelings and fame of an excellent and unprotected woman*,—surely the most incredulous of critical deterioration will no longer deny belief to so signal a confession, and admit that there is ‘ something rotten in the state’ of criticism, which calls for the probe or the scalpel—for immediate exposure or excision, in order to restore its wholesomeness, and effect a radical cure! At all events, it is not wonderful that, under such circumstances, criticism—as noble an effort of discriminating taste, as the higher poetry is of creative genius, and of which Pope justly says—

> 'Tis hard to say if greater want of skill
> Appear in *writing*, or in *judging* ill;
> But of the two, *less dangerous* is the offence
> To tire our patience, than *mislead our sense*—

should have fallen latterly into disrepute. One of the results is, that criticism is often wrongfully suspected; and another, commercially more important, has been often pressed upon private conviction, that the large and increasing body of the independent reading public (probably more competent to form a correct opinion than the middle class of periodical critics

* The result has been inconsistently consistent—a wild palinody, which every friend of Mr. Campbell, as well as himself, must wish unwritten.

themselves, since the latter are often compelled to write *invita Minerva*, urged by the claims of duty, or the goads of necessity,) either reject the evidence of critics altogether, or judge of the publications they notice, not by their comments, but by their extracts. Nay, often, as I have reason to know, they refuse to purchase books recommended by this class of critics, merely because they come recommended from a suspected source. Criticism thus defeats itself; it is curtailed of its legitimate influence in befriending merit or repressing pretension. This is a consideration which should 'give us pause.' It is, at all events, worthy the attention of publishers, whose pocket it affects, since the expensive lever to which they have hitherto trusted for moving public opinion, either by elevating their own publications, or depressing those of their rivals which might clash with them, is either powerless at present, or rapidly becoming so. Let them not deceive themselves. The complicated mechanism of this process is now clearly seen by the most uninformed of that large purchasing class to whom I have referred, and with whom it is their especial interest to stand well. There is no argument so cogent as one that addresses itself to the purse; and since publishers will soon be compelled, by the instinct of interest, to change their tack, in trying to catch the gales of public favour, there is good ground for hope, that the evil of modern criticism, its unsteadiness—whether traceable to corruption, care-

lessness, haste, or incompetency—will cure itself. But however this may be, the fact of the deterioration and invalidation of criticism in public esteem can have escaped no one that has mixed in generally intelligent and well-educated society, commercial or otherwise. So extraordinary a discrepancy as that which I have laid before the public is calculated to shake what little relic of popular confidence might remain in so vacillating a guide. Here are two judges having the same uncomplicated and unerring laws to direct them—and the sentence of one is GUILTY; of the other, NOT GUILTY. Nay! one says that the accused is a *criminal*, and deserves death; the other, that he is a *hero*, and deserves a crown. If two judges sitting in juxtaposition, in Westminster Hall, were to give such sentences, what would be said or thought of them? *Solvuntur risu tabulæ.* If two Turkish cadis were to give judgment after this fashion, it would probably be inferred, that one of them had partaken too plentifully of forbidden wine, or too sparingly (to satisfy a cadi's *auri sacra fames*) of equally-forbidden fees. Yet discrepancy on minor points (though not so vital a collision) may well be pardoned to the legal decisions of our courts, since the law is in some cases at variance with itself. But it is not so with criticism. It has no internecine principles. Its laws have been long ascertained; they are few and simple. They have been determined by reason, admitted by common sense *,

* It is commonly thought that this phrase, used with its ordinary

supported by ancient precedent, and established by modern example. It would be pedantic, in a publication of this nature, to refer, in proof of the existence of a perspicuous, precise, and invariable STANDARD OF CRITICISM, to Aristotle or to Longinus, to Quintilian or to Horace; to Bossu or to Boileau; but excuse will not be necessary, while addressing English readers, for appealing to English authorities on this head. Burke forcibly says, while affirming the existence of a settled standard of critical taste, 'It is probable that the standard of *reason*, as well as taste, is the same in all human creatures; for if there were not some principles of *judgment*, as well as of *sentiment*, common to all mankind, no hold could possibly be taken either of their reason or their passions, *sufficient to maintain the ordinary correspondence of life*.'—(Burke on *Taste*, page 1.)

Here he impresses a *most important inference* on the mind, as correlatively dependent on the main argument, namely, that a *defect in the critical judgment*, as to the fitness, proportion, order, and character of the subjects submitted to its discrimination, *would tend to argue a parallel defect, in the moral judgment, as to right and wrong*. The standard, according to him, therefore, is not only fixed and invariable, but the necessity of its canons being so, is of *vital*

signification, is peculiarly English, or at least modern; but Juvenal uses the words "communis sensus" with precisely the same meaning.

and catholic importance to the unlearned, as well as to the learned. Again, Pope has founded his elegant, compact, and highly polished *Essay on Criticism* on the stability and immutability of such a standard. Among others of his terse and perspicuous distichs on this theme, he has the following, which are at once replete with point, and in point.

> Ye, then, whose judgment the right course would steer,
> Know well each ancient's proper *character;*
> His *fable, subject, scope,* in every page—
> Religion, country, genius of his age.
> Without all these at once before your eyes,
> *Cavil* you may, but never *criticise.*
> * * * *
> Learn hence for *ancient rules* a just esteem;
> To copy *Nature* is to copy them.
>
> *Essay on Criticism.*

These rules (*such is the common consent of all our best writers on the subject*) *of nature sanctified by art, must be applied to the* PLOT or FABLE, the CHARACTER or CHARACTERS, the SENTIMENTS, DICTION, and MORAL *of every Poem*.*

Such is the *law* of criticism; the *practice* has been shown. But neither the reader nor myself will be much surprised at the discrepancy caused by the new opponents to Mr. Montgomery's reputation, when I am bold enough, and without fear of contradiction,

* Addison has governed himself rigidly by the laws dependent on this critical standard, in his excellent critique on Milton. Johnson never loses sight of them.

to state, that neither the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, nor *Fraser's Magazine* (which in talent are far superior to the other objectors, and in substance condense all their objections), make the least reference to the authority of those critical laws without which it is morally impossible to arrive at a fair and legitimate judgment. They neither refer to them, nor defer to them; to them it would appear that they are either nonexistent, or effete and obsolete. They may, indeed, have knowingly rejected their authority as too cramping and slavish a yoke for the modern 'march of mind.' But in rejecting these restraints of *art*, it has been shown, on good authority, that they *equally reject the dictates of nature and good sense.* Do I impute critical corruption, or sinister motive, to these gentlemen, as a means of accounting for what must be pronounced, according to the foregoing premises, *at least*, an obliquity of judgment? Far from it. Criticism has become *corrupted;* it has either abdicated or obliterated its first principles; and these critics merely float with the corrupted stream. They hold a brief; their brief was to condemn; and they proceed to do so in the modern dashing, *off-hand* style, *i. e.* a few general censures, *ex cathedrâ*—a few reasons like those ungallantly called women's—I dislike because I dislike—'*stet pro ratione voluntas*'—a few quotations of passages, pronounced bad on the critic's *ipse dixit;* and a few (often melancholy) jokes. I have looked carefully into the materials of these reviews;

argument and logic were not, perhaps, to be expected, nor are they found; but they scarcely contain a single reason, or process of reasoning; they contain a few bald opinions, but unsupported by authority, and without reference to a single critical principle. Surprising as this may seem, it is probable, that if readers would be at the pains to analyse them, nine hundred and ninety-nine, out of every thousand critiques, would be found to be 'got up' in the same slovenly or delusive manner. It may be replied, that it was not the intention of the writers to produce a formal critique, which *would not* be read, but to write an amusing paper, which *would*. Then let such papers be avowed as humorous essays; let them appear as *ironical philippics* against personal adversaries, and not foisted on the public as *cautious judgments* on *elaborate or popular works*, with a view to direct its judgment (*a calm, unimpassioned quality*) in the purchase or non-purchase of such works. This is not fair either towards the public, the author, or the publisher, whose property being embarked, may consider that which is *fun* to the 'off-hand cutters up,' as *death* to him. A light, witty, and humorous essay is, undoubtedly, a good thing in its place, and will as undoubtedly contribute to sell the magazine or periodical in which it may appear, better than a dry critique, according to rule. This is the 'cause effective,' probably, why we are treated occasionally—in the midst of a more sober banquet, with the *entremets* and *hors*

d'œuvres of what are termed '*quizzical cuttings up*,' or '*funny damnations* of books.' These things raise a laugh—perhaps the wind; but it is questionable whether they always effect one meditated result, that of depressing the wares of a rival publisher; and much more questionable, whether they raise the ultimately *profitable* character of the critical periodical in which they appear. On the contrary, pure, uncolored, and just criticism has been found by experience, in works of the most opposite political principles, to 'pay best' by raising that respected character which brings custom and profit. *Honesty* in this, as in other affairs, (to use one of the *self-betraying* proverbs of *mercantile atheism*) is the best *policy* *. At all events, since the prejudgment and laughing down of some obnoxious wight is not criticism—since there is no necessity that the jokes should 'waste their perfume' on a desert, being readily collected into an essay, or re-absorbed, as a reserve for future occasion, into the writer's common-place book—since the said obnoxious wight could be shortly and easily dismissed as guilty (if guilty), according to critical law, and the book purchaser warned against the delinquent, without being 'mystified,'—the whole is a work of superero-

* This proverbial 'fallacy' means—Be just in your dealings, not for the sake of God, nor of honor, nor of virtue; but of interest. Be just—which the law, by the way, *compels your fear* to be—in order to turn your neighbour to *profit* by a tricky *show of character*. A bitter satire!

gation. It is worse; it is an abnegation of the critical character, for which the cheap and easy laugh, provoked by ridicule, is a poor compensation; of which laugh, Juvenal, with the laugh on his side, retortingly says,

> Facilis rigidi cuivis censura cachinni—

and Pope, with murderously contemptuous spirit,—

> All fools have still an *itching* to deride,
> And fain would be upon the laughing side!

The wit and humour of this modern school of critique in the inventors* no one will be so splenetic as to deny; few forbear laughing with the laugher. The flagellated may even deserve the flagellation; but that does not absolve the flagellator from the charge of using unlawful instruments. The worst of these quizzing 'cuttings up' is, that they produce numerous imitations, which are, almost without exception, bad; the *servum pecus* retaining the spiteful will to pollute, but emasculating and impotentializing the jokes. So

* The invention belongs decidedly to the most powerful, most witty, and, generally speaking, with some marked and selected exceptions, most just in its literary critiques of all the magazines, *Blackwood's*. This is a tribute of truth I have uniformly paid it,—again contrary to my interests,—though differing with the politics of its conductors. It contains the real and substantial stuff of mind, whether serious or humorous. Having pointed out the fountain evil, the 'fons malorum' of modern criticism, the reader will, I hope, excuse my *pressing* the fact of my own disinterested impartiality, in the character of a literary juryman, on his notice.

'Let the galled jade wince: my withers are unwrung.'

things go on 'from bad to worse.' Meanwhile, criticism becomes as totally divested of principles and rules as if they were not its only constituent and vital elements—its *esse* and its *posse;* and the critic, satisfied with the 'opima spolia' of his buffoonery, laughter, and pay, is willing to let fun pass for criticism, though he cannot but know that he is neglecting his most sacred duties to his employer, to the author, to the public—even to himself—for, 'in these cases, we still have judgment here,'—by not judging and sentencing according to law.

It may, indeed, be doubted, whether ridicule of a more uncontaminated character ought to be introduced into criticism. But that would exclude, will be said, the seasoning, the sauce piquante of the repast. *Benissimo.* Criticism might be less palatable without it, but more wholesome. The question has been mooted—is ridicule the test of truth? The doubt rests on broader shoulders than mine. '*Non meus hic sermo.*' Warburton and Johnson, and other great authorities, pronounce against it; Akenside, in consequence of the objections of the first, recantingly excluded it from the domains of taste: the argument used by Johnson is cogent, striking, and (for him, unusually) *brief.*

'If *ridicule* be applied to any position as the *test of truth,* it will next become a question whether *such ridicule be just.* And this can only be decided by the

application of truth as the *test of ridicule.'—Johnson's Life of Akenside.*

But, waiving this question as one still unsettled, let us see how the very doubts growing out of it bear on the present case.

If just objections may be raised against the admission of ridicule into legitimate criticism, what ought to be said to the coarsest and vulgarest description of buffoonery? what, if the language in which it is conveyed be not even English? what, if such *cheap* pollution be directed against a thrice-proved and highly popular author? what, if the evil passions be delusively obtruded on the indolent world as criticism? in other words, as the quintessential *refinement of the unimpassioned, practised, and educated judgment?*

Fraser's Magazine begins its strictures on Mr. Robert Montgomery's poem of Satan in the following terms:—

'We have been *bothered* and stunned with the *braying* of Arcadian *nightingales,*' (*braying* of *nightingales!!!*—why should any delicacy of congenial *sympathy* restrain a writer from mentioning the name of the animal that does *bray?*) 'in praise of the sacred poetry of young Montgomery. It *may all be very fine, we dare say* (*!!*)—*only* the beauties are not manifest to our opaque vision *.

* May not this arise from a similar cause to that which renders the planet Mercury invisible to vulgar vision—*its proximity to the Solar god?*

That *youthful* gentleman commenced his literary career by writing a satire against all the world, in *language* by no means *smacking* of the most elevated standard (!!).'

Now, let me ask the public whether this is criticism? Nay, let me ask the critic. No doubt he repents of it. *Erubuit; salva res est.* Repentance saves; but, in the opinion of discerning men, he will not escape so readily; *they* will, I fear, pronounce his pretended criticism to be sheer blackguardism, conveyed in the most depraved and depraving gipsy slang—not language. *I*—who know the influence of imitation, and being a little behind the curtain, am aware that men of talent, taking departments in the periodicals, are often set down to alien tasks, enough to 'cast the gorge at;'—I, therefore, take a milder view, and, mitigating censure by a term of Rousseau's, call it *literary polisonnerie.* Whatever it may be, it is not judgment, it is not taste, it is not analysis, it is not discrimination; in a word, it is not criticism, which ought to combine all these.

From this uncouth exordium the critic proceeds to make other objections, chiefly in the same personal style. He first charges Mr. Montgomery with the *crime* of youth. To have proved him old would have done him more disservice. But the fault, such as it is, as the great Chatham once replied to a parliamentary antagonist, is every day diminishing;

and passing over the bitter and crushing rejoinder of his great son to an uncelebrated hoary-headed objector of the same offence, let us quietly inquire if the youth of the poet (admitting it, for the present, to be an offence) be anything more than the most common occurrence;—especially as this critic makes three additional counts in his indictment, with reference to this single illegality, such as 'youthful champion,' 'young gentleman,' 'mere stripling,' &c. &c. Premising that if Mr. Montgomery possess sterling merit (and far the great majority of the public has given this verdict), youth makes the merit more meritorious, as more extraordinary,—what is the fact? That all poets of the least mark have published as early or earlier than Mr. Montgomery. Milton, Pope, Cowley, Akenside, Dryden, among numerous others, did so. But not, it may be rejoined, their best works. With the exception of Milton, who did not (probably?) begin to compose his *Paradise Lost* till late in life, the rest produced works equal to any which they published afterwards, in early youth; many before the age at which Mr. Montgomery first came before the public. Pope's *Thebais* appeared when he *was fourteen!!* his *Ode on Solitude* at *twelve! Windsor Forest was produced at fourteen!! Akenside published his Pleasures of Imagination at twenty-three!* Dryden first published at *nineteen.* Many of Cowley's best works *were published in his childhood!!*

Even Milton published at *fifteen* his first *religious poetry!* and although that was below his after reputation, yet at *twenty-five* he published his *Masque of Comus,* in which, Johnson says, 'may be discovered the dawn of *Paradise Lost.*' Milton had then formed that system of diction and mode of verse which his maturer judgment approved, and from which he never deviated. 'A work more truly poetical is rarely found *.'

The critic of *Fraser's Magazine* next says, that the *Age Reviewed* was published by Mr. Montgomery in imitation of and with the same spirit as Lord Byron's *English Bards.* Lord Byron, however, he adds, had a *just* motive (and I agree with him), viz. to extort denied justice and to punish triumphant wrong. Mr. Montgomery had no such *vindictive* motive. But, as all men have, he must have had some motive. What was it then? The scornful indignation of an uncorrupt youthful mind against *real* or *believed* folly, vice, and crime. '*Facit indignatio versum.*' Who does not see that the accuser here crowns the accused, and prefers him over the head of the individual he champions, for whom he can find no better defence than the stimulus of revenge, however just? He contrasts the two bards, and then asks Mr. Montgomery if his conduct is christianlike? Revenge *is not* christianlike; the *contrast* to it *is.* Repentance, too, is christianlike; yet the critic *accuses* Mr. Montgomery

* Johnson's Milton.

of *repenting*, after better knowledge, of some of his attacks, and of being friendly with the attacked. He passes over, however, the fact that the critic's defunct great client, Lord Byron, did the same ; and that the noble bard's palinody was more extraordinary than literature ever witnessed ; those whom he most gashed with his scorn, or withered with his ridicule, becoming his dearest bosom friends. I can only conclude with Shakspeare—

> Who with repentance is not satisfied,
> Is not of heaven nor earth.—*Winter's Tale.*

As to the *relative merits* of the two works, especially if we are to consider the *Puffiad* (*more* Juvenalis) as the literary chapter of the *Age Reviewed*, the latter appears to me superior to the *English Bards*. Equally imprudent * and unjust in the wide sweep and uninquiring severity of many of its censures on literary men, the *Age Reviewed* is, undoubtedly, more ragged in its outline, more imperfect in its filling up ; but, in the denouncing intensity and fiery energy of the sentiments which gild its somewhat dislocated fragments, and in the '*eloquium canorum*' of its full-toned and flowing versification, it bears away the palm. It is now before me, and, on repeated perusals, I retain the opinion I first expressed, that it is a 'most extraordinary work'—marked by a fresh energy and

* It will be seen that I qualified my approbation in the criticisms on the *Age Reviewed*, which I wrote in the *Sunday Times* and *British Traveller*, by a similar censure.

'astounding power of satire.' It is not requisite to come direct from the perusal of Juvenal to pronounce what no one of the least practice in ordinary reading will deny, especially if it be brought to compare with the putrid and nauseous drainings of little minds, oozed hourly from some of the publishing common-sewers—that it contains all the glowing, though immature and latent, elements of a great future genius.

Proceeding with his attack on the man and not his work, the critic, to the offence of youth, adds one which youth generally excuses—vanity. Mr. Montgomery's portrait is annexed to one of his works. Is this so inexcusable? The highest and the lowest have done the same—Lord Byron and Ude. But the portrait is flattering. Has not the critic (at a later period perhaps than twenty-one) given a flattered miniature of himself to his mistress? and who has not done so? and shall we not good-humouredly indulge a little fault of this kind to a young poet courted by the favor of that most unstable of coquettes, the public, to the amount of ten editions and an oratorio? But, in fact, the fault is not his. The fault or crime is that of Sir T. Lawrence, or of portrait painting generally. It thirsts for excitement in gesture and sentiment; and this characteristic is become so common, that even his sexagenarian Grace of Wellington is gracefully exhibited in this manner (with naked throat, &c.), ruminating sentimentally, at midnight, on tender or painful reminiscences of his capricious mistress—the commonweal.

But enough of these trifles. As Democritus, on arriving at the end of a bad book, rejoicingly cried, 'Land!' so may we rejoice, after beating about in the midst of this stormy puddle of petty personality, to catch a glimpse of criticism. This criticism consists of two quibbles as to the sentiments of the poem, and one as to the diction; the 'reasons are as *three* grains of wheat hid in a bushel of chaff;' and this is the sum and substance—(will the world credit it, without ocular inspection?)—the sum and substance of an article in a periodical, otherwise of eminent talent, professing to be a critique on *Satan*. Cobbett may well call this the age of tinsel and hollow pretence!

But, in order to be just to this writer, whom I perhaps too mildly accuse of *injustice*, let us see what are these objections, the paucity of which alone constitute a great compliment, and the frivolity of which, if shown, a still greater. The first objection is as to the earth being 'queen of the universe.' Poetry has before called it so, and to think so still, *liceat poetis*. It is the creed of the bible. Need more be said? Klopstock has made the earth so in that immortal poem, the *Messiah*, the enthusiastic fervency and devotional excitation of which have earned for him the title of the German Isaiah. But even the cobweb pedantry of the objection, as applied to poetry, may be resolved into its dusty nothingness by a few words. The discoveries of Herschel, Lalande, and astronomers later than the infidel speculations of Voltaire, imply thus

much of a 'queenlike' superiority in the earth; that, however much larger the other planets may be, they are *not habitable by any living competency of life with which we are acquainted.* To be habitable, by thinking and immortal beings, must philosophically constitute the earth's planetary superiority. The other objection as to *sentiment* is scarcely worth noticing. It is a charge of plagiarism from Mr. Moore, which charge is met by Mr. Robert Montgomery himself, who refers to the passage from the great modern lyrist in his notes.

> He thrones *a* winter on his awful brow,
> And lays *the* summer laughing at his feet.

The critic's allegation of a defect in the personifying antithesis, depends on the epithet *laughing*, which may be used impersonally for sunny, as Pope's 'laughing skies.' If, however, the passage were intended to imply a personated contrast, Mr. R. Montgomery may have had in view the Tartar custom of placing statues on the heads of others; or the Chinese, of sculpturing gigantic deities from the tops of mountains, their hair being forests, and their eyes caves*. The antithesis of such a frowning, wintry giant, to the laughing infant, Summer, at the foot of Ararat, would, in this case, be not only accurate in metaphor, but highly beautiful in local association. Come we next to the objections as to *diction*.

* Kircher's *China Illustrata*. He mentions the giant features of one which may be seen for many leagues in the plains of Tonking;—an instance of the *sublime in art* worthy of note by the Rev. Mr. Bowles.

I class them, according to legitimate critical rule, under the heads of sentiment and diction, though the vague manner in which all are jumbled with the bits of personality and dabs of joke, demonstrate that the writer had a 'great disdain' for any such old-fashioned restrictions on the march of criticism. But objections to diction are critical, and therefore deserve examination. The writer selects certain passages, and throws them into a prose form; arguing, in half a column of unnecessary verbiage, that true poetry will bear the test. It is at once admitted. More, indeed, might be admitted; true poetry may be written in a prose form (*i. e.*) without metre. Of this, Gesner's *Idylls*, and Klopstock's *Messiah*, are obvious proofs; but Bishop Lowth has proved that Hebrew poetry was as much unshackled by metre as by rhyme, depending on comparison, parallelism, antithesis, and climax of ideas, not words. Without reference to the notorious fact that Pitt scanned with his fingers, as he spoke, large portions of his speeches, as well as those of Burke and Canning, are the noblest poetry. The plea is, therefore, readily admitted, and 'thereupon issue' may be readily 'joined.' The following is the passage, as quoted by the author; it is not, of course, the best in the work; but mark how well it bears the ordeal. Italics, and notes of question and admiration, are the critical Fire King's *pseudo* ploughshares.

'*The night hath drowsed*, the revelry is o'er, and Nature wooes me. A dawn, like a shining sea, ad-

vances through the orient heavens. *Enormous fantasies of waking light, as foam from a volcano's fiery lips, now welter forth around in rich transcendency of beams (!!!)* For, lo! the surfaced moon, arranged in clouds of crimson bloom, comes gliding o'er the waves that billow dancingly to wear her smile (!!) and veils the world with glory. *Rocks and hills salute her with magnificence (!!!)* With their greenest pomp the woods and plains are mantled, and night-tears glisten in her rosy beams (?)'

The real passage, *misquoted* and perverted in the second line, stands thus in that cogent answer to modern Zoiluses, an early second edition. The critic will see that he has been fighting, like Don Quixote, with windmill giants; or rather, like Tom Thumb, 'He makes the giants first, and then he kills them.'

> The night hath drowsed, the revelry is o'er,
> And Nature woos me. Through the orient heaven
> A dawn advances, like a shining sea;
> Around in rich transcendency of beams,
> Enormous fantasies of waking light,
> As foam'd from a volcano's fiery lips,—
> Now welter forth, then wanton, and dissolve;
> For lo! array'd in clouds of crimson bloom,
> The sun-faced Morn comes gliding o'er the waves,
> That billow dancingly to wear her smile,
> And veils the world with glory! Rocks and hills
> Salute her with magnificence; the woods
> And plains are mantled with their greenest pomp,
> And night-tears glisten in her rosy beam.

Here, with the exception of 'drowsed,' which is a phrase of Shakspeare's—

> 'Good things of day begin to *drowse*,'

any one may see that the corrected *errata* get rid of many of the critic's quicksilver objections, which are luckily fixed by his italics, or might otherwise evade the finger. The sun-faced *morn*, '*arrayed* in clouds of *crimson bloom*,' is very different from the *surfaced* MOON, *arranged*, &c. Homer's Aurora, *awaking* on the bed of Tithonus, and, with *rosy* fingers, unbarring the gates of light, may be sun-faced *, may be attended by 'crimson clouds,' and may have '*rosy beams*.' The 'weltering forth of light' is a strong phrase, and, though original, justifiable by light's wavy transmission, even according to philosophical theory and experiment: the phrase, 'enormous *fantasies* of *waking* light,' is also strong; but no one who has watched the gradual outbreaking of a fine summer morning from the sea, in long diverging and coruscating ribands of light, fluctuating like (but with far less velocity, and therefore flowing or *weltering*) the radii of an aurora borealis, can avoid being struck with the novel force, as well as graphic propriety, of the whole image. Here follows the remainder of the passage according to the critic's italicised version. 'But in yon valleys, where from bosomed (?) cots, like burning incense, wreathy smoke ascends, how beautiful the flush of life! The birds are winged for heaven, and *steep the*

* 'His *face* was like the *sun—shining in its strength*.'—Revelations. 'Black Memnon,' the Son of Tithonus and Aurora, whose statue welcomed the sun's rise in Egypt with its mystic basalt lyre, was 'sun-faced.' The head of the extant statue, vulgarly termed Memnon (see Denon), is that of *Leo* surmounted by the solar disk —hieroglyphically implying 'the sun shining in its strength.'

air in song (?): while, in the gladness (?) of the new-born breeze, the young leaves flutter; and the flowerets *shake their innocence* (!) and bloom.' The first objection is to the word 'bosom'd'—'bosom'd cots;' the honor of the blame is shared with Milton.

Bosom'd high in tufted trees.

Again—

The birds are winged for heaven,
And *steep the air in song.*

The critic objects to the latter forcible image: which, *meo periculo*, be it said, is one of great beauty. The 'flow of song' is proverbial. Nothing can be more common than the poetical use of this phrase. How often has the *flow of song* been compared to that of rivers? * Darwin has the strong expression of 'melodious tears:' this is a *conceit;* but to 'steep in song,' when it is one of the *commonplaces* of poetry to term song a '*liquid flow*,' may assuredly be licensed. Shakspeare speaks of *tears drowning* the *wind*, which, despite his great authority, is undoubted fustian. Again—

The young leaves flutter, and the flowrets *shake*
Their innocence and bloom.

The objection here possesses weight. The phrase, though an Hebraism, expressing a quality for a thing, is objectionably strong; but Milton uses a stronger

* Denham's most beautiful passage is the much-quoted comparison of his song to the flowing of the Thames. But Campbell uses a more analogous phrase:

And *steep thy song* in mercy's mellow stream.—*Pleasures of Hope.*

Hebraism, since he couples a qualifying adjective with the objectionable substantive, as if Mr. Montgomery had said of the flowrets, their *blue* or *roseate* innocence

bowed
His GREY *dissimulation.*

Here dissimulation is put by metonymy for hair; Montgomery uses innocence for flower-buds; and Shakspeare uses an analogous phrase nearly in Mr. Montgomery's sense—'wears a golden *sorrow;*' sorrow, by metonymy, for *crown.*

The next passage which the critic censures, not by giving reasons, but by the cheaper method of directing the compositor to use italics (one step towards a modern art of criticism by steam,) is the following:—

'And ye bright streams! ye woodland vagrants, *humming* to the wind *in vinelike flexure!!!!!!* how ye rove along by mead and bank, where violets love to dwell in solitude and stillness: All is fresh and gaysome! now the peasant, with an eye bright as the noon-ray sparkling through a shower, comes forth and carols in thy warming beam, *thou sky-god, throned in all thy wealth of light; sure airy painters have enriched thy sphere with regal pageantry; such cloudy pomps adorn the heavens, a poet's eye would dream his ancient gods had all returned again, and hung their palaces around the sun!!!!!!*'

I object to the phrase '*vinelike* flexure,' not because it does not paint the sinuous divergency of a

rivulet, but because it does not paint another of its equally visible properties in such a landscape as described; its gleaming darkness and intermittent glitter, as it winds through the 'woodland *;' and because the comparison to a vine does not, with sufficient contrast, dissociate the image of one tree, used metaphorically, from the other trees, used pictorially, amidst which it *hums* or murmurs over its pebbly bed. With this exception the passage is beautiful, and will not only bear the trivial test to which it is submitted, but comparison with any descriptive passage of a similar object, and of similar length in any modern poet. The last passage is a magnificent picture of a gorgeous sunrise, expressed in language of equal majesty and pomp. It is replete with vivid feeling and affluent power.

