THE

WORKS

OF

HENRY MACKENZIE, Esq.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

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OF

VOLUME SIXTH.

PAPERS

FROM

The Lounger.

A

PERIODICAL PUBLICATION,

PUBLISHED AT EDINBURGH IN THE YEARS
1785 AND 1786.

PAPERS

FROM

THE LOUNGER.

CONTINUED.

No. 50. SATURDAY, *Jan.* 14, 1786.

"TRAGEDY (according to the ancient definition quoted in a former paper) purges the passions, by exciting them." Comedy wishes to purge vices and follies, by ridicule. In a corrupt age, reason is so weak as to be obliged to call in such allies to her assistance: let her beware that they do not, like the Saxon auxiliaries of our

ancestors, usurp the government which they were called to defend.

In the earliest periods of life, ridicule is naturally employed against reason and propriety.—The child who obeys its mother, who is afraid of its governess, who will not be concerned in little plots to deceive both, is laughed at by its bolder and less scrupulous companions. At every age, reason and duty are grave and serious things, in which ridicule finds a contrast that renders her attack more easy, and her sallies more poignant.

The refinement of polished times, as was observed in the foregoing Number, does not allow them to find amusement in that gross ridicule which provokes the laughter of a ruder people. But from this very source their subjects of comedy are often of a dangerous kind. They trench upon sacred ground; I mean not as to religion, but in morals; they paint those nicer shades of ridicule, which are of an

equivocal sort, between virtue and vice, and often give the spectator leave to laugh, according to his own humour, either at the first or the latter.

In the *Ecole des Femmes*, (and I shall hardly be reckoned unfair when I make the reference to Moliere,) most of the maxims which Arnolphe makes Agnes read, are really good moral precepts, which a prudent wife would do well to follow, for her own sake as well as her husband's. There is just as much prudery and suspicion thrown into them, as to allow those who would wish to be less guarded than a good wife ought to be, to hold them in derision.

The George Dandin of the same author has been already criticised, in this moral view, by a very able writer. But he has not attended, say its defenders, to the proper moral of the piece; which is to correct a very common sort of weakness, as well as of injustice, in old men of low

birth and great wealth, who purchase alliance with decayed nobility, and are vain enough to imagine, that a wife, bought from her necessities, or from the necessities of her family, is to love and respect the husband who has purchased her. But besides that this corrective is applied to the party who may be the weakest, but is certainly the least wicked of the two, such examples, conveyed through the medium of comedy, are always more readily applied to those whom they may mislead, than to those whom they may reform. The images which comedy presents, and the ridicule which it excites, being almost always exaggerated, their resemblance to real life is only acknowledged by those whose weaknesses they flatter—whose passions they excuse. They who use the example of the scene for an apology, can easily twist it into that form; they who wish to escape its correction, easily discover the difference

between the scenic situation and theirs. The George Dandin, and the *Cocu Imaginaire* of real life, neither meet with *Lubins* nor *Pictures* to abuse them; but the girl who thinks herself entitled to be the *Angelique* of the piece, will find no difficulty in discovering her good man to be a Dandin; she who wishes her husband to be blind, will never forget the prudent advice of Sganarelle;

Quand vous verriez tout, ne croyez jamais rien.

Harpagon is held up to detestation by Moliere, for the correction of the old, the avaricious, the usurer, whom the world proscribes, whom his children must hate for his criminal parsimony. Alas! misers and usurers neither read nor see comedies; but the young and the thoughtless are taught to call prudence and economy, covetousness and avarice, to be dissipated and extravagant out of pure virtue.

In the Cheats of Scapin, the audience

is always on the side of the rogue against the poor deluded and abused old man. It is so in all comic scenes of the kind, from the slaves of Terence, down to the valets of Moliere and Regnard. Ask any wise and discreet mother of a family, if she would allow her children to associate with the parti-coloured gentlemen below stairs; she will tell you, that it is of all things what she is at pains to avoid; because, in their society, her children would learn low manners, habits of cunning, of trick, and of falsehood. Yet you bring them into such company in the comedies of the virtuous Moliere, where, if the valets are more clever and witty than those of ordinary life, they are only the more expert and agreeable rogues. We do not bring them into such society, you say; we only exhibit it to their view. But you shew them people of equal rank with themselves mixed with that society, profiting by those rogueries, applauding the inven-

tion which gives them birth. If the drama is to have any effect at all, its operation, in this case, must be unfavourable to truth and to virtue.

