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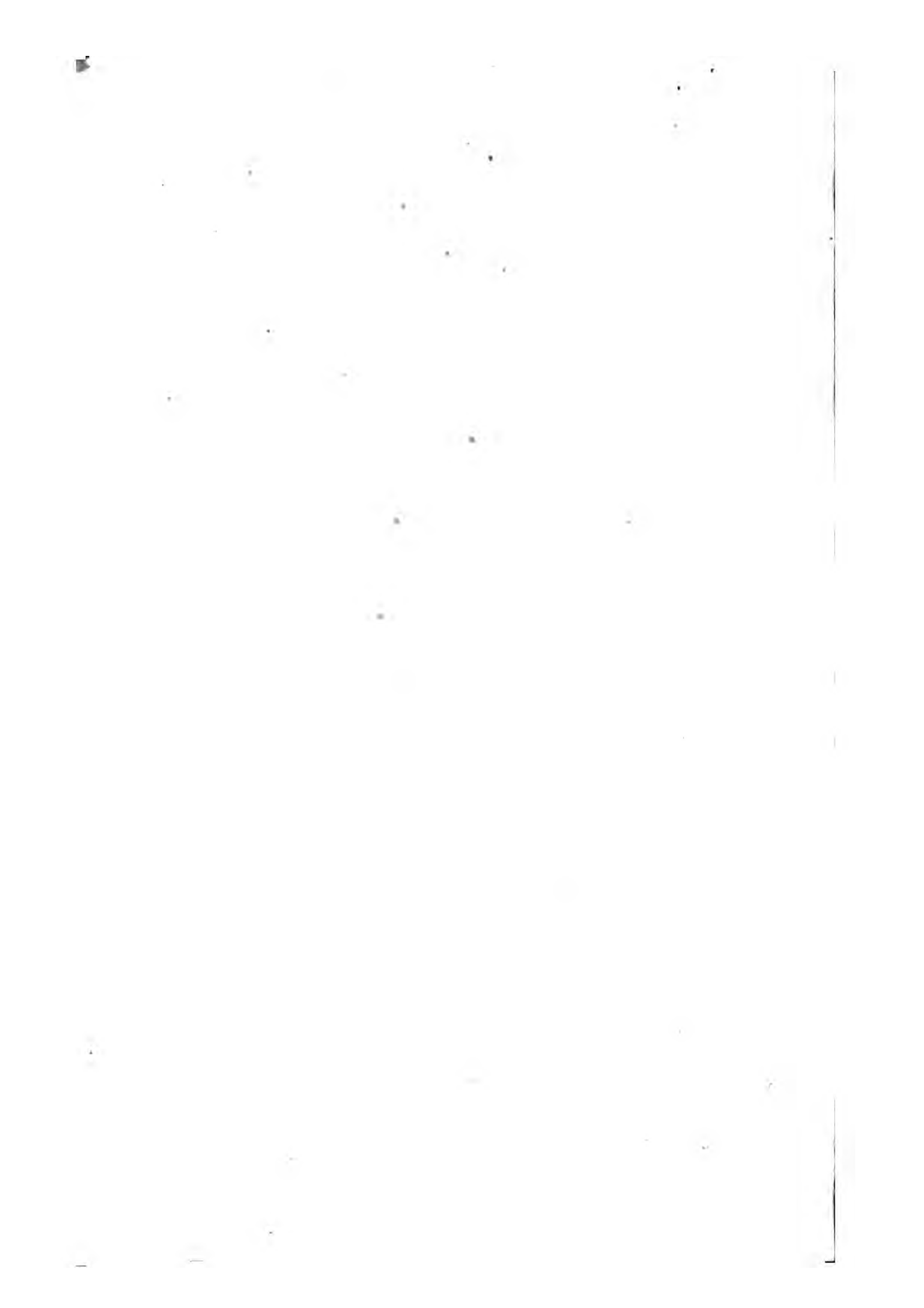
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The Shelley Papers

MEMOIR

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

BY T. MEDWIN, ESQ.

AND

ORIGINAL POEMS AND PAPERS

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

NOW FIRST COLLECTED.

LONDON :

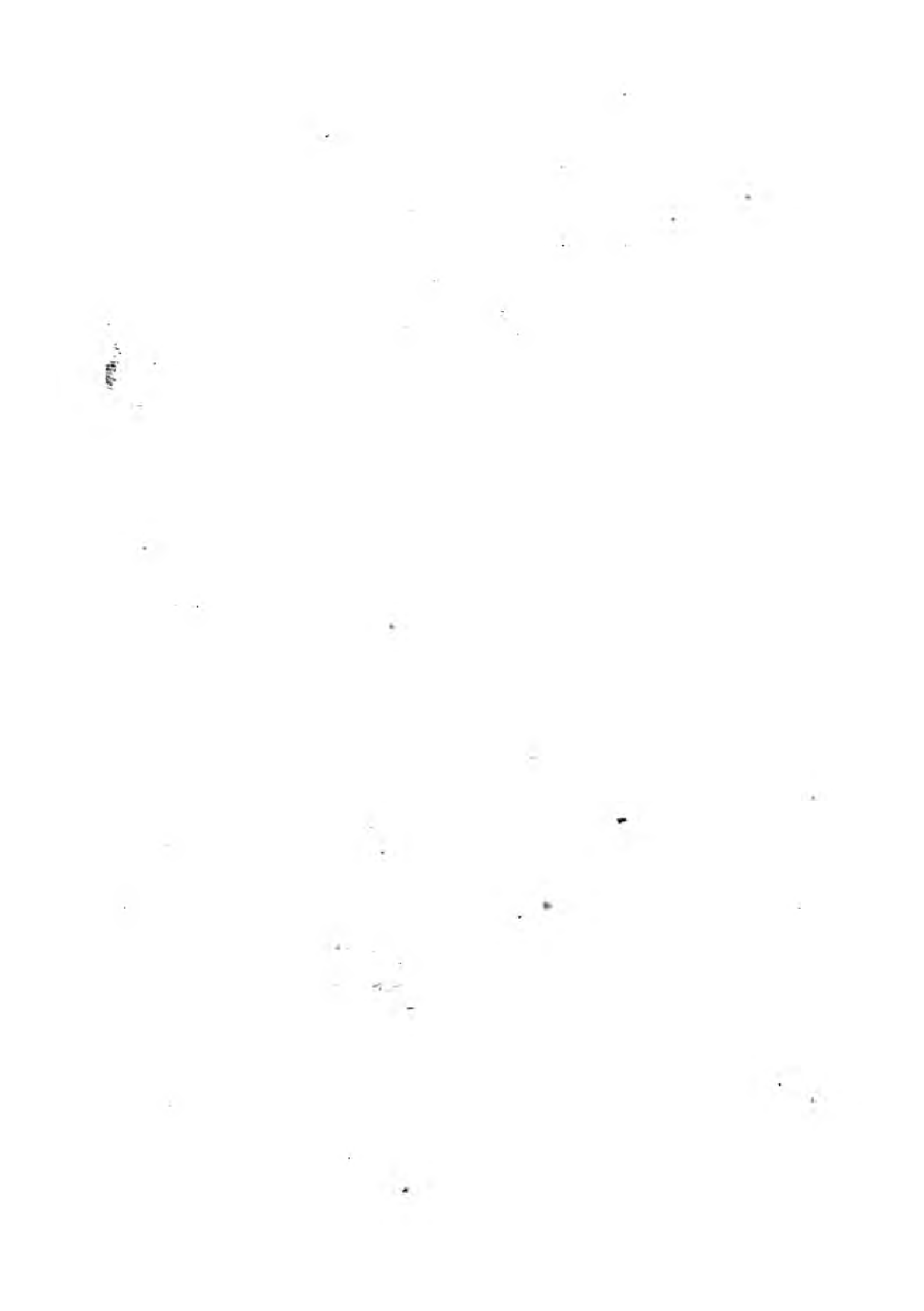
WHITTAKER, TREACHER, & CO.

1833.

LONDON :
J. HOLMES, TOOK'S COURT, CHANCERY LANE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Memoir and the majority of the Papers here collected, originally appeared in the ATHENÆUM of last year; but many persons having expressed a wish to have them in a separate form, they are now republished, with additions, and by consent of the Proprietors.



LINES

*Written by the Author of 'The Bride's Tragedy,' in the
blank-leaf of the 'Prometheus Unbound.'*

WRITE it in gold—a Spirit of the sun,
An Intellect ablaze with heavenly thoughts,
A Soul with all the dews of pathos shining,
Odorous with love, and sweet to silent woe
With the dark glories of concentrate song,
Was sphered in mortal earth. Angelic sounds,
Alive with panting thoughts, sunned the dim world ;
The bright creations of a human heart
Wrought magic in the bosoms of mankind :
A flooding summer burst on Poetry,
Of which the crowning sun, the night of beauty,
The dancing showers, the birds, whose anthems wild,
Note after note, unbind the enchanted leaves
Of breaking buds, eve, and the flow of dawn,
Were centred and condensed in his one name
As in a providence—and that was SHELLEY.

Oxford, 1822.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
MEMOIR OF SHELLEY	1—106
INVOCATION TO MISERY	108
TO A LADY SINGING TO HER ACCOMPANIMENT ON THE GUITAR	114
LINES—written during the Castlereagh Administration ..	115
WITH A GUITAR.....	117
THE MAGNETIC LADY TO HER PATIENT	120
TO THE QUEEN OF MY HEART	123
SIMILES.....	125
THE COLISEUM : a Fragment	127
THE AGE OF PERICLES	135
SCULPTURE IN THE FLORENCE GALLERY :	
The Niobe	138
The Minerva.....	142
The Venus called Anadyomine	145
A Bas-relief	147
Michael Angelo's Bacchus.....	149
A Juno	150
An Apollo	151

	PAGE
ARCH OF TITUS	151
REFLECTIONS :	
Life	153
Death	155
Love	156
REMARKS ON 'MANDEVILLE' AND MR. GODWIN	157
ON 'FRANKENSTEIN'	165
ON THE REVIVAL OF LITERATURE	170
A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT BY JURIES : a Fragment ..	174

MEMOIR
OF
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

LORD BYRON is said to have prevented the school-room at Harrow from being burnt in a rebellion, by showing the boys the names of their ancestors on the walls*; SHELLEY, to have entered into a conspiracy at Eton against the odious custom of fagging. I believe that neither of these anecdotes rests on any good authority. Shelley was in love

* Byron's own name would now act as a spell against any similar attempt. I saw his name carved at Harrow, in three places, in very large characters—a presentiment of his future fame, or a pledge of his ambition to acquire it.

with no Mary Duff* at eight years old, nor wrote epigrams on lame ducks, like Dr. Johnson, at four. I knew him from a child, our mothers being near relatives, but remember no precocity of genius which he displayed. His parents were not remarkable for any particular talent. It is true that his grandfather possessed what is thought most worth acquiring, the science of getting money, for, commencing the world with no fortune, he contrived to marry two of the richest heiresses in England, and to leave 20,000*l.* a year, and 300,000*l.*

* This love affair of Byron's seems rather to border on the ridiculous. That he showed a remarkable precocity of talent is certain. A schoolfellow of his at Aberdeen, and who used to visit his mother when lodging at Leslie's the apothecary's in Broad Street, told me that Byron and himself were caught in a thunder storm, and obliged to take refuge in a cellar, where, to wile away the time, Byron, with much emphasis and action, recited a tale from the 'Arabian Nights.' He might then be five years old. He was exceedingly pugnacious at this school, a character he maintained at Harrow, and notwithstanding the deformity in *both* his feet, he was very active. He used to blame his mother's mock delicacy for this defect. In common with many Scotch ladies of that time, it seems she had a prejudice against accoucheurs.

in the funds. A Greek poet says, that those who amass inordinate wealth "produce a stock that differs from the tree." Thus Shelley, even from a boy, had a sovereign contempt for the universal idol.—But I am not "beginning with the beginning." He was born in August 1792, and brought up till seven or eight years of age in the retirement of Field Place, Sussex, with his sisters, receiving the same education as they—hence, he never showed the least taste for the sports or amusements of boys, and, on account of his girlishness, was, on going to school, subject to many persecutions which, in his introductory stanzas to 'The Revolt of Islam,' he depicts—

Until there rose
From the near school-room, voices that, alas !
Were but an echo from a world of woes,
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

That school-room was not of Eton, but of Sion House, Brentford, where he passed several years preparatory to being sent to Eton. This place was

a perfect hell to Shelley; his pure and virgin mind was shocked by the language and manners of his new companions; but, though forced to be *with* them, he was not *of* them. Methinks I see him now, pacing, with rapid strides, a favourite and remote spot of the playground—generally alone—and where, he says, I formed these resolutions:

To be wise,
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
Such power, for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize
Without reproach or check.

Tyranny generally produces tyranny in common minds—not so in Shelley. Doubtless, much of his hatred of oppression may be attributed to what he saw and suffered at this school; and so odious was the recollection of the place to both of us, that we never made it the subject of conversation in after-life. He was, as a schoolboy, exceedingly shy, bashful, and reserved—indeed, though peculiarly gentle, and elegant and refined in his manners, he

never entirely got rid of his diffidence—and who would have wished he should? With the characteristic of true genius, he was ever modest, humble, and prepared to acknowledge merit, wherever he found it, without any desire to shine himself, by making a foil of others.

He went to Eton at thirteen. It was a new and better world: but Shelley's was a spirit that ill brooked restraint, or, in his own words, he cared to "learn little that his tyrants knew or taught;" nor did he distinguish himself much at Eton, where, as at other public schools, superior merit is only assigned to those who have the knack of making Latin verses—a task he abhorred. Perhaps his depreciation of the Latin poets (though common to all great Greek scholars) might be partly owing to his disgust at the recollection of being forced to swallow this, to him, bitter drug. I was surprised to find at every vacation the rapid developement of mind which each succeeding half-year produced in

Shelley; he proved himself also no bad scholar, before leaving Eton, by having translated several books of Pliny's Natural History: he told me he had stopped short at the chapters on Astronomy, which his tutor, on being consulted, owned his inability to explain.* Much of the last year, before he went to the University, was devoted to German, which he studied with his usual ardour of pursuit: and to his particular course of reading in this language I attribute much of his love of the romantic and the mystic and the marvellous.

He had become a believer in the ghost stories and enchantments of the Black Forest, and was giving birth to no poetical fiction when he confessed—

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Thro' many a lonely chamber, cave, and ruin,

* I remember his pointing out to me a passage that particularly struck him, and with which Calderon puzzles Cyprian, in the 'Magico Prodigioso'—"God must be all sense, all sight, all hearing, all life, all mind, self-existent," &c. Thence arose the first germ of Shelley's scepticism.

And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.

Bürgher's tale of 'Leonora' was an especial favourite with him: he had also procured the splendid edition illustrated by Lady Diana Beauclerk; and this wild ballad it was which inspired him to write verses. I remember well the first of his effusions, a very German-like fragment, beginning with—

Hark ! the owlet flaps his wings
In the pathless dell beneath,
Hark ! 'tis the night-raven sings
Tidings of approaching death.

I think he was then about fifteen. Shortly afterwards we wrote, in conjunction, six or seven cantos on the story of the Wandering Jew, of which the first four, with the exception of a very few lines, were exclusively mine. It was a thing, such as boys usually write, a *cento* from different favourite authors; the crucifixion scene altogether a plagiarism from a volume of Cambridge prize poems. The

part which I contributed I have still, and was surprised to find *totidem verbis* in *Fraser's Magazine*. The Wandering Jew continued to be a favourite subject of Shelley's. In the notes of 'Queen Mab' * he gives the Legend, probably a translation from the German, from which Byron took that splendid idea in *Manfred*—

Back, †

Back by a single hair, I could not die.

Shelley also introduces Ahasuerus in his 'Hellas.' Voltaire did the same in the 'Henriade.'

As might be shown by the last cantos of that poem, which *Fraser* did not think worth publishing,

* Queen Mab was commenced when Shelley was seventeen, as is proved by its being dedicated to his first love, of whom he says—

Thou wast my purer mind—
Thou wast the inspiration of my song—
Thine are these early wilding flowers,
Though garlanded by me.

This poem underwent, however, considerable correction ; and the notes were written after an interval of some years.

† The pitiless curse held me by the hair, and I could not die.
—*Notes of Queen Mab.*

his ideas were, at that time, strange and incomprehensible, mere elements of thought—images wild, vast, and Titanic.

Shelley, like Byron, knew early what it was to love: almost all the great poets have. After twenty-five years, I still remember Harriet G., and when I call to mind all the women I have ever seen and admired, I know of none that surpassed, few that could compare with her in beauty. I think of her as of some picture of Raphael's, or as one of Shakspeare's women. Shelley and Miss G. were born in the same year. There was a resemblance, as is often the case in cousins, between them, such as Byron describes as existing between Manfred and Astarte, or, as Shelley himself, in a fragment, says—

They were two cousins almost like to twins,

* * * * *

And so they grew together like two flowers

Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers

Lull or awaken in their purple prime.

If two persons were ever designed for each other, these seemed to be so. His novel of 'Zastrozzi,' a very wonderful work for a boy of sixteen, embodies much of the intensity of this passion that devoured him; and some of the chapters were, he told me, written by the lady herself. Shelley's mishap at Oxford was a blight to all his hopes, the rock on which all his happiness split;—he had the heart-rending misery of seeing her he adored wedded to another. Save for that expulsion (which I had almost called an unfortunate one, but that, as far as the world is concerned, the epithet would have been misapplied), Shelley would probably have become a member for some close borough, a good acting magistrate, and an excellent country squire. It is my firm belief, that he never wholly shook off this early attachment, that it was long the canker of his life, even if he ever really loved a second time.

I remember, as if it occurred yesterday, his

knocking at my door in the Temple at four o'clock in the morning after his expulsion. I think I hear his cracked voice, with its well-known pipe, "Medwin, let me in; I am expelled, (here followed a loud half-hysteric laugh)—I am expelled for Atheism." Though somewhat shocked, I was not much surprised at the news, having been led, from the tenour of his letters, to anticipate some such end to his collegiate career. In my memoir on Shelley, in the 'Conversations of Lord Byron,' I have already spoken of the marvellous treatise and conduct which led to this catastrophe. During the last term he had published also a strange half-mad volume of poems, entitled the 'Posthumous Works of my Aunt Margaret Nicholson,' in which were some panegyric stanzas to the memory of Charlotte Corday; the poetry was well *worthy* of the subject—probably the copy I have is the only one existing.