> Thou sky-god! throned in all thy wealth of light;
> Sure airy painters have enrich'd thy sphere
> With regal pageantry; such cloudy pomps
> Adorn the heavens, a poet's eye would dream
> His ancient gods had all return'd again,
> And hung their palaces around the sun!

My task is now to review another reviewer, and criticise another critic, before I proceed to a brief analysis of Mr. Montgomery's works. I couple the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* with *Fraser's Magazine*, Firstly, because the former boasts an association of

* Rogers more accurately portrays the above image—

> Save when a *bright and momentary gleam*
> Glanced from the *white foam* of some *shelter'd* stream.
> *Pleasures of Memory.*

opinion with the latter; and Secondly, because both do the char-work of modern criticism precisely on the same slatternly model. They are, in fact,

Arcades ambo
Pares cantare parati.

The editor of the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* commences his philippic with the inexorable decision of a Brennus, throwing his sword into the scale, and pronouncing '*Væ victis!*'

'The time has but very recently gone by since we existed in a *sorely exasperated state against* R. Montgomery. The chief cause of our rage was, that he had been most extravagantly and boisterously puffed by a small junta of his friends; and *to see people*, by a sudden *coup de théâtre*, attempt to place an individual, high and dry, beyond those waves of criticism which are continually fretting and dashing against *much better men*, invariably *puts us into a passion*. Had we written of Montgomery (not *James*, recollect, but *Robert*) in the first impetuousity of *our choleric mood*, we should certainly have *flayed him alive*, and sent him forth into the world in a *very raw* and pitiable condition. But, according to the advice of all sages, we have taken time to *count a hundred*, and to *swallow a tumbler of cold water*, since *our* anger first began *to boil!!!*'

Is this criticism? the writer of it would not pretend that it is, and would probably thrust out his tongue in the *knowing* style of the *chaffing cribs*, if charged with

it. It is, in fact, a confession of prejudice, envy, and partiality—an admission, that as *a juryman he ought to be challenged and excluded from* decision—a virtual abdication of the critical judgment-seat, while he preserves the form of sitting there. Let us see, however, with what kind of evidence he endeavours to vindicate a feeling so obnoxious to the public, and so derogatory to a judge, as avowed *malice prepense* and prejudice. The reasoning (if reasoning may be libelled by calling this so) is the *crambe repetita* of *Fraser's Magazine*—'Mr. Montgomery is a *young man* not yet four-and-twenty.'

'What does Mr. Montgomery know of the Omnipresence of the Deity, or of Death, or of Satan, more than any young man whom we may meet with every day of our lives at a pleasant evening party, in *white kid gloves* and *dancing-pumps?*' (!!!)

'*Young* man,' '*young* author,' 'hate to see *boys and striplings*,' &c. &c., constitute the cuckoo note repeated through three columns. Having answered whatever there may be in the argument of youth before, I now again notice it, to demonstrate 'of what proper stuff' our modern critiques are made. How can one to reply to such man-milliner twaddle, in which the whole of the wit (*eheu! quam facetus!*) may be reduced to 'pumps' and 'white kid gloves?' to 'hand and glove' knowledge, to

> Haberdashery and such small wares?
>
> *Hudibras.*

Or to the 'Finish' and oyster-room wit, of a 'cup of

cold water,' and a 'bottle of mulled port.' What follows is more 'germane to the matter.' 'Pollok dedicated all the years of his allotted time to the one great object,' &c. It is true, that Pollok, who deserves a higher title than the 'remote imitator of Milton,' produced a single work, to which he devoted a life; but what then? Must other authors be confined within the iron-railway limits of Pollok's track? But Milton did not require that long training which this writer vaguely and in swollen phraseology intimates, nor was his lion-like genius confined to a single offspring. Johnson, as we have seen, shows that the *Masque of Comus*, produced at a similar time of life to that of Robert Montgomery, was as perfect a poem in structure, diction, character, and sentiment, as the *Paradise Lost*, although on a less extended scale. Neither was Milton, more than Mr. Montgomery, the inventor of his own theology or theogony.

The writer mistakes or misstates as to Pollok being 'solitary' in childhood, youth, and manhood. He lived amidst the domestic endearments and engrossing cares of a family: whereas, that early solitariness, that 'life exempt from public haunt,' thus considered necessary to educate a poet for great things, I have reason to know, was the precise predicament in which Mr. Montgomery was placed, and in which he had an opportunity to find

> Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

Beattie's *Edwin* could not have been more alone. He *was*, indeed, what Pollok was *not*—a 'solitary child'—a 'youth that mused among the hills,'—feeding his imagination apart from his fellow-men.' The writer appears to be kindled by this mistake in poetical 'breeding,' into a display of 'easy writing,' which, to say the truth, is what Aristophanes calls prose on horseback; *Anglice*, stilted. It will not bear a rough analysis. Readers and writers are not on fair terms when the latter

> Write with ease to show their breeding;
> For easy writing's d—d hard reading.

The drift of this display, stripped of its May-day finery, is, that it is quite out of nature for young men to succeed in treating of religious themes of such difficulty and sublime devotion. Angels who soar so high 'veil their heads;' and, therefore, authors who attempt such forbidden flights are guilty of what, gentle reader? of presumptuously using the waxen pinions of the ambitious Icarus? or the failing Pegasean wing of the equally ambitious Bellerophon? No! powers of critical bathos! guilty of a 'claptrap!'

From this *curiosa felicitas* the critic hurries with breathless haste to *contradict the tenor of the preceding passage and himself.* He now argues that such subjects are so temptingly easy, (the splendour of biblical themes and their *inherent poetry* helping out the *poetical defects* of the bardlings), that it has recently 'become fashionable, among persons of

pretty fair abilities, to turn it to account,' and to trust to obtaining a *borrowed lustre*, not from their *own merits*, but the *sublime sacredness* of their themes.

A writer thus at war with himself may be safely left to fight out the battle. Mr. Montgomery may say of him, as Cicero said of Anthony, 'Homo *disertus non* tantum *mecum* quam *secum ipse* tota oratione pugnabat.'

Dr. Johnson's * opinion is, that it is very difficult to write successfully on biblical or sacred themes, for the very reason that the critic before us thinks it very easy; *viz.* that such themes 'can only be new versions of what has been said before to better purpose.' So much the greater merit in Mr. Montgomery to conquer this inherent difficulty! So much the more *vivida vis* in the creative energy of the poetic genius which can electrify non-conductors—subdue the resisting stubbornness of incoalescing materials, and fuse and mould them into shapes, imparting pleasure, extorting sympathy, and kindling admiration!

The critic next, from inflation and contradiction, proceeds in good earnest to critical business, and, like his compeer, appears to plume himself on striking a deadly blow, by putting some of Mr. Robert Montgo-

* Johnson, speaking of the noblest of Young's sacred poems, says, that 'the great reason why the reader is disappointed, is, that the thought of the Last Day makes every man more than poetical, by spreading over his mind a general obscurity of sacred horror, that oppresses distinction and disdains expression.' He draws a similar inference as to difficulty in such subjects, in his critique on Cowley's translation of the Psalms, and on his '*Davideis*.'

mery's blank verse into a prose form. Little need be added on this head. The quoted passage, in this instance, concerns Napoleon; and, though far from being one of the most striking passages in the book, is picturesque and clever: moreover, in the portion dully or consciously *left out* by the critic, forcible and exciting. The denunciation of Napoleon's apostacy from liberty, as arresting the destinies of the world, and providing future reactions by the agony which it left on godlike spirits—

> An agony too deep for words
> To fathom: too sublime for slaves to feel—

is not strictly new; but it impinges on a leading sensitive nerve in the present mechanism of social mind, and displays the instinctive tact, the thoughtful depth and long-foreseeing sagacity of genius.

Only one column is now left by the *Literary Journalist* for real criticism, namely, objections as to *character*, *sentiment*, and *diction*. I have taken the liberty of thus classing these objections according to critical form (as in the case of *Fraser's Magazine*), by picking them out of the chaotic heap of personal rubbish in which they are imbedded. The character of the fallen Archangel, as conceived by Mr. Montgomery, has been stated. He defines it himself in his poetical preface*. It is his own, and a new creation. Whether, as I and others think, that creation be dis-

* See the three stanzas, *Satan*, page 11, beginning "Such a wanderer o'er the earth.' See also the passage, *Satan*, 1st Book, p. 99, 'Even I,' &c.; 'Oh vengeance,' Book ii. p. 134, and many others.

tinguished by elaborate metaphysical inference or not, he had full poetical licence to construct and control the offspring of his own mind. There are only certain questions left for the critic. Are the ends proportioned to the means? Are the sentiment and action true to the conceived character? Is the character consistent with itself:—

> In every work regard the *writer's end*,
> Since none can compass more than they intend;
> And if the *means be just*, the *conduct true*,
> *Applause*, in spite of *trivial faults*, is *due*.—POPE.

The *Edinburgh Literary Journalist*, mistaking or misstating the character of Mr. Montgomery's Satan, and erecting another Satanic character as his guide, chooses that his Paracelsian* phantom should, gratuitously, and despite of Satan's serpent wisdom, *lie to himself;* and he asserts that it 'shows great want of discrimination and judgment,' to make Satan confessing 'that he is challenged to admire a man of virtue,' and admitting to himself—that which he must know to the multiplication of his own pangs,—that his REAL ADVERSARIES are not often perceived by the world—that

> The obscure on Earth are oft the fam'd in Heaven.

Has the objector forgot that the 'devils believe,' and that Milton's Satan admits that he admires, though he cannot imitate † virtue? All this cavilling

* The Alchemist Paracelsus left a recipe for *manufacturing* a living being.

† *Paradise Regained*, (setting aside Satan's "tears" of bitter regret,

is a mistake resulting from a false appreciation of 'Satan's' character, the pathos, remorse, and self-punishment of which can only be fully developed by making him vividly susceptible to that beauty from which he is divorced, and discriminatingly just in his estimate of that virtue from which he has fallen *. A

"such as Angels weep," in *Paradise Lost*), ascribes these sentiments to Satan—

Though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
To be beloved of God, I have not lost
To love, *at least contemplate and admire*
What I see *excellent in good or fair, or virtuous.*

In fact, Milton represents even the subordinate angels as not intellectually fallen, though morally degraded—a grand philosophical hypothesis. The fallen angels, in the following passage, would seem prophetically to represent the present age of ambitious, inquiring discovery, philosophical speculation, puzzling idealism, mental excitement and refinement, and moral deterioration; their poetry and music are still beautiful.

Others more mild
Retreated in a silent valley, sung
Of themes angelical to many a harp, &c. &c.
See Paradise Lost, 2nd Book.

* Shakspeare's view is equally philosophical.

Ah no! the *apprehension of the good*
Gives but the *deeper feeling to the worse.*

So is that of Rogers in his *Columbus*, who thus describes the appearance of the Evil Spirits:—

Forms of *angelic mould* and *grace divine;*
Yet of their glory many a scatter'd ray
Shot thro' the gathering shadows of decay;
Each *moved a god.*

And he says of their feelings, with theoretic truth and poetic pathos:

All exiled the realms of rest,
In vain the sadness of their souls suppress'd.

being partly, or utterly, *brutified* by evil, could *feel little* or *nothing*.

But it is fair to the critic to let him say all he can say on the subject of the *character* which his ideas, still vague, jumble with the *conduct* of the poem. As to that conduct, with its slight plot and action, the subject may be briefly dismissed here, by saying, that *Satan* is a monologue, as *Paradise Regained* is a dialogue, and that the action resembles that of *Childe Harold*.

The *Literary Journalist* terms the poem an 'unbroken soliloquy, in the course of which he (Satan) speaks of the changes that have taken place in empires, indulges in a good many hits at crowned heads, says a few words of Napoleon, then descants on India, America, the slave-trade, Europe and its different countries; then moralizes (rather odd, is it not, that Satan should *moralize*?) on man, his nature, and crimes; delicately touches on the tender subject of original sin, and the introduction of Christianity; falls into a pathetic mode of thinking concerning war and its miseries; gives a great deal of good advice to England, especially suggesting to her not to be so fond of money as she seems to be; visits London, and looks into her palaces, her senate, her ball-rooms, theatres, academies, &c.; and, in conclusion, leaves the full conviction on the mind of the reader, that Satan is, on the whole, a very respectable person, who has been rather harshly treated.'

Against this series of mistakes, all originating in a careless or distorted estimate of the poet's character of Satan, I cannot do better, as the subject has been already sufficiently sifted, than oppose the fair and dispassionate appreciation of another critic in the *Imperial Magazine.* He ably touches the key-note, and seizes the elucidating clue to the perspicuous unity of the poem.

'There can be no question, that his infernal majesty may be exhibited in a great variety of attitudes. Cloven feet, a long tail, and a frightful pair of horns, are not essential to the fidelity of representation. He may transform himself into an angel of light, visit the pulpit, the senate, or the bar, or admire the paintings at Somerset-house, without displaying those terrific appendages to which fanciful superstition has given a monstrous birth. There are not many positions in which he can be placed, that will be wholly inconsistent with his real character. Satan is the only personage who either meditates or speaks. It (the poem) is a long soliloquy, which proceeds from beginning to end, without any interruption, containing observations on historical incidents, on passing occurrences, and on events which are as yet embosomed in futurity. To the dark workings of the infernal mind, no one is presumed to be privy; the poet has therefore a fair opportunity of representing Satan under the influence of feelings, and as uttering expressions, which he can have no inducement to disguise. Thus

circumstanced, we feel no astonishment that he should bear his testimony to the truths of Revelation, and half regret the miseries, as well as triumph over the degraded condition, of human nature.

'If "the keen vibration of bright truth be Hell," we may well allow Satan in solitude to become a genuine moralist, and even a preacher of righteousness, when there is no hearer to be benefited by his discourse. In much of this character the poet presents him to our view. For a season he sustains the part assumed with consummate address, but various incidents breaking in upon the reveries of his meditation, rage and passion burst forth in terrible violence, and all the devil burns and heaves with infernal fury.'

Another critic, who has tact to see that an intellectual being like Satan must recognize different enemies and friends than the world would assign to him, —that to him pigmies must often appear giants, and giants pigmies,—that to him the perfidious undercurrent, which often converts prosperity into adversity, and desperation into prudence, must be always visible —says of the poem: 'New worlds of thought are opened to the reader's view. The universe of matter is made subservient to the development of the universe of mind.'

The *Edinburgh Literary Journalist* next 'hesitates dislike' to the action of the poem.

'We are introduced,' he says, 'to Satan standing *on the top of Mount Ararat*.'

We are introduced to *no such thing*.

We are introduced to Satan on the Mount of temptation in the wilderness—on the exact spot of the chief action of *Paradise Regained*. In this the reader will see another beauty. *That* is a dialogue between the Saviour and Satan, previous to the Christian Atonement—*this* a monologue of Satan 1800 years after, *on the human effects of that event*.

'He there looks round him, entirely *contrary to the established laws of optics*, on all the world.'

Pigmies against giants! A mole-hill rivalling Olympus. This critical arrow, directed *really* against Milton, falls as harmlessly short of the mark, as the powerless dart of Priam. Does not the Miltonian voice startle the objector, as the 'Dare you do it?' of the dungeoned Marius repulsed his trembling assailant? Has the critic forgot this passage, which answers his minute quibble so completely as to seem oracular*?

* Milton might be reviewed in this fashion by every 'puny whipster;' and did he live now, having the ungregarious pride of genius to keep him aloof from the homunculi of the coteries, seeking no '*exchange of praise* (*a*)'—being comparatively poor, and not belonging to the ordinary literary guilds—no doubt, would have a '*cutting up*,' to punish him for setting up poet for himself without their municipal license. One may fancy a critic of the modern school reviewing *Paradise Regained* in this manner:—

'Of Mr. *John* Milton's good intentions, devoutness, and all that, in this *attempt*, we do not doubt; but what can he know of Paradise (except his garret in Paradise Row, Barbican), more than any other old pedagogue, whom we may find every day of our lives, "teaching the young idea how to *fire*," in morning gown and slippers? What can a *blind* man know of a *view* of the world? Accordingly we are introduced to Satan looking round him, entirely contrary to *the esta-*

(*a*) Johnson's Life of Milton.

Presented to his eyes
Above the height of mountains interposed
(By what strange parallax or optic skill

blished law of optics, on all the world. Why Mr. Barker would not employ this dunderhead as a showman to the panorama of a *single city ! !* His style by no means "smacks" of elevation. His Satan is a "garrulous old gentleman," who "bows his gray dissimulation" in the most tiresome manner, while he indulges in long speeches, *de omnibus*, more than *fare* in a Paddington cad; in "the course of which he speaks of the changes that have taken place in empires," "indulges in a good many hits at crowned heads," especially the pleasant but wrong *improprietés de 'gallantry,'* as M. O'Boil (Boileau?) terms them, of Tiberius at "*Capræ*;"—"descants" on the "bearings of politics between the Parthians and the Romans"—twaddles "pretty d——d considerably" about the various "Coriphæi" (should not his *eye* (i) be knocked out?) of the tiresome schools of philosophy at Athens, inflicting on us, as he proceeds, some pedantic stuff about the "humbug" Demosthenes "shaking the arsenal:" *moralizes* (rather odd, is it not, that Satan should *moralize?*) about his admiration for virtue, and his surprise that men should mistakenly consider him to be a (*b*) foe; gives good advice to "Rome," especially suggesting to her not to be so fond of money [omnia Romæ cum pretio, says the Greek poet Virgilius (*c*)]; and, in conclusion, leaves the full conviction on the mind that Mr. *John* Milton's "Satan" is a very respectable person, who has been very harshly treated.

'In conclusion, we shall take the liberty—although he is "*no chicken*"—of giving Mr. *John* Milton a little bit of useful advice. "We have taken a cup of cold water," and are now cool and *cholerless*, (collarless,) though not shirtless and shoeless as of old, "or we should have flayed him alive." Let him be thankful for our mercy: He is a visionary nincompoop without *common sense*. By the bye, our profound familiarity with *Latin*, especially in association with a goose, enables us to assure the reader that this word (nincompoop) is derived from the abstruse phrase "non com*pus*." His poem is "no go." It is true, he has some little rhyming talents, but such talents render men most unfit for business, or acting a useful part in life. Instead of the pen, therefore, we recommend him to stick to the birch in *Bread Street, Cheapside*, or wherever else he may find it *cheapest* to get his *bread;* instead of riding his hard-mouthed *Pegasus*, let him *horse* his refractory tyros. With the help of Dilworth (though *nil* worth) he may make a respectable schoolmaster; but not all the pedantry about art and science, philosophy, &c., which he puts into the mouth of the "*Great Devil*," will ever make him a *Great Poet,'* &c. &c.

(*b*) Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind. Why *should* I?—*Par. Reg.* bk. I.

(*c*) Should not this be Juvenal?—*Note by Dr. Pangloss.*

Of vision, multiplied through air or glass
Or glass of telescope, were curious to inquire.)
Paradise Regained.

Again,

So well I have *disposed my airy microscope,*
Thou mayest behold.

Ibid.

'But *Satan* is one unbroken soliloquy, *de omnibus negotiis.*' So are most didactic poems; they are soliloquies, like Byron's *Childe Harold*, uttered by the mouth of another person, or like Cowper's *Task*, by the poet in person, *de omnibus negotiis*, connected with their theme. Cowper makes his universal, though a sofa: that of Mr. Montgomery's *Satan* must be universal, since his theme is the world and the destinies of man. *Childe Harold* is a personage in point. His sentiments are conveyed in a long soliloquy; the scene of action in *Childe Harold* is transferred from England to the continent; in Montgomery's *Satan* from the continent to England. *Childe Harold*, also, like Montgomery's *Satan*, is

But enough of these trifles, 'Quorsum hæc tam putida tendunt?' I say it without adulation, that my large experience of the press has brought me acquainted with multitudes of clever men, aye, in its minor departments too, who would produce as good articles of this description as the ordinary magazine run, 'stantes pede in uno,' at £2: 2s. per sheet; nay, one every hour by Shrewsbury clock—all properly bebugled and bespangled with the false wit of *rechauffée'd* puns. There is *no mind* in such 'rattling nonsense' whatever; and, bought at the *cheapest rate*, such wares are too *dear.*

a fallen nature—morally degraded—a human devil —but deeply read in the internal mechanism of mind; and fervidly alive to all the beauties and sublimities of nature and art.

The *Literary Journalist's* next objection (I continue to methodize for him) is to the *sentiments*, whether *characteristic* (or incident to the personage) or *poetical* (peculiar to the author). The reader will bear in mind that the true light by which the propriety of the characteristic sentiments must be tried, is, whether they are consistent with the sublime character of Mr. Montgomery's archangelic conception, not whether they are consistent with some gratuitous imagination, some saucer-eyed and long-tailed devil of the critic.

'Satan moralizes on man.' Why should he not, when no one is by to profit by his moralizing? The human devil,* *Childe Harold*, does so. If the Satan of Milton and of Montgomery admit truth, a fine moral is couched under the circumstance. Self-condemning truth is torturingly wrung from him. 'Though *blasted*, yet *believing* still,' he stands self-judged out of his own mouth. The Satan of *Paradise Regained* is equally alive to intellectual refinements (see his *Picture of Athens*) as that of our author. Again, Montgomery's soliloquy of Satan warns 'England not to be so fond of money as she seems to be.'

Milton's dialogue of *Paradise Regained* contains

* 'And soothe to say, he was a *shameless wight*.'—*Childe Harold.*

'For he through *sin's long labyrinth had run*.'—*Ibid.*

the same censure as Mr. Montgomery's monologue of Satan. There the *god of this world* says, referring to an earthly prosperity—

> They *whom I favour* thrive in *wealth* amain,
> While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want:

and the *God of the next world*, rejecting the Roman throne, rebukes Rome, in his reply, for that *idolatry of money* which Juvenal denounces, and which, finally and justly, swept her and her twin pollutions of Mammon and Priapus from the surface of the earth*.

> *Luxurious by their wealth* and *greedier* still,
> What *wise and virtuous man* would seek to free
> These thus *degenerate*, by *themselves enslaved?*

* Should not Satan, approving the vice, tremble for the continuance of his empire? Montgomery makes Satan say, that money is made the only standard of right and wrong. A curious philological investigation which has the rare merit (for antiquarianism) of being brief, points out the modern erection and introduction of this amiable commercial standard of crime and virtue expressed of old by the '*virtutem post nummos*,' and '*quocunque modo rem*' of Horace. In 1260, the Lord's Prayer has 'forgyf us ure *sinnes*;' in 960, it was *gyltas*, thence *guilt*; in 700, Scylda (German Schulde), *sins*; but in 1460, it was 'forgive to us our *dettis—debts!*'

Again, Montgomery makes Satan perceive that half the thrice-a-day Sunday church-goers are, in reality, Atheists, seeking a sanctimonious character on the Sunday, in order to cheat their neighbours with more effect on the Monday; or scarcely disavowed worshippers of the devil, Mammon, measuring virtue and morals by his metallic standard. Do not all these amiable persons already belong to the devil's eternal kingdom? and was it not important for Satan to detect so large an increase and so interesting a groupe of subjects beneath their worldly disguise? Was it not gratifying to him to detect the meditated extortion, or the half-conceived bubble, in the Pharisaical swindler's loud response and upturned eye?

The following three passages are given by the *Edinburgh Literary Journalist* as objectionable, but no reasons but *italics* are assigned:—

> Is the earth
> Appall'd, or agonizing in the wrack
> Of elements?
>
> Oh, what a cloud on liberty was thrown,
> How deep a gash her dreadless form profaned!
>
> The shriek of violated maids, the curse
> Of dying mothers and despairing sires,
> And dash of corpses torn from royal tombs
> And plunged amid devouring flame, were heard
> Terrific. Moscow seem'd a maddening hell.

I see no objection to them in sentiment or diction, but let the reader judge. The last image, 'dash of corpses torn from royal tombs amid devouring flame,' is picturesque. The composition's '*chiaro*' is excitingly shadowed by that '*oscuro*' association with terror, which is one great element of the sublime.

Two other passages are adduced as exceptionable. The first, on account of a verbal error of the press, corrected in the second edition; the second, on account of Mr. Montgomery's use of the word '*glance*' in the sense of *survey*; in which, to be candid, I agree with the critic, although there is authority for such use. Our *Minutius Felix* is welcome to the admission. Mr. Montgomery's fame as a great poet will not be affected even by the *lucky minutiæ* of

> Word-catchers who live on syllables.

The following passage is *criticised* with a more than

usual *profusion of italics*. To my view, it possesses the original vigour and searching deep-thoughtedness which characterise many of the finest metaphysical passages of Byron. The beauty and accuracy of the illustrations drawn from the phenomena of electricity and galvanism, and their mysterious connection with the mind through the excitation of the nerves, lighten through the whole passage, and flash a perspicuous ray on the little obscurity which results from its intense and energetic brevity.

> The *atmosphere* that circleth gifted minds
> Is from a *deep intensity derived,*—
> An *element of thought*, where *feelings shape*
> *Themselves to fancies,*—an *electric world,*
> Too exquisitely *toned* for common life,
> Which they *of coarser metal cannot dream:*
> And *hence (?)* those *beautifying powers of soul*
> *That arch the heavens more glorious*, and create
> An Eden wheresoe'er their magic light
> *Upon the rack of quick excitement live;*
> Their joy, *the essence of an agony, (!)*
> And *that*, the throbbing of the fires within!

The last objection of the critic is to the diction, or what he terms, 'false coinage of new words.' A few remarks are necessary here. All authorities allow a limited coinage to the poet: none a false. The only inquiry for the critic, therefore, is whether the coin is standard or debased. Neology*, though a licensed

* A volume might be collected of Buonaparte's neology, and augmented by the neology of the revolutionary Titans, his compeers. Even the polished anti-Buonapartist, Canning, was often kindled by the excitation of the revolutionary period into neology.

mark of great genius, is one of the most dangerous licences of poetry, and a true critic does not do his duty if he do not watch the poet's exertion of his privilege with jealous and scrutinizing eyes. Too loose a rein in this particular might accelerate a great deterioration of language: too tight a curb, on the other hand, might check or subvert the legitimate career of genius. It is incumbent on objectors to shew, by better arguments than *italics*, that the new phrases have not issued from the true mint of poetry, and are base or washed coin. Pope, than whom no individual could be more rigid in the sparing use of these licences, has a passage in his *Essay on Criticism*, which not only indulges the practice, but shews that he considers it essential to good poetry. This great poet and critic says, that writers of true poetical genius—

> Mark where a *bold expressive phrase* appears
> Bright through the rubbish of some thousand years.
> Command OLD WORDS that long have slept, to wake,
> *Words* that wise *Bacon*, or brave *Raleigh* spake,
> Or bid the NEW be *English ages hence;*
> *For use will father what's begot by sense.*

Shakspeare was a neologist, and 'Spenser *himself affects the obsolete.*' Looking to Milton for authority, as the author of the greatest sacred epic in our language, it is quite notorious that he not only did not abstain from the coinage of new words, but vehemently affected them. Not his *words* only, but

his *sentences* are entirely *new!* He, indeed, carried the system to its *ne plus ultra;* for, if we concur with Johnson, he invented a new and peculiar diction for the express use of his epic poem, which, says the doctor, 'is so far removed from common use, that an unlearned reader, when he first opens his book, finds himself surprised by a *new language.*'

It cannot be denied, that to servile imitators of Milton (all whose view of being Miltonian consists in the use of certain epithets and idioms, 'nathless, 'eremite,' 'dark profound,' 'nor did he not,' &c. &c.,) this large creation of words has been the great stumbling-block. As all are not Miltons who wish to be so, too boundless an issue of questionable value in new words must be restrained. To Mr. Montgomery's honour, it may be truly said, that while he is barely chargeable with the creation of *new*, he is as sparing in the revival of ancient words, as any of the 'better brothers.' He sometimes, but very rarely, resorts to the use of a new compound; and, sometimes, but generally in obedience to analogy of language, imparts an active sense to a substantive quality or thing. It may be as truly added, that although his choice of subject—'Milton's hero,' as Dryden termed Satan, and the construction of his poem in blank verse, might have seduced an inferior genius into imitation, he is not a copyist of Milton's invented and inverted style. Neither is he a mannerist: he is not, indeed, a copyist of the mere verbal physiognomy of any poet

living or dead. Compared with the classical poets of England, the construction of his verse may be said to come nearest to such a structure as might be supposed to result from a combination of Akenside, Young, and Cowper. While, in diction and sentiment, he unites the magnificent diversity and gloomy splendour of Young, he adds the natural flow and chastened vigour of Cowper, to the exuberant imagery, lofty eloquence, and platonic abstractions of Akenside. The faults of his style are those of Young and Akenside, the intermingled declamation and abrupt terseness of the first; of the second, his 'too great *inter-texture*' as (Johnson *characteristically* terms it) of complicated clauses. Like Akenside's, his sentences are often too far prolonged, and the due *closing* of his periods is too long delayed. Like him, too, he often piles image on image, and aggregates ornament on ornament, while sometimes the new thought alone preserves the mellifluous cadences and 'dying falls' of the verse from surfeiting the ear with sweetness.