In tragedy, this effect does not require exhibition to give it force; on the contrary, it is perhaps in the reading that it fastens most strongly on young and susceptible minds. The softer feelings, to which it addresses itself, are more accessible in solitude and silence than in society. It is otherwise with comedy, ridicule operating more powerfully in company, and in a crowd. There is besides no hero of a player equal to the hero of a tragedy; but the handsome figure, the showy garb, the assured countenance, the unembarrassed address, the easy negligence, of many a comedian, is fully equal to the character he is to represent. The fine gentleman of real life is a sort of comic actor. When we consider how much imitation, how much art, how much affecta-

tion, go to make up his part, we shall not wonder, if even those who have often seen such exhibitions, should sometimes mistake the player who personates for the character personated; but the young and the unexperienced naturally transfer the brilliancy of the character to his mimic representative. This gives a double force to the dialogue of the piece, and affords, in the person of a pretty fellow of a player, a very winning apology for whatever is exceptionable in the character he performs.

In the observations I formerly made on the moral effects of tragedy, I took notice of the consequences resulting from the almost uniform introduction of love, as the ruling motive of tragic action. To this objection comedy is equally liable; but there is an additional circumstance, in which it is still more objectionable, than the other department of the drama. As love is the principal action, marriage is the constant end of comedy. But the

marriage of comedy is generally of that sort which holds forth the worst example to the young; not an union the result of tried attachment, of sober preference, sanctified by virtue, and by prudence. These are the matches which comedy ridicules. Her marriages are the frolics of the moment, made on the acquaintance of a day, or of some casual encounter. In many comedies, amidst the difficulties of accomplishing the marriage, on which the intrigue of the piece turns, and in the course of which its incidents are displayed, the restraints of parents and guardians are introduced only to be despised and outwitted; age, wisdom, experience, every thing which a well-educated young person should respect and venerate, is made a jest of; pertness, impudence, falsehood, and dishonesty, triumph and laugh; the audience triumphs and laughs along with them; and it is not till within a few sentences of the conclusion, that the voice

of morality is uttered, not heard. The interest of the play is then over, the company is arranging its departure; and if any one listens, it is but to observe how dull and common-place these reflections are. Virtue is thus doubly degraded, both when she speaks, and when she is silent.

The purity of the British comedy, in modern times, has been often contrasted with the drama of our forefathers, in those days of licentiousness and immorality, when Wycherly and Congreve wrote for the rakes and libertines of a profligate court. I forbear to cite, in contradiction to this, the ribaldry, with which for some time past, our stage has been infested, in the form of comic operas and burlettas; by which the laugh and the applause of Sadler's Wells, and Bartholomew Fair, have been drawn from the audiences of Covent-Garden, and Drury-Lane. But I must observe, that, in this comparative estimate, no account has been taken of a kind of

licentiousness in which some of our latest comedies have indulged, still more dangerous than the indelicacy of the last century: those sometimes violated decency, but these attack principle; those might put modesty to the blush, or contaminate the purity of innocence; but these shake the very foundations of morality, and would harden the mind against the sense of virtue.

It is somewhat remarkable, that the French stage, formerly so proud of its *bienseance*, should have, nearly at the same period with that of England, assumed the like pernicious licentiousness. Figaro, though a less witty, is as immoral a play as the School for Scandal.

Dramas of this pernicious sort, arose upon the fashionable ridicule against what was called Sentimental Comedy, which it had become customary to decry, as subverting the very intention of that department of the stage, and usurping a name,

from which the gravity of its precepts, and the seriousness of its incidents, should have excluded it. This judgment, however, seems to be founded, neither on the critical definition of comedy, nor on the practice of its writers, in those periods when it had obtained its highest reputation. Menander and Terence wrote comedies of sentiment; nor does it seem easy to represent even follies naturally, without sometimes bringing before us the serious evils which they may produce, and the reflections which arise on their consequences.—Morality may no doubt be trité, and sentiment dull, in the hands of authors of little genius; but profligacy and libertinism will as often be silly as wicked, though, in the impudence with which they unfold themselves, there is frequently an air of smartness which passes for wit, and of assurance which looks like vivacity. The counterfeits, however, are not always detected at that time of life,

which is less afraid of being thought dissipated than dull; and by that rank, which holds regularity and sobriety among the plebeian virtues. The people, indeed, are always true to virtue, and open to the impressions of virtuous sentiment: with the people, the comedies, in which these are developed, still remain favourites; and corruption must have stretched its empire far indeed, when the applauses shall cease with which they are received.