Shelley, whilst at University College, formed but

one friendship,* and even that one was the effect of accident. Nor did this arise from any unsocial feeling, but from an unwillingness and dislike to form acquaintance with strangers, which characterized him all his life. That stiffness and formality, and unapproachableness, which are so justly ridiculed by foreigners in Englishmen, are not confined to the great world, but begin at the University—perhaps there were no Etonians whom Shelley knew in the College—perhaps he shrunk from the idea of asking for introductions, and, entirely occupied in his pursuits and lucubrations, and always communing with himself, he knew not what solitude meant.

As to chemistry, he was very superficial in that

* I can perceive no resemblance to Shelley in the misanthrope Mandeville, though it is generally understood that Godwin intended that character as an idealism of Shelley, not of Shelley in the darker traits which led to crime, but to show how the most brilliant talents warped into a wrong direction, counteract all the external advantages of life, and conduce to their possessor's misery.

science. Its phenomena alone excited his interest. I believe he imbibed his taste for it from a private exhibition of Walker's Lectures, with which he was much struck: but all he knew consisted in setting fire to trees, burning holes in carpets, and flying kites to attract lightning—an idea borrowed from Franklin. He was not very profound either in his metaphysics at this time: Hume's Essays (of which he gave me a copy I have still) were his gospel. He was very serious at my ridiculing the chapter entitled 'A Sceptical Solution of Sceptical Doubts,' and asking him what he could make of a doubtful solution of doubtful doubts.

It was with some reluctance that the head of his college urged against him the fiat of banishment—not only on account of his extreme youth (he was only seventeen), but that his ancestors *

* His grandfather married a descendant of Sir Philip Sydney. If Shelley had any aristocratic feelings, he was proud of this connexion. He told me that his uncle, the possessor of Penshurst, when he re-settled his estates, offered him some thousand

had been benefactors to the College, and founders of one exhibition, if not more. Is it not to be regretted that his tutor or some of the authorities of the University, did not attempt to convince him of the fallacy of his deductions, instead of resorting at once to expulsion, a poor test of truth? The Germans act differently with their sceptical undergraduates, and if argument fails, leave the correction of their errors to time and good sense. Shelley looked upon the refusal of the examining masters to accept his challenge in the schools, as a proof that his logic was incontrovertible, and gloried in what he considered a persecution. But if Shelley thought thus, it was different with his father, who, proud of his son's talents, had looked forward to a brilliant career for his heir. Shelley, till his father's fury had in some degree evaporated, remained in town, and we lived much together. His mind was pounds to make over his contingency (for he was in the entail); but, that although he was in great want of money at the time, he declined the proposal.

at that time wholly devoted to metaphysics, and he lived in a world of shadows, that fitted him well for the Clouds of Aristophanes. To instance this. Being in Leicester Square one morning at five o'clock (I hardly know what I was doing there myself at that early hour), I was attracted by a group of boys standing round a well-dressed person lying near the rails. On coming up to them I discovered Shelley, who had unconsciously spent a part of the night *sub dio*.

I am not sure whether it was at this period that he was in the habit of noting down his dreams. The first day, he said, they made a page, the next two, the third several, till at last they constituted far the greater part of his existence, realizing what Calderon says, in his comedy of *La Vida es Sueño*—

“ Sueño es Sueño.”

Dreams are but the dreams of other dreams.

His correspondents had now become very numerous, for he was in the habit of writing to all

those whose works pleased or interested him. Among the rest he addressed some letters to a beautiful girl, who had just published a volume, in which he discovered the germs of that talent which marks her as the first poetess of the day. Why should I not name Mrs. Hemans?

On his return to

His cold fire-side and alienated home,

we kept up an almost daily correspondence. Much of the subject-matter of it was controversial, and, as is common with disputants, literary as well as others, his reasonings made no impression on me—mine had no power to convert him. Yet, sceptic as he was, he became such from no selfish feelings. On the contrary, attributing the vices and miseries of society to the existing system of things, the “anarch custom,” he determined to employ all his thoughts, talents, and energies, to combat it, with a view of ameliorating the condition of man. I shall speak of his doctrines at some length hereafter.

He had, very early, this ambition of becoming a reformer, and wrote to Rowland Hill under a feigned name, proposing to preach to his congregation—of course he received no answer.

Of the marriage into which he was inveigled at eighteen, I shall say little. What could be expected from an union where there was no concord, no sympathy of taste or pursuits, and when every coming day must have reviv'd in dismal contrast the being his soul idolized?

I shall not follow him during his visit to Mr. Southey * at the Lakes, his residence in Sackville Street, Dublin, or in North Wales. From Ireland he sent me a political pamphlet. It was very long,

* He was once a great admirer of Southey's poems, particularly 'Thalaba,' and 'The Curse of Kehamah.' He told me in Italy, he looked upon him as a great improvisatore, and that it was sufficient to have read his poems once. The fact was, that Shelley always coupled the man with his works, and it must be remembered that Southey once addressed sonnets to the authoress of the Rights of Women, and eulogized Charlotte Corday and Wat Tyler.

closely printed, very ill digested, but abounding in splendid passages. I am only aware of his having written one other pamphlet, under the name of 'The Hermit of Marlow.' This was on the occasion of the Princess Charlotte's death. The title was only a masque for politics. Under the lament of the Princess he typified Liberty, and rung her knell. In Ireland, however, he made himself obnoxious to the government, and in consequence left the country. Shelley was of opinion, that for many years a price was set upon his head, and that several attempts were made to cut him off. I had a long conversation with Mr. Maddocks, whose tenant he was, in Carnarvonshire, as to what occurred, or Shelley supposed to occur, there. The scene at the inn in 'Count Fathom,' was hardly surpassed in horror by the recital Shelley used to make of the circumstance. The story was this: At midnight, sitting in his study, he heard a noise at the window, saw one of the shutters gradually unclosed, and a

hand advanced into the room, armed with a pistol. The muzzle was directed towards him, the aim taken, and the trigger drawn. The weapon flashed in the pan. Shelley, with that personal courage which particularly distinguished him, rushed out to discover and endeavour to seize the assassin. In his way towards the outer door, at the end of a long passage leading to the garden, he meets the ruffian, whose pistol misses fire a second time. A struggle now ensues.—This opponent he described as a short powerful man. Shelley, though slightly built, was tall, and at that time strong and muscular. They were no unequal match. It was a contest between mind and matter.—After long and painful exertion the victory was fast declaring itself for Shelley, which his antagonist finding, extricated himself from his grasp, rushed into the grounds, and disappeared among the shrubbery. Shelley made a deposition before Maddocks the next day to these facts. An attempt at murder caused a

great sensation in the principality, where not even a robbery had taken place for twenty years. No clue could be found to unravel the mystery; and the opinion generally was, that the whole scene was the effect of imagination. Mr. Maddocks, like all who ever knew Shelley, perfectly idolized him—nor without reason. During Maddocks's absence in London, an extraordinary tide menaced that truly Roman undertaking, his embankment against the sea. Shelley, always ready to be of service to his friends, heading a paper with a subscription of 500*l.*, took it himself to all the neighbourhood, and raised, for the use of Mr. Maddocks, a considerable sum, which prevented this colossal work from being demolished. I cite this, as I might do many other instances of his active benevolence. This extreme generosity often led him into great pecuniary embarrassments; and some years afterwards he suffered, in all its horrors, the evils of distress. He at length succeeded in borrowing some

money from the Jews. In the early part of his life no man was so improvident as Shelley—his heart and purse were alike open to all. He knew I was much attached to a young person whom prudential motives prevented my marrying. To do away with this obstacle, he earnestly proposed (which of course I declined) to raise a sum of money on a post obit, and settle it on the lady. Some one has said, that he would have divided his last sixpence with a friend: I say, that he would have given it to a stranger in distress.

Shelley's ill-assorted marriage contributed, as might have been foreseen, to the misery of both parties.

Some of the outpourings of his soul on this fatal union were these:—

“ What is love? Ask him who lives, what is life—ask him who adores, what is God. I know not the internal constitution of other men. I see that in some external attributes they resemble me ;

but when, misled by that appearance, I have thought to appeal to something in common, and unburthen my inmost soul, I have found my language misunderstood, like one in a distant and savage land. The more opportunities they have afforded me for experience, the wider has appeared the interval between us, and to a greater distance have the points of sympathy been withdrawn.

“With a spirit ill fitted to sustain such proofs, trembling and feeble through its tenderness, I have everywhere sought, and have found only repulse and disappointment. Thou demandest, What is love? If we reason, we would be understood: if we imagine, we would that the airy children of our brain were born anew within another’s: if we feel, we would that another’s nerves should vibrate to our own,—that the beams of her eyes should kindle at once, and mix and melt into our own,—that lips of motionless ice should not reply to lips quivering and burning with the heart’s best food. This is

love;—this is the bond and the sanction which connects not only the two sexes, but everything that exists.

“ We are born into the world, and there is something within us which, from the instant we live and move, thirsts after its likeness. This propensity develops itself with the developement of our nature—to this eagerly refer all sensations thirsting that they should resemble or correspond with it. The discovery of its antetype—the meeting with an understanding capable of clearly estimating the deductions of our own—an imagination which can enter into, and seize upon the subtle and delicate peculiarities which we have delighted to cherish, and unfold in secret—with a frame whose nerves, like the chords of two exquisite lyres strung to the accompaniment of one delightful voice, vibrate with the vibration of our own—and of a combination of all these in such proportion as the type within demands,—this is the invisible and unattainable

point to which love tends; and to attain which it urges forth the powers of man to arrest the faintest shadow of that without which there is no rest or respite to the heart over which it rules. Hence, in solitude, or in that deserted state when we are surrounded by human beings, and yet they sympathize not with us, we love the flowers, and the grass, and the waters, and the sky. In the motion of the very leaves of spring—in the blue air there is found a secret correspondence with our heart that awakens the spirits to a dance of breathless rapture, and brings tears of mysterious tenderness to the eyes, like the enthusiasm of patriotic success, or the voice of one beloved singing to you alone.

“Sterne says, that, if he were in a desert, he would love some cypress. So soon as this want or power is dead, man becomes the living sepulchre of himself, and what yet survives is the mere wreck of what he was.”

Is there anything in the writings of Rousseau

that can compare with the tenderness, with the eloquence of passion, contained in these aspirations?

What disappointed hopes gave birth to them we may more than conjecture. It was with such lacerated and withered feelings that he sate down to trace the wanderings of Alastor, and, under the idealism of the spirit of solitude, to paint his own vain and fruitless search of a being with whom he could sympathize, and render this earth, what, in his enthusiastic admiration of nature, I have often heard him call it, a paradise.

In looking back to his first marriage, it is surprising, not that it should have ended in a separation, but that he should have continued to drag for more than three years the matrimonial chain, every link of which was a protraction of torture. That separation, for which there were other and more serious grounds, into which I shall not enter, took place by mutual consent, and, considering himself free, he resolved to go abroad. His health, always

delicate, was impaired by the misery he had undergone, and the quantity of that beverage, other than a Lethean one to him, laudanum, which he had taken. He required change of scene, and a milder climate; and on the 28th July, 1814, commenced a continental tour. He crossed the Channel in an open boat, and had a very narrow escape of being upset in a sudden squall. Passing a few days in Paris, he received a small remittance; and after talking over with his party, and rejecting many plans, fixed on one eccentric enough—to walk through France—went to the *Marché des Herbes*, bought an ass, and thus started for Charenton: there, finding the quadruped too weak to carry his portmanteau, he made the purchase of a mule, and not without many adventures arrived with this singular *equipage* at Troyes.

The desolation and ruin that the Cossacks left everywhere behind them in their pestilential march—the distress of the inhabitants, whose houses had

been so lately burned, their cattle killed, and their all destroyed, made a deep impression on Shelley's feeling mind, and gave a sting to his detestation of war and despotism.

Further pedestrianism being rendered impossible by a sprained ankle, the remainder of the journey to Neuchatel was performed *par voiture*. Lucerne was the next canton visited: coasting its romantic lake up to Brunen, the château was hired for a week. But finding he had only 28*l.* left, and no chance of further remittances till December, he resolved with that small sum to return home by the Reuss and the Rhine. Shelley and his party took the *coche d'eau* for Loffenburgh: thence to Mumph the passage was made in a narrow, long flat-bottomed machine, consisting of pieces of deal nailed together. "The river is rapid, and sped swiftly, breaking as it passed over rocks just covered by the water. It was a sight of some dread to see the frail boat winding along the eddies of the rocks,

which it was death to touch, and where the slightest inclination on one side would instantly have upset it." However, this punt brought them in safety to Basle, where, hiring a boat for Mayence, they bade adieu to Switzerland; and landed in England from Rotterdam on the 13th August, having travelled 800 miles at an expense of less than 30*l*. Shelley used to describe with an enthusiasm that was infectious, the rapturous enjoyment this voyage down the Rhine was to him;—to dilate with all the fire of poetic inspiration, on the rapidity of their descent of that torrent-like river—winding now along banks of vines, or greenest pastures—now rushing past craggy heights surmounted by feudal castles.

This was one of the favourite topics in which he delighted to intoxicate his imagination; and, with a prodigality, like that of Nature in some tropical island, to lavish a world of wealth, as though his store was inexhaustible as hers.

The next eighteen months after his return were

passed almost exclusively in London, where he had to suffer all the horrors of poverty. It was at this time, I imagine, that he walked the hospitals, and studied medicine, not with any intention of practising it as a profession, but with a view of alleviating the sufferings of humanity. His knowledge of anatomy was very limited; but he made himself a tolerable botanist. I doubt, however, whether Shelley had not too much imagination to make any great proficiency in the abstract sciences: nature and education both designed him for a poet.

In May 1816, Shelley paid a second visit to the continent, and reached Sécheron, near Geneva, on the 17th of that month. On his arrival he learned, that Byron was living in the Hotel. Some correspondence on the subject of 'Queen Mab' had already passed between himself and Shelley: it was renewed, and in their interview they were so mutually pleased with each other, that it ended in Shelley's deciding to take a villa immediately

at the foot of that already taken by Lord Byron, the Campagne Diodati,—a name associated with that of Milton, and perhaps one of Childe Harold's principal reasons for choosing it as a residence. The cottage occupied by Shelley is in a most sequestered spot. There is no access to it in a carriage. It stands only separated from the lake by a small garden, much overgrown by trees. A pathway through the vineyard of Diodati communicates with it. It was here that Byron formed an attachment to the mother of Allegra. They were not altogether strangers, he having seen her once on the eve of his departure for the continent, when she applied to him for an engagement at Drury Lane; but he was no longer on the Committee of the theatre, and could not forward her views. I have already spoken of C——. She was a brunette, and gifted with no common talents, and, if I may judge by what she was six years afterwards, possessed at that time no common

beauty. This *liaison* was, however, of very short duration ;—but to return to Shelley.

At Geneva, then, commenced that friendship between Shelley and Byron, that was destined to contribute so much to their mutual advantage, and to soothe their after regrets, if such they entertained, for their lost native land.

The similarity of their destinies tended not a little to cement this intimacy. Both were marks for the world's obloquy—both were self-exiled. Their pursuits were congenial—they had

Been cradled into poetry by wrong,

And learnt by suffering what they taught in song.

They both sought and found in solitude, and Nature—to whom the Greeks rightly gave the name of mother,—a balm for their wounded spirits. It cannot, I think, be denied, that the benefit of this intimacy weighed much on the side of Byron. That he profited by the superior reading and refined taste of Shelley, is evident from all he wrote in

Switzerland. There is a higher strain of poetry—a depth of thought, of feeling—a natural piety—in the third canto of *Childe Harold*, which we do not find in his previous works. These must be attributed, in some measure, to the influence this daily intercourse had over his mind. Byron took as much pleasure in the society of Shelley as he was capable of taking (and he certainly was very social in Italy,) in that of any one, and soon entertained the greatest deference for Shelley's judgment, which, in the compositions of others, was infallible. With Shelley, Byron disagreed in many essential points; but they never came to a difference—which was the case with few of his pseudo-friends. Mr. Hobhouse and himself were always best apart; and it was a relief to him when they finally separated in Greece. A cold, calculating, unoriginal, mathematical mind, could have little in common with Byron's; but Shelley's was an *El Dorado*, an inexhaustible mine. Byron, (as in the

case of Charles Skinner Matthews, of whom he used to talk so much, and regretted so deeply,) not being a great reader himself, liked the company of those who were,—especially if they could think, for he thus obtained both the matter and spirit distilled through the alembic of others' brains. His admiration of Shelley's talents and acquirements only yielded to an esteem for his virtues; and (I think from what I witnessed five years afterwards,) to have passed a day without seeing him, would have seemed a lost day. No wonder, then, that in this absolute retirement they were inseparable. They spent their mornings on the lake—their evenings in their own small intellectual circle; and thus, as Byron said, he passed that summer more rationally than any other period of his life. He had before written for fame: here, he was inspired by a higher feeling. Madame Beloe, in her 'Life of Lord Byron,' has given a journal of his tour in the smaller

cantons; where are to be found all the elements of 'Manfred.'

Shelley, in some interesting letters addressed to his friend Mr. Peacock, describes a Tour du Lac, which he made with Lord Byron. Off Miellerie they were in great danger of being lost. He says, "It blew tremendously, and came from the remotest extremity of the lake, producing waves of frightful height, and covered the whole surface with a chaos of foam. My companion, an excellent swimmer, took off his coat: I did the same, and we sate with our arms crossed, every instant expecting to be swamped. My feelings would have been less painful had I been alone, for I was overcome with humiliation, when I thought that his life might be risked to save mine." Shelley dwells with rapture on the scenes of the 'Nouvelle Heloise,' which he calls an overflowing of sublimest genius, and more than human sensibility. On visiting Clarens he says, "Why did the cold maxims of the world

compel me, at this moment, to repress the tears of melancholy transport which it would have been so sweet to indulge, immeasurably, even until the darkness of night had swallowed up the objects that excited them." At Lausanne, whilst walking on the Acacia-shaded terrace belonging to Gibbon's house, he observes, "Gibbon had a cold and unimpassioned spirit. I never felt more inclination to rail at the prejudices which cling to such a thing, than now that Julie and Clarens, Lausanne and the Roman Empire, compel me to a contrast between Rousseau and Gibbon."

At the end of July he went to Chamouni, where at the foot of Mont Blanc were composed his sublime lines on the source of the Arveiron; which rest their claim to admiration on an attempt to imitate the untameable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those feelings sprang.