What, then, are the limits to poetical neology? Pope has stated them—

> " If *where the rules not far enough extend*—
> Some lucky licence answers to the full
> *The intent proposed—that licence is a rule.*
> Great wits sometimes may *gloriously offend,*
> And *rise to faults* true *critics dare not mend.*
>
> * * * *
>
> But if you must offend
> Against the precept, *ne'er transgress its end;*

Let it be *seldom*, and *compell'd by need*,
And have at least good *precedent to plead*.
Essay on Criticism.

This is good sense, like every thought of Pope, who has been justly called the 'Poet of good sense;' in whom nothing *ultra*—nothing opposed to the golden mean—could ever be detected, either in his * politics or poetry. With so discreet a guide we cannot err. Old or obsolete words may be revived, or new words or phrases created, provided they be poetically appropriate, or justified by necessity; as, for instance, in cases where a word or phrase will express a thought or paint an image, not to be otherwise expressed or painted without a circumlocution: the use of such licence must be *limited*, indeed naturally will be, since the predicated cases of exceptions can but unfrequently occur, and must be warranted, as much as can be, by *precedent*.

Now, let us try the accuser and accused by this perspicuous and satisfactory critical law, as applied to *diction*. The following passage contains the Edinburgh Journalist's objections on the score of Mr. R. Montgomery's alleged 'false coinage of new words:'

'Among other specimens, we find, "paradisal,"

* 'The Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory;' *Prologue to Epistles*. Proof of a wise and independent moderation. He was a consistent friend to rational liberty—a better distinction; one of those rare *unpensioned* friends of liberty who had not rendered his *advocacy questionable* by *pecuniary advantage*, or twice *mendicated subscriptions*.

"vasty," "impregn" (for impregnated,) a "dew-fall" (meaning a dew-drop,) "a most *insinuous* man," "the *greenery* of hills," "halls of *fictious* glare" (obsolete,) "a pest which might *pang* the heart" (obsolete,) "dareful" (obsolete.)

Of all this *consommé* of verbal objections, the words termed obsolete are admitted by Pope's rule; *pang* is not new, but warranted by the poetical use of substantive verbs, as 'to medicine,' 'to wing,' (Shakspeare;) dew-fall, I think, is used by Spenser. The *greenery* of hills is a beautiful picture-word (may *I* be allowed to use a new compound?) of Coleridge: the words 'impregn' and 'paradisal' are Milton's; 'vasty'—'vasty deep' is Shakspeare's. Thus no objectionable epithet remains in the critic's fasciculus but *insinuous*. Insinuant was possibly written; though philological analogy (*in* and *sinuosus*, winding into) might warrant the phrase, did the occasion claim it, which, I think, it does not. The word is, however, corrected in the second edition. *None* of these words are coined. They *are not* 'a false coinage of new words.'

The critic, had he taken pains, might have found many new words really belonging to Mr. Montgomery. Many of these words are energetic, glowing, and picturesque. They accord with the foregoing definition. They paint an ideal picture, or strong sentiment, not to be expressed, or painted otherwise, except by periphrasis, and they fix it on the mind. They,

therefore, bear the true impress of the mint of genius, and may pass henceforth for current coin. Some, however, are exceptionable. I have already objected to '*glance*' for survey; I find the word '*victimise*' used. Here the thirst—natural to all strong thinkers —for a stronger expression than lies at hand, has led the bard to overlook the word 'sacrifice,' as fully and more naturally expressive of the sense, and equally reconcilable to the metre.

A few of those pictural words and phrases, which appear to me at once new (at least in their application) and legitimate, may be appropriately adduced in this section; they are chiefly compounds: 'dew-bead,' 'sun-burst,' 'storm-roll,' 'thunder-hymn,' 'billowing music,' 'voiceful trees,' 'trepid locks,' 'arrowy-throes,' 'death-glaze,' 'sea-foam,' 'snow-flakes,' 'water-wreaths,' 'cloud-wreaths,' 'thunder-wombs,' 'plumy foam,' &c. The general peculiarity of these idioms is the adjective use of one out of two substantives in a compound. Most breathe a true and vivid poetic feeling. Some, indeed, might be adduced, which would need Pope's licence:—

> Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,
> May boldly deviate from the common track,
> From *vulgar bounds* with *brave disorder* part,
> *And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.*

I have now done with these critics. In conjunction with them I have examined successively the *plot*, the *character*, the *sentiment* and *diction* of *Satan*. Of

one important critical division * of a complete poem, these writers have taken no notice whatever, while it must have been as clear, that they either 'ignored' or neglected the critical rules, which, prescribing the other divisions, submit them to regular and perspicuous analysis. I mean the *moral*. All poems should have a moral, and *à fortiori* a sacred poem, *Satan* has a striking moral, which, if the critics had been prompted by the rules of their art to search for it, would have furnished them with a key to the apparent discrepancy of Satan's character. It is this—that 'THE HIGHEST INTELLECTUAL REFINEMENT MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE GREATEST MORAL DEBASEMENT.' A terrible and wholesome warning—at once supported by religion, by philosophy, and experience,—to this day of ambition, pretence, and feverish refinement—to this boasted age of the 'March of Mind.' Almost the whole of the 2d book of *Satan* is one of the best reasoned poetical answers I have read to the doctrine of human perfectibility. There is obviously a moral balance in the affairs of the world; weakness counterpoises strength; a compensating weight detracts from each increased momentum of our progress, and we oscillate backward towards our first impassable and dependent line. For instance, the genius of discovery by its giant machinery deluges the world with its productive wealth, with one hand; with the other, he creates an artificial race of myriads of human beings, depend-

* Bossu.

ing for their sustenance or starvation on the turning of a hair or a wheel, at the irregular nod of demand, or supply—a contemplation replete with horrible reactions—at once magnificent and frightful. But most justly harmonious with the scheme of terestrial trial, is this hypothesis of a moral counterpoise. Were it not so—

Men would be angels—angels would be gods.

Were it not so, we might expect a terrestrial millennium, an 'age of political justice.' If men could progressively become perfect here, in *enjoyment*, *morals*, and *intellect*, (all *three* are necessary to perfectibility), the narrative of the fall, and of the existence of Satan, as Mr. Montgomery makes him argue (Book 2d), might be neglected as a fable; nor would there be any occasion for the Christian religion, which pronounces the irresistible syllogism: '*God is Omnipotent, Omnipresent,* and JUST; ye *cannot have* JUSTICE *here; therefore, Omnipotence* MUST do *justice to all elsewhere.*'

That the poem of *Satan* has its defects (in common with every thing human) it would be dishonest to deny: but they are not those defects which the gentlemen, whose strictures I have rigidly but fairly analysed, point out. They are, occasional tumour and obscurity; occasional prolongation and harshness in the structure of the sentences and idioms; occasional want of condensation, *synthesis*, and precision; all faults arising from redundant luxuriancy of ima-

gination. The great fault, however, is one that only genius could commit; '*materiem superat opus*;' the exuberant profusion of power amounts, in some instances, to *supererogation and waste;* this is especially the case in the 2d Book. Not satisfied with effecting its purpose, sufficiently once, in sculpturing its vivid creations on the reader's mind, it would seem as if Mr. Montgomery's genius returned to effect it a second time, with *sharper angles and in higher relief*, in order to revel in shewing the *akamaton pur*, the indefatigable energy of its resources*. Such, and so qualified, are his faults. His highest praise is, that he never humiliates morality, nor violates modesty. His images and sentiments are pure; and can make no 'worthy man a foe.' Against his *Satan* cannot be brought the charge which has been adduced by Johnson against Milton, and by others against Byron, that each has outraged the ears of piety and virtue, by putting blasphemous expressions against the Almighty into the mouth of the evil principle. The

* The descriptions of Martin's pictures in Book the 3d, are of this supererogatory description—curious as they are on this account, that they bring the graphic force of poetical painting at once into comparison and contrast with the sister pictorial art. So are the two cabinet pictures of Shakspeare and Milton in the same book, exquisitely finished and correctly coloured as they are. I should be sorry to miss them, and yet am bound to admit that they are out of place. A fair argument may, however, be adduced, why Satan, expatiating on the operations and drawing inferences from the results of mind, should seek evidences for his deductions in the intellectual creations of the great magnates of the sister arts.

restriction has *displeased* some of Mr. Montgomery's critics, by rendering the *character* of his *Satan* less *impure*, but it has *pleased* the more discriminating, by preserving the purity of *his own*.

After noticing Mr. Montgomery's faults, to descant on his beauties is a more grateful theme; and they are redundant and inexhaustible. By the side of their steady light, all the little faults elaborately exhumed by purblind malice, or frankly admitted by friendly truth, disappear as specks in the sun seen through a darkened glass; unincorporate with his genius, they are consumed by its heat, or dissipated by its radiance.

In proof of the truth of this commendation, I need only refer to the sublimity of this Author's tempests, his exquisite sun-sets, his gorgeous sun-risings, his boldly outlined cities, with their cathedrals, and fanes, and palaces; his tender landscapes, with their umbrageous or enamelled vallies, clustered copses, embosomed homesteads, or sequestered village churches. Poetry never painted more vivid pictures on the fancy. Here lies Robert Montgomery's true power; the lock of strength which testifies his poetic eminence is his *graphic energy and vivid truth of description*. The pictures which his genius conceives he brings out with such forcible hue and outline, that while they burst on the mind's eye, with the startling suddenness of magic, they fix themselves as firmly on that internal retina, as if they possessed the reality of palpable forms. Milton's genius displayed itself in similar graphic creations. Witness the three unmatchable pictures of

Rome, Ctesiphon, and Athens in *Paradise Regained* —poetic paintings, richly worthy of the pencil of the Milton of painting—Martin. Should I seek, in pursuing the analogy of the sister arts, for a pictorial associate for Montgomery, I should call him the "Danby of Poetry."

The open or sequestered landscape—the smiling lawn or solemn woodland—the gorgeous sunrise and the stormy sunset—the fairy loveliness of Eden—the floral wealth of cultivated nature—and the gaunt sterility of the 'howling wilderness'—the convulsions and wreck of matter, and the wrathful or merciful miracles of Deity, are the themes which supply the sweet or daring imagery in which both delight. 'His descriptions,' says one of Montgomery's justly appreciating critics, 'of external nature, in addition to their graphic loveliness, have the still greater merit of being all combined with internal feeling. It would seem as if the poet's soul had poured itself abroad on the scenes that he depicts, and made them an actual part of his existence.'

I proceed, according to the systematic order I have preserved throughout, to the production of such specimens out of an abundant variety of flowers, from which it is difficult to chuse, in order to prove that the above tribute to genius is neither undeserved nor misapplied; and shall then conduct the reader to a brief analysis and comparison of Mr. Montgomery's preceding poetical works, with a view to define the gradation of poetical rank to which he is entitled.

I will first give some examples of Mr. Montgomery's diction, either in newly-applied, compounded, or revived phrases, to which objection has been made, and which are admissible under certain restrictions. Those marked with stars appear to me felicitous; the rest are adduced as specimens of the constructive peculiarity in question, which often consists, according to the real and strictly-philosophical* analogy of the language, in transferring the property of the English substantive to the active verb. Sometimes he adopts a bold Germanism (a double substantive) in his compounds, which he seldom or never uses, except when he wants a *pictural word*. He says

To *voice thy spirit* through the quarter'd world.

'*Knee* thy name' is used by Cowper; '*syllable* men's names,' by Shakspeare.

Of music, he says that it

* *Pulses into melody*.

Of a sunset, that the sky is

Damask'd with crimson clouds.

Spenser uses the word. Of rivers that they

Run gladness.

This is an Hebraism. Describing a storm, he uses the following phrases—

All echo with the *chorus of thy clouds*.

* Ecstatic thunders *antheming* the storm.

* Were a philosophical language constructed, it must follow this analogy, as the Chinese does: vocal or written accents marking the sole difference between the substantive, verb, adjective, and adverb.

Shakspeare speaks of winds

Quiring to the sound of angels' harps.

Montgomery says—

And every cloud is at its *thunder hymn.*

Thunder-hymn is a sublime expression. Byron (see *Cain*) has 'singing in thunder.' Shakspeare applies a similar idea to a storm, but degrades it by the mechanical imagery of an '*organ:*'

The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder,
That deep and dreadful *organ-pipe,* pronounced
The name.

Describing the rustling murmurs of waving boughs, Montgomery calls them

Airy *leaf-notes.*

And, satirizing sentimental fancies, says that they are

Vain and unimpressive as the *dance*
Of *leaf-shades* figured in the dreamy sun.

He uses the terms—

* *Chariot-roll* of clouds.

Flowerets *giddy with delight.*

Of a misanthrope, he says—

Deflowering happiness of her young *bloom ;*

Of England's mental excitation—

The world
* Is *fever'd* with thy name.

The subjoined is original and picturesque:

* Boughs like *hearse-plumes* wave their *shadowy pomp.*

'*Brave delight*' is Shakspearian; so is '*Voiceless harm.*'

* *Bright perfidy* of *wanton* eyes,

has been objected to. To me it appears a new and beautiful metonymy. "Bright perfection" has been applied, by Pope, to a beautiful woman; "fair destruction," less gallantly, by Darwin.

The following passages exhibit phrases in which, besides pictural beauty of image, the "sound is made an *echo* to the sense."

Hears
The careless *mutter* of the *broken clod*
Upon his coffin *echo.*

What *ocean mockery* from the *voiceful* boughs
Is heard!

Hark! the *revelry* of waves!
Now, like the *whirling* of unnumber'd *wheels*
In faint advance; now wild as battle *roar*
In shatter'd echoes voyaging the wind;
Then, *snake-like hissing*, they enring * the shore,
Dissolve, and *flower the shelly beach with foam!*

Oh! what a *sea* of sound
Went *billowing* with ecstatical delight
Thro' fathomless immensity, when hosts
Divine their *Holy, Holy, Holy* sung.

A *sea* for ever *sounding* with his *voice*
Of billows, "Might and majesty are here,
And in eternity my waves have roll'd."

The voice of waves,
Faint as the *rush* of *rapid* angel *wings.*

We now come to a more important department of the subject—the sentiment and imagery of the poem.

* The word *enring*, from the German (*umringen*), is picturesque, and analogical with the Teutonic paternity of the English language.

In both there are as many examples of the *sublime and beautiful* as any poem of *equal* length in the language contains. Scattered with profusion on both sides of my now pleasant path, I have only to cull these flowers with unstinted freedom.

The following passages, which I have made free to class under distinguishing heads, appear to me replete with poetical beauty.

DISTANT MOUNTAINS.

Soundless and solemn as *cathedral towers*
Made dim and *spectral by the wintry moon.*

A CROWDED CITY.

The *storm roll* of immingled life
Is heard, and, like a *roaring furnace*, fills, &c.

A sunrise has been already given. Here follow two sunsets: I remember nothing of this kind equally beautiful. Byron's strength did not lie in these ideal paintings, but in the analysis of mind.

SUNSET.

But lo! the day declines, and to his throne
The Sun is wheeling. What a world of pomp
The heavens put on, in homage to his power!
Romance hath never hung a richer sky,—
Or sea of sunshine, o'er whose aureate deep
Triumphal barks of beauteous form career,
As though the clouds held festival, to hail
Their god of glory to his western home.
And now the earth is mirror'd on the skies!
While lakes and vallies, drown'd in dewy light,
And rich delusions, dazzlingly array'd,

Form, float, and die in all their phantom joy.
At length the Sun is throned; but from his face
A flush of beauty o'er Creation flows,
That brightens into rapturous farewell!
Then faints to paleness; for the day hath sunk
Beneath the waters, dash'd with ruby dyes,
And Twilight in her nun-like meekness comes;
The air is fragrant with the soul of flowers,
The breeze comes panting like a child at play,
While birds, day-worn, are couch'd in leafy bowers,
And, calm as clouds, the sunken billows sleep:
The dimness of a dream o'er Nature steals,
Yet hallows it; a hush'd enchantment reigns;
The mountains to a mass of mellowing shade
Are turn'd, and stand like temples of the night:
While field and forest, fading into gloom,
Depart, and rivers whisper sounds of fear.

ANOTHER SUNSET.

But lo! again the magic sunset woos:
The heavens are flow'ring with a rosy mass
Of splendor, richly hued; and, floating on,
It deepens round the dying sun, who glares
With fierce redundancy awhile, then sinks
Away, like glory from Ambition's eye.
Behind him—many a cloud-idolater
Will say,—what rocks, and hills, and waves of light!
Magnificent confusion! such as beam'd
When the rash boy-god charioted the skies,
And made a burning chaos of the clouds!

AN ENGLISH LANDSCAPE.

Here alone,
With Summer hymning through her haunted vales,
'Tis beauty, bloom, and brightness all! How rich
The wooing luxury of floral meads,
Reposing in the noon; where scented winds
Exult, and many a happy brooklet sings:
Sure Admiration might romance it here!

Tall mansions, shadow'd through patrician trees,
Those brown-spread farms, grey villages and cots,
With castled relics, and cathedral piles—
Where dreaming Solitude may muse and sigh,
Enchant dead ages from their tombs, or hear
The dark soliloquy of ancient Time,—
Adorn the landscape, and delight the view:
While haggard rocks, and heaven-aspiring hills,
Balking the ocean, here and there create
A mountain charm, to solemnize the scene.

LONDON.

Myriads of domes, and temples huge, or high,
And thickly wedded, like the ancient trees
That in unviolated forests frown;
Myriads of streets, whose river-windings flow
With viewless billows of unweary sound;
Myriads of hearts in full commotion mix'd,
From morn to noon, from noon to night again,
Through the wide realm of whirling passion borne,—
And there is London!

* * * * * *

But, Mammon! thou almighty friend of Hell,
Sure London is thy ever-royal seat,
Thy chosen capital, thy matchless home!
Where rank idolaters, of every lot
And land, do bow them to the basest dust
That falsehood, flattery, or cunning treads,
From dawn to eve, and serve thee with as true
A love as ever angel served his God!
See, how the hard and greedy worldlings crowd,
With toiling motion, through the foot-worn ways;
The sour and sullen, wretched, rack'd and wild,—
The whole vile circle of uneasy slaves.
Mark one, with features of ferocious hue;
Another, carved by villany's own hand
A visage wears, and through the trait'rous blood
The spirit works, like venom from the soul!

* * * * * *

What rush and roar unceasing! and how strange
A mass of objects, as I move along
Invisible amid these floods of life
I see. A chaos of unnumber'd hearts,—
Beating and bounding, charged with great design,
And making Fate, at every pulse, to feel,—
Before me acts its mighty tragedy!

ANOTHER LANDSCAPE.

Here all that can soft worship claim, or tone
The sweet sobriety of tender thought,
Is thine: the sky of blue intensity,
Or charm'd by sunshine into picture-clouds,
That make bright landscapes when they blush abroad,—
The dingle grey, and wooded copse, with hut
And hamlet, nestling in the bosky vale,
And spires brown peeping o'er the ancient elms,
And steepled cities, faint and far away,
With all that bird and meadow, brook and gale
Impart, are mingled for admiring eyes
That love to banquet on thy blissful scene.

A THIRD LANDSCAPE.

Dilated, as with gladness, glows the blue
O'erhanging sky, untinctured with a cloud:
Around me, hills on hills are greenly piled,
Each crowning each in billowy ascent,
And beautiful array: a breeze is up,
In bird-like motion winging the bright air;
Or by the flow'rets, giddy with delight,
And dancing golden in the meadow-pomp.—
Nor am I lonesome in this hour of bliss:
The shining flocks that speckle the glad fields,
The larks and butterflies that tint their path
With beauty, and yon group of happy babes,
Fit company for sunbeams and for flowers,
So brightly innocent they seem,—partake
The dreamy joy of this romantic hour.
And thou, beneath me in thy waveless mood

Luxuriant spread, with ripples twinkling—gay
As insect-wings that flutter in the sun,—
Calm Ocean!

A SEA-SHORE SCENE.

Some musing wand'rer by the shore I see,
Weaving his island-fancies.—Round him, rock
And cliff, whose grey trees mutter to the wind,
And streams down rushing with a torrent ire:
The sky seems craggy, with her cloud-piles hung,
Deep-mass'd, as though embodied thunder lay
And darken'd in a dream of havoc there!—
Before him, Ocean, yelling in the blast,
Wild as the death-wail of a drowning host:
The surges,—be they tempests as they roll,
Lashing their fury into living foam,
Yon war-ship shall outbrave them all!—her sails
Resent the winds, and their remorseless howl;
And when she ventures the abyss of waves,
Remounts, expands her wings, and then—away!
Proud as an eagle dashing through the clouds.

A CHURCH-YARD.

How meekly piled, how venerably graced
This hamlet fane! by mellowing age imbrown'd,
And freckled like a rock of sea-worn hue.
No marble tombs of agonizing pomp
Are here; but turf-graves of unfading green,
Where loved, yet lowly, generations sleep:
And o'er them many a Sabbath sigh is heaved
From hearts that live on sadness from the tomb.
And such is thine, lone muser! by yon grave
Now ling'ring, with a soul-expressive eye
Of sorrow. Corn-fields glowing brown, and bright
With promise, sumptuous in the noon-glare seen;
The meadows, speckled with a homeward tribe
Of village matrons, sons, and holy sires,—
The hymning birds, all music as they soar,
And those twin brooks, so beautifully glad,

That whisper happy secrets to the wind,—
Such life and beauty by the landscape breathed,
And yet,—a tomb-shade overclouds it all!
A church-yard! 'tis a homely word, yet full
Of feeling; and a sound that o'er the heart
Might shed religion. In the gloom of graves
I read the curse primeval, and the Voice
That wreak'd it, seems to whisper by these tombs
Of village quiet, that around me lie
In green humility:—can Life, the dead
Among, be musing, nor to me advance
The spirit of her thought? True, Nature wears
No rustic mourning here: in golden play
Her sprightly grass-flowers wave: the random breeze
Hums in the noon, or with yon froward boughs
A murm'ring quarrel wakes: and yet how oft
In such a haunt, the insuppressive sigh
Is heard, while feelings that may pilot years
To glory, spring from out a minute's gloom!

In the following I have ventured to mark with italics the expressions which appear to me new, picturesque, true, or beautiful, in

A STORM.

But lo! the heavens are ominously gloom'd,
Methinks, as though they frown'd a dark response.
Erewhile, and star-troops in their island glow
Around the wan enchantress of the skies
Appear'd, while lovingly the *azure lay*
Between them, *softer than the lid of sleep.*—
But now, all pregnant with portentous ire
They threaten, *muffling up the pomp of night.*—
There is a *gasping in the heated air,*
A *wing-like flutter* in the *tim'rous boughs,*
And *sigh,* and *sound,* from *out the heart of things*
Invisible, breathed forth;—the Storm awakes!
A thousand thunder-wombs the sky oppress,

The lightnings lance the clouds, and North to South,
And East to West, a tale of darkness tell!
Hark! as the *wearied echoes howl themselves*
Away, the roaring of the midnight sea,
Beneath the cliff, doth take a *sounding life*,
For she is waved with glory! billows heave
Their blackness in the wind, and, bounding on
In vaulting madness, beat the rocky shore
Incessant, flaking it with plumy foam.

This section of the subject may be advantageously closed by proceeding from terrestrial landscape to one of divine beauty.

PARADISE.

Paradise!—I see it as it rose
In youthful splendor on my savage eye:
A starry jubilee still rang; the wings
Angelical of many a hovering shape
Still joy'd, and glitter'd in the virgin air
That seem'd one atmosphere of melody!
As yet, no cloud was born; the sunshine fed
The flowers with beauty, till the twilight dew;
Birds, Eden-sprung, with sky-tints on their plumes,
And butterflies, bright creatures, rich as they,
Like showers of blossoms from a tree upwhirl'd
On starry wing hung trembling in the air!
More glorious yet!—from Eden's mount I gazed,—
The greenery of whose untrodden hills
Changed like the laughing hues on plumage seen—
And saw two creatures of celestial mould.
Till these were made, companionless the world
Appear'd, and as a heart suspended lay,
All throbbing for the vision that should dawn!
And they were fashion'd, breathing shapes of life,
With radiant limbs, whose robes were innocence,
And eye that spoke the birth-place of the soul!

* * * * * *

The one did glance the blue immensity
Above, with a majestic gaze, and eye
The sun, as though he felt himself akin
To his pre-eminence, and throned state:
The other, in her fair perfection seem'd
A shape apparell'd by her own pure smiles,
Surpassing beauty, and subduing love;
While, *ever as she moved, the blush of flowers*
O'erveil'd her; and a breezy host of sounds,
Like magic birds, embosom'd in the air
In sweet attendance caroll'd round her path.
Never hath sunny mood, or shaping dream,
Divined the vision which in Eden lay,—
Each sound was music, and each sight a heaven!

Vivid imagery is the characteristic of the preceding extracts. The thoughts which sadden, or enliven, the following passages, show that Mr. R. Montgomery is not unfamiliar with the recesses of the human heart; indeed, sometimes he "considers too curiously;" occasionally, the thoughts are too metaphysically refined. Some of the contemplative passages are full of Byronian depth; as, for instance, the contrast of battle triumphs to the physical misery of a battle-field;

Of worldly meanness sepulchred in self,
And clinging, wormlike, to corporeal clay,

to its joyless external pomp: of the elevation of successful genius, to the pangs inflicted on it, by the envious mean, &c.

A SLEEPING MONARCH.

Servile is the pomp
Of kings, though gorgeously it dare the eye;
* * * * *

With that dim haunting of the dreary tomb,
That often through the banquet-splendor gapes,—
A darkness that defies a sun!—

DEATH.

At that deep hour, when, dwindling to a blank,
The earth departs, and those dear sounds of life
That once prevail'd so eloquently sweet,
Grow faint and dismal, as *the dreary voice*
Of waters, gurgling round a drowning man,
The solemn meanings of the past are known.
What spirit warn'd in every funeral knell!
How oft the hearse-train, stealing through the rush
Of sounding pathways with a spectral glide,
The vision of a dying moment gave!

In the following passage, the expressions 'wolf-eyed,' 'bubbles out in song,' 'a sunbeam in a storm,' are replete with poetical feeling.

LIFE.

There droops a man,
Poetic sadness in his pensive eye,
As haunting tombs, or scenes beyond the dead;
And here, a victim of tempestuous thought,
Wolf-eyed, and glaring out his wilder'd mind
In glances lit with torture!—while to mock
Their coward anguish, see a soulless thing
Appear, *whose spirit bubbles out in song:*
And this is life,—*a sunbeam in a storm!*

The idea conveyed by the following sentence in italics derives its forcible effect from its terse simplicity.

FALL OF EMPIRES.

Tell me what are they?
And she, earth's ancient tyranness, dread Rome—
The rolling of her battle-cars, the *voice*
Of Scipio, and the sound of Cæsar's march,
Did *I not hear?*

THE TAX ON GENIUS!

But now, come down from thy celestial height!
Descend, and struggle with the heartless crew
Who out of others' tears extract their joy.
The rocky nature of ignoble minds,
Ambitious spite, and unrelenting hate,
And all who nibble at each young renown,
'Tis thine to wrestle with; thy spell is o'er,
And glory is a feast for shame:—reproach
It not; true happiness it never breathed!

RIVAL ENVY.

Again,

O thou, that hunger'st for bewild'ring fame,
Come here, and prove what rottenness of heart,
What fev'rous envy, what corrosive sense
Of emulation, in these glorious dwell!
What under-currents in this scene of joy!
Smiles in the surface, but a coward tide
Of jealousy beneath. Hark! to the gibe,
O Hate, the tart dissent, the damning sneer,—
To such a littleness the mighty fall!
Behold it, Ignorance! redeem thy blush,
And take a happier name.

The subjoined passage is imbued with a melancholy but true philosophy. Canning is probably implied.

THE STATESMAN.

Alas, Ambition! see yon gifted man,
Stand forth awhile, surpassing and sublime;
His brow imperial, in his eye a blaze
Of meaning, pour'd from a majestic soul:
Borne on the whirlwind of triumphant Thought,
Through the wide universe his spirit sweeps!
Thrones, monarchies, and states,—he summons each
To strict accompt; their victories and kings

Arraigns, and bids Britannia front them all!
The Senate wonders, Rapture finds a tongue,
And Envy sinks abash'd to praise. But go,
Young Emulation, when this glowing scene
Hath cool'd to common life, and mark him well!
The hero is no hero here! the mean
Have tortured whom a kingdom could not bend:
Around him, too regardful, scandal flies;
And words, like gnawing vipers, poison life
Away, or rankle in the spirit's core.

In the next passage the argument is wrought up to its logical climax with accurate and striking force of thought.

The rounded earth nought so tremendous shows
As this vast city, in whose roar I stand,
Unseen, yet seeing all. The lifeless gloom
Of everlasting hills, the solitudes
Untrod, the deep gaze of thy dazzling orbs
That decorate the purple noon of night,
Oh Nature! no such majesty supply.
Creation's queen, almightily endow'd,
Upon the throne of Elements thou sitt'st:
But in the beating of *one* single heart,
There is that more than rivals thee! and here,
The swellings of innum'rous hearts abound;
And not a day but, ere it die, contains
A hist'ry, that, unroll'd, will awe the heavens
To wonder, and the listening earth with fear!

The next and last passage I shall quote in this section of my subject, is sublime in thought and diction.

SATAN'S ADDRESS TO THE ALMIGHTY.