No. 51. Saturday, *January* 21, 1786.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Sir,

I was much pleased with one of your late papers, published on the last day of last year, in which you suggested several uses that might be made of a recollection of past events, and of a proper consideration of the power of time.

The neglect of the improvement of time, is an evil of which every moralist has complained, on which therefore it were presumption in me to attempt to enlarge. But without repeating what has been so often and so well said on its waste, or its abuse, permit me to take notice of that forgetfulness of its progress, which affects

the conduct and deportment of so many in the different relations of life. In matters of serious concern, we cannot violate the rights of time without rendering ourselves unhappy; in objects of smaller importance, we cannot withdraw from its jurisdiction without making ourselves ridiculous. Its progress, however, is unfortunately very apt to be unnoticed by ourselves, to whom its daily motion is gradual and imperceptible; but by others it will hardly fail to be marked, and they will expect a behaviour suitable to the character it should stamp upon us.

How often do the old forget the period at which they are arrived, and keep up a behaviour suitable, or perhaps only excusable in that which they have long ago passed? We see every day sexagenary beaux, and grey-haired rakes, who mix with the gay and the dissipated of the present time, and pride themselves on the want of that thought and seriousness which

years alone, if not wisdom, should have taught them. This is the pitiful ambition of the weak and the profligate, who, unable to attain the respect due to virtue, or the credit of usefulness, wish to shew the vigour of their minds, and the soundness of their constitutions, at a late period of life, by supporting a character of folly or licentiousness. But they should be told, that they generally fail in their object, contemptible as it is; the world only allows them credit for an attempt at follies, for an affectation of vice. "What a fine wicked old dog your father is!" said a young fellow, in my hearing, at the door of a tavern, a few nights ago. "Why, yes," replied his companion, with a tone of *sang froid*, "he would if he could."

In the other sex, I confess I feel myself more inclined to make allowance for those rebels against time, who wish to extend the period of youth beyond its na-

tural duration. The empire of beauty is a distinction so flattering, and its resignation makes so mortifying a change in the state of its possessor, that I am not much surprised if she who has once enjoyed it, tries every art to prolong her reign. This indulgence, however, is only due to those who have no other part to perform, no other character to support. She who is a wife or a mother, has other objects to which her attention may be turned, from which her respectability may be drawn. I cannot therefore easily pardon those whom we see at public places, the rivals of their daughters, with the airy gait, the flaunting dress, and the playful giggle of fifteen. As to those elderly ladies, who continue to haunt the scenes of their early amusements, who sometimes exhibit themselves in al the gay colours of youth and fashion, like those unnatural fruit-trees that blossom in December, I am disposed rather to pity than to blame

them. In thus attending the triumphs of beauty, they may be of the same use with the monitor, who followed the Roman heroes in their triumphal processions, to put them in mind, amidst the shouts of the people, and the parade of conquest, that, for all their glory, they were still but men.

But the progress of time is as often anticipated as it is forgotten, and youth usurps the privileges of age, as frequently as age would retain the privileges of youth. At no period, perhaps, was this prematurity of behaviour more conspicuous than at present. We have boys discoursing politics, arguing metaphysics, and supporting infidelity, at an age little beyond that when they used to be playing at taw and leap frog. Nor are these the most hurtful of their pretensions. In vice, as in self-importance, they contrive to get beyond "the ignorant present time;" and, at the years of boyishness,

to be perfect men in licentiousness and debauchery. It is much the same with the young people of the female world. Girls, who formerly used to be found in the nursery, are now brought forward to all the prerogatives of womanhood. To figure at public places, to be gallanted at public walks, to laugh and talk loud at both, to have all the airs, and all the ease of a fine lady, are now the acquirements of misses who, in my younger days, Mr Lounger, were working their samplers, learning white seam, or were allowed to spoil a mince-pie, by way of an exercise in pastry: and it is no uncommon thing, now-a-days, to see, in the corner of a ball-room at midnight, leaning on the arm of her partner, and now and then answering some of his speeches with a rap of her fan, the same ungrown girl, who, not a great many years ago, would have curtseyed to the company, kissed papa and mamma, and gone to bed supperless be-