Of the Mer de Glace he speaks thus: "I will not pursue Buffon's grand but gloomy theory, that

this globe which we inhabit will at some future period be changed into a mass of frost, by the encroachments of the polar ice, and of that produced on the most elevated points of the earth. * * * Imagine to yourself Ahriman throned among these desolating snows—among these palaces of death and frost, so sculptured in this their terrible magnificence by the adamantine hand of necessity, and that he casts around him, as the first essays of his final usurpation, avalanches, torrents, rocks, and glaciers, at once the proofs and symbols of his reign; add to this, the degradation of the human species, who, in these regions, are half deformed, or idiotic, and most of whom are deprived of anything that can excite interest or admiration. This is a part of the subject more mournful and less sublime, but such as neither the poet nor the philosopher should disdain to regard. One would imagine Mont Blanc, like the god of the Stoics, was a vast animal, and

that the frozen blood for ever circulated through his stony veins."

What his real opinion of Byron's genius was, may be collected from a sonnet he once showed me, and which the subject of it never saw. The sentiments accord well with that diffidence of his own powers—that innate modesty which always distinguished him. It began thus—

If I esteemed him less, envy would kill
Pleasure, and leave to wonder and despair
The ministration of the thoughts that fill
My soul, which, as a worm may haply share
A portion of the unapproachable,
Marks his creations rise as fast and fair
As perfect worlds at the Creator's will.

Shelley used to say, that reading Dante produced in him the same despair. He was at this period of his life, and continued ever, a warm admirer of the Lakists, especially of Wordsworth and Coleridge. But he was a still greater lover of Æschylus and Goethe. He read to Lord Byron

the 'Prometheus,' (of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter,) and 'Faust,' from which was derived the idea of 'Manfred,'—though he has treated that drama in such a way, that Goethe's loud accusations were by no means well founded. Among all his poetical crimes, Shelley has never been taxed with plagiarism.

It was one of his fanciful notions, that what we call talent, is in some degree magnetic, or epidemic: that spirits catch from each other a particle of the *mens divinior*. Such an idea, if not to be found in Plato, is worthy of him. This divine author he had long made his constant companion, and ended in idolizing. It was probably to the 'Phædo' that he owed his conversion from materialism.

"Whatever may be the true and final destination of man," writes Shelley, "there is a spirit within him at variance with nothingness and decay. This is the character of all life and being. Each is at

once the centre and circumference,—the point to which all things are resolved, and the line within which all things are contained. Such contemplations materialism and the popular philosophy of mind and matter alike forbid. They are consistent only with the intellectual system.”

But, though congenial in their pursuits, there was little congeniality of sentiment between Shelley and Byron on these subjects. Byron was doubtless a sceptic; but why, he scarcely knew, or dared ask himself. Almost all his friends at Cambridge had been sceptics; and he had been rather laughed out of his faith than *convinced, by inquiry or argument, of its fallacy. We next find Shelley at Como, where he composed his eclogue of ‘Rosalind and Helen,’ which glows with all the enchanting scenery of that delicious summer retreat. Though deficient as a story, this tale abounds with isolated passages of beauty, such as are not to be surpassed in our or any language. One would imagine that Byron,

when, on the banks of the Brenta, he wrote the stanza—

A single star is by her side,—

had in his mind's eye the still more exquisite lines from 'Rosalind and Helen'—

Leading the infantine moon,
And that one star which to her
Seems as if to minister
Half the golden light she brings
From the sunset's radiant springs.

Shelley remained on the Lake of Como during the summer of 1817.

It was to a vivid remembrance of these romantic excursions that we owe the scenes in the 'Revolt of Islam.' He there crowds images on images, each more lovely and fantastic than the former, illustrating one by the other, till he almost forgets, and his readers hardly wish to remember, in the enchantment which his magic wand calls up, that he is wandering from his theme. But I fear I am doing so myself, and shall land him again, after an absence of a year and some months, in England.

Shelley was at Bath in November 1817, when an event occurred which was destined to darken the remainder of his existence; or, in his own words, written about this period, when for him

Black despair,
The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
Over the world.

This event, upon which I could wish to throw a veil, was the death of his wife under the most distressing circumstances. Her fate was a dreadful misfortune, to him who survived, and her who perished. It is impossible to acquit Shelley of all blame in this calamity. From the knowledge of her character, and her unfitness for self-government, he should have kept an eye over her conduct. But if he was blameable, her relations were still more so; and, having confided her to their care, he might consider, with many others similarly circumstanced, that his responsibility was at an end. That he did not do so, his compunction,

which brought on a temporary derangement, proves; and yet was it not most barbarous in a reviewer to gangrene the wounds which his sensitive spirit kept ever open? How pathetically does he, in a dirge not unworthy of Shakspeare, addressed to whom I know not, give vent to his agonized heart:

That time is dead for ever, child—
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever;
 We look on the past,
 And stare aghast,
 At the spectres, wailing, pale and ghast,
 Of hopes that thou and I beguiled
 To death on Life's dark river.

“Até does not die childless,” says the Greek dramatist. A scarcely less misfortune, consequent on this catastrophe, was the barbarous decree of the Court of Chancery, unhappily since made a precedent, by which he was deprived of his children, had them torn from him and consigned to strangers.

The grounds upon which this act of oppression

and cruelty, only worthy of the most uncivilized nations, was founded,—

Trial

I think they call it,—

was decided against him upon the evidence, if such it can be called, of a printed copy of 'Queen Mab,' which, in his preface to 'Alastor,' he disclaimed any intention of publishing. It is said that he was called upon, by the court, to recant the opinions contained in that work. Shelley was the last man in existence to recant any opinion from fear: and a fiat worse than death was the consequence—sundering all the dearest ties of humanity.

Byron told me, that (well knowing Shelley could not exist without sympathy) it was by his persuasion that Shelley married again. None who have the happiness of knowing Mrs. Shelley can wonder at that step. But, in 1812, a year and a half after his first marriage, that he continued to

think with Plato on the subject of wedlock is clear, from a letter addressed to Sir James Lawrence, who had sent him his 'History of the Nairs.' Shelley says, "I abhor seduction as much as I adore love; and if I have conformed to the usages of the world on the score of matrimony, it is that disgrace always attaches to the weaker sex." An irresistible argument.*

His short residence at Marlow has been already described. There he led a quiet, retired, domestic life, and has left behind him a character for benevolence and charity, that still endears him to its inhabitants.

* Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature, society declares war against her—pityless and unerring war. She must be the tame slave; she must make no reprisals: theirs is the right of persecution, hers the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy. The loud and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She dies of long and lingering disease; yet *she* is in fault. *She* is the criminal—*she* the forward, the untameable child;—and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous matron, who casts her as an abortion from her undefiled bosom.—*Shelley.*

He became about this time acquainted with Keats; and Shelley told me that it was a friendly rivalry between them, which gave rise to 'Endymion' and the 'Revolt of Islam,'—two poems scarcely to be named in the same sentence. Shelley was too classical—had too much good taste—to have fallen into the sickly affectation—the *obsoletas scribendi formas* of that perverse and limited school.† The 'Revolt of Islam' must be

† The following note, by the Editor of the *Athenæum*, was appended to this passage on its publication in that paper:—

“ Nothing is more ridiculous, than a running commentary, wherein an editor apologizes for, or dissents from, the opinions of a writer in his own paper. Occasions, however, may arise to excuse, if not to justify, such disclaimer; and for self-satisfaction we enter our protest, on this occasion. We go as far as Captain Medwin in admiration of Shelley; but as far as Shelley—“ infallible,” says the Captain, “ in his judgment of the works of others”—in admiration of Keats. Shelley was a worshipper of Truth—Keats of Beauty; Shelley had the greater power—Keats the finer imagination: both were single-hearted, sincere, admirable men. When we look into the world,—nay, not to judge others, when we look into our own hearts, and see how certainly manhood shakes hands with worldliness, we should despair, if such men did not occasionally appear among

looked upon as the greatest effort of any individual mind, (whatever may be its defects,) in one at the

us. Shelley and Keats were equal enthusiasts—had the same hopes of the moral improvement of society—of the certain influence of knowledge—and of the ultimate triumph of truth;—and Shelley, who lived longest, carried all the generous feelings of youth into manhood; age enlarged, not narrowed his sympathies; and learning bowed down his humanity to feel its brotherhood with the humblest of his fellow-creatures. If not judged by creeds and conventional opinions, Shelley must be considered as a moral teacher both by precept and example: he scattered the seed of truth, so it appeared to him, every where, and upon all occasions,—confident that, however disregarded, however long it might lie buried, it would not perish, but spring up hereafter in the sunshine of welcome, and its golden fruitage be garnered by grateful men. Keats had naturally much less of this political philosophy; but he had neither less resolution, less hope of, or less good-will towards man. Lord Byron's opinion, that he was killed by the reviewers, is wholly ridiculous; though his epitaph, and the angry feelings of his friends, might seem to countenance it. Keats died of hereditary consumption, and was fast sinking before either *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* poured out their malignant venom. Even then it came but as a mildew upon his generous nature, injuring the leaves and blossoms, but leaving untouched the heart within, the courage to dare and to suffer. Keats (we speak of him in health and vigour,) had a resolution, not only physical but moral, greater than any man we ever knew: it was unshakable by everything but his affections. We are not inclined to stretch this note into an essay,

same period of life. I do not forget Milton, or Chatterton, or Pope, when I say this. It occupied him only six months. The dedicating lines lose nothing in comparison with Byron's to Ianthe; and the structure of his Spenserian stanzas, in harmony and the varied flow of the versification, may serve as a model for all succeeding writers in that metre.

Early in the spring of 1818, various reasons induced Shelley again to quit England, with scarcely a hope or wish to revisit it. The breach between himself and his relatives had been made irreparable. He was become *fatherless*—he was highly unpopular from the publicity given to the trial—from the attacks of the reviewing churchmen on his works; and his health was gradually becoming

and shall not therefore touch on the 'Endymion' further than to say, that Captain Medwin cannot produce anything in the 'Revolt of Islam' superior to the Hymn to Pan; nor in the English language anything written by any poet at the same age with which it may not stand in honourable comparison."

worse. The vegetable system which he followed, as to diet, did not agree with his constitution, and he was finally obliged to abandon it. That he was a Pythagorean from principle, is proved by the very luminous synopsis of all the arguments in its favour, contained in a note appended to 'Queen Mab.' He was of opinion, and I agree with him and the disciples of that school, that abstinence from animal food subtilizes and clears the intellectual faculties. For all the sensualities of the table Shelley had an ineffable contempt, and, like Newton, used sometimes to inquire if he had dined—a natural question from a Berkleyist.

But to follow him in his travels—a more interesting topic. He passed rapidly through France and Switzerland, and, crossing the Mont Cenis into Italy, paid a visit to Lord Byron at Venice, where he made a considerable stay.

Under the names of Julian and Maddalo, written at Rome some months afterwards, Shelley paints

himself and Byron in that city. The sketch is highly valuable. He says of Byron, at this time, "He is cheerful, frank, and witty: his more serious conversation a sort of intoxication; men are held by it as a spell":—of himself, that he "was attached to that philosophical sect that assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvements of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may be made susceptible." I shall enter more at large hereafter on Shelley's particular theories, though they are somewhat subtle and difficult of analysis.

Venice was a place peculiarly adapted to the studious life Shelley loved to lead.

The town is silent—one may write
Or read in gondolas by day or night,
Unseen, uninterrupted. Books are there—
Pictures, and casts from all the statues fair,
That are twin-born with poetry; and all
We seek in towns; with little to recall
Regrets for the green country.

In the autumn we find Shelley at Naples. Fortune did not seem tired of persecuting him, for he became the innocent actor in a tragedy here, more extraordinary than any to be found in the pages of romance. The story, as he related it to myself and Byron, would furnish perfect materials for a novel in three volumes, and cannot be condensed into a few sentences, marvellous as the scenes of that drama were. Events occur daily, and have happened to myself, far more incredible than any which the most disordered fancy can conjure up, casting "a shade of falsehood" on the records of what are called reality. Certain it is, that Shelley, as may be judged from his 'Lines written in Despondency,' must have been most miserable at Naples. No one could have poured forth those affecting stanzas, but with a mind, as he says in the 'Cenci,' hovering on the devouring edge of darkness. His departure from Naples was, he said, precipitated by this event; and he passed the en-

suing winter at Rome. There is something inspiring in the very atmosphere of Rome. Is it fanciful, that being encircled by images of beauty—that in contemplating works of beauty such as Rome and the Vatican only can boast—that by gazing on the scattered limbs of that mighty colossus, whose shadow eclipsed the world,—we should catch a portion of the sublime—become a portion of that around us?

Certain it is, that artists produce at Rome, what they are incapable of conceiving elsewhere, and at which themselves, are most sincerely astonished. No wonder, then, that Shelley should have here surpassed himself in giving birth to two of his greatest works, so different in themselves, the 'Cenci' and the 'Prometheus Unbound.' He drenched his spirit to intoxication in the deep blue sky of Rome. His favourite haunts were the ruined Baths of Caracalla, or the labyrinths of the Coliseum, where he laid the first scene of a tale which

promised to rival, if not surpass 'Corinne.' Like Byron in 'Childe Harold,' or Madame De Staël, he meant to have idealized himself in the principal character. This exquisite fragment he allowed me to copy; and during the twelve months I passed at Rome, I read it as many times, sitting, as he says, on some isolated capital of a fallen column in the Arena, and each time with an increased delight.

Shelley's taste and feeling in works of ancient art were, as might be expected, most refined. Statuary was his passion. He contended, "that the slaughter-house and dissecting-room were not the sources whence the Greeks drew their perfection. It was to be attributed to the daily exhibition of the human form in all its symmetry in their Gymnasia. Their sculptors were not mere mechanics: they were citizens and soldiers animated with the love of their country. We must rival them in their virtue before we can come up to them in their compositions." The hard, harsh, affected style of

the French school and Canova, he could never endure; and used to contrast what are considered the masterpieces of the latter with those of the age of Pericles, where the outline of form and features is, as in one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's paintings, so soft as to be scarcely traceable by the eye. He considered the Perseus, which Forsyth so ridiculously overpraised, a bad imitation of the Apollo; and said, after seeing the great conceited figurante of the Pitti, "go and visit the modest little creature of the Tribune."

Shelley used to say that he did not understand painting,—not meaning that he was insensible to the beauty of the pictures—(of the incomparable Raphael, for instance, whom I have often thought Shelley much resembled, not only in face, but genius, though it was differently directed,)—but that he did not know the style of different masters—the peculiarities of different schools. This he thought only to be acquired by long experience

and observation, a retentive memory of minutiae, the faculty of comparison: whereas sculpture requires no previous study; and of which the Roman peasant is perhaps as good a judge as the best academician or anatomist.

From Rome, in 1819, Shelley returned to Florence. The view from the Boboli Gardens he thus describes: "You see below, Florence, a smokeless city, with its domes and spires occupying the vale, and beyond, to the right, the Apennines, whose base extends even to the walls; and whose summits are intersected by ashen-coloured clouds. The green vallies of these mountains, which gently unfold themselves upon the plains, and the intervening hills, covered with vineyards and olive plantations, are occupied by the villas, which are, as it were, another city—a Babylon of palaces and gardens. In the midst of the picture rolls the Arno, now full with the winter rains, through woods, and bounded by aërial snowy summits of

the Apennines. On the right, a magnificent buttress of lofty craggy hills overgrown with wilderness, juts out in many shapes over a lovely valley, and approaches the walls of the city.

“ Cascini and other villages occupy the pinnacles and abutments of these hills, over which is seen, at intervals, the ethereal mountain line, hoary with snow, and intersected by clouds. The valley below is covered with cypress groves, whose obeliskine forms of intense green pierce the grey shadow of the wintry hill that overhangs them. The cypresses, too, of the garden, form a magnificent foreground of accumulated verdure: pyramids of dark green and shining cones, rising out of a mass, between which are cut, like caverns, recesses conducting into walks.”

Shelley, while at Florence, passed much of his time in the Gallery, where, after his severe mental labours, his imagination reposed and luxuriated amid the divine creations of the Greeks. The

Niobe, the Venus Anadyomine, the group of Bacchus and Ampelus, were the objects of his inexhaustible and insatiable admiration. On these I have heard him expatiate with all the eloquence of poetic enthusiasm. He had made ample notes on the wonders of art in this Gallery, from which, on my leaving Pisa, he allowed me to make extracts, far surpassing in eloquence anything Winkelman has left on this subject.

In this city, also, he saw one of those republics that opposed for some time a systematic and effectual resistance to all the surrounding tyranny of Popedom and despotism. The Lombard League defeated the armies of the despot in the field, and until Florence was betrayed into the hands of those polished tyrants, the Medici, "freedom had one citadel where it could find refuge from a world that was its foe."

To this cause he attributed the undisputed superiority of Italy, in literature and the arts, above all

its cotemporaries — the union, and energy, and beauty, which distinguish from all other poets the writings of Dante — that restlessness of fervid power, which surpassed itself in painting and sculpture, and from which Raphael and Michael Angelo drew their inspiration.

Here Shelley would probably have taken up a permanent residence, but that the winds that sweep from the Apennines were too keen for his nerves. After passing some months at Leghorn and the Baths of Lucca, he finally fixed himself at Pisa, where, in the tenderness of affection and sympathy of her who partook of his genius, and could appreciate his transcendent talents, he sought for that repose in domestic retirement, which the persecutions of fortune, and a life chequered by few rays of sunshine, had as yet denied him.

In the autumn of 1820 I accepted Shelley's invitation to winter with him at Pisa. He had been passing part of the summer among the chesnut

forests of that delicious retreat—the baths of Lucca; and I found him at those of St. Julian, at the foot of the mountain, which Dante calls the Screen of Lucca. A few days after my arrival, we were driven from his house by the overflowing of the Serchio, and migrated to the south side of the Arno, at Pisa, next door to the Marble Palace, with the mystical inscription “Alla Giornata.” Shelley complained of his health: his nerves seemed dreadfully shattered; but his appearance was youthful,—nay, almost boyish, although his hair (which had a natural wave) was mixed with grey. A few weeks only had elapsed since a singular, and almost incredible and dastardly outrage had been committed on him. He was at the post-office asking for his letters, when a stranger, on hearing his name, said, “What! are you that — atheist Shelley?” and without more preamble, being a tall powerful man, struck him a blow which felled to the ground and stunned him. On

coming to himself, Shelley found that the villain had disappeared. Raging with the insult, he immediately sought his friend Mr. Tighe, who lost no time in taking measures to obtain satisfaction. Mr. Tighe was some time in discovering the hotel at which the cowardly aggressor had put up, but at length traced him to the Donzelli. It seems that he was an Englishman, and an officer in the Portuguese service : his name I have now forgotten.