Thou dread Avenger! ever-living One!
Lone Arbiter! Eternal, Vast and True;
The soul and centre of created things
In atoms or in worlds; around whose throne
Eternity is wheel'd; who look'st—and life

Appears; who frown'st—and life hath pass'd away!
Thou God!—I feel thine everlasting Curse,
Yet wither not: the lightnings of Thy wrath
Burn in my spirit, yet it shall endure
Unblasted,—that which cannot be extinct.
  Thou sole Transcendency, and deep Abyss
From whence the universe of life was drawn!
Unutter'd is Thy nature; to Thyself
Alone the proved, and comprehended God;
Though once the steep of thine Almightiness
This haught, unbowing spirit would have climb'd,
And sat beside thee, God with God enthroned,—
And vanquish'd, fell—Thy Might I'll not disclaim.
Immutable! Omnipotence is Thine;
Perfections, Powers, and Attributes unnamed
Attend Thee; Thou art All; and oh, how great
That consummation! Worlds to listening worlds
Repeat it; angels and archangels veil
Their wings, and shine more glorious at the sound;
Thus, Infinite and fathomless, Thou wert,
And art, and wilt be. In Thine awful blaze
Of majesty, amid empyreal pomp
Of Sanctities, chief Hierarch, I stood
Before thy throne terrifically bright,
And heard the hymning thunders voice thy name,
While bow'd the Heavens, and echoed Deity!

* * * * * *

  And yet divided empire have I won.
Behold the havoc in Thy beauteous world!
And have I not, recount it, Space and Time!
Thy master-piece, creation's god of clay,
Dethroned from that high excellence he proved,
When first man walk'd a shadow of Thyself?
  Then roll thee on, thou high and haughty World,
And queen it bravely o'er the universe!

* * * * * *

Build thrones,
And empires, heap the mountain of thy crimes,
Be mean or mighty, wise or worthless still,—

Yet I am with thee! and my power shall reign
Until the trumpet of thy doom be heard,
Thine ocean vanish'd and thy heavens no more!
Till thou be tenantless, a welt'ring mass
Of fire, a dying and dissolving world.
But then, Thy hidden lightnings are unsheath'd,
O God! the thunders of Despair shall roll;
Mine hour is come, and I am wreck'd of all—
All, save Eternity, and *that* is mine!

An attempt has been made (when to derogate from the noble sublimity of the above passage was impossible) to derogate from its originality, by referring it to *Satan's address to the Sun*, in Milton: the detractors might as well have compared it to Ossian's *address to the Sun*, which, with self-betraying anachronism, is obviously borrowed from Milton. The passage has more affinity to the most faultless piece in Young—the poet's Address to the Almighty, beginning 'Oh, thou great Arbiter,' in the 'Christian Triumph;' but the latter is brief and unimaginative, though well reasoned, and, when compared with this *characteristic* address of Satan, shrinks into dwarfish littleness.

I NOW proceed with some remarks on *The Omnipresence of the Deity*. This work has been honoured with a wreath of as unanimous applause as ever greeted the production of any poet, however popular. As some publications are beneath criticism, so the universal suffrage of the '*vox populi, vox Dei*' should have placed

this at least above cavil and detraction. What commendation now can benefit, or what dispraise deteriorate a work, which, in an unprecedented short time, reached eleven editions, and is now (a tribute paid to no modern poet besides) published as an Oratorio? All the magnates of criticism, and almost the whole town and provincial press, concurred in offering unanimous and splendid homage to its merits. Surely these are not the 'Arcadian nightingales,' whose *bray* provoked the *phrenitis* of the writers in *Fraser's Magazine*, and the *Edinburgh Journal*, only to be cured by *cupping* and *cold water!* Hard judgment on their brethren or on themselves!

Having said thus much on the established reputation of the *Omnipresence*, I may be spared a *detailed* analysis of its merits or demerits. In conception, the poem is original; in the sweet flow, and chastened and balanced structure of the versification, it resembles Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope:* if it has less classical polish, it glows with more enthusiastical fervour; and the tone of equable elevation is sustained with well-poised wing throughout; but it has little affinity to that, or to the two cognate didactic poems—Rogers's *Pleasures of Memory*, or Akenside's *Pleasures of Imagination*, in the nature of the pervading sentiment. The sense of an Almighty, omnipresent witness of our minutest actions and thoughts, and whose thought could, at any given particle of time, arrest the movement of onr 'fearfully-made' mechanism, and call us

into his awful presence for judgment, intensely and sublimely pervades the entire poem. A sacred 'tranquillity overshadowed with terror,' which Burke has affirmed to be one element of the sublime, is its poetical characteristic. It is imbued with that thrilling, yet pleasing and elevating fear, on surveying the mighty design of the universe, which Horace describes as alone peculiar to men of mind:—

> Hunc solem et stellas et decedentia certis
> Tempora momentis, sunt qui *formidine* nulla
> Imbuti spectent;

and which is even extorted from the materialist Lucretius, in an obviously heartfelt and painfully-wrung feeling—

> His tibi me rebus quædam *divina voluptas*,
> Percipit atque *horror*, quod sic natura tua vi
> Tam manifesta patet ex omni parte retecta.

But the archetypal idea of the poem may be probably traced to the sublime passage in the Psalms:—

Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit: or whither shall I go then from thy presence?

If I climb up into heaven, thou art there: if I go down to hell, thou art there also.

If I take the wings of the morning: and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there also shall thy hand lead me: and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, peradventure the darkness shall cover me: then shall my night be turned to day.

Yea, the darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day: the darkness and light to thee are both alike.

Burke considers the Deity's omnipresence as the *highest elevation* of the contemplative sublime.

'Though in a just idea of the Deity, perhaps none of his attributes are predominant; yet, to our imagination, his power is by far the most striking. To be struck with his power, it is only necessary to open our eyes. But while we contemplate so vast an object, under the arm, as it were, of Almighty power, and *invested on every side with* OMNIPRESENCE, we shrink into the minuteness of our own nature, and are in a manner annihilated before him. * * * If we *rejoice*, we rejoice with *trembling;* and even whilst we are *receiving benefits*, we cannot but *shudder* at a power which can confer benefits of such mighty importance.'—Burke *on the Sublime and Beautiful.*

As the design of the *Satan* of Mr. Montgomery brings him into comparison with the *Paradise Regained* of Milton and the *Childe Harold* of Byron, so his *Omnipresence*, combined with his *Satan*, bring him into fair comparison with two living authors of great genius—Campbell and Rogers. These poets, following up Akenside's idea of the *Pleasures of Imagination*, which may be considered as a poetical essay on *Taste*, produced their twin didactic splendid poems, the *Pleasures of Memory* and the *Pleasures of Hope*. Both the latter embrace the two provinces of taste—the beautiful and the sublime,—but chiefly limit themselves within the bounds of the former. The

Omnipresence principally takes up the sublime; its purport is to display the pleasures of contemplative elevation of mind; the feelings of thrilling fear at Almightiness constantly present, with their purifying and ennobling effects. The subject ascends to the highest regions of imagination: it is a loftier walk of poetry than that of either Rogers or Campbell; and requires a more sinewy and constantly unwearied wing. If all the demands which such a subject exacts from the poet be satisfactorily met,—if the poem be complete, and worthy of the subject in sentiment and diction, the task which he has achieved must be pronounced greater than that of either of those bards. And this notwithstanding slight faults; which, in reality, are as imputable to them as to him. It cannot be disputed, that, taking the *Omnipresence* singly, he is inferior to Rogers, in placid sweetness, in steady outline, and philosophical grouping; and often inferior to Campbell in chastened polish, in mellifluous logic, and some of the fascinating graces of minor ornament and detail. He is superior to them, however, in grand simplicity of design and massy sublimity of effect. Campbell has few instances of *unmixed sublimity;* Rogers, I think, none—a placid correctness, and agreeable beauty of thought and style, pervade the whole of his poem. The *Omnipresence,* under this point of view, may be likened to the solemn sternness of a gigantic Egyptian temple—as compared with the elegant ornament and polished gracefulness of a

Grecian fane. But I know of no four consecutive lines in this work, that can excel the melting sweetness, and accurate illustration of this short passage in Rogers—notwithstanding the *triple alliteration* in the last line, which I fear the critics would have pronounced fatal in Montgomery.

> Lighter than air, Hope's summer visions fly,
> If but a transient cloud obscure the sky;
> If but a ray of sober reason play,
> Lo! Fancy's fairy frostwork melts away.

The six gossamer lines, however, which follow, beginning, 'But can the wiles of art,' and close the book, disappoint both the ear and mind by their unsubstantial dilation.

Nor does Montgomery rival the flowery luxuriancy, the dreamy but pure voluptuousness, and soothing pathos, of the following passage in Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*:—

> Auspicious HOPE! in thy sweet garden grow
> Wreaths for each toil, a balm for every woe:
> Won by their sweets in nature's languid hour,
> The way-worn pilgrim seeks thy summer bower;
> There, as the wild-bee murmurs on the wing,
> What peaceful dreams thy handmaid spirits bring!
> What viewless forms th' Æolian organ play,
> And sweep the furrow'd lines of anxious thought away.

While instituting a comparison, I quote passages with which few readers are unfamiliar, in order fairly to recall, in this first stage of the inquiry, the peculiar beauties of sentiment and diction which characterize

the brother bards. Correct metaphor and tender associations form the mental charm of the preceding mellifluous passages in Rogers and Campbell; vivid portraiture, united with delicious cadence, of the succeeding passages from Montgomery:—

> See! not a cloud careers yon pensile sweep—
> A waveless sea of azure, still as sleep;
> Full in her dreamy light the Moon presides,
> Shrined in a halo, mellowing as she rides;
> And far around, the forest and the stream
> Bathe in the beauty of her emerald beam.

Again—

> Thrice has the sun upon his green-wav'd bed,
> 'Mid rosy clouds his vesper radiance shed;
> And thrice the moon from out the ocean rose
> Like pale-eyed beauty waking from repose;
> As oft beneath, the melancholy wave
> Murmur'd o'er many a seaman's weedy grave.

Again—

> Sublimely sad! to linger in some aisle,
> Where, through the *blazon'd panes*, the vesper smile
> With *pallid radiance* quivers in the gloom,
> Or *crowns, like seraph light, the inspiring tomb.*

In the subjoined landscape, the image of the 'rainbow dropping on the distant hill,' is conceived in the purest spirit of poetry:—

> First comes the Sun, unveiling half his face;
> While dark clouds, skirted with his slanting ray,
> *Roll, one by one, in azure depths away,*
> Till *pearly shapes*, like *molten billows*, lie
> Along the *tinted bosom* of the sky:

Next breezes murmur with harmonious charm,
Panting and wild, like orphans of the storm;
Now sipping flowers, now making blossoms shake,
Or *weaving ripples on the grass-green lake;*
And thus the Tempest dies; and *bright, and still,*
The rainbow drops upon the distant hill.

Nor are the energetic phrases, in the following scene of horror, less impressed with the true mint-mark of genuine poetry—

No more the tocsin for the carnage tolls,
No *death-piled tumbril* from the slaughter *rolls;*
The blood has dried upon the wither'd plain,
And brave La Vendée *blooms* in *peace* again.

The next passage will remind the reader of Campbell's defects, though it is still distinguished by Montgomery's forcible peculiarity of diction; for example, the pictural idiom, '*unrolls* the thunder.' The succeeding line, 'unfurls the whirlwind, and upheaves the world,' is, however, an inflated imitation of Campbell's great fault—his balanced inflation.

Far as the fancy flies, or life-stream flows,
From Georgia's deserts to the Greenland snows,
Where space exists, Thine eyes of mercy see,—
Creation lives, and moves, and breathes in Thee!
* * * * *
Expands the blossom, and erects the tree,
Conducts each vapour, and commands each sea,
Beams in each ray, bids whirlwinds be unfurl'd,
Unrolls the thunder, and upheaves a world!

Again—a specimen of the objectionable resemblance with a redeeming difference.

Some wear out life in smiles, and some in tears,
Some dare with hope, while others droop with fears,

Some gaily vanish to an unfear'd grave,
Fleet as the sun-flash o'er a summer wave.

The following passages, descriptive of a Vagrant and a Captive, exhibit the author's differences from and resemblances to Campbell, in character, sentiment, and diction. In these and other beautiful descriptions, a loose phrase, now and then provokingly occurring, induces the inference, that the author, with the impatience of genius, has not rigidly corrected his proofs. The thrice corrected *MSS.* of 'paper-saving' Pope, and the thrice elaborated *revises* of the nervously fastidious Canning, should have taught him the *saving* virtue of correction.

THE VAGRANT.

At wintry eve, when warring night-winds blow,
Pierce his cold cheek, and drift his locks of snow,
As oft the vagrant shivers through the street,
No voice to pity, and no hand to greet,
With many a pause he marks that window-pane,
Whose cheering blaze recalls his home again;
The friend and face, the music and the mirth,
And social magic of his evening hearth,
Awaked by mem'ry, warm his widow'd heart,
Till real woes in fancied bliss depart;
And one by one, as happier days appear,
To each he pays the homage of a tear;
Though homeless, still he love's home's joyous glare,
Looks up to heaven, and feels his home is there.

THE CAPTIVE.

Within a dungeon, mildew'd by the night,
Barr'd from salubrious air and cheering light,
Lo! the pale captive pines in hostile lands,
Chain'd to his doom by adamantine bands.

Oh! how he pants to face the fresh-wing'd breeze,
And list the voices of the summer trees:
To breathe, and live, and move, and be as free
As Nature is, and man was made to be!
And when at night, upon his flinty bed,
Silent and sad, he lays his grief-worn head,
There as the dungeon bell, with dismal sound,
Tolls midnight through the sleeping air around,
Remembrance wafts him to congenial climes,
And frames a fairy world of happier times—
The woodland haunts around his native scene,
The village dance upon the festive green,
His sloping garden where he lov'd to ply,
And smiled as peeping flower-buds hail'd his eye,
His beauteous partner, and her blue-eyed boy,
Who prattled, play'd, and fed his soul with joy.

A favourite specimen of sublimity in Darwin, beginning 'Immortal Love, who ere the morn of time,' and embodying an idea of *Creation*, derived from a fable of Aristophanes, strikes me as polished almost into tameness. Not so its antithesis in Campbell—a Hindoo fable of the *Day of Judgment—The Tenth Avatar*—derived probably from or modified by the anaglyphics or picture-writing of the Apocalypse.

Nine times have Brama's wheels of lightning hurl'd
His awful presence o'er the alarmed world;
Nine times hath guilt, through all his giant frame,
Convulsive trembled, as the Mighty came;
Nine times hath suffering mercy spared in vain,—
But heaven shall burst her starry gates again!
He comes! dread Brama shakes the sunless sky
With murmuring wrath, and thunders from on high.

Heaven's fiery horse, beneath his warrior form,
Paws the light clouds and gallops on the storm!
Wide waves his flickering sword; his bright arms glow
Like summer suns, and light the world below!
Earth, and her trembling isles in Ocean's bed,
Are shook; and Nature rocks beneath his tread!

This is, indeed, a noble passage; but in the ten diluted lines which follow ('To pour redress, &c.) and which close the book, the excited attention is defrauded of the justly-expected climax; with the inane imagery of 'Seriswattee lifting her hallowed wand,' and the feeble transposition of—

Camdeo *bright* and Ganesa *sublime.*'

In short, the entire frame of this well-conceived poem is evirated by a fastidious timidity in overpolishing.

But the preceding sublime passage may be fairly matched by the *Thunder-Storm* of R. Montgomery. The subjoined verses will bear a rigorous test of comparison.

Ye giant winds! that from your gloomy sleep
Rise in your wrath, and revel on the deep;
Lightnings! that are the mystic gleams of God,
That glanced when on the sacred mount he trod;
And ye, ye thunders! that begird His form,
Pealing your loud hosannahs o'er the storm!
Around me rally in your mingled might,
And strike my being with a dread delight;
Sublimely musing, let me pause and see,
And pour my awe-struck soul, O God! to Thee.
* * * * * *

A thunder-storm—the eloquence of heaven,
When every cloud is from its slumber riven,
Who hath not paused beneath its hollow groan,
And felt Omnipotence around him thrown?
With what a gloom the ush'ring scene appears!
The leaves all flutt'ring with instinctive fears,
The waters curling with a fellow dread,
A breezeless fervour round creation spread,
And, last, the heavy rain's reluctant shower,
With big drops patt'ring on the tree and bower,
While wizard shapes the bowing sky deform,—
All mark the coming of the thunder-storm!

* * * * *

Oh! now to be alone, on some still height,
Where heaven's black curtains shadow all the sight,
And watch the swollen clouds their bosoms clash,
While fleet and far the living lightnings flash,—
To mark the caverns of the sky disclose
The furnace-flames that in their wombs repose,
And see the fiery arrows fall and rise,
In dizzy chase along the rattling skies.

The next picture is in a different style, and exquisitely tender.

A DAUGHTER SITTING BY HER FATHER'S DEATH-BED.

There, as the melancholy midnight bell
Tolls o'er the sleeping world the day's farewell,
Frequent she glances at his wrinkled brow,
And those dear eyes, so dim and deathful now,
Till all his love and all his care returns,
And memory through her brain and bosom burns.
That drooping hand, so delicately weak,
How often had it smooth'd her infant cheek;
Or danc'd her, lightly tripping by his side,
And prattling sweetly with delighted pride;

Or pluck'd the painted flower that charm'd her age,
Or gently oped instruction's pictur'd page,
Or pointed to the trepid beauty-star
That twinkled in the vesper sky afar.

In this comparison I have arrayed the minor poem of one poet against the principal poems of the two others. This is hardly fair; for I have not brought Montgomery's principal poem, *Satan*, to bear upon the question. Nor have I yet said any thing of his *Satires*. In *Satan*, even more than in the *Omnipresence*, the peculiar forte of Robert Montgomery is brought into the lists—namely, vivid susceptibility to nature's beauties, and graphic power in delineating them. From some of the passages in which this wizard potency is displayed, the bards of Hope and Memory, with all their 'mail of proof' and godlike array—with all their admitted greatness in other qualities, must retire. Even Byron, had he lived, unrivalled as he was in one particular by any ancient or modern bard—the fierce and searching energy with which he dissected the mind and heart of man—might have owned, in this quality, 'a brother near his throne.'

In confining myself to the comparison of Robert Montgomery with Rogers and Campbell, I have been induced partly by the kindred style and subjects of their poems. If I have not compared him with other modern poets, of great and deserved repute, it is because their peculiar class of poetry cannot be brought to the same test. Scott's fame rests, and will rest,

not on his poetry, picturesque as it is, and studded with antiquarian 'gems of price,' but on his inimitable and immortal prose. In one respect, there is an analogy between the leading distinction of his prose and that of Robert Montgomery's verse—that which constitutes the mystic charm of his novels—his GRAPHIC POWER—the vigour with which he paints a scene in all the vivid reality of hue and outline on the startled retina of the imagination. Moore is as a lyrist unmatched—a 'glittering star, apart,' moving to heavenly music—the combined Anacreon and Catullus of Britain. Robert Montgomery is a poet of the old and sterling English school: he is original, but he is no mannerist—he does not try poetical experiments on style. His poetry is regular—hence he cannot be brought into possible comparison with the school tauntingly termed the 'Lake,'—Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth, mighty names, whom, though I differ with them as to the poetical theory which they have endeavoured to set up, I mention with the homage due to great talents. Their imagination seems too visionary for the guidance or apprehension of common judgment, too diseasedly nauseated with common but life-bearing food, and too misdirected by an overweening and morbid craving for unlicensed novelty. Moreover, their *chief distinction* is, that they *reject* the rigid *orthodox canons* by which I have guided my argument through the whole of this inquiry, and act up to their doctrine of dissent by dissenting practice. Condemned

by Pope to original poetical sin, they condemn Pope in return, to the purgatory of their contempt. They are no more tangible, therefore, by the reach of my argument, than if they lived in another world.

Neither are Wilson's admirable poem, the *City of the Plague*, nor the *World before the Flood*, of James Montgomery, nor the single *Poemata* of other writers, such as Croly, Hunt, Cornwall, &c., nor the matchless common-life scenes of the Wilkie of poetry—Crabbe—to be passed without just commendation. But I have instituted a higher comparison, and the fate of secondary bards must be included in that of the primary. If I award a palm above the secondary class to Montgomery, it will be on many and broad grounds, which I shall feel it my duty to recapitulate; but among them, I may now name one hitherto unnoticed. Unlike the narrower limitation of the bards to whom I have compared him, he has, without once quitting the domain of regular poetry, shewn himself a master in all the four domains of taste, partitioned between the perception of the *sublime*, the *new* or *picturesque*, the *beautiful*, and the *satirical*.

Again, there are the female poets of this poetical æra—a bright constellation of talent, glittering with the starry *lyre* and *crown* of Mitford and Hemans. To these our male poets, of whatever degree, ought to yield precedence. Gallantry forbids a comparison which begins by admitting doubt. There is no Salic law in poetry. For my part, I please myself with foreseeing, and

should wish to see, a tenth Muse enthroned on the topmost pinnacle of Parnassus, and a new Elizabethan period of female pre-eminence in poetry, rather than in legislation. Nor do I stand alone in the persuasion, that the art which adorns and purifies, softens, elevates, and delights, belongs, *par eminence*, to woman; to man, the more stern and ambitious research of scientific discovery. To this opinion it is scarcely to be hoped that the present age will defer; but the next, perhaps, will accept and confirm it.

With Lord Byron no living poets will bear comparison. Comparison would annihilate the living and insult the dead. I have thought myself compelled to abstain from it, by the proprieties of social and reverential feeling. Of Byron, all who can appreciate genius, must be proud to say with me—

> Neque ego illi detrahere ausim
> Hærentem capiti, multâ cum laude coronam.

My scope of subject, as limited by critical precedent and law, has these advantages: first, that it obviates all necessity of comparison between poetic regularity and irregularity—between the orthodoxy and sectarianism of Parnassus; second, that Rogers and Campbell being admitted as the heads of the regular school, a comparison of Montgomery with them (since every *minor* is included in the *major*) will decide the question as to all the subordinates of the same school. It is well that the limits of this inquiry are thus prescribed by the rules laid down in its outset, otherwise a

pamphlet would be insufficient for its embrace; and the brief notice imposed by duty might be often mistaken for misappreciation or contempt. Could I allow myself to depart from the above rules, I should be probably led to this conclusion, among others—that Montgomery deserves a station by the side of Rogers and Campbell; but that all three are inferior to Southey. I say this with reference to the vivid poetic feeling—the pictural *vis* of imaginative creation, breathing and burning through those magnificent irregularities, *Thalaba* and the *Curse of Kehama*. With reference especially to the latter, Daniell never startled or fascinated the eye with more living picturings of the gorgeous landscapes, the architectural sublimities, and idolatrous pomps of India. But neither my scope nor space will allow me to fill up the conditional comparison thus merely outlined; and I must, therefore, leave the apparent paradox as I have stated it, in the form of a postulate, rather than a demonstration; namely, Southey's *natural* superiority to all living poets in the highest and truest constituent of poetical imagination, GRAPHIC FORCE—his *conditional* inferiority, as one of the founders of an irregular poetical school, which excludes him from the range of this inquiry.

It is only with the great living duumvirate of *regular poetry*, that the comparison can be and ought to be made—in order to demonstrate how near their grade, in the scale of poetical eminence, Montgomery

rises; or how much beneath their standard, in deference to truth, he may be admitted to sink.

Although compelled to be brief by the compass of my subject, it may be advisable here to acquit myself of slurring over the comparison with Rogers and Campbell, by adding a short analysis of their standard works. Had these great men (they deserve the title) unhappily postponed publication till now—their 'faultless verse' would not have been invulnerable to modern criticlings;

Critics like these would make it prose again—

Would the twin stars—the gemini of modern poetry—have piloted their vessel safely through the *Sympleyades* of conflicting politics and covert envy? Most probably: but with such stubborn opposition to encounter, and with such accumulated competition to vanquish, it may be fair to infer, that it was lucky for their unquestioned pre-eminence, that it was established in a different æra*. Of the various didactic bards whom I have brought into comparison,

* Surely, if as Mr. Montgomery's opponents say, that he has *without merit* achieved the feat of *eleven editions* in his *Omnipresence*, and this in the midst of a competition unexampled in talent and number, they pay but a poor compliment to the present duumvirate of heroic poetry, since they thus insinuate that part of the now secured laurels of the latter, under the shade of which they enjoy a *somewhat timid* '*otium cum dignitate*,' might have been owing to a stage comparatively free from competition and inspection. The perennial offsets of their genius might, under more adverse auspices, have dwindled into narrower verdure—perhaps have been strangled by the neighbouring overgrowth of talent.

it may be said, that in *sentiment*, Akenside chiefly occupies himself with the real or ideal properties of things—Rogers and Campbell, chiefly with their moral or intellectual associations—Byron with the innermost phenomena of matter and mind—Montgomery, chiefly with the exterior properties and qualities of natural objects. Darwin, as it has been elsewhere urged, poetically represented the feeling of the revolution's birth—Byron, of its close. Campbell may be said to embody the same innovating spirit as Darwin; but divested of its insane excitement and mitigated into liberalism. Nor does this analogy between Darwin and Campbell hold only with regard to sentiment. It is still more striking with regard to diction. Campbell is Darwin improved. Few will refuse their assent to this assertion, when perusing the evidence of the following lines, which are extracted from the *Pleasures of Hope*. In many of them, the artificial balanced structure is not merely Darwinian, but Darwin himself revived.

His *winged insects* and his *rosy flowers*.
Her *whisker'd pandours* and her *fierce hussars*.
Dust in the *wind*, or *dew* upon the *flower*.
Strength in her *arms*, or *mercy* in her *woe*.
An *artless* savage but a *fearless* man.
The *patriot's virtue*, and the *poet's song*.
The *sword* of Brutus and the Theban *lyre*.
The *Thracian trumpet* and the *Spartan song*.

Of *England's glory* and *Helvetia's arms.*
The *smile of triumph* or the *frown of scorn.*
Their *wealthless lot* or *pitiless command.*
&c. &c.

Of the second peculiarity of Darwin's diction, his *Latin neology*, I find but one example, '*horrent;*' of his third, his material personifications—none; but his fourth and last, the *reiterated verb*, runs through the entire poem. The following passage is again, in this particular, completely Darwin.

He *sweeps* before the wind,
Treads the lov'd shore, he sigh'd to leave behind,
Meets at each step a friend's familiar face,
And *flies* at last to Helen's long embrace;
Wipes from her cheek the rapture-speaking tear,
And *clasps* with many a sigh his *children dear.*

Again,

Dropp'd from her nerveless grasp the shatter'd spear,
Closed her bright eye, and *curb'd* her high career.

Again,

Wav'd her dread standard to the breeze of morn,
Peal'd her loud drum, and *twang'd* her trumpet horn.
&c. &c.

Campbell's beauties, a few of the most striking of which have been quoted, are indeed numerous, and diffused over the whole poem. Like Rogers, in the *Pleasures of Memory*, he seldom rises to the sublime; nay, to the two or three previously extracted passages,

generally quoted as sublime, the word magnificent (expressing splendour and greatness, somewhat artificial, and divested of the awe of terror) would, perhaps, be more applicable The picturesque, or new, is equally rare; there is, however, one passage of pictural and picturesque force, in the description of the Swedish hero's fatal march through a snow storm, to Pultowa:—

Froze every standard sheet, and *hush'd* the *drum*.

Campbell's chief defect of diction is that of Darwin,—a stilted, artificial monotony; the cæsura tiresomely falling, line after line, on the same accented pivot of the ten-syllabled *see-saw*. He has another—his over-chastened and classical polish often descends to tameness, and sometimes to low expressions. Thus we have—'Children dear,' *vide supra;* 'can wisdom *lend the pledge?*' 'sapient eye,' 'sapient rule.' This latter word, vulgarized into irony, has been objected to Montgomery.

Again—

Every *form* that fancy can *repair*.
From dark oblivion, * * *
Twang'd her trumpet horn, * * *
From whence each bright *rotundity* was *hurl'd*.

'Viewless winds,' 'viewless eyes;' this equivocal adjective has been objected to Montgomery: viewless means *unseeing* as well as *unseen*.

Deep from *his vaults* the *Loxian murmurs* flow.

'Vaults' is unpoetical; the passage is, besides, bad grammar. Whose vaults? The poet means, but does not express, those of the Apollo Loxius. The next line is rendered low by an *unlucky* anachronism—

> And Pythia's awful *organ* peals below.

He says of the spheres, in the language of the parade, that they—

> Peal'd their first notes to *sound the march* of time.

The following is associated with a low image: a similar passage in Montgomery has been objected to—

> Or round the *cope* (ring?) her living *chariot* driven,
> And *wheel'd* in triumph thro' the signs of heaven.

> How can thy words from balmy slumber *start*
> Reposing virtue?

The bard here means *cause to start;* the word is ungrammatical, unless in the vulgarized sense, in which it is *nautically* used. But enough on this head; here is enough, and more than enough, to shew that the most *faultless* poet of the day might furnish ample employment to hypercriticism. Mr. Campbell affects, like R. Montgomery, compound words, which, with some exceptions, appear unobjectionable. 'Terror-mingled,' 'wonder-beaming,' 'passion-kindling,' 'rapture-heightened,' 'love-delighted,' 'carnage-covered,' '*broomwood-blossomed,*' &c. &c. His *rhymes* are elaborately perfected, and may be pronounced faultless.

Rogers's standard poem, the *Pleasures of Memory*, is free from Campbell's Darwinian ill taste of diction. It is pure and sweet, both in verse and thought. A polished equability, sometimes tinctured with pathos, and often adorned with picturesque associations, pervades it. It is rarely elevated; never attempts the sublime, and its fault in sentiment is what the University men term *essayical;* it is a *theme* replete with sensible and tasteful remarks conveyed in sweet and flowing verse. In confirmation of this opinion, I may here quote a passage of *great beauty*, both in diction and sentiment, in addition to another already quoted.

> When joy's bright sun has shed his evening ray,
> And hopes delusive meteors cease to play;
> When clouds on clouds the smiling prospect close,
> Still thro' the gloom thy star serenely glows;
> Like yon fair orb, she gilds the brow of night
> With the mild magic of reflected light.

The versification is occasionally, in this poem, but systematically in *Human Life*, deformed with triplets. The latter poem, far inferior to the *Pleasures of Memory* in thoughtful tenderness, and commenced and probably suggested by a plagiarism from Goldsmith, has been rendered a failure by its triplets, from which the anathema of Dr. Johnson * ought to have deterred our bard. Rogers's rhymes, like Campbell's, are faultless; he also affects compound words,—'root-

* Life of Dryden.

inwoven,' 'war-worn,' &c., and sometimes, unhappily, creates a word, as '*tapered* rite.' Occasionally the diction descends from equable to feeble, and from feeble to low. Many instances of the latter might be found by 'word-hunters.' I shall here only note a curious circumstance, that the Poet of Memory, three times in three pages, uses the word steal in the sense, cause to steal, as—

Stealing soft music on the ear of night,—

a circumstance which, coupled with a similar ungrammatical construction in Campbell, demonstrates our want of a causal verb, like that employed in Arabic and its parent *philosophical* language—Hebrew. If there be no example of the sublime in Rogers's *Pleasures of Memory*, replete as it is with picturesque description, it is but justice to add, that a poem, considered as a subordinate epic sketch, by the same bard, shews that the *divina vis* of a more elevated feeling was not wanting. Indeed, justice is not done to the *Voyage of Columbus*. It is but the *ébauche* of an epic poem; and the plot has an unredeemable vice, that of transferring the inspiration of the bard himself to a gratuitous monk,—a vice rendered more fatal by an interchange of the epic pentameter with an imitation of Scott's tetrametrical Iambics. But, if the test of Longinus be correct, that the tasteful critic may recognize the true sublime when he finds his imagination attracted, elevated, and inflamed by that

of the poet, the true sublime may be found among passages of exquisite beauty in the *Voyage of Columbus*. A brief example may be adduced. Describing the flight of Merion, the guardian angel of America, the poet characteristically says, he

> Rose like the *condor*, and at tow'ring height,
> In *pomp of plumage sail'd, deep'ning the shades of night,*
> *Roc of the west*, to him all empire given,
> Who *bears Axalua's* * *dragon folds to heaven:*
> *His flight a whirlwind*, &c.

The commencement of Canto the Second, alluding to the submersion of the Atlantis of Plato and Solon, or rather of the Egyptian priests, might be referred to as another example; and the conclusion of the passage, which describes 'armed shapes' of godlike stature, slowly passing along the red battlement of the evening sky—

> *Streaming a baleful light that was not of the sun,*

is radiant with sublime splendour, and imbued with mysterious excitement. The most striking feature of this epic sketch, and with the notice of which I shall conclude, is 'germane to the matter' of this pamphlet. I mean the *graphic power* of its occasional descriptions —a sure test of an excited imagination, and therefore, of the highest order of poetry. It is curious, that here, and here only, in direct opposition to his usual style,

* The resemblance of the theology of Mexico to the Egyptian, Chinese, and Scandinavian, cannot here fail to strike the antiquarian. Her chronology and astronomy were Chinese.

Rogers resorts to those *pictural words* and phrases which have been noticed as the chief beauty and peculiar distinction of Montgomery. For example;

> And from his *wings of gold* shook *drops of liquid light.*

> Oh whence as wafted from Elysium, whence
> Those perfumes, strangers to the raptured sense?
> Those *boughs of gold* and fruits of *heavenly hue,*
> *Tinging* with *vermeil* light the *waters blue?*

But—

> Whose cunning *carved* this *vegetable bowl?*

does not express the *vivid* image of P. Martyr: Ex ligno *lucido* confectum, et *arte mira laboratum.*

Again—

> Where many a *fire-fly* shooting thro' the glade
> *Spangled the locks* of many a lovely maid,
> Who now *danced forth to strew our path with flowers.*

> There guavas *blush'd* as in the *vales of light.*

The episode of the *Fount of Youth*—a beautiful Mexican fable, sung by the humming-bird—

> *Gem full of life,* the *fairy king of flowers*—

is exquisitely vivid; of the mystic fount he says,

> It met the sun in many a *rainbow shower*
> *Murmuring delight:* its *living waters* roll'd
> 'Mid *branching palms* and *amaranths of gold.*

While instituting the preceding comparison of affinities suggested by a review of the *Omnipresence,* I may

not inappropriately adduce the following passages, bearing out my view of the resemblance of Montgomery's style in *Satan* to Cowper, Young and Akenside. They are less faultless than the first, but not so tame: on the other hand, they are more faultless and free from *conceits* and wordy amplification than the two last. The subjoined resembles Cowper's passages, 'For wealth too grasping,' and 'Ambition, avarice,' *Task*, Book III*. I am sorry my space will only allow me to refer to, not to quote the kindred passages, in the three above-named authors.

To eyes,
Where avarice hath raised a blinding film
That flatters, while it bounds the view, her scenes
Array'd, and glowing with commercial pomp,
More costly than the sun-enchanted skies
Appear. Triumphantly outspreads the show
Of Trade, of Traffic, and their sumptuous world!
See! from yon ports what merchant-vessels spread,
Daunting the winds, and dancing o'er the waves,
Rich wares and living burden, while the breeze
Toys with the flag, and fills the panting sail.
Others, from many a tempest-haunted track
Return'd, in thunder beat their homeward way,
And send their spirit wreathing on the gales!
Then hark! amid this wilderness of domes,
Dark lanes, and smoke-roof'd streets,—what mingled roar,

* These lines of observing and cold irony on selfish snugness may be quoted as a happy specimen of analogy to the polished antitheses of Cowper—

Too mean for virtue, too polite for vice,
The happy medium which their spirits keep
Is fully toned to temporal joys.—*Satan*, p. 146

While Commerce, in her thousand shapes and moods,
With eager hand and greedy eye, pursues
Her round of wonders, and of gain.
* * * * *
Yet here, methinks, had not one hideous thirst
For lucre parch'd all pity from the mind,
The hollow cheeks, and livid brow of Toil,
That, lean, and yellow'd by infectious gloom,
Droops o'er his hateful task,—might pang the heart
Of Selfishness, in her most griping hour.
Here, too, amid the pestilential glow
Of heated chambers, where in sad revenge
Art flourishes o'er fading life,—are pent
The infant young, and friendless orphan poor ;—
They who should gambol on the lusty meads,
While gamesome blood danced beauty through their cheeks,
Thus doom'd to languish in degenerate toils !—
Why, what a hell-slave will this Commerce prove,
When life and feeling perish for her cause !
* * * * * *
Already hath an evil spell begun ;
Though a proud empire will not see, her heart
Is fever'd with a fest'ring mass of thought,—
A lust of gain, that rankles into lies,
O'er fraudful means, or knavish arts ; while Truth,
Integrity, and Honour, are diseased,
And die away in avaricious dreams.

The next extract will remind the reader of a favourite cognate passage in Akenside—

Yet who the summer, that bright season-queen,
Hath hail'd, beheld the march of midnight worlds,
The sun in glory, or his skiey realm,
When thunder-demons are abroad again,
And riding on the chariot roll of clouds !
Who that hath seen the ocean-terrors swell,
Or moonshine rippling o'er the rocking waves

In smiles of beauty,—all this living might,
And motion, grace, and majesty of things,—
Nor caught some impulse that believing heart
Might share, and crown it with a creed sublime?

Again, Akenside's admirers will not fail to be pleased with the subjoined extract, on the score of diction and imagery—

Such will not ever be: thy death-gloom pierced,
And awful on the unimprison'd soul
Will blaze a *sun-burst* of revealing truth!
Wherein these mysteries of sight and sense
Shall all unravell'd lie.—The wizard Night
In cavern darkness robed; the lone sweet star,
Oft worshipp'd for a beatific orb
Where bright Immortals dwell; the moon's romance,
The sun's enchantment, when he wakes to smile
The day abroad, or paint departing Life
By his deep setting; with the spirit-tone
Of winds, the ocean's ever mutt'ring choir
Of billows, weaving her mysterious spell,—
And all that thus predominantly awes
Or saddens feeling, shall itself resolve
In spiritual completion. Then, thy tear
Ecstatic, radiant with adoring thought;
The rapture, thrilling like a viewless chain
From Heaven let down, and link'd around the soul,
Shall be translated by unbodied mind.—

This subjoined short sentence is strikingly like Young—

By Day the present, but at Night the past
Prevails.

Again,—

When this world dies, the next begins to live.

Again,—

Creatures, whose souls outweigh a world, awake!
Methinks I hear a pitying angel cry.

In the next passage, the first line in *italics* resembles Young; the last line is stamped with sublime force—

How well,
For many, had they brute enjoyers been
Of homely nature, or, as trees and flowers,
Than, charter'd with undying mind, to live
Mere breath and blood, without a spirit train'd
To pure advancement in the destined walks
Of reason, and magnetically sway'd
By truths that up to heaven and glory lead.—
He lives the longest who has thought the most;
And by sublime anticipation felt,
That what 's immortal must progressive prove,
Or, *downward darken to avenging night.*—

To conclude: the blank verse exordium of the *Omnipresence* has also a passage resembling Young's better style—

Another day
Is dead! and, with it, many a breathing shape
Of life shall breathe no more. Many an eye,
That smiled upon the morn, is film'd and cold;
Many a heart, that leapt with living joy,
Is spiritless and still,—a solemn thought,
Truth-born, and deep. But Life o'ershadows Death
Beneath her brilliant wings; and day on day,
And hour on hour is piled: yet unappall'd
We glitter on life's varied road, until
The death-knell mutters o'er our tombs, and some
Communer with the midnight, when he hears
The dusky steeples moaning to the clouds,
Shall sigh and say—"*Another day is dead!*"

Montgomery's description of the *Last Day* has been referred to: its fault is inflation; but it may be here said, that it is free from the prevailing blemish, of Young's *Last Day*—his forced and glittering conceits. Young compares the souls roused by the last trumpet, to *clustering bees*. Montgomery says 'the dust of ages *startles into life*;' and adds—

> The sea has heard it; *coiling up with dread*
> Myriads of mortals *flash* from out her bed.

Young compares the stars to *bunches of grapes on a vine*. Montgomery says of their appearance at nightfall—

> Heaven's blue concave *blossoms out in stars*.

THE next avowed publication of Robert Montgomery in the scale of merit is his volume containing the *Universal Prayer*, *Death*, the *Vision of Heaven*, and the *Vision of Hell*. The *Universal Prayer* is hardly worthy of his fame; and *Death*, though it contains some striking passages, does not appear to me characterised by his usual energy and originality. The following picture is however exquisite.

CONSUMPTION.

With step as *noiseless* as the *summer air*,
Who comes in *beautiful decay*?—her eyes
Dissolving with a *feverish glow of light*,
Her *nostrils delicately closed*, and on
Her cheek a *rosy tint*, as if the *tip*
Of Beauty's finger faintly press'd it there,—
Alas! CONSUMPTION is her name.

I may be excused another extract, equally beautiful, which recalls to mind the witching transitions and magic melody of the divine Weber, in his *yet unappreciated Oberon.*

A STORM AND SHIPWRECK.

Listen!—for, hear ye not the startled Winds
Invisibly are coming from their caves?
Fierce as avenging fiends from hell evoked,
They march, and madden with a mingled howl;
Creation *cowers* to the waking Storm,
And *darkens* as the *ocean-chaos* did
Beneath the *spirit-shadow* of her God!—
Again! again! the congregated Winds
Unroll their voices,—they have roused the Sea,
And on her back ten thousand thousand waves,
Like wings of wrath, are swelling as they rise!
Above, the rocky clouds are wildly clash'd,
Till *darkness quickens into light!* and fierce
And far the thunder-demons whirl their roar,
Rattling the heavens until they burst in rain;
While echoes wake and shiver as they roll,
And *lightnings dart like daggers* from the clouds!
Alone upon the *leaping billows,* lo!
What *fearful Image works its way?* A ship!
Shapeless and wild, as by the *storm begot;*
Her *sails dishevell'd* and her *massy form*
Disfigur'd, yet tremendously sublime:
Prowless and helmless through the waves she rocks,
And writhes, as if in agony! Like him,
Who to the last, amid o'erwhelming foes,
Sinks with a bloody struggle into death,
The vessel combats with the battling waves,
Then *fiercely dives below,*—the *Thunders roll*
Her requiem, and Whirlwinds howl for joy!—

Look!—where a *lash of lightning stripes the sea,*—
Like straw upon the wind, a bark is whirl'd
From wave to wave! within, a pale-faced crew

Sit dumb as phantoms ; with their *eyes bedimmed,*
Their *locks all foamy* and their *lips unclosed* ;
And when the clouds unsheath their fires, against
The *wizard glare, their upturn'd faces gleam*
In one despairing row !—Their doom is seal'd
Above !—Death howls in every *wolfish blast,*
And rides on each gigantic wave ! the Sea
Shall be their sepulchre, *their coffins be*
Her caves, until the summon'd Ocean hear
The death-trump, and her bosom'd dead arise !

The sudden scenic evanishing of this Weberian transition is full of enchantment ?

Wave, wind, and thunder have departed ! *shrunk*
The vision'd ocean from my view,—and lo !
A *distant landscape,* dawning forth amid
The bright suffusion of a *summer sun.*
On yonder mead, that like a windless lake
Shines in the glow of heaven, a cherub boy
Is bounding, playful as a breeze new born,
Light as the beam that dances by his side.
Phantom of beauty ! with his trepid *locks*
Gleaming like water-wreaths,—a flower of life.

The *Vision of Hell* is as gorged with images of sublime terror, as the *Vision of Heaven* is begemmed with exquisite picturings of Elysian beauty and angelic splendour. The first (especially in the passage which describes the fiery form and agonized enthronement of Satan) resembles the gorgeous orientalisms and splendid horrors of Vathek : the last is coloured by a Swedenburgian hue of religious Platonism ; the welcoming, by two angels, of liberated souls into the garden of heaven is redolent with beauty, and the whole scene, tinted with that 'roseate glow' with which Proclus clothes

his Platonic Elysium, will remind the reader of the fascinating mysticism of Klopstock. I subjoin the contrasted passages.

HEAVEN.

The palace of the mighty God,
Expanded into view!—My living soul!
With awful feeling enter where He dwells.
* * * * *
An empyréan infinitely vast
And irridescent, roof'd with rainbows, whose
Transparent gleams a mingled radiance shed,
Before me lay: Beneath this dazzling vault,
Glory, beyond the wonder of the heart
To dream, around interminably blazed.—
I felt, but cannot paint the vision there!
* * * * *
Stillness ethereal reign'd, and forth appear'd
Elysian creatures, robed in fleecy light,
Together flocking from celestial haunts,
And mansions of purpureal mould.
* * * * *
The hallow'd choir was hush'd; and I beheld
Cherubic forms of immaterial grace
And beauty walk o'er amaranthine meads,
And soar on shining pinions; as they sail'd,
Their radiance quiver'd forth, and from each wing
Soft as the breeze, and silky as a cloud,—
A gleam play'd liquidly around their path.
* * * * *
Of archangelic mien, upon the wing
Two Shapes I watch'd, careering to the bound
Of vision: lighting there, they welcom'd in
Three happy Spirits, by THE LAMB redeem'd.
* * * * *
In a bower
Remote, whose emerald leaves with liquid drops
Of light were gemm'd, two angels next I mark'd

In sympathetic converse sat. Amid
The stormy world below, they had o'erwatch'd
The errant beings just arrived: through all
Their ways of sin and woe, their guardian power
Presided, until Mercy came to crown
Their doom, and they were saved, and seal'd for Heaven.
Seraphic sweetness from their lips exhaled,
As, wrapt with angel love, th' immortal pair
Their tale of heavenly triumph told.

HELL.

Apart, upon a throne of living fire
The fiend was seated; in his eye there shone
The look that dared OMNIPOTENCE; the light
Of sateless vengeance, and sublime despair,—
He sat amid a burning world, and saw
Tormented myriads, whose blaspheming shrieks
Were mingled with the howl of hidden floods,
And Acherontine groans; of all the host,
The only dauntless he! As o'er the wild
He glanced, the pride of agony endured
Awoke, and writhed through all his *giant frame*,
That redden'd and dilated like a sun!
Till, moved by some remember'd bliss or joy
Of paradisian hours, or to supply
The cravings of infernal wrath,—he bade
The roar of Hell be hush'd,—and silence was!
He call'd the cursed,—and they *flash'd from cave*
And *wild*—from dungeon and from den they came,
And stood an *unimaginable mass*
Of spirits agonized with burning pangs.

The *Age Reviewed*, and the *Puffiad*, are imputed to Mr. R. Montgomery; and, though not avowed, are not denied. A studied detail of them may be passed over: notice and extract are, however, necessary to show the probable *quo animo* of the late attack. Notwithstanding its great scope, the *Age*

Reviewed appears incomplete—the *Puffiad* complete, though a mere single sheaf of the great harvest of satire which life presents.

It should never be forgotten, that the former satire was written at the age of nineteen; and those who recollect that Pitt was so early matured in the giant proportions of his *fatal* eloquence as to wield the destinies of the world at twenty-one, will not consider this fact as derogatory from genius, but the contrary.

I shall dispose of the *Puffiad* first. If the *Age Reviewed* may be, in fierce vituperation and range of purpose, compared to Juvenal, the style occasionally approaches to that of the orthodox poet, Young, in his powerful satire the *Universal Passion*. The *Puffiad* may be compared to some of the lighter censures of Horace, in its playful range; but approximates still nearer to Young, who, Johnson says, unites the different qualities of Horace and Juvenal, without the laxity of the former, and the latter's deficiency of image. It is pointed and epigrammatic; the wit is sharp, and the thought is weighty; but, like Young's sarcasm, it plays chiefly on the surface of actions. It is mock heroic, like the *Dunciad;* it has a hero like that, and numerous victims. The diction is terse (unlike Mr. Montgomery's usual redundant style), and the imagery and metaphors are appropriately adapted to the subject. A few of the latter are added, which are original, and will remind the reader of the sly smartness of Pope. Of universal knowledge, he says—

Like a mad *cracker*, let her whisk and run,
And *brighten every hole* beneath the sun.

Dull scribbling *cannibals*, such authors sit,
And grin and *gorge* upon *each other's wit.*

A rhyming race,
Who creep and drag their filthy trail around,
Like *crawling snails* upon the slime-laced ground.

The diction is equally appropriate to the subject—witness the following terse, pointed, and energetic sentences. Of certain critics he says:

They *fly-blow* every line.

With *rotten laurels rustling* on his brow.

. . . . Fume of ropy brains
Begot by dulness. . . . .

Bid *the stifled lumber breathe again.*

Make dirt more dirty than it was before.

The syllables *run scampering* into rhyme.

They *crawl away like spiders fat with blood.*

He terms battered dandies,

Diseased perfumes.

Unlucky criticisms,

Crude disasters of the quill.

Filthy bloom of vice.

Sallow belles that *bloom*,
Like *mouldy parchment* with a rank perfume.

Belles first, and now beaux:

Full in the street, where *fashion's pimpled apes*
Limp forth at noon to *show their poker shapes.*

One of the culinary authors is thus described:

See round his frizzly pate what grandeur plays,
While his eyes twinkle with a *kitchen* blaze;

Thou stuff'st the meat with scientific hand,
And *rott'st the noblest stomach of the land.*

He *melts* a line from out his *frosty* brain:
So from the *rooftops*, when the sun is felt,
Reluctant snows in dirt-striped crystals mel .

'Reminiscent rubbish' is described as 'pestering fat octavos,'

Pick'd from brains
Addled and heavy with their rakish pains.

I pass over quotations giving too clear explanation of the secret causes of the late combined attack on Mr. R. Montgomery, unwilling to give offence myself. My argument will suffer by doing so, but my courtesy will be preserved. The passages, therefore, in which 'Quack Reviews,' 'Monthly Humdrums,' 'Lettered cutthroats,' and the system of 'Puff me, puff thee,' are wittily, but too uncompromisingly dealt with, I shall beg leave to pass over, as well as to forbear extracting the witty comparison of the 'Parnassian state,' God wot, to a 'mixed herd of pigs,' 46; and shall proceed to the satirical sentiment. The following passages, describing Impudence the 'mighty mother' of Puff, and her *protegé*, the Hero, will not unfavourably remind the reader of the *Dunciad.*

Oh! bull-eyed goddess! let me pause awhile,
And thank thee for thy favours tow'rd our isle:
Here, with a full-blown pomp and painted mien,
Thou walk'st in brazen beauty o'er each scene;
Bless'd be thy bounty, for thou gav'st us, &c.

Viewless to vulgar eyes, he [*Mr. Puff*] sits alone,
With embryo puffs and papers round him thrown,

In the *snug corner* of a noiseless room
(*True greatness loves to be enwrapt in gloom*)
Here, unbeheld, he plies the live-long day,
At composition short, but *sure to pay*.
No muggy tomes from the Museum store,
No mildew'd relics of the hacks of yore,
He needs! *true genius* prompts the glowing line
Where avarice and impudence combine:
The *sterling* vigour of his pen ne'er fails,
Alike in novels, memoirs, and in tales;—
Yes! mark the magic of its lies support,
With smutty trash, the country and the court,—
Wake tender itchings in the public mind,
Astound the learned, and mislead the blind:
His puffs appeal—the nation hears the call—
They strike, they tickle, and they cozen all!

The following passage will remind the reader, and not disadvantageously, of Cowper and Pope.

Our ancestors—monotonously good!
Liv'd on, poor souls! as virtuous as they could;
So plainly honest, and so bluntly pure,
They liv'd in calm simplicity secure;
Content to make their paradise at home,
They seldom frisk'd in France, or whined at Rome;
No snug elopement, or polite crim. con.,
For paper-grubs, or law, to live upon,—
No London trip, to run the crazy round
Of Vice above, and Folly under ground,—
* * * * * *
No stage-worn beldames to amuse the land
With wedding fuss, or love at second hand;
No dirty demirep, no paltry peer
To cram the papers with their foul career:
Good heavens! how dull the way of life they trod,—
Adorn'd their country, and adored their God!
And here, fair Muse! applaud the rich who roam
To sun-rouged lands,—and leave their debts at home;

Who catch the Gallic smile—th' Ausonian mien,
And glossy manners of a foreign scene,
And thence returning, kindly spread around
The continental itch on British ground.

This is equal to a passage on the same subject in Cowper; but not to the politely scornful irony of a celebrated passage in Pope's shew-up of diplomatic nurselings:

Led by my hand, he saunter'd Europe round,
And gather'd every vice on Christian ground, &c.
Dunciad, 4th Book 311, &c.

The following has great *verve*, and finishes with an expression perfectly Juvenalian, '*Carted* round the world!' Nor is the *insurrectionary* vehemence of the fifth line less remarkable. Will Mr. Robert Montgomery's detractors say that this passage, evidently thrown off in mere playful power, is not poetry? They cannot master it by any passage in the *English Bards*.

Spirits that burn'd with an heroic glow,
Awake! arise! resume your reign below!
Again with Vice a valiant contest wage,
And blast the brazen monsters of the age;
Down with the domes where titled scoundrels meet;
And lash the dastard dogs from street to street,
Till every C———d from his throne be hurl'd,
Cursed by the good, and carted round the world!

This short outline of 'one alone of the Parnassian throng', is bitterly dashed out;

Made up of every cold and jealous art,
Beloved by none he crawls his reptile way;
Stabs where he can, and slanders for his pay.

The next passage I shall adduce is equally energetic, and concludes with a thought of deadly and annihilating scorn.

Ye of the empty skull! unsafe, unsound,--
Ye critic-gnats, that sting and buzz around;
Obsequious grubs, whose idiotic page
Is wet-nurse to the *wig-wams* of the age,—
How shall the muse portray your petty arts,
Your addled heads, or your polluted hearts?
* * * * * *
'Tis hard to tell the baser of the two,—
The one who writes or reads each quack review;
Such letter'd cutthroats in the cause unite,
Such knaves direct them, and such numskulls write!
A critic!—that's a man, whose mind should be
Steep'd in the lore of sage antiquity;
Of taste well modell'd, and of judgment sound,—
Unprejudiced, untainted, and profound:
But say, amid the fry of critics now,
With dainty eye, and Aristarchian brow,
How seldom shall we find the man whose mind
Is fit to helm the judgment of mankind!
How much I scorn SOME ignominious crews,
Plump with the vulgar venom of reviews,—
How much I loathe their miserable yell,
Hate is too blunt, and verse too weak to tell:
If such upon this humble page of mine
Shall condescend to pen a fulsome line,
May the mean tools eject their rankest bile,
And dub me "wretch," and all they deem more vile;
FROM THESE A LINE OF WELL INTENDED PRAISE
WOULD BE THE FOULEST BLOT UPON AN AUTHOR'S DAYS!

Concentrated Imagery is the main characteristic of Mr. Montgomery's style in his didactic poems. In his satires we see him under a different aspect. Ju-

venal's power consists in an analogical property—that of concentrating an entire logical argument into three or four energetic phrases—sometimes, indeed, condensing a whole thesis into a single word. This untranslateable writer,—(untranslateable without a circumlocution, which disguises, or misrepresents his true character—I say this, *meo periculo*, notwithstanding the excellent *paraphrases* of Hodgson, and even Gifford,)—effects the magical result sometimes by a collocation of words, varying their force like counters by position, often by *prolepsis*, often by briefly insinuating an inference, overstepping the logical stages by which it is reached. If several of Mr. Montgomery's words, in his imaginative poetry, concentrate similes, or resemble *pictures*, some of Juvenal's words resemble single algebraic characters, which represent an entire reasoning process. The latter's style is perfectly divested of images; and it will be seen that, with all his exuberant imagery in descriptive poems, Mr. Montgomery uses scarcely any in the *Age Reviewed*, but adapts himself, with the native tact and elasticity of genius, to the severe style appropriate to the subject, and of which Juvenal furnishes the model.

In the following passages, the rushing sonorousness of the verse, and the glowing vehemence of the denunciation, often rise above the common level of poetical satire to the sublime. To save space and time, I shall follow the example of 'my learned friends',—whose polite attention is solicited,—by criticising with italics

and notes of admiration. At the same time they must accord me the liberty of arranging the satirical extracts in a dramatic form. Up curtain!

OVERTURE TO THE 'MARCH OF MIND.'

Tune—the 'ROGUE'S MARCH.'

Delightful period!—dare we mock the truth,
When age puts on the wantonness of youth?
When female love is barter'd like her bed,
And griping beldames force the maid to wed,
When matrons wallow in eternal vice,
And *palsied swindlers snivel* o'er their dice; (!!)
'Woe!' cries Britannia, sovereign of the sea,
How sinecures and Germans plunder me;
Wet-nurse for aliens, and their toading trains,
I waste my mint, and desolate my plains;
While beastly eunuchs, if they twirl and squall,
Pipe on the stage, or straddle at a ball,
From my domain may pick voluptuous fare,
And pocket thousands for a *gargled air!* (!!)

A few more bars of the same strain—

Yes! every blockhead born to clean the mews,
To patch our breeches, or to mend our shoes,
Cocks his pert eye, uplifts his pompous brow,
And dubs himself a politician now. (!!)
Avaunt, ye minions!!

CONCLUDING CRASH.

Can aught of PATRIOTIC fervour grace
The heart-corruptions of your reptile race?
Will the foul frothings of ignoble spite
Protect your country or the freeman right?
Go!—*dip your nasty quills in Grub-street mire*,
Traduce for malice, and lampoon for hire;

Cling to the cursed columns that ye scrawl,
Like bloated beetles on a slime-lick'd wall;
There mask the foulness of your covert aim,
And *strut in all the energy of shame!* (!!)

Recipe for a Modern Tragedy.

Compound some proverbs of obscurest growth,
The *mouldy remnants of the dust and moth;*
Add quantums due of powder, flash, and smoke,
The scenic whistle, and the poniard's stroke,—
With all appliances of fort and gun,
Dish up five acts—the tragedy is done!
Six times shall thund'ring sticks, and hired huzzas,
Force the vile stuff, and wake the slow applause.
Ye managerial knaves, whose nod decides,
Whose pocket judges, and whose whim provides,
Before your glance the *manuscript must shake,*
And *shirtless* authors feel a *fellow-quake.*

[*Enter a Persona Dramatis.*]

'I'm first!' cries Fungus, 'unabash'd I'll stand,
Nor step behind the noblest of the land!
Though scullion-bred, my kitchen tones declare,—
Should I deny—my mother basted there:
I rival Farquhar with my spotted hounds,
In domes, in palaces, and myrtle-grounds?
What boots a doughty title more than these,
While Erskine's ragged widow crave her cheese
And Thespian harlots swim the stage by night,
To keep their peers by day, and titles bright?