He had, however, started for Genoa, whither Mr. Tighe and Shelley followed, but without being able to overtake him, or learn his route from that city. This anecdote will show the feeling of animosity which the malice of Shelley's enemies had excited against him in the breasts of his compatriots ;—but the time is happily past when Quarterly Reviews can deal out damnation, or that they can drive out of the pale of society, or point out as a mad dog to be knocked on the head, any one who does not happen to profess the same creed as

themselves. How little did the *reverend* writer of that article know of Shelley, when he says that “from childhood he (Shelley) has carried about with him a soured and discontented spirit—untractable as a boy, and unamiable in youth—querulous and unmanly in all three.” But as if this foul nomenclature was inexhaustible, the critic ends by taxing him with “low fraud, cold selfishness, and unmanly cruelty.” Are such libellers to pass with impunity? Is this proper and decorous language from a clergyman?

Shelley's whole time was dedicated to study. He was then reading Calderon, and mad about the Autos; but he did not the more lay aside his favourite authors, the Greek dramatists: a volume of Sophocles he used to take with him in his rambles: he generally had a book even at dinner, if his abstemious meal could be called one;* and

* The reason for Byron's abstemiousness was a very different one from Shelley's. Like his late Majesty, Byron was horrified

told me he always took a book to bed with him. In the evenings he sometimes read aloud a canto of Dante or Tasso, or a canzone of Petrarch. Though his voice was somewhat broken in the sound, his recitation of poetry was wonderfully effective, and the tones of his voice of varied modulation. He entered into the soul of his author, and penetrated those of his listeners.

Prince Mavrocordato was his daily, almost his only visitor. It was with peculiar delight that I listened to Shelley's spirited and poetical version

at the idea of getting *fat*; and to counteract this tendency of his to corpulency, mortified his Epicurean propensities. Hence he dined four days in the week on fish and vegetables; and had even stinted himself, when I last saw him, to a pint of claret.

Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.

Thus his sensuality broke out now and then; and I have seen him eat of as great a variety of dishes, as a German at a *table d'hôte*. He succeeded, it is true, in overmastering nature, and clipping his *rotundity* of its fair proportions; but with it shrank his cheek and his calf. This the Guiccioli observed, and seemed by no means to admire Milord's eremitish diet.

of the Prometheus and Agamemnon of Æschylus ; —in the last of which he used to rave about the opening chorus. He was become, as well he might be, disgusted with publishing, with seeing poets enjoying reputation who did not possess a tithe of his genius, and some even of those decking themselves out, like daws, in his borrowed plumes. He used to say, that as he had failed in original compositions, he would translate the ‘ Prometheus’; and it is to be lamented that he did not carry his design into effect. His ‘ Cyclops’ of Euripides and ‘ Hymn to Mercury’ of Homer, are specimens of what his powers as a translator were, and how critically he was versed in Greek, and caught the true spirit of his authors. Plato he read with all the facility of a modern work, and had made a translation of the ‘ Symposium,’—an attempt so difficult, that the Germans pretend their language is alone capable of mastering it. This splendid effort I had hoped Mrs. Shelley would have given

the public, having promised, in 1824, some of his posthumous prose works.

During this winter he wrote little—without encouragement, who can? One of his poems I must not, however, forget to mention, (and perhaps not the least exquisite, though it fell dead from the press,) the ‘*Epipsychidion*.’ This Psyche was the Contessina Emilia V. She was an interesting, beautiful, and accomplished girl, and immured in the odious Convent of St. Anne, by a jealous step-mother.

Shelley was a martyr to a most painful complaint, which constantly menaced to terminate fatally, and was subject to violent paroxysms, which, to his irritable nerves, were each a separate death. I had seen magnetism practised in India and at Paris, and at his earnest request consented to try its efficacy. Mesmer himself could not have hoped for more complete success. The imposition of my hand on his forehead instantaneously put a stop

to the spasm, and threw him into a magnetic sleep, which, for want of a better word, is called somnambulism. Mrs. Shelley and another lady were present. The experiment was repeated more than once.

During his trances I put some questions to him. He always pitched his voice in the same tone as mine. I inquired about his complaint, and its cure—the usual magnetic inquiries. His reply was—“What would cure me, would kill me,” (alluding probably to lithotomy). I am sorry I did not note down some of his other answers. Animal magnetism is, in Germany, confined by law to the medical professors; and with reason—it is not to be trifled with. Shelley afterwards used to walk in his sleep; and Mrs. Shelley once found him getting up at night, and going to a window. It is remarkable, that in the case of the boy Matthew Schwir, recorded by Dr. Tritchler, the patient spoke in French, as Shelley in Italian. He improvised also

verses in Italian, in which language he was never known to write poetry. I am aware that in England the phenomena of animal magnetism are attributed to the imagination. I only state those facts that may perhaps shake the incredulity of the most sceptical.

Shelley was afterwards magnetized by a lady, to whom he addressed some lines, of which I remember some of the stanzas.*

There has been an imaginary voyage of Lord Byron's to Corsica and Sardinia, with the Countess Guiccioli and Shelley, published by Galignani, and which has passed through several editions. This voyage is said to have taken place during the winter I passed at Pisa, and which Shelley never quitted. The writer of this vision conjures up a storm, and makes Shelley so terrified, that he is put on shore God knows where. Now, it so happens, that Shelley was never so much in his element

* See Table of Contents for reference to these stanzas.

as at sea. Storms were his delight; and when at the lake of Geneva, he used to be taken for Byron braving *Bises* in his boat, which none of the *batteliers* could face.

Shelley was in danger of being lost more than once at sea, and had a very narrow escape in coming from the Isle of Man in the year 1813 or 1814. He had taken his passage in a small trading craft, which had only three hands on board. It was in the month of November, and the weather boisterous when they left Douglas, which soon increased to a dreadful gale. The Captain attributed to Shelley's exertions so much the safety of his vessel, that he refused, on landing, to accept his fare. It is a strange fancy some people have to libel the dead, in order to gratify the malignity of the living.

It was during my stay with Shelley that the Neapolitan insurrection broke out. His ardent mind, with a truly poetical, but, unhappily, not a

prophetic spirit, hailed this as the dawn of Italian freedom; and as the Spanish short-lived revolution had inspired him with his magnificent 'Pæan to Liberty,' so he then wrote his 'Ode to Naples;' compared with which, those of Collins have always seemed to me tame and lifeless. It has the merit of being, what few of our English modern odes (ill called so) are, really an ode, constructed on the model of those left us by Pindar, and worthy of the best days of Greece. The Italians are enthusiastic in their praise of this ode;—perhaps neither Felicaja nor Petrarch have produced any more sublime. Shelley could never endure Moore's lines against the Neapolitans, beginning, "Yes, down to the dust with them," &c. He used to say that such taunts came ill from an Irishman; and, whether merited or no, were cruel and ungenerous. Shelley considered Coleridge's 'Ode to Switzerland' as the best in modern times. He knew it by heart, and used to declaim it and the 'Ancient

Mariner' in his peculiar and emphatic manner. Byron knew as little what an ode meant, as he did a sonnet—the most difficult of all compositions.

Shelley's lines beginning,

There 's blood on the ground,

were not composed on the occasion of the Spanish revolution, as they are entitled, but on the Manchester massacre.

We had many conversations on the subject of Keats, who, with a mind and frame alike worn out by disappointment and persecution, was come to lay his bones in Italy. Shelley was enthusiastic in his admiration of 'Hyperion' and the Ode to Pan in the 'Endymion'; but was little partial to Keats's other works. Their correspondence at this period would prove highly interesting. Poor Keats died three days before I arrived at Rome, in March or April 1821; and much of the remainder of that year, which Shelley passed at the Baths of St. Julian, was occupied on 'Adonais,' which breathes

all the tenderness of Moschus and Bion, and loses nothing in comparison with those divine productions on which it was modelled. Not the least valuable part of that Idyll is the picture he has drawn of himself, in the two well-known stanzas beginning "'Mid others of less note." How well do those expressions, "a pard-like spirit, beautiful and swift!"—"a love in desolation marked"—"a power girt round with weakness"—designate him.

There is a passage in that elegy which has always struck me as among the sublimest in any language, though it is rather understood than to be explained, like Milton's "Smoothing the raven down," &c.

Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until death tramples it to fragments.

His great amusement during this summer was, with his friend Williams, to navigate the clear and

rapid little river, the Serchio, and the canals that branch from it. This chosen companion and partaker of his fate, lived in the place of Pisan Villagiatura, some miles higher up the stream, against which Shelley used often to tow his light skiff, in order to enjoy the rapidity of the descent. A boat was to Shelley what a plaything is to a child—his peculiar hobby. He was eighteen when he used to float paper ones on the Serpentine ; and I have no doubt, at twenty-eight, would have done the same with any boy. It was the revival of this dormant passion for boat-building which led to the fatal project of building a schooner at Genoa, of a most dangerous construction : all her ballast, I forget how many pounds of lead, being in her keel.

It may be imagined that Shelley was of a melancholy cast of mind—on the contrary, he was naturally full of playfulness, and remarkable for the *fineness* of his ideas ; and I have never met with

any one in whom the brilliance of wit and humour was more conspicuous. In this respect he fell little short of Byron; and perhaps it was one of the great reasons why Byron found such a peculiar charm in his conversation. I doubt whether Byron could have surpassed him in his Parody on Wordsworth's 'Peter Bell,' and some other fugitive pieces of the same kind, remarkable for a keen sense of the ridiculous.

At the latter end of this year he paid a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna. He was then writing 'Cain,' and owes to Shelley the Platonic idea of his Hades and the phantasmal worlds—perhaps suggested to Shelley himself by Lucian's 'Icaro-Menippus.'*

* Northcote used to take leave of his pupils going on their continental tours, with "Now, young man, remember you cross the Alps expressly to become a thief." Byron was as little scrupulous as the great artist in appropriating to himself the works of others; but he had the ingenuity to select those that were in bad repute, and therefore not generally read. Shelley's 'Queen Mab' and Casti's 'Novelle' were two of his favourite

It was this visit which decided Byron on wintering at Pisa—a wish to be near Shelley was one of his inducements; independent of which, Tuscany was almost the only State in Italy where a foreigner, *situated as Byron then was*, could find

cribbing books. I taxed him roundly more than once with this habit of his; and especially of his having plagiarized his lines in ‘Cain’ from

Earth’s distant orb appeared
The smallest light that twinkles in the heavens;
Whilst round the chariot’s way
Innumerable systems rolled,
And countless spheres diffused
An ever varying glory, &c.

and of taking ‘Don Juan’ from Casti, *passim*. “I mean,” said I to him, “one of these days to translate the ‘Novelle.’” Byron seemed rather alarmed at the idea. “Casti! why you could not have a notion of such a thing? There are not ten Englishmen who have ever read the ‘Novelle.’ They are a sealed book to women. It is in the Pope’s Index. The Italians think nothing of it.”—“What do you think of it, Byron?”—“I sha’nt tell you,” replied he, laughing, and changed the subject. Speaking of the ‘Index Expurgatorius,’ Shelley used to tell an amusing anecdote of the Roman Dogannieri. On passing the frontier, his books were searched with much strictness, and among them was a Spinoza and an English Bible. Which do you suppose was seized and confiscated? The Bible!

refuge or safety. The part he took in the affair of Romagna, though denied by that veridical article in the *Westminster Review*, is now known;—nor shall I enter into the question how far he was wrong in intermeddling with the politics of other countries. I bear too great a love for Italy, and abhorrence of Austrian despotism, to blame him. Had not Cardinal Gonsalvi been then the Pope's prime minister, perhaps the stiletto (if he had not been openly arrested) would have ended his days. Byron's name is still a terror to the despots of Italy.* His writings have done much to fan the flame of liberty. Shelley used to say that poets were the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

* Some months since, being at Genoa, the police, hearing that I had been with Byron at Pisa, sent me an order to leave the city in twenty-four hours, on the suspicion of my being a Carbonaro. It is true, that on my arrival at Turin, our ambassador offered me his protection; but British officers and subjects are now insulted in every petty state.

I shall end this part of my sketch with some curious observations of his:—

“In one sense, religion may be called poetry, though distorted from the beautiful simplicity of its truth. The persons in whom this power abides may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, be *Atheists*; but although they may *deny* and *abjure*, they are *compelled to serve*—which is seated in the *throne of their own soul*; and whatever systems they may *professedly* support, they *actually* advance the interests of liberty. It is impossible to read the productions of our most celebrated writers, whatever may be their systems relative to thought or expression, without being startled by the electric life which there is in their words. They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature, with a comprehensive, all-embracing, all-penetrating spirit, at which they are themselves most sincerely astonished: it is less their own spirit, than the spirit of the age. They

are the priests of an unapprehended inspiration—the mirror of the gigantic shadow that invests them—the echoes of words, of which they conceive not the power which they express—the trumpet which sounds to battle, and feels not what it inspires—the influence that is moved not, but moves. Poets and philosophers [*he repeats*] are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.”

It was a strange coincidence, that I should have been exposed to the same squall which proved fatal to two of my oldest and best friends, Shelley and Williams. I embarked on the 2nd of July, with a party with whom I was acquainted, on board of a vessel they had hired, for Genoa. During the first three days of our voyage, we were constantly becalmed, lying one whole night off the Pontine Marshes, where some of our passengers were attacked with malaria. On the fourth day set in a sirocco, which brought us into the gulph of Genoa. That gulph is subject to violent gusts of

wind at all seasons of the year, but more especially in the hot months; and our captain, as the breeze died away, foresaw that we should not get into port at least that night. Over the Apennines, which encircle Genoa as with an amphitheatre, hung columns up-piled of dark threatening clouds, which soon confirmed his opinion. I forget the precise hour at which the squall came on, but neither between the Tropics nor on the Line, did I ever witness a severer one, and, being accompanied by a heavy rain, it was the more felt. We were, however, all snug, and in smooth water, in consequence of the Mistral* blowing right off the shore. We must have been 20 or 25 miles from Spezia, when the storm burst upon us.

I should think few pleasure-boats could have lived in such weather, especially in the bay of Spezia, where it was impossible to run before the

* The old way of spelling Mistral was Maestral, or prevailing wind—Vento Maestro.

wind, the reefs stretching a long way out, and the surf rising very high all along the coast. After beating all night and the best part of the next day, we at length got into harbour. At the Hôtel de l'Europe there was a rumour that two Englishmen had been lost near Lerici; but though I knew my friends were living in the vicinity of that place, it never entered my mind that they were the individuals, and proceeded on my journey to Switzerland. Some days after my arrival at Geneva, however, I heard from Byron and Mrs. Shelley the melancholy news, and immediately recrossed the Alps. At Sarzana, the people of the place told me that the bodies of my friends had been washed on shore. On the evening of the same day I arrived at Pisa. I have already, as taken from the mouth of Mr. Trelawney, given a description of the funeral ceremony, and my finding Byron in a high fever, on his return from the sad obsequies, and have nothing to add to that account.

I believe that Byron felt severely the loss of Shelley—though, it must be confessed, his remarks at the pyre, and swimming off to his yacht, little prove it. Don Juan like, he was a strange compound of meanness and generosity, of the pathetic and ludicrous, the grave and the gay, the sublime and the ridiculous.* An instance of this was not wanting during the first days of my visit. In the burning of Shelley, there was a portion of his body that would not consume. It was supposed to be his heart. Mr. Leigh Hunt carefully preserved and took with him the relic to the Lanfranchi. This Mrs. Shelley of course claimed. But her

* There is an anecdote of Byron, which justice requires should not be passed over. At one of the dinners he gave at Pisa, (before dinner, I should say,) he proposed to Shelley a bet of 1000*l.* on the longevity of Sir Timothy Shelley and Lady Noel. This bet Shelley accepted; and many weeks had not transpired before Lady Byron's mother died; but Byron never mentioned, or offered to pay the debt. *Quære*, if the Countess had survived the Baronet, whether Byron would not have claimed, and Shelley paid the 1000*l.*? Both may be answered in the affirmative.

right was contested for some time on the part of Mr. Hunt, who contended that his friendship surpassed her love.

Byron compared this amiable dispute to that between Ajax and Ulysses, for the arms of Achilles, and said, "What does Hunt want with it? He'll only put it in a glass case and make sonnets on it." Byron had heard also that Mrs. Williams meant to preserve her husband's ashes in an urn. His remark was, "Why, she'll make tea in it one of these days."

These grim jokes were certainly ill-timed, but are in character with the writer of the shipwreck in Don Juan.

During several evenings we passed together, it was a melancholy satisfaction to talk over all the particulars of the wreck. It would seem that Shelley had been insensible of the danger, as well as Williams, for the boat was seen to have gone down with every stitch of sail set, as proved after-

wards, when it was found. Williams was a good swimmer, and had no doubt made strong efforts for his life, having been washed on the beach partly undressed ; but Shelley had his hand locked in his waistcoat, where he had in his haste thrust a volume of Keats's poems, showing that he had been reading to the last moment, and had not made the slightest struggle to save himself. We both agreed that he wished to die young, though if years are to be measured by events, he had lived, as he used to say, to a hundred. Shelley's writings are prophetic of his destiny. He singularly remarks : " The life of a man of talent, who should die in his *thirtieth* year, is, with regard to his own feelings, longer than that of a miserable, priest-ridden slave, who dreams out a century of dulness. The one has perpetually cultivated his mental faculties—has rendered himself master of his thoughts—can abstract and generalize amid the lethargy of every-day business ;—the other can

slumber over the brightest moments of his being, and is unable to remember the happiest hour of his life. Perhaps the perishing ephemeron enjoys a longer life than the tortoise." Byron did ample justice to his talents and virtues, and we passed in review the strange occurrences of his life, and among the rest canvassed fully his Naples Romance. Byron thought, as Maddocks had done in the Welch affair, that the whole was the effect of an overwrought imagination. I am of a very different opinion—for, however visionary Shelley might be in his poetical theories, in the concerns of life he always showed a particular sagacity and rationality; for it was a curious anomaly in his character, that, although he was extremely negligent as to his own, there was no one to whom a friend could better intrust his affairs, no one who displayed more judgment, prudence, and caution in their arrangement. This, Byron, who was not a man of business, knew, and latterly, seldom

acted without having recourse to Shelley—whose advice he generally adopted. We had much discussion about the ‘Liberal’ then preparing. The influence Shelley had over Byron, was proved in nothing more than his being persuaded to join in that review, the first idea of which was suggested by Shelley for the benefit of Mr. Hunt. Byron, by Shelley’s death, found himself in a cleft stick—was in honour bound, though “*à contre cœur,*” to lend his name to a periodical the fate of which he foresaw. Had Shelley lived, it probably might have been different; though the tide of cant was then running so strong, that the addition of even his talent would hardly have availed to stem it. Byron’s friends were all hostile to the undertaking: he himself never entered heartily into it, and was not sorry to see it fail. He only wrote, I believe, one prose article, that on ‘My Grandmother’s Review, the British,’ and I am surprised that Messrs. Moore and Murray, who have scraped

together every scrap, raked up the rags and tatters and cinders of Byron, should have forgotten to give a place, in their castrated quartos,*

* I am at no loss to account for the inveteracy with which I was assailed by the press, through the influence of the all-mighty of biblioplists, and the persevering attempts that were for a time but too successfully exerted, to cast doubts on the authenticity of Byron's 'Conversations.' Much credit is due to the publisher for this very ingenious, and to him useful policy. The fact is, that Messrs. Moore, Murray, and Hobhouse looked upon Lord Byron as an heir-loom, as their private property; and were highly indignant that any one should presume to know anything about their noble friend. Considering how fond Lord Byron was of mystifying, it is most singular that almost every anecdote contained in my Sketch of his Life, should have been subsequently confirmed by his letters or autobiography; but I must consider it a remarkable piece of effrontery that Mr. Moore should treat me as so far dead in the world of letters, as, without any acknowledgment, apology, or citation of the 'Conversations,' to strengthen his diluted volumes with the most spiritual part of mine. The communication from Goethe to me, he has taken upon himself to extract, only changing a few words of my translation, and omitting that of the Sonnet addressed by that much-lamented poet to Lord Byron. The beautiful lines to the Countess Guiccioli, and the Irish Avatara, and many of the Epigrams, he has assumed to himself the same privilege of adding to this edition; and to the seventh volume, containing the Juvenile Poems, has appended, with the signature E., (as

to one of the most humorous of their noble correspondent's *jeux d'esprit*.

Byron, the most superstitious of beings, related also the following story of Shelley, which I afterwards heard confirmed. Shortly before his fatal voyage to Leghorn, the inhabitants of the country house at San Lorenzo were alarmed, at midnight, by piercing shrieks. They rushed out of their bed-rooms. Mrs. Shelley, who had miscarried a few days before, got as far as the door and fainted.

his own notes,) several pages of my book, prefacing them with "Lord Byron said—so and so." If such a gross violation of literary property should be passed over, adieu to copyright.

Had I considered Mr. Moore's a real Life of Lord Byron—had his materials been such as to enable him to say

Unde fit ut pateat veluti descripta tabella

Vita—

I should have felt the less indignant at this liberty; or, even had he acknowledged the source from which he had derived his information, should have been the less inclined to object to this piracy; but, as nothing can be more imperfect, more garbled, more timid and time-serving and one-sided, than the Memoirs so splendidly illustrated and vauntingly put forth to the public, I am not willing to be silent on this topic.

The rest of the party found Shelley in the saloon with his eyes wide open, and gazing on vacancy, as though he beheld some spectre. On waking him, he related that he had had a vision. He thought that a figure wrapped in a mantle came to his bed-side, and beckoned to him. He got up and followed it, and when in the hall, the phantom lifted up the hood of his cloak, and showed the phantasm of himself—and saying, “Siete satisfatto”—vanished.

Shelley had been reading a strange drama, which is supposed to have been written by Calderon, entitled, *El embozado, ó el encapotado*. It is so scarce, that Washington Irving told me he had sought for it without success in several of the public libraries of Spain. The story is—that a kind of Cipriano or Faust is through life thwarted in all his plans for the acquisition of wealth, or honour, or happiness, by a masked stranger, who stands in his way like some Alastor or evil spirit.

He is at length in love—the day is fixed for his marriage,—when the unknown contrives to sow dissension between him and his betrothed, and to break off the match. Infuriate with his wrongs, he breathes nothing but revenge, but all his attempts to discover his mysterious foe prove abortive : at length his persecutor appears of his own accord. When about to fight, the Embozado un-masks, and discovers the phantasm of himself, saying, “Are you satisfied?” The hero of the play dies with horror.

This play had worked strongly on Shelley’s imagination, and accounts for the awful scene at San Lorenzo.

On the 22nd of August, I took my last leave of Byron, to return to Geneva. I performed this journey in a caratella, with relays of horses, a mode of conveyance which Matthews, the Invalid, had reason for recommending, for it enabled me to make much more progress than I could have

done post. I shall not enter into my feelings during this mournful pilgrimage to the sites of my friends' funeral pyres, easily discoverable by their ashes. I had another duty to perform, to visit the country house, where they had passed their *Villegiatura*.

From Sarzana to Lerici, there is only a cross (and that a narrow) carriage road. After a somewhat difficult ascent of three miles, the caleche set me down at a bye foot-path, which conducts to San Lorenzo. The sky was perfectly cloudless, and not a breath of air relieved the intense heat of an Italian August sun. The day had been unusually oppressive, and there was a mistiness in the atmosphere, or rather a glow which softened down the distances into those mellow tints in which Claude delighted to bathe his landscapes. I was little in a mood to enjoy the beauties which increased every moment during this walk. I followed mechanically a pathway overhung with trellised

vines, and bordered with olive trees, contrasted here and there with the massy broad dark foliage of the fig tree. For a mile or two I continued to ascend, till on a sudden a picture burst on my view, that no pen could describe. Before me was the broad expanse of the Mediterranean, studded with islands and a few fishing boats, with their lattine sails, the sun's broad disk just dipping in the waves; thick groves of fruit trees, interspersed with cottages and villas sloped down to the shores of the gulph of Spezia: and safely land-locked, a little to the left, Lerici, with its white flat-roofed houses almost in the sea, stood in the centre, and followed the curve of this bay; the two promontories projecting from which were surmounted with castles for the protection of the coast, and the enforcing of the quarantine laws. The descent now became rapid and broken, and, deeply worn into the rock, only offered occasional glimpses of the sea, the two islets in front, and the varied

coast of Porto Venere to the right. I now came in sight of San Lorenzo, a village, or rather a miserable collection of windowless black huts, piled one above the other, inclosed within barren rocks that overhang and encircle it. The place is inhabited solely by fishermen and their families, on the female part of whom devolves (as is common in Italy) the principal labour. However ungraceful in itself, the peasantry of this part of Italy have some peculiarity of costume; but the women of San Lorenzo are in a savage state of nature—perfect Ichthyophagi; their long coal-black hair trails in greasy strings, unwashed and uncombed, over their faces, and some of these fiendish-looking creatures had not even fastened it in a knot behind the head, but suffered it to hang half way down their backs. They had neither shoes nor stockings, and the rags which scarcely hid their deformity, were strongly impregnated with the effluvia of the fish they carried

on their bare heads to the neighbouring markets. Their children were just such meagre yellow imps as, from such mothers, and filth, and poverty of food, might be supposed. The men I did not see.

Between this village and Lerici, but nearer to the former, was pointed out to me the solitary villa or palazzo, as it was called, which was about to waken in me so many bitter recollections. It is built immediately upon the shore, and consists of one story;—the ground floor, when the Libeccio set strongly in, must have been washed by the waves.

A deaf unfeeling old wretch, a woman who had the care of the house, and had witnessed all the desolation of which it had been the scene, with a savage unconcern and much garrulity, gave a dry narrative of the story as she led me through the apartment.

Below was a large unpaved sort of entrance hall, without doors or windows, where lay the

small flat-bottomed boat or skiff, much shattered, of which I have already spoken. It was the same my poor friends had on the Serchio. Against the wall, and scattered about the floor, were oars, and fragments of spars and masts, some of which had been cast on shore from the wreck: they told too well the tale of woe.

A dark and somewhat perpendicular staircase now led us to the only floor that remained. It reminded me somewhat in its arrangement of an Indian Bungalow: the walls white-washed—the rooms, now without furniture, consisted of a saloon with eight doors, and four chambers at the four corners: this, with the exception of a terrace in front, was the whole house. This verandah, which ran the whole length of the villa, was of considerable width, and the view from it, of a magical and supernatural beauty.

There was now a calm desolation in the unrippled marble of the sea, that reminded me, in its

contrast, of the days and nights of tempest and horror which Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Shelley experienced, balanced between hope and fear for the fate of their devoted husbands—fancying now that every sail would bring them to their homes, and now, that, in the roaring of every wave, they could discover their drowning cries. I could picture to myself the ghastly smile with which Trelawney related the finding of their corpses—the torpor and unconsciousness of Mrs. Williams, the sublime firmness of Mrs. Shelley, contrasted with her frame, worn out with sickness—their children, too young to be sensible of their loss, clasped in their despairing and widowed mothers' arms. All this rushed upon my imagination, and, insensible to the heat or fatigue of the ascent, I found myself, scarcely knowing how, where my caleche was waiting for me;—and it was midnight, and after a twenty-two hours' journey, more harassing in mind and body than I

had ever experienced, that I reached the inn at Spezia.

Shelley though an outcast from his family, the continual object of the persecution of the press, and a mark for the calumny and detraction of the world, imbibed none of the gloom and misanthropy common to little minds: on the contrary, we can trace in his works no anger or dissatisfaction with the world—none of the fret or fever of disappointed ambition: every line he wrote breathes a spirit of benevolence, a love for the whole creation, animate and inanimate. Almost any but a Promethean spirit would have sunk under the weight of his misfortunes and injuries, and that past events should occasionally cast their shadows over him, was natural; but nothing could long ruffle the azure and calm depths of his soul.

Shelley had at command the same weapons which Byron used: but he disdained the arm of

satire, and treated his critics with a noble scorn ; he says to one of them—

The grass may grow in wintry weather
As soon as hate in me.

Byron had more of the cynicism of Apemantus than the real sense of injury that drove Timon into misanthropy. This is perceptible in all his writings—that Shelley could wield a lash of bronze for others, he proved in *Adonais*, and not excepting even the strongest lines of our English Juvenal, Churchill, perhaps the stanzas on Keats's Reviewer cut nearer to the bone than any in our language. Among the few satirical poems he wrote, was one on the Court of Chancery, on being robbed of his children ; but, great as his wrongs were, even this he never published, though it should have found a place among his posthumous works. This satire was an abstraction, but of awful power.

His longest satirical work was a comic drama

in imitation of Aristophanes, entitled, ‘*Œdipus Tyrannus*; or, *Swellfoot the Tyrant*.’ It was printed somewhere in the City, and suppressed on the day of publication by the desire of the then Lord Mayor, who was acquainted with a friend of Shelley’s, who had superintended the press. Many passages in this drama are parodied from Sophocles, and the choruses are truly Aristophanic. The Queen is there designated by Pasiphaë, and, like Io, persecuted by a swarm of gad-flies, meaning her spies and informers. The chorus, which traces her wanderings over the world, is very humorous, and, in parts, full of poetry, and begins thus:—

With a Ha, and a Hum,
We come! we come!
From the ends of the earth—

In some of the scenes, the swinish multitude are introduced before the monarch. But I have altogether forgotten the plot.

Yet, though Shelley despised the sort of criti-

cism with which he was all his life assailed, he was not insensible to the injustice of the world. But what could he expect from the reviewers, after telling them almost in the outset of his career that the system of reviewing was incompatible with poetry, and sprung up in that torpid interval when poetry was not;—that Longinus and Homer could never have existed together, &c.—was it not natural that he should be attacked? Yet, writing with the hell of reviews before his eyes, nothing could ever induce him to throw a bone to the Cerberuses—to change one tittle or iota, in order to deprecate their animosity. Nor was it vanity or longing after fame, the common incentives of authors, which made him continue to publish. However visionary might be Shelley's theories of reform, they sprung from a mind in which selfishness never entered—a mind ardently devoted to what he considered the vital interests of humanity. I look upon most of his poems to be a comment

on the *Phædo* and *Republic* of Plato, and that they have a tendency to promote liberty, and with it that greatest and best of truths, the immortality of the soul. The sincerity of his opinions, however erroneous, was proved by the willingness with which he submitted to obloquy and reproach, in order to inculcate them. Shelley attributed the vice and misery of mankind—the degradation of the many for the benefit of the few—to an unnatural state of society,—to a general misgovernment in its rulers,—to the superstition and bigotry of a mercenary and insincere priesthood. With a poet's eye he foresaw a millennium—the perfectability of the human race, when man would be happy, free, high, and majestic.

Pure and moral himself, loving virtue for her own sake, and not from fear, he thought no other ties were necessary than the restraints imposed by a consciousness of right and wrong implanted in our natures, and could not see that in the pre-

sent state of the world, and in the default of education, such a system was fallacious.

His tenets, therefore, should have been looked at as those of Owen of Lanark are with us, or those of St.-Simon in France, as the aspirations of the philanthropist; and the critic might have said with Maddalo—

You talk Utopias,

instead of calumniating the man, and attributing to his speculations the desire of corrupting youth, which could be as little said of him as it was untrue of Socrates. Besides, it should have been considered that works so abstruse, so subtle, so profound and metaphysical, are far beyond the capacities of the many, and can only be thoroughly comprehended by those who have made the Platonic philosophy the study of their lives. Even the Quarterly reviewers, in 1810, confessed that there was no danger in his writings.

Shelley lived in a world of his own, and, believing with Berkley only in the existence of mind, it was with an effort to himself that he descended to matter and the realities of life;—hence, he used to say, that ‘The Cenci’ was a heavy task, and produced with infinite labour. Yet he proved in that tragedy no less an acquaintance with the workings of the human mind than he had done in displaying the secret springs of nature. He laboured at his ‘Charles I.’ for months, and yet made little progress, whilst ‘The Revolt of Islam’ only occupied six months, and the ‘Prometheus Unbound’ fewer weeks.

It was said of Heraclitus, by Socrates, that where he understood his works he found them magnificent, and where he did not, he supposed them to be equally so. Thus, the subtilty of Shelley’s poetry escapes from common intellects—the brilliancy of his ideas, the prodigality of his imagination, is lost on common minds. His

talents were developed by an unwearied and unceasing cultivation. Poetry was not the amusement, it was the serious occupation of his life—the object of his waking and dreaming thoughts. He exercised the severest self-criticism on every thing he wrote, and his MSS., like that of Tasso at Ferrara, are scarcely decipherable. It has been supposed also, that Byron improvised his poems. This is a great mistake, and I am told, that in the proofs sent him, he made what the painters call innumerable “Pentimentos.”

Shelley, as a poet, stands alone. He is to be tried by the test of no other writer. Like Byron, he belongs to no school. The world now begins to do him justice, and assign him the place he deserves—a niche by the side of his friend. Byron could set bounds to his imagination, control it at will. Shelley was carried away by his. Byron shuddered at the name of Swift, and was always, but without cause, terrified at the idea of ending

life in madness or idiotism. Insanity hung as by a hair suspended over the head of Shelley.

The Greeks were right about Trophonius's Cave. No man was ever a great poet who had not, as Shakspeare says, a fine frenzy. Almost all Shelley's and Byron's finest things were written under the effects of a temporary derangement. Perhaps few will agree with me in thinking Shelley the second master spirit of the age. His creations remind me of the ideal beauty of some of Raphael's Madonnas;—Byron's, of Titian's Venuses. Shelley's figures possess all the classical truth that distinguished Nicholas Poussin's, whilst his landscapes combine Martin's wild imaginations with Turner's gorgeous sunsets filled with deepening gold. Byron could be a Salvator or a Claude. Both, like Guido, could give to every subject they touched a portion of their own elastic minds—convert everything into beauty. Neither Byron nor Shelley would have been the poets they were,

but for a certain poetical education. They both drank their inspiration from true and pure sources—from all the wild and the wonderful and the beautiful of nature. The memory of Switzerland was ineffaceable in both. In his books Shelley used to scrawl pines and alpine summit raised upon alpine summit, only to be scaled by the Oceanides, with some spectral being stalking from peak to peak.

It was the imagination directed the pen, and he was himself unconscious of what he was tracing. It was said of De Lamartine and Delavigne, that if one could have swallowed the other, they would have made the greatest (I do not mean in size) of French Poets. So with Shelley and Byron: each wanted what the other possessed, to have made a paragon.

It is to be lamented that Shelley did not live to complete his 'Triumph of Life,' composed in the fatal gulph of Spezia, or in the caverns that

indent that romantic coast. It is unhappily a fragment, and, in its present arrangement, very obscure. He has proved that, in his hands at least, ‘*Terza Rima*’ is well adapted to our language. I made a singular discovery some time ago in reading a favourite author of mine, Cardan—that this vision of Shelley’s, by a strange coincidence (for I am convinced he never saw the work), should have been nearly the same as Cardan’s, as will be seen by the following extracts:—

Methinks I sate beside a public way,
 And a great stream
Of people there were hurrying to and fro,
All hastening onward, but none seemed to know
Whither:
Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,
 With steps towards the tomb.

Cardan, in his chaste Latinity, says—

“ *Illuscente Aurora, visus sum toto humano
genere, maximaque turba mulierum, non solum
ac virorum sed puerorum atque infantium, juxta*

radicem montis qui mihi à dextera erat, currere. Cum, admiratione captus, unum à turbâ interrogarem, quonam omnes tam præcipiti cursu tenderemus; *Ad mortem*, respondit."

It is to be lamented that no bust or portrait exists of Shelley, though the infinite versatility and play of his features would have baffled either sculpture or painting. His frame was a mere tenement for spirit, and in every gesture and lineament showed that intellectual beauty which animated him. There was in him a spirit which seemed to defy time, and suffering, and misfortune. He was twenty-nine when he died, but he might have been taken for nineteen. His features were small; the upper part not strictly regular. The lower had a Grecian contour. He did not look so tall as he was, his shoulders being a little bent by study and ill health. Like Socrates, he united the gentleness of the lamb with the wisdom of the serpent—the playfulness of the boy with the pro-

foundness of the philosopher. In argument he was irresistible, always calm and unruffled; and in eloquence surpassed all men I have ever conversed with. Byron was so sensible of his inability to cope with him, that he always avoided coming to any trial of their strength; for Shelley was what Byron could not be, a close, logical and subtle reasoner, much of which he owed to Plato, whose writings he used to call the model of a prose style.

He was not likely to have lived long. His health had been impaired by what he had undergone, and by the immoderate use he at one time made of laudanum. He was, besides, narrow-chested, and subject to a complaint which, from day to day, might have cut him off. Its tortures were excruciating, but, during his worst spasms, I never saw him peevish or out of humour—indeed, as an Italian said to me, he was *veramente un angelo*.

But thou art fled,
Like some fair exhalation,—
The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,
The child of grace and genius :
Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes
Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee
Been purest ministers ; who are, alas !
Now thou art not.