[*Enter Sir Punch.*]

A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN, OR 'JOLTERHEAD,' M.P.

Burden'd with fate, SIR PUNCH to London goes,
'NOES' in his eyes, and 'AYES' upon his nose;—

Room for Sir Punch!—Reporters, nib your pens!
And listen to the '*hows*,' and '*wheres*,' and '*whens*.'
Hark! how his leathern lungs, like bellows, pant,
Heave the big speech, and puff it out in cant;
See how he licks his tooth, and screws his eye,
And twists and twirls his thumbs, he can't tell why.
Like Pythia perch'd upon the Delphic stool,
He writhes and wriggles till his mouth is full,
And then unloads a heap of stubborn stuff,
Till coughs proclaim the House has had enough;
Then down he sits with aching sides and bones,
Just like a hog, convulsed with grunts and groans.

CHORUS TO SIR PUNCH'S PERFORMANCE.

Shame to the sunken state! and Britain's pride,
That e'en, tho' beggar'd, helms a world beside;
Since paltry traders represent our isle
As mean in talent, as in moral vile.
What! shall the knave and blockhead dare to sit
Where Pitt and Sheridan once flash'd their wit?
There is an eloquence in Canning's eye,
And *classic verdure* in his rich reply—
A thoughtful vigour in perspicuous Peel;
But how can ragamuffins speak or feel,
That, job-inspired, to Stephen's mansion flock,
To make the Parliament a grand joint stock?
Big with 'M.P.' behold the mushroom race
Thrust in by bribes to fill a barter'd place;
To *drizzle speeches*, and like pug-dogs perk
In halls once hallow'd by the lips of Burke.
Look at the gang! * * *
When such a herd pollutes St. Stephen's fane,
What patriot mourns not for his country's stain?
Oh! *might one hiss the motley forum fill*, (*!!*
And drive each dunce to his deserted till.

JANUARY AND MAY.

Train'd by some venal, match-contriving jade,
In palsied arms what lovely maidens fade!

Like flowers transplanted to a sandy heath,
Where vapours wither, and pollutions breathe:
What eye can such a loathsome scene behold,
Nor curse the rottenness preserved in gold?
To marry wealth, what anguish will be borne?
A crooked log by night—a child by morn!
His parchment seal'd—the wife attends each whim,
Starts at his groan, and chafes his flannell'd limb;
Hangs round his knee, and whimpers at his wrath,
Secures his tucker, and spoons out his broth;
A vigil, down to periwig and cap,
She prays for death,—and *sees it in his nap!*

ANOTHER BRACE OF CHARACTERS.

Next, see the Rectors, whose ancestral worth,
Secures a 'good fat' living, at their birth;
From college ripe, they chant the hunter's song,
Drink, chase, and shoot the wood's wild 'feather'd throng.'
Let the lean Curate, in his white-wash'd room,
Gulp the small beer, and preach the sinner's doom,—
With foggy throat three sermons growl a day,
And, thankful, feast on sixty pounds for pay!

A WATER PROCESSION, YCLEPED 'SWAN-HOPPING.'

From vulgar scenes, behold a gilded change,
When paunchy shrieves enjoy their wat'ry range;
Now bells are crack'd! and fat the turtle flames—
For proudly sails the charlatan of Thames!
The sinking river sweats beneath its weight,
And *bubbles anger at the capon'd freight;*
While hungry idiots stare along the shore,
Sigh for the soup, or watch the *dripping* oar.

A PROCESSION OF GENTLEMEN OF THE LONG ROBE!

A tribe there is,—the tribe of every street,
That cheat unhang'd, yet help to hang the cheat!
A plague so direful Egypt never saw,—
The *money-gulping vermin* of the law:

See! where the *dapper caitiffs bustling* come,
Whose *teeth-grip'd lips* compress the mutter'd hum;
A savage grin plays on the sallow cheek,
Their knitting brows the augur'd pillage speak;
Beneath their hugging arms tied briefs repose,
And free behind, the ruby tape-string flows:
A cringing, tricky, overbearing host,
Whose law is quibble, and whose cheat's a boast.

[ENTER THE 'CI-DEVANT RESPECTABLE' JOHN BULL AND FAMILY.]

Superbly see the trader's costly bale
Roll'd on the counter for patrician sale;
The brass-lined window, and Peruvian shows
Of silks for belles, and handkerchiefs for beaux—
All prove the spirit of commercial pride,
And shed a glory on the counter's side!
And then the master of this mighty place—
Oh! what a model of slim form and grace!
So prim and spruce—so civet-like and sweet,
Such taper fingers and such dainty feet!
He keeps a groom and 'blood,' and Sabbath chaise,
Olivia waltzes, and Amelia plays.
And then, he gives his ball, and swills his wine,
And deems it courtly not till eve to dine:
In short, no nabob more sublimely swells
Than this same connoisseur of yards and ells,
Till debt and ruin rouse *the rascal's fears*,
And George's white-wash blot the long arrears.

CHORUS TO THE ABOVE PERFORMANCE.

Pride is the monster-passion of the times,
The spring of folly, and the nurse of crimes;
Pride makes the black-leg swindle for his ore,
Pride makes the honest to be so no more;
Pride tempts the guilty to become more vile,
At once the curse and ruin of our Isle!

GRAND INTERLUDE, BETWEEN THE ACTS, ON MERCANTILE SWINDLING.

Tune, TANTARARA ROGUES ALL.

Tremendous ones for *coke, and silk, and steam**,
For *starching bed-gowns* and for *skimming cream;*
For *horseless coaches* and *potato flour,*
For *gin well poison'd,* and for *wine soon sour;*

* Horne Tooke once said to one of that class of traders who are anxious to believe that authors must be visionary and unbusiness-like, and who, to disparage Tooke's authorship, boasted of his own common sense—that his (the boaster's) sense was very *common* indeed. So, it has been pleaded, that commercial men lost their senses during the bubble year. The pleaders are too adulatory; it must have been a very small minority, indeed, that had any senses to lose. The benevolence of parliamentary jobbers, in heaping up mock-mountains of gold, was more obvious than their sense. Like that of the patriarch of bubble-mongers, 'much-injured Blunt,' their patriot purpose, doubtless, was to hasten the present *respectable* and *profitable* euthanasia of party;

To buy both sides, and give their country peace.

I reflect, with pleasure, on having been allied with the *Times* and *Herald*, in various papers (town and provincial) then under my control, in unremitting exposure of the bubble-concoctors. The following leading article, written during the time I edited the *Sheffield Iris*, after the secession of Mr. James Montgomery, was copied into the *Morning Herald.*

'Never was volume more instructive opened to the perusal of mankind, than the recent pages of our cotemporary experience, recounting the history of joint-stock companies—the frauds of their *authors*, and the infatuation of their *dupes*. The *former* were, in many instances, insolvents, whose desperate circumstances stimulated their invention, and who often matured within the walls of a prison that "golden plan" which was destined, like the talisman of a wizard, to change the stone floor of a debtor's cell for a drawing-room with rich carpets, and substitute a splendid directorship for squalid captivity. The *latter*—their dupes—the covetous fools, who rushed blindly into the great gambling-house opened by knaves, under the lazy and absurd delusion of obtaining wealth without labour, and profit without industry, are equally blameable for encouraging, as the former for projecting. Neither our nobility, our bankers, nor our merchants are free from blame, in yielding to that torrent of avaricious cupidity, the fearful reflux of which is now inundating all classes with disaster. Have not some of our nobles sighed after the ores of the South American mountains, and gloated in voluptuous dreams of Sybarite imagination, over the glowing produce of silk-worms reared among the mists and bogs

Or schemes for *golden mines*,—as yet all clay,
For *South Sea Islands*—catch 'em if you may!
Of schemes so rational, who has not heard?
Some bought a whole, and some a modest third:
At once their avaricious eyes admire,
And Cent. per Cent. fans all their hearts on fire!—
But, sad surprise!—kind PETER paws the shares,
Each sawney hoots, and d——s, and puffs, and swears;
Then, like a sluice, the 'Company' disembogues,
And proves *the genuine stock*—a *stock of rogues!*

ENTER A CI-DEVANT JEUNE HOMME, OR BATTERED DANDY.

Once king of rakes, LOTHARIO mopes forgot,
With gout, neglect, and ruin, for his lot!
No more the midnight haunt shall welcome him,
No more the light dance curve his shapely limb;
Nor Fashion's *lean licentious crew* attend
From noon to night, their dear, delightful friend:
Wrinkles and wasted wealth have banish'd all
Who prais'd his bottle, or adorn'd his ball!

A PSEUDO DANDY.

What titled Nabob he, that quizzes there,
With braided bosom and Macassar'd hair?

of Ireland? Have not some of our bankers busied themselves in "*extracting sunbeams from cucumbers?*" Have not our merchants—once a name for integrity and honour—deeply involved themselves in the general corruption of delirious greediness, and, to use the words of an energetic writer, "shewed their plague-spots, as if they were badges of distinction?" Have not, in short, lords and commoners, divines and lawyers, quakers and stock brokers, physicians and literati, all embarked promiscuously in the same shoreless sea of infatuation, in which he that invented the most brutally stupid, and most *visionary commercial* romance, (compared with which, Laputan speculation might shew like wisdom,) was deemed the most complete *man of business;* and he was pronounced most clever, who proved himself to be the greatest cheat. This comes of people not being content to go on in the plain old-fashioned Englishway of getting rich by regular industry. Hence the deterioration of the British merchant's character. Once his *word* was as good as his *bond;* but now, as a learned and witty counsel said in a shuffling case of Alderman A——, 'no prudent man would *take his bond* without rigid inspection.'

That creamy glove, and supercilious shoe,
That glossy garment of imperial blue,—
Those taper fingers, and *unwholesome skin*,
Betray patrician spirit shrin'd within.'—
O, that's a tailor, kneaded to a fop,
Obliged Sir T. with loans,—and left his shop!

A REAL DANDY.

Forth stalks the coxcomb, flimsy—frothy—vain,
In step a Brummell, and in look a Hayne;
'From head to toe,' perfum'd like Rowland shops,
He's every inch the paragon of fops!
A *porkish whiteness* pales his plastic skin,
And *muslin halters* prop the *pimpled chin;*
A gleaming spy-glass dangles from his neck,
Speckless his frill and fame, tho' prone to speck!
A goatish thing—he lives on ogling eyes,
On scented handkerchiefs, and maiden sighs!

A WHIP-CLUB PEER.

Next mark the red-nosed Jehu awe the street,
With file-thinn'd teeth, and 'benjamin' complete;
His balanc'd hat, and far equestrian gaze,
The val'rous spume that round his muzzle plays;
That cock-pit air, and fine Herculean fist,
Where Belcher science turns the flexile wrist;
The look from Tattersall's—the *snorted* 'hail,'—
All show him tallied for the horse's tail:
Had heaven, in pity, doom'd the vulgar fool
In fitter rank the whip and wheel to rule,
How would his stable mien adorn the place,
And add new dignity to coachee's grace!

A MILITARY EXQUISITE.

The foppish soldier, victor in the ball,
Comes clinking next, the cynosure of all:
For him will titled Harriets melt and frown,
And rank him darling puppy of the town:

Big lips and clanking chains, and polish'd spurs,
And sword that rarely from its scabbard stirs,
The warlike foot-fall, and the *hairy glue*,
All fit him for another Waterloo!

EPILOGUE.

Fashion is all in all,—that creed of fools
Whose flighty doctrine half the empire rules.
Queen of the rich,—*Minerva of the vain*,
Begot by folly,—*cleav'd from falsehood's brain*,
'Tis Fashion dies the beldame's blister'd cheek,
Lives in her errant gaze, and kitten squeak.
To scribble, leave the card's diurnal lie,—
Watch Christie's grin, or pinch a noon-tide pie,—
Create importance in a matin call,
Unpack a tradesman's shop—nor buy at all,—
Crawl forth each morn, and so yawn out the day,
Growl, smile, and guzzle,—*sorrowing to be gay*;—
Thus, Fashion dupes her addle-headed slaves,
Until, *like dogs, they shrivel to their graves!*
Deals with the gambler, pilfers with the rogue,
And gives to *Wealth* a NEW MADE DECALOGUE.

Space and time warn me now to drop the curtain on this amiable tragi-comedy, from the *Age Reviewed*.

The next passages will bear *advantageous* comparison with similar passages, on nearly the same subjects, in *English Bards*.

ALMACK'S.

All serve the myst'ries of this dread conclave
While Willis toils, their sneakup and their slave:
O peerless senate!—ye who here decree,
And trace beyond the flood, a pedigree,
Illumined rulers of a wax-lit stye,
Where passion twirls the leg, and rolls the eye,—
Let your mean pride ascend to decent aim,
Outlaw the bosom's lust-creating shame.

The ball commences—rich the music flows,
Melts on the heart, and vivifies the toes;
Wide o'er the room, behold the chalky round,
Where light the foot-beat floor begins to bound;
Awak'ning pleasure each flush'd face illumes,
And flirting misses toss their crested plumes;—
Warm streams the blood within each thrilling vein,
Tints the bright cheek, and rushes on the brain.
Now anxious idiots in their pumps appear,
From red-gill'd banker up to lean-jaw'd peer;
Here a huge beldame swells within her stays,
Smirks at each beau—and flaps him for his praise;
Here Bond Street puppies, rank with *eau Cologne*,
Limp round the room, and whimper to the ton;
While peevish beldames by their daughters watch,
Glance in their eyes, and pray—' God send a match!'

THE OPERA.

Now to the Opera turn, where ballets please,
And foppish fashion fumes away its ease;
There, what fine ear can list the lewd-breathed sounds,
What decent eye survey the wanton bounds,
Each warm lascivious twirl of panting lust,
Nor feel the burning fever of disgust?
Bedaub'd with paint, here jewell'd herds compose
Their pustuled persons in the steamy rows;
Pile luscious fancies on transparent limbs,
Move with each form, and languish as it swims.
Patrons of vice from dunghill or from court,
In mercy, cease such operatic sport!
Caress no Bochsas in your costly home,
No whisker'd knave, no eunuch scamp'd from Rome;
O! let the lavish'd millions feed the poor,
The wan-eyed paupers fainting at your door.

CRUSH-ROOM.

Now from the Op'ra's widened portals stream
A shiv'ring concourse,—wide the torches gleam,—

And fling cadav'rous hues upon each face,
Where pall'd Delight has left her pale-worn trace.
Perturbed, mark, the blinking chap'rons guard,
Wrapt in her gather'd silks, their dainty ward;
While flutt'ring near, gallants obtrusive try
To read the twinkling promise of her eye:
Within the crush-room fretful throngs parade,
And lisping puppies quizz each well-laced maid;
Some round the fire-place chafe their chilly hands,
Smooth their wild locks, and fold their silken bands:
While, borne *with crutches* to the creaking door,
The *snarling cuckolds* for their cars implore.

The following extracts from the *Age Reviewed* are of appalling force. The phrase 'synonyme of all depravity,' and the passages, 'Heaven sweep,' &c., and 'Come, godless,' &c., have a terrific vehemence of vituperation, modulated like Pope, but flashing with the fiery intensity and withering brevity of Juvenal. Byron, has nothing superior to this first passage in the sublime of satirical description:—

A DUEL BETWEEN TITLED GAMBLERS.

For such a bandit famed Chalk Farm uprears
Its battle-field, where base or brutish peers,
And touchy boobies, *fire away their dread,*
And *thick skulls blunt the disappointed lead:*
Lo! there the heroes stand,—the pistols roar!—
Heaven sweep from Britain's isle one villain more!

A FASHIONABLE HELL.

Within St. James's Hells what bilks resort,
Both young and hoary, to pursue their sport!
'Tis mis'ry revels here!—the haggard mien
And lips that quiver with the curse obscene,

The hollow cheeks that faintly fall and rise,
While silent madness flashes from the eyes,
Those fever'd hands, the darkly-knitting brow,
Where mingling passions delve their traces now—
Denote the ruined,—whose bewilder'd air,
Is one wild vengeful throbbing of despair!
Deserted homes, and mothers' broken hearts,
Forsaken offspring,—crime's unfathom'd arts,
The suicide,—and ev'ry sad farewell,—
These are the triumphs of a London Hell!

Nor can the *English Bards* produce such a burst of sublimely indignant and withering vituperation as this—

Now for the apex of polluted souls,
No shame subdues, no reverence controls;
Come, godless, blushless—England's vilest pair,
Blots to the land, and plague-spots to the air;
The base we've had, of ev'ry kind and hue,
The bloody, lech'rous, and unnat'ral too—
But never, yet, the wretch that equall'd thee,
Thou synonyme of all depravity!

The last line has terrific force.

Oh stand not forth to Britain's public eye,
The monster-fiend of painted blasphemy;
But go!—and quickly end thy course perverse,
Hung on the gibbet of a nation's curse!!!

In the midst of this scathing lava-torrent of poetical vituperation, the author discovers the manly feeling of his humane nature by the following pathetic sketch. Like the revelling joy with which he turns from the horrors of crime, on all occasions, to sympathize with the innocent sportfulness of childhood; and

the noble homage which he delights in offering to maternal and domestic virtue; such sketches as these demonstrate that there is no malignant worldly rancour in the display of his appalling satiric power, but a virtuous indignation, scorning folly, and hating vice and crime, whether ragged or ribanded, with a perfect hatred.

> But who art thou, whose passion-wither'd face
> Sheds mournful beauty through the netted lace?
> Those radiant orbs, that so obtrusive shine,
> Like stars, beneath thine eyebrow's arching line,
> That lip's vermilion,—brow of lucid snow,
> Can these betray thee, child of sin and woe?
> Alas, that ever woman's gentle soul
> Should sink to glutted passion's base control!
> But still, around thine air there lurks a grief
> That longs, yet will not ask, a pure relief;
> Perchance, ere villains taught thee thence to roam,
> A mother clasp'd thee in her cottage home;
> Some grey-lock'd sire sat near his evening hearth,
> Hung on thy neck, and bless'd thy happy birth!

Again, so exhaustless is his fertility, that, in the affluent consciousness of power, he tosses from him, with contemptuous waste, the following *picture* of a metropolitan fire, unmatched, I think, by any writer —certainly by Darwin's balanced and inflated description of a similar subject.

A FIRE.

> But list! huge wheels roll o'er the jarring stones,
> I hear the clatt'ring hoofs, and rabble's tones!
> Before yon dome the creaking engines wait,
> Where shield-mark'd firemen urge the liquid freight,

While, grandly awful to the startled sight,
Rear the *red columns* of resistless light!
The windows deepen into dreadful glow,
Till the *hot glass bursts shatt'ring* down below;
While darting fires around their wood-work blaze,
And *lick the water, hissing* as it plays;
Above the crackling roof fierce flames arise,
And *whirl their sparks, careering* to the skies;
Triumphantly the ravenous blazes mount,
As if they started from a fiery fount,
Now, *cloud-like,* piling up in *billowy fire,*
Now quiv'ring sunk, to re-collect their ire:—
But see! again whirl up the blood-red flames,
In vain the rushing flood their fury tames;
Like burning mountain-peaks, aloft they raise
Their jagged columns of unequal blaze,
Till the loose beams and *flaking rafters* fall,
And in a thund'ring earthquake bury all!

The concluding moral of this satire, addressed to the virtuous few who might be tempted by the unvarying sight of shallow knavery triumphant, and talented honesty in the dust, to disgust or doubt, has a softened flow of verse, suitable to the noble pathos and moral elevation of the philosophical sentiment.

And thou, lorn wisdom's child, where'er thou art—
That mark'st each May-morn dream of hope depart,
The knave and parasite on fortune's throne,
Whilst thou hast only thought to call thine own;
Still nobly live the solitary sage,
And soar in mind above this venal age;
Rich in thyself, partake the best content,—
A heart well govern'd, and a life well spent!

In reverting to all the extracts from Mr. Montgomery's works, and looking to the distinct and peculiar excellencies which they exhibit in so wide a range of

subject, and such various walks of poetry, I feel that I am more liable,—through that guarded and respectful cautiousness of discretion which every writer ought to observe in addressing the entire body of the thinking public,—to the charge of underrating, than to that of overrating Mr. Montgomery's poetical grade. To the *evidential* investigation of that grade, it would be unwise and 'ultra quam sat est' to add anything; but this, I now find, I may confidently do—challenge his adversaries to produce from any modern bard whatever (not even excepting Lord Byron) a larger number of forcible and noble passages in the domains of didactic poetry and satire.

One more argument before I recapitulate and conclude. Besides the eminent and elevated merit of Mr. R. Montgomery's poetry (which for any critic to deny, in the face of the evidence here adduced, and in the face of the public, would be, to use the energetic language of St. Paul, 'to lie to his own soul'), his didactic works are characterised by a peculiarly high and equally-sustained tone of morals and religion. Hence one class of objectors. May he not breathe the ether of loftier sentiments than may suit the marsh miasma of certain literary coteries, *Epicuri de grege porci;*—may not the mountain air to which the 'broad sail vans' of his eagle wings ascend, be such an atmosphere as the measured and measuring materialism of *Utilitarian literature* cannot breathe in and live? The *Literary Gazette*, referring to the religious character pervading

Mr. R. Montgomery's didactic poetry, announces its appearance as a new poetical era. In this I concur. Master minds either are created by, or themselves create and indicate great social and poetical eras. It is when the waters are stirred, that the most buoyant and valuable order of minds rises, like the fire-containing, inextinguishable oil of the naphtha springs, to the surface. Great genius requires great excitement. Extraordinary events are requisite either as the precursors, the stimulants, or the accompaniments of genius. Galvanized into giant force by them, common events touch not its governing nerve; but if it be of heaven, 'heaven born,' it will, in its own unhurried and sure time, make itself manifest and stand. Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Darwin, Byron, were kindled by the feeling of their several eras, and represented that feeling.

Milton embodied the puritanical perfectibility of his age. Darwin, with a different neology, and wielding the new and opposite energies of a deified materialism, harbingered the great revolution which ravaged France, and shook Europe to its foundations—whose vital momentum was a philosophical perfectibility—'earthborn, of the earth—earthy.' Byron, and Napoleon (and correctly the first called himself

The great Napoleon of the realms of rhyme)—

represented the matured aspirations of the Revolution, in the full colossal strength of its intellectual ambition, and in the startling contrast of its termination—both dy-

ing when the convulsive throes of the departing giant *, yielding up the ghost amidst eclipse and earthquake, proclaimed 'One woe is past.' The smoke of the evil cycle has now passed away, and it may be hoped that a day of moral enlightenment will succeed. Historical analogy confirms the hope. Tracing our road by its suggestions, we may presume that the next era will probably be characterized by a re-ebbing tendency towards a deep and possibly progressive and permanent religious feeling. Poetry, as the expression of a nation's more elevated and excited feeling, will, as before, accompany the change—just as it rushed at once, with the change of manners and morals, from the lofty chastity and republican rigour of Milton, into the licentious ribaldry which stained the poetry of the Restoration: when the

Willing Muses were debauch'd at court.

If reasoning may warrant this expectation, facts too numerous to be cited here—facts pressing us on every side like the air—above, beneath, around us—evince that a great crisis of some kind is even now at hand; '*imo vero etiam instat in foris.*' Cowper boldly predicts that the crisis will be a millennium, shortly to appear. (*Winter Walk.*) Croly, Irving, Faber, Frere, and Wolfe concur. There is more splendour than proba-

* While exultingly referring to the *Birmingham Union* of that day, and to the 'nunc dimittis' of his friend Priestley, Darwin has a magnificent passage, comparing the French Revolution to a giant breaking the innumerable puny bands that bound him to the earth, like Gulliver the threads of the Lilliputians.

bility, or orthodox warrant, in this magnificent expectation. A Christian community, embracing the whole world and universal man, in one brotherhood of reciprocal good will; an universal empire of civilization—in which the only competition between nations might display itself in the emulation of intellectual and moral improvement is desirable, and perhaps, though improbable, possible. It is the only perfectibility—the only terrestrial millennium—which philosophy *could*—which orthodox religion *should*, acknowledge. Towards this great social diapason, it has been the strong impression of many wise and good men, that all the separate melodies, all the mingling harmonies of human aspiration, have been, and still are, ascending through the gamut of successive eras,—through octaves of deepening or decreasing power, through many a changeful bar, and many a dissonant key-note. The possibility of such an era being admitted, the question may be fairly mooted, Is Mr. Montgomery the *poetical* harbinger of this re-action—of this crisis—of this predicted and hoped-for era of *religious philosophy?* I think he may challenge the character. The whole evidence is now before the public. It is for that public to decide whether he be the new poetical 'Star in the East,' which, according to the foregoing theory, must harbinger that era; or whether the 'wise men,' my critical brethren, must seek elsewhere 'for him that is to be born King' of Castaly in Byron's room. By way of recapitulating, I shall say, in conclusion, that whether I look

to the dispassionate results of this long and careful analysis of Mr. R. Montgomery's poems, as concerns his invention, his sentiments, or his diction—whether to comparison with the only poets who can compete with him—Campbell and Rogers—whether to the puny nature of the objections, and their utter untenability—whether to the testimony of all the most respected and influential critics of the day, or to the popular voice in his favour; I am bound, and *most especially* when I look at the wide and original grasp of *Christian philosophy*, which the poems of Montgomery embrace—when I look at this never-deluding mark of original genius, which heralded the different geniuses of Napoleon and Byron, with forcible signs, which he 'who ran might read'—namely, the *synchronism* of his appearance, as a religious and anti-infidel poet, at the precise crisis of a vast religious reaction in masses of opinion, which he *has, in fact, grouped together*, and poetically *rallies* and *represents*—I am bound (it is, as I have said, for the jury of the public finally to decide) to sum up in favour of the opinion, that the arms of Achilles belong to him, and that he is worthy of succeeding to the poetical monarchy of Byron. If the latter must still remain vacant, he has shown, by what he has done, what new glories the future has still in reserve for him, and that he is the presumptive heir. But should this reservation of the throne be not admitted, this ought in candour to be admitted, that Robert Montgomery's real poetical rank is

by the side of Campbell and Rogers; with them 'to share the divided empire' of the departed poetical imperator. At least, in arriving at this conclusion, it will be allowed to me that the court has been fairly opened, and the plea stated according to legal rule; that 'off-hand' flippancy and indecent hurry have been equally discarded, at the risk of some prolixity in the proceedings; that the judge cannot be accused of bias, and that the advocate comes into court with clean hands. In opening the case I have shown, (proved, I may say) that in estimating Mr. Montgomery's genius, I have been IMPARTIAL *against* the bias of personal interest; it will be quite evident that I am not swayed by the under-current of coteries and publishing interests. I will now give a third irresistible proof of that impartiality which, with modest confidence, I may say it, gives me a just claim to the public ear. *I am* diametrically *opposed to the politics of Mr. R. Montgomery, and was so, when I, with such favouring sincerity, expressed my opinion of his first work.* Here I give a pledge that I am not chargeable with that which I have denounced—the prevailing vice of modern criticism, the 'fons malorum,' the chief source of the public contempt and degradation into which a noble intellectual art has fallen. I have done my utmost to open the eyes of the public to the real state of the question, as well as to the state of criticism generally, and to the *necessity of returning to the* OLD LEGITIMATE AND ESTABLISHED STANDARD.

The public will now judge for themselves. They will impute the discrepancy of criticism which has elicited this essay to many causes—attributing something to the modern neglect, or obliteration, of critical rules, or to the hurried manner in which critiques are written, in order to keep pace with the hurried production of multiplied and undigested works; something to the conflicting interests of rival publishers regulating the depressing or elevating agencies of their avowed bookselling-machines; something to opposite theological and political principles; and, lastly, something—a hint worth notice—to the jealousy of rival poets operating in their critical character. *Almost every modern author is a two-fold combination of poet and critic.* What he writes in one character, he has often the means, therefore, of praising or forcing into notice in the other. Some have been charged (although I believe such instances are rare) with effecting this purpose *directly* by writing a favourable critique of their own work*. It is generally, however, done *indirectly*, and can be so done, with equal effect, in three ways: First, authors can obtain a favourable critique on their own work in their own publisher's review; Second, they can influence the appearance of favourable critiques in other reviews, through the machinery of the

* Perhaps the gentlemen of *Fraser's Magazine* can say something on this subject. Does Mr. Fraser know anything of a reviewer who penned and inserted a laudatory criticism on his own book? Such a thing would seem to 'out-Herod *Herod*.'

coteries, poetical critics being willing to 'exchange praise' on the fashionable commercial principle of reciprocity; Third, they can depress a rival poet, likely to displace them; or pluck the laurels from an illustrious brow, with the view of weaving therewith a chaplet for their own. With mediocrity genius is a great offence, and can hope for no favour. The modern criticling is a poet,—'*ipse facit versus;*'—and, therefore, approves only of the small wares in which he *deals* himself;

Parcit
Cognatis maculis similis fera.

Theological and political causes operate more widely than selfish. Mr. R. Montgomery, with uncompromising boldness, avows himself to be a Tory—an orthodox churchman,—although some of his criticlings (I forget which,) in their usual unhappy hurry, charge him with poetically representing the Methodist or dissenting interests. Hence how large a class of reviews and papers may naturally be expected to oppose his success, and underrate his talents! The canker at the core of criticism—the system of judging of literary works politically, has somewhat mitigated lately; just as the old opposition of Whig and Tory has become mitigated. But the abuse still exists, sufficiently exists to warrant the aspiration of many good and able men for the appearance of a Review, of the first class, which should not only repudiate political influence, but unyoke itself from the burden of trading influences, and

all other influences but those of independence and truth. Time was, when the birth of any book *, good or bad, might be compared to that of an Egyptian citizen, who was immediately supplied, by the priests,

* In order to prove that my opinion on the true duties of a critic, and on the necessity of dissociating *political* feeling from *literary* criticism, has always been uniform and consistent, I must again solicit pardon for the necessary egotism of quoting myself from a Sunday Paper, at that time of unrivalled circulation. Accused of optimism in too readily and too often encouraging the *début* of some young authors of obvious talent—whom I neither knew then nor know—this was the reply :—

" We see no earthly reason why a Reviewer is to turn Timon or Jacques, directly his *goose-quill* touches that composition of *gall* and *vinegar*, ycleped *ink*. Nevertheless, we can ' render a reason ' for our apparent optimism, which we think will be satisfactory to those who are of the above *atrabilarious* opinion ; our room precludes our *notice* of aught that we consider unworthy the reader's *notice*, and which we consequently cannot approve. One of the great tendencies of modern criticism is equally ungentlemanlike and unjust. An author has frequently the sentence of approval or condemnation passed on his writings, just as he appears to coincide or differ with his critic in political opinion : and the precision with which the judgment of any work of mark, in rival Reviews, may be calculated beforehand, would be ludicrous, if it were not disgraceful. Now this, in a gentlemanly avocation, is ' pitiful,' and should be ' reformed altogether.' We have, we know, astonished the narrow-minded small fry of letters—the ' Tritons of the minnows'—by our fairness in adjudging, occasionally, the prize of superior merit to those of opposite politics. They are welcome to their surprise ; and, in the mean while, we shall, in conformity with the entire independence, literary and political, of this paper, persist, when on the judgment-seat, in putting on the political eye-bandage of justice, while we grasp her literary sword ; and imitate the Egyptian Judges of the dead, whether princes or commoners came before them, in appealing to the amulet of ' Truth ' which decorated their necks."—*Sunday Times.*

A consciousness of the above-recorded timely and repeated encouragement of then obscure, but now admitted talent, is, at this time, one of my most pleasant reminiscences.

with a good and evil genius—one *defending* what the other *condemned*. The review of a book could be foreseen with laughable precision, and mock critiques might be written beforehand (I remember two or three trifling felicities of this kind), with as much prophetic accuracy as anticipative King's speeches.

Another cause of the lately-engendered discrepancy of opinion, respecting Mr. R. Montgomery, may be traced to offended vanity and mortified pique. He has attacked (imprudently and unjustly in some cases) a great number of writers who are naturally glad to thrust out their stings in return; or, if they be *blind worms*, and have none, to wriggle themselves into something resembling an attitude of *serpentlike* menace. A blind worm may be goodhumouredly permitted to fancy itself a snake, and a *weed* to bristle up with the idea of its being a *stinging-nettle*. Many offences, however, are imputed to Mr. Montgomery by the alarmed imaginations of feeble writers. Wit haunts the weak like a bugbear; and even when most innocent of hostile intention, it always appears to blockheads in the light of an enemy.

> Unhappy wit, like most mistaken things,
> Atones not for the envy which it brings:
> 'Tis what the vicious fear, the virtuous shun,
> By fools 'tis hated, and by knaves undone.

Here are causes enough, and more than enough, to account for critical discrepancy. But Mr. Montgomery has also a two-fold character. He, too,

is a critic and a poet; and how well he can handle the critical rod, he has shown in the *Age Reviewed* and the *Puffiad.* Such a critic is not to be 'put down' with ease, nor divested of his hard-earned conquests with impunity. To push spoliation too far is a bad experiment, even with the vanquished; for *spoliatis arma supersunt.* How much more so with the triumphant and unconquered! In the war of critic with critic, the first skirmish does not decide the battle: such battles, like Waterloo, may appear to be won at twelve, only to be followed by utter discomfiture at seven.

Mr. Montgomery may say, with Hamlet, to some of his assailants, in his critical character,

> I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;
> For though I am not *choleric* and *rash,*
> Yet have I in me something *dangerous,*
> Which let thy *wisdom fear.*

APPENDIX.

Quid refert *dictis ignoscat* Mutius an non?

SINCE the foregoing strictures were written, the *Edinburgh Review* has joined and dignified the contest. I was not aware, till then, that the able editor of the *Westminster Review* had also entered the lists. I shall briefly reply to what is material in both, in this Appendix; and, considering the style of both objurgations, the reply cannot be too brief. The *Westminster Reviewer* dismisses the matter with a sneer. Now, all partial notice of Montgomery from him shews want of tact as well as bad taste. I have a great respect for Dr. Bowring, and generally have concurred, and do concur, with his views as to civil and religious liberty. But, '*Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas.*' Montgomery's *politics* being so diametrically opposed to his, good taste should have suggested candour in appreciating his *literary* character. Again, Montgomery, like himself, is a poet and a critic. As *Fraser's Magazine—still* the most talented assailant of Montgomery—boasts of having destroyed Dr. Bowring's *poetical* reputation, the vulnerability of the one half of his literary character should have excited sympathy or suggested justice. Thus far considered, his

remarks must be designated as a political rejoinder to a political opponent. I am afraid they will have a worse interpretation with the ill-natured, who already say, '*This is not criticism, but* REVENGE!' and who point to the following attack of Montgomery, (in *his critical* character) on the editor of the *Westminster Review*, (in *his political*,) in order to shew how the critical rejoinder was provoked.

> Alas, for Greece!—by Christian Turks profaned,
> By Britons plunder'd, and by Moslems chain'd;
> * * * * * *
> Detested bunglers! wailing freedom's cause,
> To filch her succours, and entrap applause;
> May future ages ever spurn the cheat,
> Your thief-committees, and your base defeat,
> Your pilfer'd thousands from the trusted loan, &c.
> * * * * * *
> Accursed bondmen!—ye who groan'd for Greece;
> Ye mean impostors, who combined to fleece,
> When kindled England heard the freeman's moan,
> And glowing patriots gave the needed loan.
> Oh! what a hell was in your common heart,
> When Greece was robb'd, and plunder hugg'd its part!

With at least one-half of the article in the *Edinburgh Review*—all that relates to puffing—I the more cordially agree, since I was the first, or among the first, to earn the enmity of the publishing puffers, by exposing, so long back as 1822, the whole machinery of their nefarious practices, in a series of papers published in a periodical, now extinct *. A deep scorn of these

* *Gazette of Fashion.*—The theme of those papers is expressed with all but verbal similarity in the following passage from the *Edinburgh Review*. 'The publisher is often the publisher of some periodical work. In this periodical work the first flourish of trumpets is sounded. The peal is then echoed and re-echoed by all the other periodical works over which the publisher or the author, or the author's coterie, may have any influence.'

knavish tricks is, indeed, one of the motives which determines my present stand by the side of Montgomery. All Englishmen like to see fair play. The young poet has been a *bad politician* with regard to the avowal of his politics: but he has been an equally *bad politician* with regard to puffers, of whose skill in the 'trade and mystery' of picking pockets, he, in the *Puffiad*, has been the most uncompromising and effectual exposer. His frank avowal on these two points—politics and puffing—are certainly not those of a man trickily courting favour and panegyric from all quarters, as the *Edinburgh Reviewer* insinuates. He must have strange notions indeed, who thinks to win '*golden* opinions from all sorts of people,' by knocking, right and left, all sorts of people down. But, is it not curious and suspicious, that the *Edinburgh Review*, attacking Montgomery in an article professing to be an attack on puffing, should not advert to the circumstance, that Montgomery himself is the author of an attack on puffing called the *Puffiad?* There appear two reasons for this omission. The Reviewer has *borrowed the whole tenor and substance*, nay, in some cases, the *very words* of his exposé, from the *Puffiad*, without being so polite as to acknowledge the loan. The allusion was, moreover, slippery ground for the *Edinburgh Review*, since the *Edinburgh Review* is *itself puffed by the very machinery which it exposes.* Whether Montgomery's publisher resorted, as warranted by the Reviewer's admitted case of exception—'self-defence,'—to puff the poet's works, I have no means of knowing. I presume he advertised Montgomery as Murray advertised Byron, and Constable, Scott.

Unadvertised, no author of the truest genius could catch the long but shifty ear of the puff-ridden public; and his greatest luck, if even appreciated by the discerning few, would be glittering starvation—like him of old, who '*fregit subsellia versu*' and '*esurit!*' If, however, Montgomery's publisher did resort to puff, he deserved reproof. But my impression is otherwise.

I have demonstrated, (demonstrated here is not too strong a word,) that I could not be actuated by the spirit of puff in criticising Montgomery's first works—nay, that I was in *collision*, rather than in *collusion*, with it. During my wide connexion with the press, I *never wrote* one word (for or against) on the subject of Montgomery's subsequent works. Had any unfair influence in his favour been attempted, I think it must have come to my knowledge, either in town or provincial papers. I know of none: but, if I must speak truth, many instances of the *puffing of the Edinburgh Review* have come to my knowledge, *and the proofs have passed through my hands.* I refer to insinuating little *slips* of 'cut-and-dry' laudatory notices of the *Edinburgh Review*, paid for as paragraphs and editorial notices. *Verbum sat.*

The tenor of the criticism in the *Edinburgh Review* might have been (as before hinted) anticipated. But it is pitiful that the great conductors of the *Edinburgh Review* should either employ the stipendiary of a small magazine to make a collection of alleged faults, or copy his long-elaborated collectanea, with all their mistakes, mistatements, and *errata.* I have admitted many of the faults imputed, and some others not imputed. But if I had only adduced those faults, and not ex-

hibited the *per contra* of the account, in drawing the balance, I should feel that I deserved the reader's reproof for acting a dishonourable part. No work, of any age, could bear so unfair a test. Could the *Edinburgh Review?* Certainly not. Witness the reasoning of the critique before us, in which the idea is stolen from Montgomery's *Puffiad*, and disfigured with gipsy-like ingenuity to prevent detection. The Reviewer's thus disfigured reasoning, like every other instance of *integrity*, consists of two halves: but one of them contradicts the other. Puffing, he says, defeats itself —this is one half. Puffing, thus self-defeated, does immense injury, *i. e.*, does not defeat itself; this is the other half. Now for his diction. While accusing Mr. Montgomery of loose expression, he says, 'Many intolerable lines of Mr. Montgomery's *own*.' What model of style is this? Again, after quoting nearly the worst passage in *Satan*, he says,

> Here we conclude. If our remarks give pain to Mr. Robert Montgomery, we are sorry for it. But, at whatever cost of pain to individuals, literature must be purified from *this taint*.

What taint? This is sad slip-slop for an *Edinburgh Reviewer*. The writer here forgets that nicety of relative grammatical construction, of a lapse in which he accuses another. These felicities may be found in the limited comments of one article, in which the critic, expecting, perhaps, to be criticised, is instinctively on his guard. Let me take one more peep at the Review. This is positively the first passage which salutes me. It is headed 'Finance:'—

> Currants are a useful article of food, and, when mixed with flour and a little fat, make a very excellent dish.—Page 221.

Fat and (raw) flour! Heaven preserve the lieges from the infliction of this gastronomical *excellence*. The Reviewer's physical taste, like his mental, would be ill-appreciated on this side of the Tweed. But the chandler-shop minutiæ of the Treasury budget may be deemed to offer an unfair example of a model for style. Language is naturally debased by debased associations. Let me, then, take a superior test—the admirable article on the works of a great man—Godwin—written by a very different personage from Montgomery's reviewer. Admirable as it certainly is, I find in it this passage.

> Mr. Godwin was the first *whole-length broacher* (*?*) of the doctrine of *Utility*. He took the whole duty of man—all other passions, affections, rules, weaknesses, oaths, gratitude, promises, friendship, natural piety, patriotism,—infused them in the glowing cauldron of universal benevolence, and ground them into powder under the unsparing weight of the convictions of the individual understanding. The entire and complicated mass and texture of human society and feeling was to pass through the furnace of this new philosophy, and to come out renovated and changed, without a trace of its former Gothic ornaments, fantastic disproportions, embossing, or relief. It was as if an angel had descended from another sphere to promulgate a new code of morality.—Page 155.

Here we have ' passions, affections, rules,' &c. &c., *infused* in a *glowing cauldron;* next, *ground into powder;* then *passed through* a *furnace* and *renovated* —and then ' it was (what was, the glowing cauldron, the powder, or the furnace?) *as if* an *angel* had descended,' &c. &c. A ' greatly daring,' but not ' judicious' jumble. So much for the metaphor; the grammar of the passage is equally correct. ' The entire and complicated mass *and* texture of human society *was,*' &c. &c. But enough! I scruple

not to say, that similar faults might be found in every page of the *Edinburgh Review*, were the critics rigidly *criticised* in turn. Byron, who called parliamentary oratory a *grand delusion*, might have coupled criticism in the same estimate. The present literary desideratum is, a *Review of the Reviews*.

Finally, as Montgomery (with unjustifiable temerity, as I have always thought) *first* attacked most of the gentlemen understood or admitted to be *Edinburgh Reviewers*, their critical article can only, as in the former case of the *Westminster Review*, be deemed a POLITICAL REJOINDER. If it be true, as confidently alleged, that the minor magazine collector of Montgomery's errors—from whom the *Edinburgh Reviewer* has *seriatim*, and sometimes *literatim*, borrowed his examples—is the same individual, who, by a similar elaborate process, attempted to pluck, one by one, the leaves from the bay-wreath of Byron, it is a curious reminiscence, that the *Edinburgh Review* attempted to crush in its bud that fame which the magazine writer attempted to canker in maturity.

The *Edinburgh Review* will permit me to wish it joy on this *sympathetic* uniformity of its fortune. It was its lot before to be united in the same sacred, though bruised and lacerated, fellowship of attack and defeat. Poetical critics are an obstinate tribe: too apt to be mistaken for drones in their *Idle Hours*, they are easily teased to vindicate their character as wasps, and assert the honors of their sting. Their venomous tooth, like that of some serpents, is genteelly sheathed on common occasions—but, '*castigati, remordent.*' It has been noticed, that the

elaborately collected charges against Montgomery's poetical reputation are copied *seriatim* from a new periodical; the (probably deceived) proprietor and editor of which I shall not injure by naming it; the picked and garbled extracts are as unworthy of copy as reply; but among the above-named consecutive copies of alleged faults, one is curious, as it would seem to offer presumptive proof of collusive motives. In the magazine here noticed there is a perverted passage from the *Omnipresence*, on the death of a *war-horse*, whose rider falls on the 'bleeding breast' of his horse, while the dying horse 'stares ghastly and grimly on the skies.' Will it be believed, that the *Edinburgh Reviewer*, copying the garbled passage of the magazine, asks how the *slain warrior*, 'lying on his bleeding breast,' contrives to 'stare ghastly and grimly on the skies'? Fie! fie! this perversion is unworthy, and ungentlemanlike; and some writers preferring the rough sincerity of truth to that *bienséance*, which I shall not lose sight of, would be tempted to call it *mendacity and fraud*, not criticism, as some readers, I lament to say, have already termed it.

The individual thus alleged to be the original author, at least the suggester of the Edinburgh *Rejoinder*, is, as below, addressed in the *Age Reviewed*. I need add no comment to the quotation, since the public will probably decide that, even in this stage of the contest, Montgomery has far the best of the 'set-to'. He hits hard 'facers,' neither readily parried, nor readily forgotten; and though the battered and groaning critics may be anxious to say they have not felt his blows, and that their smarts are imaginary, they will not easily induce the jeering bystanders to think so.

But who is he that with sardonic smile,
And jaundiced eye, and lip weigh'd down with bile,
Sneaks by, with pedlar sketches at his back?
The monarch of the small-beer poet pack!
The mighty would-be cock of prose and rhyme,
Like Balaam's donkey, braying the sublime!
Alike so hated by each friend and foe,
That they applaud, who would not strike the blow.
Did Byron's laurels feel thy blackening slime,
And forged detection of his thought and rhyme?
For this dull deed, may ne'er thy rhyme again
Crawl through a page, or hobble through a strain;
But injured genius blast thy venal muse,
And drive thee, snarler, to thy fostering blues.

The attack is repeated in *Satan*, with more remorseless vituperation and more crushing scorn —

E'en now my eye is on a *dismal wretch*,
In whom is summed up *all that can profane*
The *name of man; ignoble as the dust*,
And *rocky-hearted* as a *wretch* can be.
&c. &c.

Enough has been advanced to shew the *quo animo* of the last attacks on Montgomery. He, and all who come before the public, are 'fair game;' an anonymous rejoinder to an anonymous attack, is fair; an anonymous attack on unanonymous writers, though less equal, if frankly conducted, is also fair; but the fair public will never approve of any individual stabbing a long marked victim, under the appearance of fair duello,—like that personification of devilish malice, Goethe's Mephistopheles,—beneath the arm of a deceived ally. The unfairness of quoting none but garbled passages, picked out by an ambushed enemy with leisurely malice, might irritate little minds, but it can only excite a pitying smile in '*les gens comme il faut.*' Alas! for the littleness of all human pretence! It is

well for real genius, that it is calm, patiently contemptuous of wilful misappreciation, and self-confiding as to ultimate results; that, though prompt in proper season, it is not easily discomposed; and that it is only to the small talent of the smallest witlings, that the proverbial fallacy of talented irritability can justly apply.

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REPLY

TO

'FRASER'S' AND 'THE MONTHLY' MAGAZINES.

'They *praise* and they *dispraise* they know not what,
'And know not why, but as one leads the other;
'Of whom to be *dispraised* were no *slight praise*.'

MILTON.

REPLY

TO

'FRASER'S' AND 'THE MONTHLY' MAGAZINES.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

SEVERAL periodical works have done me the favor to commend the preceding effort to reform the judgment-seat of criticism, and subject the opinions of modern critics to the restraints of critical law. But two magazines—*Fraser's* and the *Monthly*—have preferred to assail me and the temperate argument I have thought myself at liberty to plead at the bar of the public, with much crapulous invective and obstreperous personality. When I say two magazines, I mean two *employés* of those magazines, who, as I am well informed, are Dr. Magin and the Rev. George Croly. They, it seems, are both pleased to consider themselves inculpated by my pamphlet; the first as the founder of that new school of critical blackguardism therein parodied and exposed, (p. 56); and the last in his *double character* of (*religious*) poet and critic—a delusive union constituting part of the modern art of puffing, also exposed (page 150). Fully convinced that public plain sense is not so easily browbeaten out of its calm opinion by mere noisy balderdash, as these persons suppose, I have not thought it requisite to disturb my tranquillity by hurrying my reply. If these two individuals are willing, in answer

to the temperate tone studiously preserved in my publication, to exchange the language of educated gentlemen for that of Billinsgate, I am not anxious to degrade a victorious argument by losing my equanimity so far as to follow their example. Besides, it would be an unequal combat. My inexperience in literary blackguardism would not be a match for their proficiency. Setting aside their *scurrilities*, it is indeed a sufficiently nauseous task, in order to reply to their arguments, to be obliged to soil my hands by fishing them out of the filth in which they have revelled in immersing them. If I am compelled therefore to exhibit feelings of contemptuous nausea in *unwillingly* coming into contact with my self-begrimed and unsavoury assailants, *they only are to blame.* Dr. Magin, with the characteristic pedantry of a small pedagogue, finds nothing to object to but the alleged inaccuracy of my Latin quotations, and founds his charge of false Latinity on an investigation of my *printer's slip of errata.* Is not this one of those *deviations from the right line,* doctor, with which you are familiar? The doctor has, indeed, added one line to these *Errata;* but as he was probably under the influence of that species of second sight vulgarly ycleped 'seeing double,' the additional line is excusable; yet, alas, the 'shot,' as it is in all such cases, is wasted. A pedant's only idea of crime in argument is false Latin: and therefore the doctor's pedantry did not see the real fault—the number of the Latin quotations. To such a charge I should have bowed; but that again would not have suited the doctor's *Greek* faith, since the objection would have drawn attention to the *very unusual* circumstance that the microscopic eye of malicious and

practised pedantry, searching word by word a pamphlet of 164 pages, and that, *too much crowded* with Latin quotations*, and even examining the printer's *errata*, could detect but *one* error. Yes, doctor, but one (*e* for *is* in imbelle). This trivial error of the press would bring no printer, nor printer's reader, into disrepute. What are this scholastic 'word-catcher's' other discoveries, skilled as he is in rectifying 'commas and points?' I should deem it 'sin to rob him of his mite.' The common law phrase 'quo animo' (which the worthy doctor pleases to think I could have written 'quo animus,' although 'quo animo' is used before at page 123 of the pamphlet) is corrected in all but some dozen copies of the first impression on one of which the doctor pounced. I can fancy I see him unshaven, unbraced, ungartered, hurry, hiccupping, stumbling, and stuttering to the bibliopole, the sallow frouzyness of his beer-muddled visage becoming yellower with bilious joy as he carried off the prize. *Phrenitis* and *phrenesis* are equally correct. *Capræ*, and *other* lapses which the doctor has not ventured to touch, are *purposely* (as he must know) inserted in the *prophetic ridicule of Dr. Magin's usual blackguard style of criticism* (page 56); and I must do him the

* They are *seventy-one*, doctor. Can you produce *any other* pamphlet, or *even* leading article or speech (*e. g.:* Sir C. Wetherell's, with its single quotation five times corrected, in and out of St. Stephen's, and *not correct yet*) exhibiting such a proof of *proportionate* accuracy in Latinity? I think not. I have now furnished you a few more quotations to try conclusions on. Of course, my *Latin* 'authorities are stolen from the last *English* grammar'—(Fraser's No. 6., p. 674) which, as the *bull* shows the doctor never looked into one, and as he is not familiar with English (for to call the 'chaffing' slang of St. Giles's, used by beggars, thieves and gypsies, English, would be a libel)—he would lose nothing by studying. Mr. Lindley Murray, whom I beg to introduce, would be a *profitable* acquaintance to him, as well as to his friend the obstreperous 'Angel of the World,' who often breaks Priscian's head, in the Irish fashion, 'for love.'

*

justice to say that he has fully and laboriously *sinned up* to all the defects of the mock example. He may justly snap his finger at the 'Greek humbug Longinus.' My mode of writing ϖυρ in English characters, which our Irish Caleb Quotem pronounces 'Valpyan and cockneyfied,' the doctor must know has good and learned warrant. (See Bryant on the derivation of *purus, bury;* see also *duo, mus, duple, cube, Suria, Sulla, lacrumæ, clupeus, lutra,* &c. The Germans always pronounce the Greek *y* as *u*.) As to the doctor's interpretation of 'communis sensus,' which, according to him, implies *tact,* I retain the opinion I expressed, though previously aware of Gifford's authority. Dr. Magin is, indeed, the last person whose estimate of common sense I should be willing to take. But what has the besotted pedantry of the doctor's entire article to do with a pamphlet inquiring into the laws of criticism, the existence of a critical standard, *now in utter abeyance,* and the poetical grade, according to those laws and standard, of Robert Montgomery? Against this inquiry, argumentative process, and estimate, the doctor tacitly admits that he cannot find one word to say. Supposing I were as bad a Latinist as the doctor (having no other notion of literary offence) pleases to wish that it should be believed! What then? The erudite simpleton is quite welcome to his little victory over the printer's error of *e* for *is:* I will readily, if it will please the doctor, shift it from the printer's shoulders to my own;

> His whole debate—
> Disputes of *me* or *te,* or *aut,* or *at;*
> To sound or sink in *cano, o,* or *a,*
> Or give up *Cicero* to *C* or *K*—

will be considered of less consequence in good society than amidst the stuttering compotations of the '*Pig*

and Whistle' and the birch-flourishing honours of Irish hedge-schools. I readily admit the worthy doctor's superiority in deciding on the gender of *ictus*. He has probably had reason during some of his crapulous exploits at the said '*Pig and Whistle*' to feel, without *under-standing*, by 'tact'—(perhaps I should say, con-*tact*, doctor?) that a knockdown *blow* is *masculine*; more especially when the pummelled person remains *neuter*. The doctor may say with 'cudgelled Roper' in the Dunciad:

> And oh! he cried, what street, what lane but knows,
> Our thumpings, pumpings, blankettings, and blows;
> In every 'oyster-shop,' our works are seen,
> And the fresh vomit runs for ever green.

Physician, physic yourself, is a good adage. Would it not have been wiser, doctor, before you virtually admitted the rottenness of your cause, by concocting a criticism out of a printer's slip of *errata*, to have looked into the lapses of your own magazine, which contains no more pages than my pamphlet. In the number just published, which *dishonours* me by the *mitigated* personality of its attack, we have at page 90, (Fraser's Magazine*, No. 7.)

Timeo Danaos dona ferentes.

Would it not have been as well, doctor, to have introduced *et* after Danaos? Your own 'cacolology' wants curing, Dr. Pangloss! *Respue* quod non es. But what will the public say, most erudite and illustrious doctor, when told that within a few leaves of your

* I purposely *spared* this abusive magazine in the first instance, as Mr. Fraser now probably knows, for *domestic reasons*—reasons which have hitherto alone restrained me from dragging some of the Literary conspiracy here brought, for its *Literary* delinquencies, to the bar of public opinion,—before a *legal tribunal*. It was hardly requisite for some of these 'gentlemen' with laborious and supererogatory folly, to furnish me with new proofs and new legal confirmations of their pertinacious, malignant, and *punishable* collusion.

attack on my printer's *slip of errata*, there are in one page (page 678) not less than the three following successive blunders in so common a language as French.

1. *C'est* cause est l'empire que la nature a donné
2. Le voisinage des parties *le* plus sensibles du corps.
3. A cet etat succedent la *larguer* (langueur) l'abattement, &c.

Perhaps the doctor may plead that although *rich* in Latin, he is a *pauper* as to French; and it is only fair to concur with his leading article (page 637), 'that the fountain-head of pauperism is poverty.' A valuable truism!

But the doctor and his colleagues are also adepts in the style called nonsense, as witness (Fraser's, page 53, No. 7):—

Poetry, which in the latter years of Æschylus, and the earlier days of Sophocles, *had been the brightness of a veiled face in the dark places*, was then the *undimmed radiance* of a countenance *looking* like a girl of Tempé *through a transparent mantle*. Sublimity, the light of poetry in its birth and in its resurrection, had become mellowed into a *soft gloaming*, something like the *mingling light and harmony* of a *nightingale's home*—and this *was beauty of thought*.

'Incore!' Another '*coop d'oil*,' as the orange doctor would say.

The melodies of this sweetest of Israël's harpers, are associated in my mind with the *faintly illumined face* of some beautiful Moravian maiden, about whom my memory *hangs* in *darkening folds*, *glimmering* only here and there, as some dearer remembrance, like a *sister's finger*, rests upon it.

'*C'est et most excillint*,' doctor, to use your own Milesian French. Ancient Pistol never uttered any true no-meaning more grandiloquent. The confused jumble of logic and Irish eloquence is charmingly absurd, and calculated to oblectate any doctorial head bemused, whether sleeping or waking for three and twenty out of the four and twenty hours, with 'ale or viler liquors.' In order to appreciate *two sentences*

like the above, the doctor must, indeed, have 'drunk himself,' as Bardolph says, 'out his *five sentences*.'

To use your own exquisite grammar, doctor, for you are equally skilled in English grammar, as you are erudite in Irish eloquence, and successful as a Greek, I may conclude by asking: '*To what good* are such things' (page 695). This is as 'iligant' English, doctor, as your Irish metaphor of *Froth tinkling* (Fraser's, No. 7, p. 113) is superb. It is not the froth that tinkles, doctor, at the various bacchanalian crypts where you and your contubernalian grade of 'gentlemen of the press' are clamorous for porter and oysters. No! the froth of the 'heavy wet,' as you often so learnedly inform us, should be 'blown off:' it is the half-pence, when *requested* to be paid for the frothy luxury, that *tinkle*, while 'mine host's' eyes *twinkle* doubtless, at the unusual godsend of a transferred portion of your brass.

Cujus aceto *,
Cujus conch*is* † tumes? in qua te quæro proseucha ‡?

I thus, with Christian goodwill, leave, in the midst of such associates and associations as delight him, the worthy Ultra Ex-Subeditor of the Ex-New Times, who, with intelligible malignancy, and in *conspiring* co-operation with another Ex-Subeditor of the same extinct ultra periodical at the time it was coupled with the Courier, who,—by writing *epicene*, (that means *neuter* §, I think doctor,) epicene radicalism in a Sunday paper, is subjecting its originally good constitution to the various stages of *atrophy* (that means slow wast-

* 'Heavy wet.'

† Oysters. May I crave permission, doctor, to change *e* for *is*?

‡ The 'Coal-hole,' or 'Hole-in-the-Wall.'

§ Since 'neuter' may be unpleasant, will *amphibious* do better doctor?—*i. e.*—suited to the present *sea* or the late *land* service.

ing, I think, doctor!)—stutters out a wish to insinuate that I had contemporaneous engagements in the *New Times* and *Times*. I never had an engagement in either paper*, and never received one farthing from either. The doctor probably meant his colleagued assailant on me, in the Monthy Magazine, whom I am next to answer, and who really had engagements in both papers, in which the *Reverend* Gentleman was engaged as *theatrical* critic.