These affecting lines would have furnished his most appropriate epitaph. I have never been able to read them without applying them to Shelley, or his tribute to the memory of Keats, without, under the name of Adonais, impersonating the companion of my youth. There was, unhappily, too much similarity in the destinies of Keats and Shelley: both were victims to persecution—both were marked out for the envenomed shafts of invidious critics—and both now sleep together in a foreign land. Peace to their manes !

POEMS AND PAPERS

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

INVOCATION TO MISERY.

COME, be happy!—sit by me,
Shadow-vested Misery :
Coy, unwilling, silent bride,
Mourning in thy robe of pride,
Desolation—deified !

Come, be happy!—sit near me :
Sad as I may seem to thee,
I am happier far than thou,
Lady, whose imperial brow
Is endiademmed with woe.

Misery! we have known each other,
Like a sister and a brother
Living in the same lone home,
Many years—we must live some
Years and ages yet to come.

'Tis an evil lot, and yet
Let us make the most of it ;
If love lives when pleasure dies,
We will love, till in our eyes
This heart's Hell seem Paradise.

Come, be happy!—lie thee down
On the fresh grass newly mown,
Where the Grasshopper doth sing
Merrily—one joyous thing
In a world of sorrowing !


There our tent shall be the willow,
And thine arm shall be my pillow ;
Sounds and odours sorrowful
Because they once were sweet, shall lull
Us to slumber, deep and dull.

Ha ! thy frozen pulses flutter
With a love thou darest not utter.

* * * * *

Thou art murmuring, thou art weeping,
Whilst my burning bosom 's leaping.

Kiss me ;—oh ! thy lips are cold :
Round my neck thine arms enfold—
They are soft, but chill and dead ;
And thy tears upon my head
Burn like points of frozen lead.



Hasten to the bridal bed—
Underneath the grave 'tis spread :
In darkness may our love be hid,
Oblivion be our coverlid—
We may rest, and none forbid.

Clasp me till our hearts be grown
Like two lovers into one ;
Till this dreadful transport may
Like a vapour fade away,
In the sleep that lasts alway.

We may dream, in that long sleep,
That we are not those who weep ;
E'en as Pleasure dreams of thee,
Life-deserting Misery,
Thou mayst dream of her with me.

Let us laugh, and make our mirth,
At the shadows of the earth,
As dogs bay the moonlight clouds,
That, like spectres wrapt in shrouds,
Pass o'er night in multitudes.

All the wide world beside us
Are like multitudinous
Shadows shifting from a scene—
What but mockery may they mean?
Where am I?—Where thou hast been.

AN ARIETTE FOR MUSIC.

TO A LADY SINGING TO HER ACCOMPANIMENT ON
THE GUITAR.

As the moon's soft splendour
O'er the faint cold starlight of heaven
Is thrown,
So thy voice most tender
To the strings without soul has given
Its own.

The stars will awaken,
Though the moon sleep a full hour later
To-night :
No leaf will be shaken
Whilst the dews of thy melody scatter
Delight.

Though the sound overpowers,
Sing again, with thy sweet voice revealing
A tone
Of some world far from ours,
Where music and moonlight and feeling
Are one.

[*Note.*—This Ariette has been very beautifully set to music
by Mr. Henry Lincoln.]

LINES

WRITTEN DURING THE CASTLEREAGH
ADMINISTRATION.

CORPSES are cold in the tomb ;
Stones on the pavement are dumb ;
Abortions are dead in the womb,—
And their mothers look pale, like the white shore
Of Albion, free no more !

Her sons are as stones in the way ;
They are masses of senseless clay ;
They are trodden, and move not away ;—
The abortion with which she travaileth,
Is Liberty, smitten to death.

Then trample and dance, thou Oppressor !
For thy victim is no redresser ;
Thou art sole lord and possessor
Of her corpses, and clods, and abortions—they pave
Thy path to the grave.

Hearst thou the festal din
Of Death, and Destruction, and Sin,
And Wealth crying *Havock!* within ?
'Tis the Bacchanal triumph which makes truth
dumb—
Thine Epithalamium !

Aye, marry thy ghastly wife!
Let Fear, and Disgust, and Strife,
Spread thy couch in the chamber of Life:
Marry Ruin, thou Tyrant! and God be thy guide
To the bed of thy *bride!*

WITH A GUITAR.

THE artist who this idol wrought,
To echo all harmonious thought,
Felled a tree, while on the steep
The winds were in their winter sleep,
Rocked in that repose divine
On the wind-swept Apennine;
And dreaming some of Autumn past,
And some of Spring approaching fast,
And some of April buds and showers,
And some of songs in July bowers,

And all of love ; and so this tree,—
O that such our death may be !—
Died in sleep, and felt no pain,
To live in happier form again ;
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,
The artist wrought that loved Guitar,
And taught it justly to reply,
To all who question skilfully,
In language gentle as its own,
Whispering in enamoured tone
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
And summer winds in sylvan cells ;
For it had learnt all harmonies
Of the plains and of the skies,
Of the forests and the mountains,
And the many-voiced fountains ;
The clearest echoes of the hills,
The softest notes of falling rills,
The melodies of birds and bees,
The murmuring of summer seas,

And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
And airs of evening; and it knew
That seldom-heard mysterious sound,
Which, driven in its diurnal round,
As it floats through boundless day,
Our world enkindles on its way—
All this it knows, but will not tell
To those who cannot question well
The spirit that inhabits it.
It talks according to the wit
Of its companions; and no more
Is heard than has been felt before,
By those who tempt it to betray
These secrets of an elder day :
But sweetly as its answers will
Flatter hands of perfect skill,
It keeps its highest, holiest tone,
For our beloved friend alone.

THE MAGNETIC LADY TO HER
PATIENT.*

SLEEP on! sleep on! forget thy pain :
My hand is on thy brow,
My spirit on thy brain ;
My pity on thy heart, poor friend ;
And from my fingers flow
The powers of life, and like a sign,
Seal thee from thine hour of woe ;
And brood on thee, but may not blend
With thine.

* See the Memoir, page 65.

Sleep on! sleep on! I love thee not;
But when I think that he
Who made and makes my lot
As full of flowers as thine of weeds,
Might have been lost like thee;
And that a hand which was not mine,
Might then have chased his agony
As I another's—my heart bleeds
For thine.

Sleep, sleep, and with the slumber of
The dead and the unborn:
Forget thy life and woe;
Forget that thou must wake for ever;
Forget the world's dull scorn;
Forget lost health, and the divine
Feelings that die in youth's brief morn;
And forget me, for I can never
Be thine.

Like a cloud big with a May shower,
My soul weeps healing rain,
On thee, thou withered flower ;
It breathes mute music on thy sleep ;
Its odour calms thy brain !
Its light within thy gloomy breast
Speaks like a second youth again.
By mine thy being is to its deep
Possess.

The spell is done. How feel you now ?
Better—Quite well, replied
The sleeper.—What would do
You good when suffering and awake ?
What cure your head and side ?—
'T would kill me what would cure my pain ;
And as I must on earth abide
Awhile, yet tempt me not to break
My chain.

TO THE QUEEN OF MY HEART.

SHALL we roam, my love,
To the twilight grove,
 When the moon is rising bright ;
Oh, I'll whisper there,
In the cool night-air,
 What I dare not in broad day-light !

I'll tell thee a part
Of the thoughts that start
 To being when thou art nigh ;
And thy beauty, more bright
Than the stars' soft light,
 Shall seem as a weft from the sky.

When the pale moonbeam
On tower and stream
Sheds a flood of silver sheen,
How I love to gaze
As the cold ray strays
O'er thy face, my heart's throned queen !

Wilt thou roam with me
To the restless sea,
And linger upon the steep,
And list to the flow
Of the waves below
How they toss and roar and leap?

Those boiling waves
And the storm that raves
At night o'er their foaming crest,
Resemble the strife
That, from earliest life,
The passions have waged in my breast.

Oh, come then and rove
To the sea or the grove
 When the moon is rising bright,
And I'll whisper there
In the cool night-air
 What I dare not in broad day-light.

SIMILES.

As from an ancestral oak
 Two empty ravens sound their clarion,
Yell by yell, and croak by croak,
When they scent the noonday smoke
 Of fresh human carrion :—

As two gibbering night birds flit
 From their bowers of deadly hue,
Through the night to frighten it,
When the morn is in a fit,
 And the stars are none, or few :—

As a shark and dog-fish wait
Under an Atlantic isle,
For the negro-ship, whose freight
Is the theme of their debate,
Wrinkling their red gills the while—

Are ye, two vultures sick for battle,
Two scorpions under one wet stone,
Two bloodless wolves whose dry throats rattle,
Two crows perched on the murrained cattle,
Two vipers tangled into one.

THE COLISEUM.

A FRAGMENT.*

AT the hour of noon, on the feast of the Pass-over, an old man, accompanied by a girl, apparently his daughter, entered the Coliseum at Rome. They immediately passed through the arena, and, seeking a solitary chasm among the arches of the southern part of the ruin, selected a fallen column for their seat, and, clasping each other's hands, sate in silent contemplation of the scene. But the eyes of the girl were fixed upon her father's lips : his countenance, sublime and sweet, but motionless as some Praxitelian image of the greatest of poets, filled the air with smiles reflected from external forms.

It was the great feast of the Resurrection, and the whole native population, together with the foreigners, who flock from all parts of the earth to contemplate its celebration, were assembled round

* This is the fragment referred to in the Memoir, p. 51.

the Vatican. The most awful religion in the world went forth surrounded with the emblazonry of mortal greatness, and mankind had assembled to wonder at and worship the creation of its own power. No stranger was to be met with in the avenues that led to the Coliseum. Accident had conducted the father and daughter to the spot immediately on their arrival.

A figure, only visible at Rome in night or solitude, and then only to be seen amid the desolated temples of the Forum, or gliding among the galleries of the Coliseum, or the ruined arches of the Baths of Caracalla, crossed their path.

His form, that, though emaciated, displayed the elementary outline of exquisite grace, was enveloped in an ancient chlamys, which half concealed his face. It was a face, once seen, never to be forgotten. The lips and the moulding of the chin resembled the eager and impassioned tenderness of the shapes of Antinous; but, instead of the effeminate sullenness of the eye, and the narrow smoothness of the forehead, shone an expression of profound and piercing thought. His brow was clear and open, and his eyes deep, and like two wells of crystalline water which reflect the all-

beholding heavens. Over all was spread a timid expression of diffidence and retirement, which intermingled strangely with the abstract and fearless character which predominated in his form and gestures.† He avoided, in an extraordinary degree, what is called society, but was occasionally seen to converse with some accomplished foreigner, whose appearance might attract him in his solemn haunts. He spoke Italian with fluency, though with a peculiar but sweet accent. There was no circumstance connected with him that gave the least intimation of his country, his origin, or his occupations. He was for ever alone.

Such was the figure which interrupted the contemplation (if they were so engaged) of the strangers, in the clear and exact, but unidiomatic phrase of their native language.

“Strangers, you are two—behold the third in this great city, to whom alone the spectacle of these ruins is more delightful than the pageantry of religion.”

“I see nothing,” said the old man.

† There never was drawn a more perfect portrait of Shelley himself.

“What do you hear, then?”

“I listen to the sweet singing of the birds, the humming of the bees, which, and the sound of my daughter’s breathing, compose me like the soft murmur of waters; and this sun-warm wind is pleasant to me.”

“Wretched old man! know you not that these are the ruins of the Coliseum?”

“Alas, stranger!” said the girl, in a voice like mournful music: “speak not so, my father is blind.”

The stranger’s eyes now suddenly filled with tears, and the lines of his countenance became relaxed.

“Blind!” he exclaimed, in a tone of suffering which was more than an apology, and seated himself apart on a flight of shallow and mossy steps, which wound up among the labyrinths of the ruin.

“My sweet Helen,” said the old man, “you did not tell me that this was the Coliseum.”

“How should I tell you, dearest father, what I knew not? I was on the point of inquiring the way to that building when we entered the circle of the ruins; and until the stranger accosted us, I

remained silent, subdued by the greatness of what I saw."

"'Tis your custom, sweetest girl, to describe to me the objects that give you delight; you array them in the soft radiance of your words; and whilst you speak, I only feel the infirmity which holds me in such dear diffidence as a blessing. Why have you been so long silent?"

"I know not. First, the wonder and the pleasure of the sight; then, the words of the stranger, and then thinking on what he said, and how he looked; and now, beloved father, on your own words."

"Well, dearest, what do you see?"

"I see a vast circle of arches built upon arches, and stones like shattered crags, so vast are they, and walls giddily hanging—totteringly—on walls. In the crevices and in the vaulted roofs, grows a multitude of shrubs: the wild olive, the myrtle, and the jasmine, and intricate brambles, and entangled weeds, and strange feathery plants like dishevelled hair, such as I never saw before. The stones are immensely massive, and they jut out from each other like mountain cliffs. There are terrible rifts in the walls and high windows, through which is seen the light of the blue heavens. There

seem to me more than a thousand arches, some ruined, some entire, and they are all immensely high and wide. Some are broken, and stand forth in great heaps, and the underwood is tufted in their crumbling fragments. Around us lie enormous collections of shattered and shapeless capitals and cornices, loaded with delicate sculpture."

"It is open to the sky," said the old man.

"We see the liquid depth of heaven above, and through the rifts and the windows, the flowers and the weeds and the grass and creeping moss, are nourished by the unforbidden rain. The blue sky is above—the wide bright blue sky; it flows through the great rifts on high, and through the bare boughs of the marble-rooted fig-tree, and through the leaves and flowers of the weeds, even to the dark arcades beneath. I feel, I see it—its clear and piercing beams fill the universe and impregnate the joy-inspiring wind with warmth and light and life, and interpenetrate all things, even me, father. And through the highest rift, the noonday waning moon is hanging, as it were, out of the solid sky: and this shows that the atmosphere has the clearness which it rejoices me that I feel."

“Dearest child, what else see you?”

“Nothing.”

“Nothing?”

“Only the bright, green, mossy ground interspersed with tufts of dewy clover-grass, that run into the interstices of the shattered arches, and round the isolated pinnacles of the ruins.”

“Like those lawny dells of soft short grass which wind among the high forests and precipices of the Alps of Savoy.”*

“Indeed, father, your eye has a vision more serene than mine.”

“And the great wrecked arches, the shattered masses of precipitous ruin overgrown with the younglings of the forest, and more like chasms rent by earthquakes among the mountains, than the vestige of what was human workmanship.”

“What are they?”

“Things awe-inspiring and wonderful—are they not caverns such as the untamed elephant and

* Shelley on visiting Meillerie, says, “Groves of pine, chesnut, and walnut, overshadow it; magnificent and unbounded forests, to which England affords no parallel. In the midst of these woods are dells of lawny expanse inconceivably verdant, adorned with a thousand of the rarest flowers, and odorous with thyme.”

tigress might choose amid the Indian wildernesses where to hide their cubs—such as, were the sea to overflow the earth, the mighty monsters of the deep would change into their vast chambers?”

“Father, your words image forth what I would have expressed, but could not.”

“I hear the rustling of leaves, and the sound of water—but it does not rain—like the faint drops of a fountain among woods.”

“It falls from among the heaps of ruin over our heads. It is, I suppose, the water collected in the rifts from the showers.”

“A nursling of man now abandoned by his care, and transformed by the enchantment of Nature into a likeness of her own creations, and destined to partake their immortality. Changed to a mountain cloven into woody dells, which overhang its labyrinthine glades, and shattered into toppling precipices, even the clouds, intercepted by its craggy summits, supply eternal fountains with their rain.”

“By the column on which we sit, I should judge that it had once been crowned with a temple or theatre, and that in sacred days the radiant multitude wound up its craggy path to the spectacle or the sacrifice.”

“ It was such, Helen—What sound of wings is that?”

“ It is of the wild pigeons returning to their young. Do you not hear the murmur of those that are brooding in their nests?”

“ It is the language of their happiness.”

THE AGE OF PERICLES:

WITH CRITICAL NOTICES OF THE SCULPTURE IN
THE FLORENCE GALLERY.

THE period which intervened between the birth of Pericles and the death of Aristotle, is undoubtedly, whether considered in itself, or with reference to the effects which it produced upon the subsequent destinies of civilized man, the most memorable in the history of the world. What was the combination of moral and political circumstances which produced so unparalleled a progress during that period in literature and the arts;—why that progress, so rapid and so sustained, so soon received a check, and became retrograde,—are problems left to the wonder and conjecture of

posterity. The wrecks and fragments of those subtle and profound minds, like the ruins of a fine statue, obscurely suggest to us the grandeur and perfection of the whole. Their very language,—a type of the understanding, of which it was the creation and the image,—in variety, in simplicity, in flexibility, and in copiousness, excels every other language of the western world. Their sculptures are such as, in our perception, assume to be the models of ideal truth and beauty, and to which, no artist of modern times can produce forms in any degree comparable. Their paintings, according to Pausanias, were full of delicacy and harmony; and some were powerfully pathetic, so as to awaken, like tender music or tragic poetry, the most overwhelming emotions. We are accustomed to consider the painters of the sixteenth century, as those who have brought this art to the highest perfection, probably because none of the ancient pictures have been preserved.

All the inventive arts maintain, as it were, a sympathetic connexion between each other, being no more than various expressions of one internal power, modified by different circumstances, either of an individual, or of society.

The paintings of that period would probably bear the same relation as is confessedly borne by the sculptures to all successive ones. Of their music we know little; but the effects which it is said to have produced, whether they be attributed to the skill of the composer, or the sensibility of his audience, were far more powerful than any which we experience from the music of our times; and if, indeed, the melody of their compositions were more tender, and delicate, and inspiring, than the melodies of some modern European nations, their progress in this art must have been something wonderful, and wholly beyond conception. Their poetry seems to maintain a high, though not so disproportionate a rank, in comparison. Perhaps Shakspeare, from the variety and comprehension of his genius, is to be considered as the greatest individual mind, of which we have specimens remaining;—perhaps Dante created imaginations of greater loveliness and beauty than any that are to be found in the ancient literature of Greece;—perhaps nothing has been discovered in the fragments of the Greek lyric poets equivalent to the sublime and chivalrous sensibility of Petrarch:—but, as a poet, Homer must be acknowledged to excel Shak-

speare in the truth and harmony, the sustained grandeur, and satisfying completeness of his images, their exact fitness to the illustration, and to that which they belong. Nor could Dante, deficient in conduct, plan, nature, variety, and temperance, have been brought into comparison, but for the fortunate isles, laden with golden fruit, which alone could tempt any one to embark in the misty ocean of his dark and extravagant fiction.

ON THE NIOBE.

Of all that remains to us of Greek antiquity, this figure is perhaps the most consummate personification of loveliness, with regard to its countenance, as that of the Venus of the Tribune is with regard to its entire form of woman. It is colossal: the size adds to its value; because it allows to the spectator the choice of a greater number of points of view, and affords him a more analytical one, in which to catch a greater number of the infinite modes of expression, of which any form approaching ideal beauty is necessarily composed. It is the figure of a mother in the act of sheltering, from some divine and inevitable peril, the last, we may imagine, of her surviving children.

The little creature, terrified, as we may conceive, at the strange destruction of all its kindred, has fled to its mother, and is hiding its head in the folds of her robe, and casting back one arm, as in a passionate appeal for defence, where it never before could have been sought in vain. She is clothed in a thin tunic of delicate woof; and her hair is fastened on her head into a knot, probably by that mother whose care will never fasten it again. Niobe is enveloped in profuse drapery, a portion of which the left hand has gathered up, and is in the act of extending it over the child in the instinct of shielding her from what reason knows to be inevitable. The right (as the restorer has properly imagined,) is drawing up her daughter to her; and with that instinctive gesture, and by its gentle pressure, is encouraging the child to believe that it can give security. The countenance of Niobe is the consummation of feminine majesty and loveliness, beyond which the imagination scarcely doubts that it can conceive anything.

That masterpiece of the poetic harmony of marble expresses other feelings. There is embodied a sense of the inevitable and rapid destiny which is consummating around her, as if it were already

over. It seems as if despair and beauty had combined, and produced nothing but the sublimity of grief. As the motions of the form expressed the instinctive sense of the possibility of protecting the child, and the accustomed and affectionate assurance that she would find an asylum within her arms, so reason and imagination speak in the countenance the certainty that no mortal defence is of avail. There is no terror in the countenance, only grief—deep, remediless grief. There is no anger:—of what avail is indignation against what is known to be omnipotent? There is no selfish shrinking from personal pain—there is no panic at supernatural agency—there is no adverting to herself as herself: the calamity is mightier than to leave scope for such emotions.

Everything is swallowed up in sorrow: she is all tears: her countenance, in assured expectation of the arrow piercing its last victim in her embrace, is fixed on her omnipotent enemy. The pathetic beauty of the expression of her tender, and inexhaustible, and unquenchable despair, is beyond the effect of sculpture. As soon as the arrow shall pierce her last tie upon earth, the fable that she was turned into stone, or dissolved into

a fountain of tears, will be but a feeble emblem of the sadness of hopelessness, in which the few and evil years of her remaining life, we feel, must flow away.

It is difficult to speak of the beauty of the countenance, or to make intelligible in words, from what such astonishing loveliness results.

The head, resting somewhat backward upon the full and flowing contour of the neck, is as in the act of watching an event momentarily to arrive. The hair is delicately divided on the forehead, and a gentle beauty gleams from the broad and clear forehead, over which its strings are drawn. The face is of an oval fulness, and the features conceived with the daring of a sense of power. In this respect it resembles the careless majesty which Nature stamps upon the rare masterpieces of her creation, harmonizing them as it were from the harmony of the spirit within. Yet all this not only consists with, but is the cause of the subtlest delicacy of clear and tender beauty—the expression at once of innocence and sublimity of soul—of purity and strength—of all that which touches the most removed and divine of the chords that made music in our thoughts—of that which

shakes with astonishment even the most superficial.

THE MINERVA.

The head is of the highest beauty. It has a close helmet, from which the hair, delicately parted on the forehead, half escapes. The attitude gives entire effect to the perfect form of the neck, and to that full and beautiful moulding of the lower part of the face and mouth, which is in living beings the seat of the expression of a simplicity and integrity of nature. Her face, upraised to heaven, is animated with a profound, sweet, and impassioned melancholy, with an earnest, and fervid, and disinterested pleading against some vast and inevitable wrong. It is the joy and poetry of sorrow making grief beautiful, and giving it that nameless feeling which, from the imperfection of language, we call pain, but which is not all pain, though a feeling which makes not only its possessor, but the spectator of it, prefer it to what is called pleasure, in which all is not pleasure. It is difficult to think that this head, though of the highest ideal beauty, is the head of Minerva, although the attributes and attitude of the lower

part of the statue certainly suggest that idea. The Greeks rarely, in their representations of the characters of their gods,—unless we call the poetic enthusiasm of Apollo a mortal passion,—expressed the disturbance of human feeling; and here is deep and impassioned grief animating a divine countenance. It is, indeed, divine. Wisdom (which Minerva may be supposed to emblem,) is pleading earnestly with Power,—and invested with the expression of that grief, because it must ever plead so vainly. The drapery of the statue, the gentle beauty of the feet, and the grace of the attitude, are what may be seen in many other statues belonging to that astonishing era which produced it: such a countenance is seen in few.

This statue happens to be placed on a pedestal, the subject of whose reliefs is in a spirit wholly the reverse. It was probably an altar to Bacchus—possibly a funeral urn. Under the festoons of fruits and flowers that grace the pedestal, the corners of which are ornamented with the skulls of goats, are sculptured some figures of Mænads under the inspiration of the god.* Nothing can

* There is an urn in the British Museum, whose reliefs are of the same era, and where the same subject is treated in

be conceived more wild and terrible than their gestures, touching, as they do, the verge of distortion, into which their fine limbs and lovely forms are thrown. There is nothing, however, that exceeds the possibility of nature, though it borders on its utmost line.

The tremendous spirit of superstition, aided by drunkenness, producing something beyond insanity, seems to have caught them in its whirlwinds, and to bear them over the earth, as the rapid volutions of a tempest have the ever-changing trunk of a waterspout, or as the torrent of a mountain river whirls the autumnal leaves resistlessly along in its full eddies. The hair, loose and floating, seems caught in the tempest of their own tumultuous motion; their heads are thrown back, leaning with a strange delirium upon their necks, and looking up to heaven, whilst they totter and stumble even in the energy of their tempestuous dance.

One represents Agave with the head of Pentheus in one hand, and in the other a great knife; a second has a spear with its pine cone, which was the Thyrsus; another dances with mad vo-

a way by no means inferior to that described so enthusiastically by Shelley. It is in the room of the admirable Faun.

luptuousness; the fourth is beating a kind of tambourine.

This was indeed a monstrous superstition, even in Greece, where it was alone capable of combining ideal beauty and poetical and abstract enthusiasm with the wild errors from which it sprung. In Rome it had a more familiar, wicked, and dry appearance; it was not suited to the severe and exact apprehensions of the Romans, and their strict morals were violated by it, and sustained a deep injury, little analogous to its effects upon the Greeks, who turned all things—superstition, prejudice, murder, madness—to beauty.

ON THE VENUS CALLED ANADYOMINE.

She has just issued from the bath, and yet is animated with the enjoyment of it.

She seems all soft and mild enjoyment, and the curved lines of her fine limbs flow into each other with a never-ending sinuosity of sweetness. Her face expresses a breathless, yet passive and innocent voluptuousness, free from affectation. Her lips, without the sublimity of lofty and impetuous passion, the grandeur of enthusiastic imagination

of the Apollo of the Capitol, or the union of both, like the Apollo Belvidere, have the tenderness of arch, yet pure and affectionate desire, and the mode in which the ends of the mouth are drawn in, yet lifted or half-opened, with the smile that for ever circles round them, and the tremulous curve into which they are wrought by inextinguishable desire, and the tongue lying against the lower lip, as in the listlessness of passive joy, express love, still love.

Her eyes seem heavy and swimming with pleasure, and her small forehead fades on both sides into that sweet swelling and thin declension of the bone over the eye, in the mode which expresses simple and tender feelings.

The neck is full, and panting as with the aspiration of delight, and flows with gentle curves into her perfect form.

Her form is indeed perfect. She is half-sitting and half-rising from a shell, and the fullness of her limbs, and their complete roundness and perfection, do not diminish the vital energy with which they seem to be animated. The position of the arms, which are lovely beyond imagination, is natural, unaffected, and easy. This, perhaps, is the finest personification of Venus, the deity of

superficial desire, in all antique statuary. Her pointed and pear-like person, ever virgin, and her attitude modesty itself.

A BAS-RELIEF.

PROBABLY THE SIDES OF A SARCOPHAGUS.

The lady is lying on a couch, supported by a young woman, and looking extremely exhausted; her dishevelled hair is floating about her shoulder, and she is half-covered with drapery that falls on the couch.

Her tunic is exactly like a chemise, only the sleeves are longer, coming half way down the upper part of the arm. An old wrinkled woman, with a cloak over her head, and an enormously sagacious look, has a most *professional* appearance, and is taking hold of her arm gently with one hand, and with the other is supporting it. I think she is feeling her pulse. At the side of the couch sits a woman as in grief, holding her head in her hands. At the bottom of the bed is another matron tearing her hair, and in the act of screaming out most violently, which she seems, however, by the rest of her gestures, to do with the utmost

deliberation, as having come to the resolution, that it was a correct thing to do so. Behind her is a gossip of the most ludicrous ugliness, crying, I suppose, or praying, for her arms are crossed upon her neck. There is also a fifth setting up a wail. To the left of the couch a nurse is sitting on the ground dandling the child in her arms, and wholly occupied in so doing. The infant is swaddled. Behind her is a female who appears to be in the act of rushing in with dishevelled hair and violent gesture, and in one hand brandishing a whip or a thunder-bolt. This is probably some emblematic person, the messenger of death, or a fury, whose personification would be a key to the whole. What they are all wailing at, I know not; whether the lady is dying, or the father has directed the child to be exposed: but if the mother be not dead, such a tumult would kill a woman in the straw in these days.

The other compartment, in the second scene of the drama, tells the story of the presentation of the child to its father. An old man has it in his arms, and with professional and mysterious officiousness is holding it out to the father. The father, a middle-aged and very respectable-looking man,

perhaps not long married, is looking with the admiration of a bachelor on his first child, and perhaps thinking, that he was once such a strange little creature himself. His hands are clasped, and he is gathering up between his arms the folds of his cloak, an emblem of his gathering up all his faculties to understand the tale the gossip is bringing.

An old man is standing beside him, probably his father, with some curiosity, and much tenderness in his looks. Around are collected a host of his relations, of whom the youngest, a handsome girl, seems the least concerned. It is altogether an admirable piece, quite in the spirit of the comedies of Terence.*

MICHAEL ANGELO'S BACCHUS.

The countenance of this figure is a most revolting mistake of the spirit and meaning of Bacchus. It looks drunken, brutal, narrow-minded, and has an expression of desolateness the most revolting. The lower part of the figure is stiff, and the manner in which the shoulders are united to the breast, and the neck to the head, abundantly inharmonious.

* This bas-relief is not antique. It is of the Cinquecento.

It is altogether without unity, as was the idea of the deity of Bacchus in the conception of a Catholic. On the other hand, considered only as a piece of workmanship, it has many merits. The arms are executed in a style of the most perfect and manly beauty. The body is conceived with great energy, and the manner in which the lines mingle into each other, of the highest boldness and truth. It wants unity as a work of art—as a representation of Bacchus it wants everything.

A JUNO.

A statue of great merit. The countenance expresses a stern and unquestioned severity of dominion, with a certain sadness. The lips are beautiful—susceptible of expressing scorn—but not without sweetness. With fine lips a person is never wholly bad, and they never belong to the expression of emotions wholly selfish—lips being the seat of imagination. The drapery is finely conceived, and the manner in which the act of throwing back one leg is expressed, in the diverging folds of the drapery of the left breast fading in bold yet graduated lines into a skirt, as it descends from the left shoulder, is admirably imagined.

AN APOLLO.

with serpents twining round a wreath of laurel on which the quiver is suspended. It probably was, when complete, magnificently beautiful. The restorer of the head and arms, following the indication of the muscles of the right side, has lifted the arm, as in triumph, at the success of an arrow, imagining to imitate the Lycian Apollo in that, so finely described by Apollonius Rhodius, when the dazzling radiance of his beautiful limbs shone over the dark Euxine. The action, energy, and godlike animation of these limbs speak a spirit which seems as if it could not be consumed.

ARCH OF TITUS.

ON the inner compartment of the Arch of Titus, is sculptured in deep relief, the desolation of a city. On one side, the walls of the Temple, split by the fury of conflagrations, hang tottering in the act of ruin. The accompaniments of a town taken by assault, matrons and virgins and children and old men gathered into groups, and the rapine and

licence of a barbarous and enraged soldiery, are imaged in the distance. The foreground is occupied by a procession of the victors, bearing in their profane hands the holy candlesticks and the tables of shewbread, and the sacred instruments of the eternal worship of the Jews. On the opposite side, the reverse of this sad picture, Titus is represented standing in a chariot drawn by four horses, crowned with laurel, and surrounded by the tumultuous numbers of his triumphant army, and the magistrates, and priests, and generals, and philosophers, dragged in chains beside his wheels. Behind him, stands a Victory eagle-winged.

The arch is now mouldering into ruins, and the imagery almost erased by the lapse of fifty generations. Beyond this obscure monument of Hebrew desolation, is seen the tomb of the Destroyer's family, now a mountain of ruins.

The Flavian amphitheatre has become a habitation for owls and dragons. The power, of whose possession it was once the type, and of whose departure it is now the emblem, is become a dream and a memory. Rome is no more than Jerusalem.

REFLECTIONS.

LIFE.

LIFE, and the world, and whatever we call that which we are, and feel, is an astonishing thing. The mist of familiarity obscures from us the wonder of our being. We are struck with astonishment at some of its transient modifications, but it is itself the great miracle. What are the changes of empires, the wreck of dynasties, with the opinions that supported them—what is the birth and extinction of religions, and of political systems, to life? * What are the revolutions of the globe which we inhabit, and the operations of the elements of which it is composed, compared with life? what is the universe of stars and suns, and their motions, and the destiny of those that inhabit them, compared with life? Life, the great miracle, we admire not because it is so miraculous. If any artist, I do

* It is singular, that Napoleon at St. Helena, as stated in Las Cases' Memoirs, should have been led into a similar reflexion. "Qu'est-ce que la vie? Quand et comment la recevons-nous? Tout cela est-il autre chose encore que le mystère?"

not say had executed, but had merely conceived in his mind, the system of the sun, the stars, and planets, they not existing, and had painted to us in words or upon canvas the spectacle now afforded by the sight of the cope of heaven, and illustrated it by astronomy, what would have been our admiration!—or had imagined the scenery of the earth, the mountains, and the seas, and the rivers, and the grass and the flowers, and the varieties of the forms and the masses of the leaves of the woods, and the colours which attend the rising and the setting sun, and the hues of the atmosphere turbid or serene, truly we should have been wonder-struck, and should have said, what it would have been a vain boast to have said, Truly, this creator deserves the name of a God. But now, these things are looked upon with little wonder; and who views them with delight, is considered an enthusiast or an extraordinary person.

The multitude care little for them. It is thus with life, that includes all. What is life? Thoughts and feelings arise with or without our will, and we employ words to express them.

We are born, and our birth is unremembered, and our infancy remembered but in fragments.

We live, and in living we lose the apprehension of life.

DEATH.

By the word death, we express that condition in which natures resembling ourselves apparently cease to be what they were. We no longer hear them speak, nor see them move. If they have sensations or apprehensions, we no longer participate in them. We know no more, than that those internal organs, and all that fine texture of material frame, without which we have no experience that life or thought can subsist, are dissolved and scattered abroad.

The body is placed under the ground, and after a certain period there remains no vestige even of its form. This is that contemplation of inexhaustible melancholy, whose shadow eclipses the brightness of the world. The commonest observer is struck with dejection at the spectacle, and contends in vain against the persuasion of the grave, that the dead indeed cease to be.

The corpse at his feet is prophetic of his own destiny. Those who have perceived him, whose voice was delightful to his ear, whose touch met,

and thrilled, and vibrated to his like sweet and subtle fire, whose aspect spread a visionary light upon his path, these he cannot meet again. The organs of sense are destroyed, and the intellectual operations dependent on them, have perished in their sources. How can a corpse see and feel? What intercourse can there be in two heaps of putrid clay and crumbling bones piled together?

Such are the anxious and fearful contemplations, that, in spite of religion, we are sometimes forced to confess to ourselves.

LOVE.

The mind selects among those who most resemble it, that which is most its archetype and instinctively fills up the interstices of the imperfect image, in the same manner as the imagination moulds and completes the shape in the clouds, or in the fire, into a resemblance of whatever form, animal, building, &c. happens to be present to it.

Man is in his wildest state a social animal—a certain degree of civilization and refinement ever produces the want of sympathies still more intimate and complete, and the gratification of the senses is no longer all that is desired. It soon becomes

a very small part of that profound and complicated sentiment which we call love, which is rather the universal thirst for a communion not merely of the senses, but of our whole nature, intellectual, imaginative, and sensitive, and which, when individualized, becomes an imperious necessity, only to be satisfied by the complete, or partial, or supposed fulfilment of its claims. This want grows more powerful in proportion to the developement which our nature receives from civilization ; for man never ceases to be a social being.

REMARKS ON 'MANDEVILLE' AND MR. GODWIN.

THE author of 'Mandeville' is one of the most illustrious examples of intellectual power of the present age. He has exhibited that variety and universality of talent which distinguishes him who is destined to inherit lasting renown, from the possessors of temporary celebrity. If his claims were to be measured solely by the accuracy of his researches into ethical and political science, still it

would be difficult to name a contemporary competitor. Let us make a deduction of all those parts of his moral system which are liable to any possible controversy, and consider simply those which only to allege is to establish, and which belong to that most important class of truths which he that announces to mankind seems less to teach than to recall.

'Political Justice' is the first moral system explicitly founded upon the doctrine of the negativeness of rights and the positiveness of duties,—an obscure feeling of which has been the basis of all the political liberty and private virtue in the world. But he is also the author of 'Caleb Williams'; and if we had no record of a mind, but simply some fragment containing the conception of the character of Falkland, doubtless we should say, "This is an extraordinary mind, and undoubtedly was capable of the very sublimest enterprises of thought."

St. Leon and Fleetwood are moulded with somewhat inferior distinctness, in the same character of an union of delicacy and power. The Essay on Sepulchres has all the solemnity and depth of passion which belong to a mind that sympathises, as one man with his friend, in the interest of future

ages, in the concerns of the vanished generations of mankind.