The Reverend Editor of the Monthly Magazine, begins logically enough to impugn my authority as a critic, before he attempts to pull down his brother religious poet. This metaphorical 'Milesian' (I happen to be a Welshman) who cannot

Ope
His mouth but out there flies a trope;

whose entire style is notoriously a pyebald jumble of strained Irish metaphors, pounces, like another *Scylla* on the Ithacans, on the six unhappy metaphors sprinkled over the deck of my pamphlet. He is abundantly wrathful against all; but against one especially, which he misquotes, the sudden anti-metaphorical zeal of the metaphorical editor boils over. He rages against it like a mad bull, when exasperated at the sight of his own shadow. 'Hence the limited chances of dis-

* The doctor, while subediting and Burkeing the 'Rip', may have seen leading articles from the *Kent and Essex Mercury*, during the two years (from 1825 to June 1828) I edited it (*i. e.*, wrote its leading articles), copied into the *Times*, and thence drawn his inference. My politics have, indeed, been precisely those of the *Times*, from the date of my first article twenty years ago in the *Examiner*, against Negro Slavery, down to my advocacy of the Spanish Constitutionalists (and that single handed, since I urged warlike demonstration to prevent the French Bourbons crossing the Bidassoa) in three papers, two provincial, and one metropolitan, of now unrivalled circulation. I constantly predicted then, that the infamous aggression on liberty would ultimately destroy D'Angouleme, and dethrone his family. *Catalonian* Mina's day has again risen.

covering the first heliacal emersion of a (*any*) new poetical star from the lower belt of the vulgar horizon.' This I confess is bad, and I am still more ashamed to confess that I unconsciously borrowed the metaphor *from the Reverend Editor's manly Jubilate pamphlet on the Queen-killing coronation of George IV.*, which the Reverend Editor sent to various editors of country papers, and to me, then anonymous Editor of a north-eastern paper, among the rest, *requesting them to puff it.* Precise instructions were, moreover, given in certain confidential quarters, to press the fact—subsequently urged by him in his Two-monthly Review, also 'kilt' like the 'Rip' and New Times—(the whole *clique* have always killed every periodical they have presumed to manage, or for the puffing management of which they have intrigued)—the fact of his religious *superiority* to Byron as a poet. The reverend gentleman knows nothing of the person who 'rejoiceth in the name of Edward Clarkson.' Convenient obliviousness! since *Edward Clarkson preceded him as* Editor of the very Monthly Magazine which he now edits*, before the reverend Editor converted it from liberalism to ultraism, and not liking such violent changes, however usual with the various conspiring subeditors of the extinct New Times, Edward Clarkson gave unforgivable offence to the present proprietor of the Monthly Magazine†, by trans-

* In this capacity I wrote the long article (claimed by others) '*On the Non Eternity of the World*,' argued on the mathematical process of induction, which any reader, by referring to the two last numbers of the Monthly Magazine, Old Series, will find made considerable stir, and attracted large correspondence.

† I gave similar offence to the same party, by transferring from the *Asiatic Journal*, a series of *gratuitous* articles to the *Oriental Herald* of Mr. Buckingham, on the same score, *viz.*, my conformity with the political tenets of the latter. So much for the *animus* of this attack!

ferring his series of what had been made leading articles in the Monthly Magazine, to an honourable man—Mr. Thelwall—and, like himself, a consistent friend of civil and religious liberty. The present editor of the *Monthly Magazine* affects equal ignorance of my strictures on the hieroglyphical language, the reference to which, in those four little characters (1811,) contains more food for certain *phonetic daws in borrowed plumes* to chew, than the reverend gentleman can understand. The reverend editor may as well boast of *forgetting himself, like* his colleague; since those strictures (estimated as peculiarly worth the expense of wood-cuts) constitute the leading articles of the very Monthly Magazine, which he edits, for the greater part of the year preceding his editorship. The reverend gentleman, in conformity with his New Times' *solitary* attack on it (and a curious circumstance relative to Sir John Stoddart, is connected with this allusion) in conjunction with a late ultra-editor of the *Berkshire Chronicle*, also as the *Reverend Theatrical* Critic will recollect, an *Ex-Subeditor of the Ex-New Times—the third referred to*—does me the favour also to disvalue, a second time, my Romance of Herwald de Wake*. It is but a Romance, and may not be *really* worth more than *sixpence, or Salathiel.* But the 'Angel' of the critical and *Millenary* 'world," ought to have in common consistency known that it was praised in the most unqualified terms by Mr. S—, a former editor, in *this very Monthly Magazine* which he now edits!!

* The Egyptian scenes of initiation, in the Necropolis beneath the Great Pyramid, which constitute nearly one of the three volumes, are so strikingly like the same scenes in the 'Epicurean,' that, as they may have at least suggested the latter, I cannot but flatter myself that Mr. Moore has honoured me by a perusal of this work.

The reverend gentleman says he can purchase it for ninepence. If he will take the copy to Mr. Ridgeway, I will pay him the publishing price for it, thus giving him the opportunity of earning more than he ever can expect to do by preaching his volume of sermons. But as one good turn deserves another, the reverend gentleman will perhaps have the politeness to give me the publisher's price for such of his various literary offspring as I may redeem from the greasy fingers of the cheesemongers and tripemen, or awake from their grim repose on the dusty shelves of the book-stalls. The balance will be greatly in my favour.

In all this, the reverend Editor acts on the honest system of some of the lower *canaille* of the Press, who, equally contemptuous and ignorant of the decencies of good society, uniformly abuse the Editors into whose places they shuffle themselves. Like the craped footpad, creeping with dastard caution in the dark, they first steal a man's purse, and then abuse him for not having the stolen purse. While devouring the grapes, they blaspheme the planter of the vine. Such ruffians would steal the clothes from the backs of children, and then boast, with profligate effrontery, of having reduced them to nudity, or stabbed them in the back. Your presumptuous New Series (and of newspapers as well as magazines,) often 'forgets its Creator in the days of its youth,' till reminded, by the growing debility of its circulation, of premature old age, approaching decay, and inevitable dissolution.

The attack on Montgomery as a religious poet, by the reverend Editor, (he being himself a religious poet) is conducted on the same *disinterested* principle.

The assailants resemble the ugly Tartar recorded by Hudibras, who could think of no other means to make himself look handsome, but by knocking out the brains of every handsome fellow he encountered.

Let us briefly examine this pretended criticism of the Monthly Magazine. It is, in fact, a mere *rechauffé* of the old garbled extracts from the ' Omnipresence,' as collected by an Ultra colleague of the reverend gentleman in stripping the laurels from Lord Byron's brows, in order therewith to cover their own poetical baldness. A few specimens from this dung-heap of musty and ragged criticism, may be taken up with quarantine caution at the point of the fingers

> Unearthly terror gripes his coward fame.
> ' Omnipresence.'

Clanely note on *that same*, by the reverend ' Milesian.'

' Imagine terror *griping* a murderer. *A dose of calomel* would do no more.' Is not this ' beastly dirty?'

The reverend gentleman's colleague, in the same spirit, makes a still more dirty ' comment on my phrase " pungent gripe of the satire," which I cannot soil my paper by quoting. Is not ' this blackguardism ?'

The succeeding quotation is as polished in its wit, as the preceding is cleanly in its manners:

> How did thy presence smite all Israel's eye.
> ' Omnipresence.'

Note by the reverend disciple of *Knox*. " This is very like giving Israel a black eye." How facetious! This ' apostolic blow' is worthy of other critical and witty professors of ' real fancy and science!'

A third quotation will show what it is for ' Milesian'

Absintees to be immersed for any considerable time in the cess-pool effluvia of Cockneyism, till they *clane forgit ould Ireland.*'

The meadow minstrels carol to the scene.
'Omnipresence.'

"Note by the reverend Editor. What have birds to do with meadows?" Innocent inquirer! Surely some cockney from the suburban hedgerows and *reeking* brickkilns of Brompton, must have interpolated this in order to *smoke* the reverend gentleman; his Irish colleague in 'Fraser's' having already informed us that *nightingales bray!!* He denies the existence of *sparrows*, and the sneering wag presents him with a *lark*. But, perhaps the 'Milesian' birds differ from the English; or like the Irish reptiles, (biped or otherwise) not liking their own bogs and fogs, favour us with their exclusive company.

So much for the wit and knowledge of this pseudo-criticism on R. Montgomery. A more serious charge remains—that of wilful falsification.

The Monthly critic says that Montgomery in my pamphlet, is 'unblushingly compared to Milton.' This is untrue. I repeatedly assert his *dissimilarity* and *inferiority:* and compare him to Akenside, Cowper, and Young, but chiefly to the latter: (page 64.)

The Monthly Magazine Editor says, that 'according to Mr. Clarkson, Montgomery's description of the last day is superior to anything in the Pleasures of Hope or Memory.' This is untrue. I say, on the contrary, (page 118) that it is faulty and inflated; that it is only better than Young's which is not good; and I adduce but two phrases from each in proof of the fairness of this comparative estimate.

The Monthly Critic again asserts that I wrote thus:

'the thought is weighty, but *like Young, it* plays on the surface of actions.'

This is untrue, I say of the *satire*, that *like Young's sarcasm, it* plays, &c. (page 123).

The *Eruditissimo Reverendissimo* again purposely misquotes: "Soared like the heliacal emersion," &c. &c. This is another wilful falsification. 'Soared like,' are words foisted in by the ingenious, but not ingenuous reverend. Again, "heliacal emersion" is applied to *Mr. Croly*—and to all poets who struggling into light, write for the *reading minority*, (see p. 17); not, as he labours shiftily to infer, exclusively to Mr. Robert Montgomery.

Our critical 'Milesian' says, 'The *Universal Prayer* * * *, Mr. Clarkson assures us, resembles the gorgeous &c.

Mr. Clarkson says no such thing. On the contrary, I expressly disapprove (page 118) the *Universal Prayer*, as unworthy of Montgomery's fame.

The poetical critic affirms that I (as well as others) deprecate attack on the score of Montgomery's youth. Monthly Magazine, page 212).

This is not only untrue; but the critic must have known it to be so when he pledged his editorial character to the falsehood, since he has the 'Milesian' effrontery to appropriate, without the politeness of acknowledgment, the series of examples which I adduce (page 32) to prove that poetical precocity is a common occurrence, and, therefore, that a poet's youth can neither be matter of praise nor depreciation.

So much for the good faith of my reverend assailant. His critical acquaintanceship with authors, is equal to his good faith. To display this, he ventures out of his depth in some collateral remarks on Juvenal

and Milton. And first,—with laughable caution, however, eschewing the risks of Latin quotation,—he pays his respects to the former. Will any of the reading public believe, that this Bavian Zoilus—half poetaster, half criticaster—who imposes on them with the muffled *bugbear* of the dogmatic 'we,' is ignorant that Juvenal's style is characterized by coarseness? Why, Millenarian Sir, his coarseness amounts to obscenity. Is obscenity 'due to man and his worth,' Mr. Croly? The word 'straddle' is unhappily too close a translation of Juvenal's prurient energy; his vituperation, indeed, not only stings (*pungit*) but 'butchers;' and the words 'pustuled' and 'porkish whiteness,' (page 204) are Juvenalian, precisely for the very reason this pseudo-critic thinks they are not,—their coarse energy and *stigmatizing* condensation. There is 'pungency' of wit—'I thank thee, Jew, (*Wandering Jew*, of course,) for teaching me that word'—in Juvenal, but it is stained, like the pothouse wit of the reverend gentleman's colleague, and as the Monthly, but not witty, attack on me is stained, by 'beastliness' and 'blackguardism.' May I not add that the latter is also stained by intentional falsification? May I not add, by stupid infatuation, when I state that this 'grave and reverend signor' can, in the midst of his silly quibbles and 'word catching,' suffer the following passage to turn his minute shuffling and *Slop*-pail research into ridicule?

'Montgomery makes his *Damon* (this is the Irish way of pronouncing *Demon*, and ludicrously betrays the 'Milesian' concoctor of the criticism) gaze around.' The process was 'as thus'—The Orange Bishop *in petto*, while dictating his critical inspirations, says to his *Sub-Deacon*, 'Arrah, *Janus* dear, write Demon (Da-a-mon) now,' and '*Damon*' is accordingly written.

So much for the modern Damon and *Pythius!* (*u*

for *a*, again, Dr. Pangloss! !) So much for *spiritual*, theatrical, critical, and poetical *inspiration*.

This reverend *'person's' knowledge of the style of Milton is as great as his knowledge of that of Juvenal, —of English as of Latin. Let us 'elucidate.' Here follows a passage meant to be very fine; it is the Millenarian's usual jumble of metaphors, in which, while attacking mine and *his own*, he favours me with his *countenance* by patronizing and appropriating one of those which he attacks (*the concluding passage*) with true Milesian coolness. The reverend gentleman's *countenance*, in this particular, is *far from handsome*. Milton's Paradise Lost, he says (page 213) 'is copious and stately, but NATURAL and characteristic; in description lavish and picturesque; in sentiment high-toned and sincere. *Its very perusal is an act of devotion!!* The world and its countless interests, its joys and sorrows; its idle, but seducing day-dreams fades *off* our minds. *We breathe a loftier atmosphere*, &c.' The excessive absurdity of this magniloquent rigmarole I goodhumouredly spare; since a laugh is worth something, and one ought to be grateful. I shall say nothing of the reverend gentleman's *Irish orthodoxy* in recommending his *bishop* and *brother-churchmen* to imbue themselves with the study of Milton's mingled *Socinianism* and *Arianism* as an 'ACT OF DEVOTION!' But Milton is pronounced '*natural*.' No one but a '*natural*' would say so. Is it credible that any critical tyro, English or Irish, could venture to insult the reading public and the 'schoolmaster' (not the doctor, though he, too, is generally 'abroad') with such an affirmation? A schoolboy of a

* The 'devil' is requested not to print this 'persona,' or 'parson.' We must write 'by the card,' and an *a* or *e* might 'undo us.' Mr. Croly's Spanish, by the way, is as bad as his bousy co-conspirator's French. See 'Monthly Magazine' (page 187 to 201). What degrading incompetency! What despicable and fraudulent pretence is this to criticism!!

fourth form would be justly flogged for such ignorance. Nothing but the little occasional disguises of the 'Irish doctor' could excuse the callous nudity of this exposure. Natural? why, reverend Sir, it is *most unnatural;* the *artificial* structure of his style is its most singular characteristic. But do not take my word: take that of the lexicographer Dr. Johnson, who knew *something of English.* He says that Milton's 'style is formed on a *perverse* and *pedantic* principle;'—'he *wrote no language*, but has formed what Butler calls a *Babylonish dialect*;' that 'his diction so far-*removed from common use*,' that the reader, on opening his work, 'finds himself surprised by a *new language*,' and finally, that nothing but Milton's 'exalted genius' could reconcile us to 'its *deformity*.'

This 'deformity' being the reverend 'Milesian's' Irish view of what is '*natural*,' I here leave him to seek consolation or compotation with his learned and *cacological* colleague, Dr. Pangloss. They may compare notes as to what is 'common sense' or tact, and as to what is 'natural' (illegitimate and soft-headed are, I think, two of the meanings of this word, doctor!) All that remains is to turn the offenders off, and wish them an exit as little painful as possible. 'Farewell, then,' as Swift said to two similar colleagues*, 'beloved and loving pair! Few equals will you leave behind!'

In this advanced stage of the new farce of the 'Critics criticised,' the reader will probably feel little concern to see more than the drop-scene. It will not be requisite to waste my time or his in exposing paragraph by paragraph the scandalous bad faith with which the extracts from the 'Omnipresence,' with

* Battle of the Books.

avowed effrontery, taken from the most incorrect edition, are garbled in the *Monthly Magazine*. The public verdict is, I feel convinced, given in my favour; and further exposure is superfluous. The calm and good-humoured voice of truth will always prevail over the angry virulence of interested motive and obvious collusion. But it ought to be remarked, as an example of Irish compliment and Irish rhetoric, that Montgomery's irritable, noisy, and wrathful assailants, curiously concur in two defamatory charges which they bring against the *reading* public whom *they address* and the *writing* community to which *they belong*.' Let us 'elucidate.' They say, 1*st*., that the whole public, who purchased Montgomery's twelve editions, while they with obstinate dulness *discouraged one edition of any work of the enraged objectors*, are *blocks* more thick, stolid, and solid, than ever were used by barber or shipwright; a very nation of king logs: 2*nd*., that all the critical brethren of the assailants, appertaining to the almost entire town and country press, who approved the said twelve editions, and in fact chiefly caused the sale, were either fools or knaves; either most especial and portentously long-eared asses, or bribed hirelings. This is 'too flattering.' But 'hear both sides' is a sound English adage; and therefore I cannot conclude better (since such conclusion, too, will be in the comparing and temperate spirit of the whole pamphlet) than by opposing to the estimate of the Rev. George Croly, Dr. Magin, and all the other *exes* from the extinct New Times, that of the reverend critic's former employer—the Editor of the Times, whom the reverend and his colleagues so egregiously eulogize as a fool, a knave, and a hireling.

'The author is, we understand, a very young man; but, in this production, he has displayed a *depth and maturity of thought*—a *strength* and *justness* of reasoning, which would DO HONOUR TO ANY WRITER OF THE PRESENT DAY. His versification *combines, in no ordinary degree, energy and elegance;* his figures are *beautifully appropriate*—they are never introduced merely at the suggestion of fancy, but are called in to illustrate some feeling of the mind, or some affection of the heart. A glowing spirit of fervid devotion distinguishes the whole work: in every page we find—

"Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn!"

The author appears to have felt that he stood in the presence of Him whose greatness he was celebrating; to Him he has prayed for inspiration, and from Him he has received it. He *describes with felicitous effect* the presence of the Deity in all times and places—in the darkness of night, in the storms of winter, in the mild breath of spring, in the gorgeous glory of summer, and in the fruition of autumn. The author has inculcated this principle with a *force and vigour worthy of the theme:* he calls on his fellow-men, *eloquently* and affectionately, never to let the fact escape from their memory, that the Deity is ever present; and he argues that, where such a feeling exists, it must check the growth of evil, counteract the tendency of human nature to vice, and extend the empire of virtue. *A purer body of ethics we have never read;* and *he who could peruse it without emotion,* clothed as it is in the *graceful garb* of poetry, must have a VERY COLD AND INSENSIBLE HEART.—*The Times.*'

Here is no flinching. Therefore, *expende Annibalem.* How much might you estimate, Mr. Croly, the purchase money of the Editor of the Times? Hence we might, by rule of three, infer what it would cost to bribe a theatrical critic of the same paper.

I have done for the present with Robert Montgomery's present assailants.

Fixed on the rack of Satire let them lie,
Fit garbage for the hellhound Infamy.

A new supplement, or a new pamphlet, as it may happen, will be ready for any more worthies of this Bavian and Mævian *Conspiracy*, nursed like sooterkins among the fetid and mouldy cinders of the extin-

guished *New Times**,—whenever they may feel a stomach for the encounter. Neither their cause, their motives, nor their talents, are to be feared; and in one respect they are still less to be feared; since this ultra *Slop*pite clique, turned adrift by the prolonged decadence, and final extinction of the Ex-New Times, have uniformly *Burked* every paper and periodical, whether radical or ultra, into fatal connexion with which—generally by promises of more effectual PUFFING—sometimes by the most impudent apostacy or treacherously ambidexter politics—they have since insinuated themselves. Perhaps I may be induced, at my leisure, and in good time, to amuse the public with the secret memoirs of the Conspiracy.

Mox in reluctantes dracones.

* That I may not appear to deal in vague and causeless insinuations, a few unmasking words may be dropped. Dr. Magin, an Ex-Subeditor of the New Times, asserts, under the cover of a little knavish mumbling (Fraser's Magazine, No. 6, page 722), that during the time I was 'Valpyan Editor' of the Sunday Times—about four years—during which time I often wrote the eight or ten leaders which that paper then gave, and continually not less than ten or twelve columns (tantamount in quantity, to this pamphlet every week) of original contribution—during the time, moreover, when so far from 'not flourishing,' which the 'Rip' and the New Times Subeditor, stammers forth a *collusive* wish to hint, it nearly doubled its circulation, of which fact, better proofs (L.s.d. proofs) than the attesting affidavits printed in the paper itself, can be readily given, if I am challenged to do so—during a time when every scrap and line of manuscript, proprietary or otherwise, were submitted (and justifiably submitted) to my inspection previous to printing—I say this Ex-Subeditor of the New Times asserts, with an astonishing blindness of confession, only accountable by intoxication, that the above 'voluminous *Mss.*' (and voluminous they must, indeed, be if collected), which, by a law-enforced rule, are deposited in weekly packets, in the hands of the *printer*, were transferred to, and are now in the hands of another confederate Ex-Subeditor of the Ex-New Times—that New Times, it being remembered, being an Ultra, the Sunday Times a Radical publication. This is asserted. If true, it would be my duty to-morrow, to subject (notwithstanding the domestic restraining motives referred to) the whole junta, with *Mr. Burlington Puff* (already legally committed, sly as he is) at their head, to an action for conspiracy. The legal details it would develope would, at all events, furnish an amusing *denouement* to the last scene of the *Montgomery Controversy*. But I am at liberty to disbelieve Dr. Magin.

POSTSCRIPT.

When the foregoing remarks were written, I little thought I should have occasion to add any 'more last words;' but the following advertisement, which I copy from the *Morning Chronicle* of August 19th, irresistibly claims my attention.

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

The most illiberal attacks having of late been repeatedly made upon me as a Publisher, by certain Reviewers, who, in their zeal to destroy the popularity, and with a view to account for the extensive sale, of Mr. R. Montgomery's Poems, charge me with having unduly raised that author into public favour by a system of Puffing, which they thus define:—1st, By the Publisher having his own Review—2dly; By his exchanging favours with other Reviews—3dly; By his influencing the public opinion through the literary coteries—and 4thly; By his bribing the periodical press;—I feel myself called upon to declare (and I defy any man living to disprove the assertion), that this is a deliberate and malicious calumny. 1st, I have no Review whatever. 2dly, I have not the power of exchanging favours with other Reviews, and should disdain so to use it if I had—3dly, I am not connected, either directly or indirectly, with any of the coteries—and 4thly, I never bribed, or paid, or offered to pay, any individual connected with the periodical press, to praise the works of Mr. Montgomery, or any other works in which I have an interest. *What others may do, who notoriously possess the above means, and as notoriously use them, concerns not me. I shall, therefore, make no comment on the motives mhich influence these gentlemen, nor point to the corrupted sources whence the venom flows;* but I appeal to the public, whether it is not a gross abuse of critical power, and a flagrant instance of critical injustice, thus to invade my property and impugn my conduct, on grounds which, I repeat, are at once malicious, scandalous, and false?

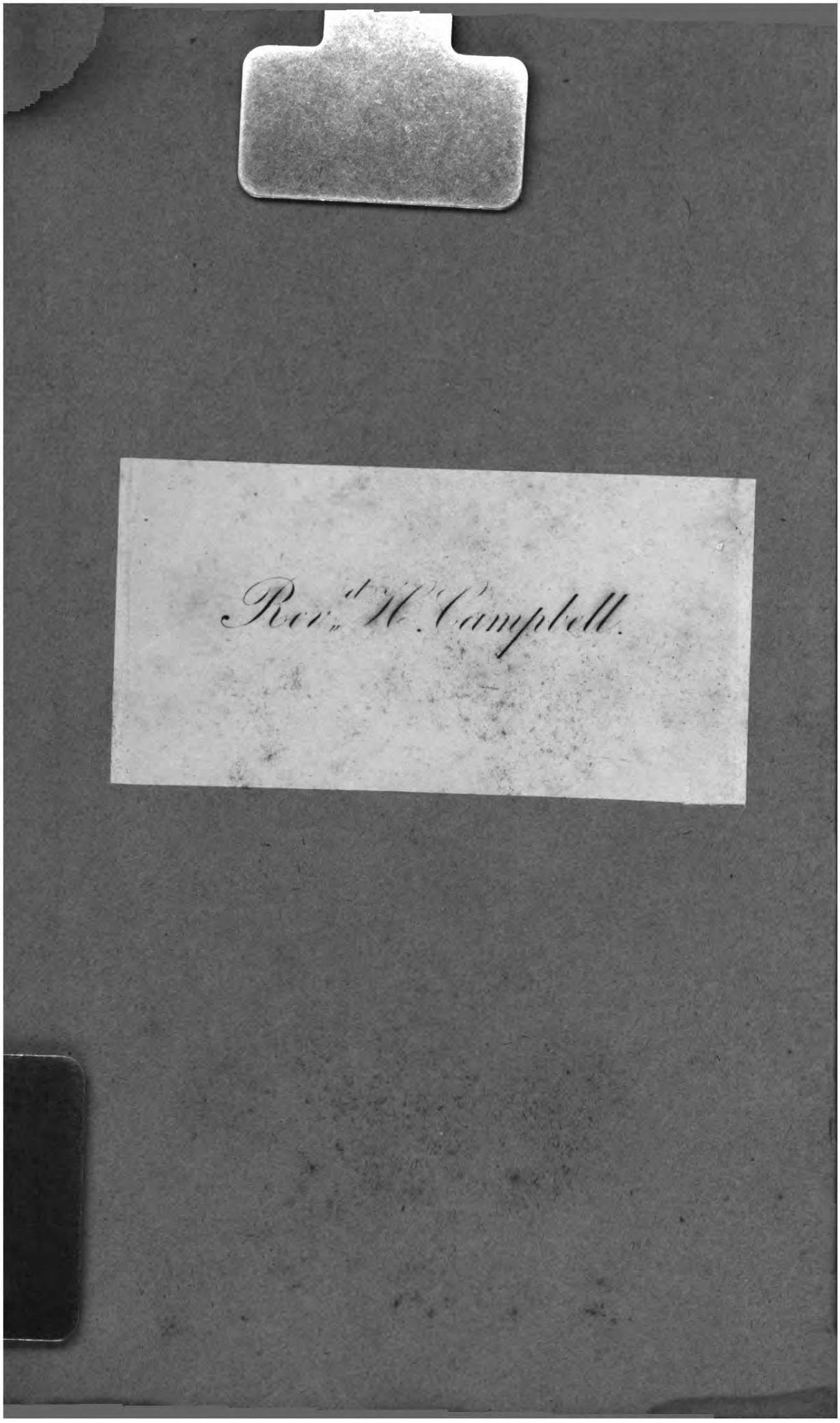
Samuel Maunder.

This is certainly manly and straightforward enough, and written in a tone of such honest indignation, that if the anonymous gentlemen, thus *inscribed* and *branded*, *can* feel any thing lighter than a horsewhip, *feel they must.* That the shamefully dishonest artifices resorted to by the junta—who, chiefly holding their brief from the Great Arch-Puffer, audaciously stigmatize the whole town and country press with the charge of being bribed like themselves—called for some notice from the publisher and proprietor of Montgomery's poems, I am quite

ready to admit; nay, that a total silence on his part, might have even been regarded by the 'miscellaneous rabble,'—who, incompetent of comparative judgment, always consider the last and noisiest buffoon to be the victor,—as amounting to an admission of the validity of these reiterated slanders. Otherwise the whole *clique* are only fit to be laughed at. But I must say he appears to me to have *only half understood his case.* I should really have given him credit for knowing the 'mysteries' of his profession better. He not only disclaims all connexion with the reciprocally-reviewing coteries and the 'caw me, caw thee' system; but he adds, with a *naiveté* quite amusing, I should think, to the gentlemen *concerned*—(and *concerned* they really are)—'I never bribed, or paid, or offered to pay, any individual connected with the periodical press.'—Ay, there's the rub!' One of the secret motives of attack—perhaps 'the very head and front of his offending' in the eyes of the Burlingtonians, I respect Mr. Maunder's feelings; but I am at a loss to conjecture how he could pen the sentence just quoted, and not be struck with the fact, that his greatest sin was a *sin of omission* (*i. e.*, he *never bribed or paid*, &c.) Now, if he had been well read in *Burlingtoniana*, or made himself an adept in the *arcana* of Burlington Street—if he had 'bribed or paid,'—instead of expecting, 'good easy man,' to reap honest fame or profit in times like these, from honest practices,—neither he nor his author would have been the objects of half the rabid abuse which has been lavished on them. Had he resorted to that *golden* system of puffing, befitting the present *golden age* of literary morals, there would have been no growling, no barking, nor biting—the jealous watchdogs of literature would have fawned and slavered on him like spaniels, and he might have plundered 'my public' with impunity. Aye, had he 'bribed or paid,' &c., he might have inundated the country with the veriest excrementitious trash that ever exuded in a fashionable novel, foamed in Millenarian delirium, or piped and snivelled in libellous and penny-trumpet imitation of the sonorous, enchanted horn of Walter Scott. He might then have been lauded to the skies for his 'public spirit and liberality,' instead of being lampooned and belied by the hungry descendants of Zoilus and Thersites, for having ushered into the world the undying works of Robert Montgomery.

Again, therefore, for the present, I take leave to make my bow. *Bon jour, Messieurs;* and to use the 'parlez *voo play-tale, civil play,*' French of my worthy 'Milesian' friends, 'a nous *revoyer.*'

London: W. Clowes, Stamford-street.


Rev.d W. Campbell.