It may be said with truth, that Godwin has been treated unjustly by those of his countrymen, upon whose favour temporary distinction depends. If he had devoted his high accomplishments to flatter the selfishness of the rich, or enforced those doctrines on which the powerful depend for power, they would, no doubt, have rewarded him with their countenance, and he might have been more fortunate in that sunshine than Mr. Malthus or Dr. Paley. But the difference would have been as wide as that which must for ever divide notoriety from fame. Godwin has been to the present age in moral philosophy what Wordsworth is in poetry. The personal interest of the latter would probably have suffered from his pursuit of the true principles of taste in poetry, as much as all that is temporary in the fame of Godwin has suffered from his daring to announce the true foundations of minds, if servility, and dependence, and superstition, had not been too easily reconcilable with his species of dissent from the opinions of the great and the prevailing. It is singular that the other nations of Europe should have anticipated,

in this respect, the judgment of posterity; and that the name of Godwin and that of his late illustrious and admirable wife, should be pronounced, even by those who know but little of English literature, with reverence and admiration; and that the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft should have been translated, and universally read, in France and Germany, long after the bigotry of faction has stifled them in our own country.

'Mandeville' is Godwin's last production. In interest it is perhaps inferior to 'Caleb Williams.' There is no character like Falkland, whom the author, with that sublime casuistry which is the parent of toleration and forbearance, persuades us personally to love, whilst his actions must for ever remain the theme of our astonishment and abhorrence. Mandeville challenges our compassion, and no more. His errors arise from an immutable necessity of internal nature, and from much constitutional antipathy and suspicion, which soon spring up into hatred and contempt, and barren misanthropy, which, as it has no root in genius or virtue, produces no fruit uncongenial with the soil wherein it grew. Those of Falkland sprang from a high, though perverted conception of human nature,

from a powerful sympathy with his species, and from a temper which led him to believe that the very reputation of excellence should walk among mankind unquestioned and unassailed. So far as it was a defect to link the interest of the tale with anything inferior to Falkland, so is Mandeville defective. But the varieties of human character, the depth and complexity of human motive,—those sources of the union of strength and weakness—those powerful sources of pleading for universal kindness and toleration,—are just subjects for illustration and developement in a work of fiction; as such, 'Mandeville' yields in interest and importance to none of the productions of the author. The events of the tale flow like the stream of fate, regular and irresistible, growing at once darker and swifter in their progress: there is no surprise, no shock: we are prepared for the worst from the very opening of the scene, though we wonder whence the author drew the shadows which render the moral darkness, every instant more fearful, at last so appalling and so complete. The interest is awfully deep and rapid. To struggle with it, would be the gossamer attempting to bear up against the tempest. In this respect it is more

powerful than 'Caleb Williams': the interest of 'Caleb Williams' being as rapid, but not so profound, as that of 'Mandeville.' It is a wind that tears up the deepest waters of the ocean of mind.

The language is more rich and various, and the expressions more eloquently sweet, without losing that energy and distinctness which characterize 'Political Justice' and 'Caleb Williams.' The moral speculations have a strength, and consistency, and boldness, which has been less clearly aimed at in his other works of fiction. The pleadings of Henrietta to Mandeville, after his recovery from madness, in favour of virtue and of benevolent energy, compose, in every respect, the most perfect and beautiful piece of writing of modern times. It is the genuine doctrine of 'Political Justice,' presented in one perspicacious and impressive river, and clothed in such enchanting melody of language, as seems, not less than the writings of Plato, to realize those lines of Milton :

How charming is divine philosophy—
Not harsh and crabbed—
But musical as is Apollo's lute !

Clifford's talk, too, about wealth, has a beautiful, and readily to be disentangled intermixture of truth

and error. Clifford is a person, who, without those characteristics which usually constitute the sublime, is sublime from the mere excess of loveliness and innocence. Henrietta's first appearance to Mandeville, at Mandeville House, is an occurrence resplendent with the sunrise of life: it recalls to the memory many a vision—or perhaps but one—which the delusive exhalations of unbaffled hope have invested with a rose-like lustre as of morning, yet unlike morning—a light which, once extinguished, never can return. Henrietta seems at first to be all that a susceptible heart imagines in the object of its earliest passion. We scarcely can see her, she is so beautiful. There is a mist of dazzling loveliness which encircles her, and shuts out from the sight all that is mortal in her transcendent charms. But the veil is gradually undrawn, and she “fades into the light of common day.” Her actions, and even her sentiments, do not correspond to the elevation of her speculative opinions, and the fearless sincerity which should be the accompaniment of truth and virtue. But she has a divided affection, and she is faithful there only where infidelity would have been self-sacrifice. Could the spotless Henrietta have subjected her

love to Clifford, to the vain and insulting accident of wealth and reputation, and the babbling of a miserable old woman, and yet have proceeded unshrinking to her nuptial feast from the expostulations of Mandeville's impassioned and pathetic madness? It might be well in the author to show the foundations of human hope thus overthrown, for his picture might otherwise have been illumined with one gleam of light. It was his skill to enforce the moral, "that all things are vanity," and "that the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting"; and we are indebted to those who make us feel the instability of our nature, that we may lay the knowledge (which is its foundation) deep, and make the affections (which are its cement) strong. But one regrets that Henrietta,—who soared far beyond her contemporaries in her opinions, who was so beautiful that she seemed a spirit among mankind,—should act and feel no otherwise than the least exalted of her sex; and still more, that the author, capable of conceiving something so admirable and lovely, should have been withheld, by the tenor of the fiction which he chose, from execrating it in its full extent. It almost seems in the original conception of the cha-

racter of Henrietta, that something was imagined too vast and too uncommon to be realized; and the feeling weighs like disappointment on the mind. But these objections, considered with reference to the close of the story, are extrinsical.

The reader's mind is hurried on as he approaches the end with breathless and accelerated impulse. The noun *smorfia* comes at last, and touches some nerve which jars the inmost soul, and grates, as it were, along the blood; and we can scarcely believe that that grin which must accompany Mandeville to his grave, is not stamped upon our own visage.

ON 'FRANKENSTEIN.'

THE novel of 'Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus,' is undoubtedly, as a mere story, one of the most original and complete productions of the day. We debate with ourselves in wonder, as we read it, what could have been the series of thoughts—what could have been the peculiar experiences that awakened them—which conduced, in the author's mind, to the astonishing combi-

nations of motives and incidents, and the startling catastrophe, which compose this tale. There are, perhaps, some points of subordinate importance, which prove that it is the author's first attempt. But in this judgment, which requires a very nice discrimination, we may be mistaken; for it is conducted throughout with a firm and steady hand. The interest gradually accumulates and advances towards the conclusion with the accelerated rapidity of a rock rolled down a mountain. We are led breathless with suspense and sympathy, and the heaping up of incident on incident, and the working of passion out of passion. We cry "hold, hold! enough!"—but there is yet something to come; and, like the victim whose history it relates, we think we can bear no more, and yet more is to be borne. Pelion is heaped on Ossa, and Ossa on Olympus. We climb Alp after Alp, until the horizon is seen blank, vacant, and limitless; and the head turns giddy, and the ground seems to fail under our feet.

This novel rests its claim on being a source of powerful and profound emotion. The elementary feelings of the human mind are exposed to view; and those who are accustomed to reason deeply

on their origin and tendency will, perhaps, be the only persons who can sympathize, to the full extent, in the interest of the actions which are their result. But, founded on nature as they are, there is perhaps no reader, who can endure anything beside a new love story, who will not feel a responsive string touched in his inmost soul. The sentiments are so affectionate and so innocent—the characters of the subordinate agents in this strange drama are clothed in the light of such a mild and gentle mind—the pictures of domestic manners are of the most simple and attaching character: the father's is irresistible and deep. Nor are the crimes and malevolence of the single Being, though indeed withering and tremendous, the offspring of any unaccountable propensity to evil, but flow irresistibly from certain causes fully adequate to their production. They are the children, as it were, of Necessity and Human Nature. In this the direct moral of the book consists; and it is perhaps the most important, and of the most universal application, of any moral that can be enforced by example. Treat a person ill, and he will become wicked. Requite affection with scorn;—let one being be selected, for whatever cause, as the refuse of his kind—divide him,

a social being, from society, and you impose upon him the irresistible obligations—malevolence and selfishness. It is thus that, too often in society, those who are best qualified to be its benefactors and its ornaments, are branded by some accident with scorn, and changed, by neglect and solitude of heart, into a scourge and a curse.

The Being in 'Frankenstein' is, no doubt, a tremendous creature. It was impossible that he should not have received among men that treatment which led to the consequences of his being a social nature. He was an abortion and an anomaly; and though his mind was such as its first impressions framed it, affectionate and full of moral sensibility, yet the circumstances of his existence are so monstrous and uncommon, that, when the consequences of them became developed in action, his original goodness was gradually turned into inextinguishable misanthropy and revenge. The scene between the Being and the blind De Lacey in the cottage, is one of the most profound and extraordinary instances of pathos that we ever recollect. It is impossible to read this dialogue,—and indeed many others of a somewhat similar character,—without feeling the heart suspend its pulsations with

wonder, and the "tears stream down the cheeks." The encounter and argument between Frankenstein and the Being on the sea of ice, almost approaches, in effect, to the expostulations of Caleb Williams with Falkland. It reminds us, indeed, somewhat of the style and character of that admirable writer, to whom the author has dedicated his work, and whose productions he seems to have studied.

There is only one instance, however, in which we detect the least approach to imitation; and that is the conduct of the incident of Frankenstein's landing in Ireland. The general character of the tale, indeed, resembles nothing that ever preceded it. After the death of Elizabeth, the story, like a stream which grows at once more rapid and profound as it proceeds, assumes an irresistible solemnity, and the magnificent energy and swiftness of a tempest.

The churchyard scene, in which Frankenstein visits the tombs of his family, his quitting Geneva, and his journey through Tartary to the shores of the Frozen Ocean, resemble at once the terrible reanimation of a corpse and the supernatural career of a spirit. The scene in the cabin of Walton's

ship—the more than mortal enthusiasm and grandeur of the Being's speech over the dead body of his victim—is an exhibition of intellectual and imaginative power, which we think the reader will acknowledge has seldom been surpassed.

ON THE REVIVAL OF LITERATURE.

IN the fifteenth century of the Christian era, a new and extraordinary event roused Europe from her lethargic state, and paved the way to her present greatness. The writings of Dante in the thirteenth, and of Petrarch in the fourteenth, were the bright luminaries which had afforded glimmerings of literary knowledge to the almost benighted traveller toiling up the hill of Fame. But on the taking of Constantinople, a new and sudden light appeared: the dark clouds of ignorance rolled into distance, and Europe was inundated by learned monks, and still more by the quantity of learned manuscripts which they brought with them from the scene of devastation. The Turks settled themselves in Constantinople, where they adopted no-

thing but the vicious habits of the Greeks: they neglected even the small remains of its ancient learning, which, filtered and degenerated as it was by the absurd mixture of Pagan and Christian philosophy, proved, on its retirement to Europe, the spark which spread gradually and successfully the light of knowledge over the world.

Italy, France, and England,—for Germany still remained many centuries less civilized than the surrounding countries,—swarmed with monks and cloisters. Superstition, of whatever kind, whether earthly or divine, has hitherto been the weight which clogged man to earth, and prevented his genius from soaring aloft amid its native skies. The enterprises, and the effects of the human mind, are something more than stupendous: the works of nature are material and tangible: we have a half insight into their kind, and in many instances we predict their effects with certainty. But mind seems to govern the world without visible or substantial means. Its birth is unknown; its action and influence unperceived; and its being seems eternal. To the mind both humane and philosophical, there cannot exist a greater subject of grief, than the reflection of how much superstition has retarded the

progress of intellect, and consequently the happiness of man.

The monks in their cloisters were engaged in trifling and ridiculous disputes: they contented themselves with teaching the dogmas of their religion, and rushed impatiently forth to the colleges and halls, where they disputed with an acrimony and meanness little befitting the resemblance of their pretended holiness. But the situation of a monk is a situation the most unnatural that bigotry, proud in the invention of cruelty, could conceive; and their vices may be pardoned as resulting from the wills and devices of a few proud and selfish bishops, who enslaved the world that they might live at ease.

The disputes of the schools were mostly scholastical: it was the discussion of words, and had no relation to morality. Morality,—the great means and end of man,—was contained, as they affirmed, in the extent of a few hundred pages of a certain book, which others have since contended were but scraps of martyrs' last dying words, collected together and imposed on the world. In the refinements of the scholastic philosophy, the world seemed in danger of losing the little real

wisdom that still remained as her portion ; and the only valuable part of their disputes was such as tended to develop the system of the Peripatetic Philosophers. Plato, the wisest, the profoundest, and Epicurus, the most humane and gentle among the ancients, were entirely neglected by them. Plato interfered with their peculiar mode of thinking concerning heavenly matters ; and Epicurus, maintaining the rights of man to pleasure and happiness, would have afforded a seducing contrast to their dark and miserable code of morals. It has been asserted, that these holy men solaced their lighter moments in a contraband worship of Epicurus, and profaned the philosophy which maintained the rights of all by a selfish indulgence of the rights of a few. Thus it is : the laws of nature are invariable, and man sets them aside that he may have the pleasure of travelling through a labyrinth in search of them again.

Pleasure, in an open and innocent garb, by some strange process of reasoning, is called vice ; yet man (so closely is he linked to the chains of necessity—so irresistibly is he impelled to fulfil the end of his being,) must seek her at whatever price : he becomes a hypocrite, and braves damnation with all its pains.

Grecian literature,—the finest the world has ever produced,—was at length restored: its form and mode we obtained from the manuscripts which the ravages of time, of the Goths, and of the still more savage Turks, had spared. The burning of the library at Alexandria was an evil of importance. This library is said to have contained volumes of the choicest Greek authors.

A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT BY JURIES.

A FRAGMENT.

GOVERNMENT, as it now subsists, is perhaps an engine at once the most expensive and inartificial that could have been devised as a remedy for the imperfections of society. Immense masses of the product of labour are committed to the discretion of certain individuals for the purpose of executing its intentions, or interpreting its meaning. These have not been consumed, but wasted, in the principal part of the past history of political society.

Government may be distributed into two parts:—First, the fundamental—that is, the permanent

forms, which regulate the deliberation or the action of the whole ; from which it results that a state is democratical, or aristocratical, or despotic, or a combination of all these principles.

And Secondly—the necessary or accidental—that is, those that determine, *not* the forms according to which the deliberation or the action of the mass of the community is to be regulated, but the opinions or moral principles which are to govern the particular instances of such action or deliberation. These may be called, with little violence to the popular acceptation of those terms, Constitution, and Law : understanding by the former, the collection of those written institutions or traditions which determine the individuals who are to exercise, in a nation, the discretionary right of peace and war, of death or imprisonment, fines and penalties, and the imposition and collection of taxes, and their application, thus vested in a king, or an hereditary senate, or in a representative assembly, or in a combination of all ; and by the latter, the mode of determining those opinions, according to which the constituted authorities are to decide on any action ; for law is either a collection of opinions expressed by individuals without constitutional authority, or

the decision of a constitutional body of men, the opinion of some or all of whom it expresses—and no more.

To the former, or constitutional topics, this treatise has no direct reference. Law may be considered, simply—an opinion regulating political power. It may be divided into two parts—General Law, or that which relates to the external and integral concerns of a nation, and decides on the competency of a particular person or collection of persons to discretion in matters of war and peace—the assembling of the representative body—the time, place, manner, form, of holding judicial courts, and other concerns enumerated before, and in reference to which this community is considered as a whole;—and Particular Law, or that which decides upon contested claims of property, which punishes or restrains violence and fraud, which enforces compacts, and preserves to every man that degree of liberty and security, the enjoyment of which is judged not to be inconsistent with the liberty and security of another.

To the former, or what is here called general law, this treatise has no direct reference. How far law, in its general form or constitution, as it

at present exists in the greater part of the nations of Europe, may be affected by inferences from the ensuing reasonings, it is foreign to the present purpose to inquire—let us confine our attention to particular law, or law strictly so termed.

The only defensible intention of law, like that of every other human institution, is very simple and clear—the good of the whole. If law is found to accomplish this object very imperfectly, that imperfection makes no part of the design with which men submit to its institution. Any reasonings which tend to throw light on a subject hitherto so dark and intricate, cannot fail, if distinctly stated, to impress mankind very deeply, because it is a question in which the life and property and liberty and reputation of every man are vitally involved.

For the sake of intelligible method, let us assume the ordinary distinctions of law, those of civil and criminal law, and of the objects of it, private and public wrongs. The author of these pages ought not to suppress his conviction, that the principles on which punishment is usually inflicted are essentially erroneous; and that, in general, ten times more is apportioned to the victims of law, than is demanded by the welfare of society, under the shape

of reformation or example. He believes that, although universally disowned, the execrable passion of vengeance, exasperated by fear, exists as a chief source among the secret causes of this exercise of criminal justice. He believes also, that in questions of property, there is a vague but most effective favouritism in courts of law and among lawyers, against the poor to the advantage of the rich—against the tenant in favour of the landlord—against the creditor in favour of the debtor; thus enforcing and illustrating that celebrated maxim, against which moral science is a perpetual effort: *To whom much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

But the present purpose is, not the exposure of such mistakes as actually exist in public opinion, but an attempt to give to public opinion its legitimate dominion, and an uniform and unimpeded influence to each particular case which is its object.

When law is once understood to be no more than the recorded opinion of men, no more than the apprehensions of individuals on the reasoning of a particular case, we may expect that the sanguinary or stupid mistakes which disgrace the

civil and criminal jurisprudence of civilized nations will speedily disappear. How long, under its present sanctions, do not the most exploded violations of humanity maintain their ground in courts of law, after public opinion has branded them with reprobation; sometimes even until by constantly maintaining their post under the shelter of venerable names, they out-weary the very scorn and abhorrence of mankind, or subsist unrepealed and silent, until some check, in the progress of human improvement, awakens them, and that public opinion, from which they should have received their reversal, is infected by their influence. Public opinion would never long stagnate in error, were it not fenced about and frozen over by forms and superstitions. If men were accustomed to reason, and to hear the arguments of others, upon each particular case that concerned the life, or liberty, or property, or reputation of their peers, those mistakes, which at present render these possessions so insecure to all but those who enjoy enormous wealth, never could subsist. If the administration of law ceased to appeal from the common sense, or the enlightened minds of twelve contemporary *good and true men*, who should be the peers of the accused, or, in

cases of property, of the claimant, to the obscure records of dark and barbarous epochs, or the precedents of what venal and enslaved judges might have decreed to please their tyrants, or the opinion of any man or set of men who lived when bigotry was virtue, and passive obedience that discretion which is the better part of valour,—all those mistakes now fastened in the public opinion, would be brought at each new case to the * * * *

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THE END.