tween eight and nine in the evening. In both sexes, the *ingenuus pudor*, the becoming modesty and reserve, which were formerly the most pleasing characteristics of youth, seem now to be exploded: they have forgot to blush; and the present rule of manners, is such, that their parents do not blush for them. I confess, Sir, it is not without some indignation, that I frequently see fathers and mothers, smiling with complacency and pride on their children, for saying and doing things for which, in my time, they would have been turned out of the room. But I am an old man, apt, perhaps, to complain and be peevish. That I may not incur the other charge of the poet, the garrulity of age, I beg leave to conclude, by assuring you, that I am, Sir, your admirer and humble servant, SENEX.

After the severity of Senex's reprehension of the present times, on which he cer-

tainly has not looked with a favourable eye, it may be a relief to my readers, to read a letter of a lighter sort, received from another correspondent, from whom the same paper to which Senex refers has drawn the following proposal.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

SIR,

I HAD the honour of reading your paper for the New-Year, setting forth the natural reflections to which that returning period should give rise, and the moral uses of the recollection of past events. I am one, Sir, not much given to serious reflections, yet I acknowledge the use of remembrance, provided it does not go back an unreasonable time, and takes in only a certain set of events. I have long been an attendant and admirer of the fa-

shionable world; and do not indeed think it worth my while to carry my philosophy down to the lower orders of the people. Of the fashionable world, I presume I need not inform you, Sir, that the new year does not begin at the 1st of January; it used to be computed from the 18th; but this year, from some particular incidents, it is not, I believe, intended that it should begin so early. About the beginning of February, people will think of dating the commencement of the new year, and may, perhaps, indulge the propensity you suppose, in recollecting the events of the old. Of this, persons of fashion have the greater need, that their years suffer an interruption unknown to the natural; they exist merely, in a state of oblivion, in the country, for five or six months of summer and autumn, and may therefore be very well supposed to forget the transactions of the last year, which ended so long a while before the present

began. I would propose, Sir, to help their memories by a sort of moral memorandum-book, which, I doubt not, as you are a philosopher and moralist, will meet with your approbation. My memorandum-book, however, will consist chiefly of things which they must remember to forget. I subjoin a few of the proposed memoranda, by which you may judge of the utility of the whole.

In the first place, then, people of fashion will please to

—— forget nature as much as possible.

Such of them as have not had the advantage of keeping in practice the rules of a polite education, during the summer months, at some of the watering-places, will have been apt to let the rusticity of nature creep upon them. They may have learned several bad habits, which they must now by all means forget; such as, laughing at a merry, or crying at a

moving tale; being themselves happy with happiness, or sad with sorrow; being pleased with the attentions of others, or pleasing others by their attentions; in short, a great many sincerities which might do well enough in the country, but which, like other natural productions, the winter always kills, among people of fashion, in a town.

They will, secondly, remember to

—— forget their country-acquaintance.

They may have received or bestowed many rural civilities, which it would be very improper to recollect here, and may meet with bows and curtesies from very odd or very good sort of people, (for the terms are nearly synonymous,) which they are to return only with a broad stare of surprise at the freedom used with them. If they have been so rusticated as not to find courage for that, the thing may be accomplished by forgetting their eye-sight;

for which purpose they may resume their opera-glasses, which it is probable have lain quietly in their drawers since their departure from town.

It is a memorandum similar to the above, to put them in mind that married persons of both sexes are to

—— forget their husbands, wives, and children.

There is a manifest indecorum, or rather perhaps indecency, in the remembrance of such connections, of which no truly polite person will ever be guilty.

A direction somewhat akin to this, is that of

—— forgetting their fortunes;

of which the remembrance, when it interferes with the demands of pleasure, or of gaiety, is one of the most vulgar and mechanical things in the world. It will, at any rate, be time enough to indulge it at the end of the season, when they may

possibly be put in mind of it by other people. As they are, indeed, uniformly to shun all plebeian qualities, it is indispensable for them to

—— forget their modesty.

A proper confidence in ourselves is one of the truest marks of having lived among persons of condition. Neither knowledge, genius, valour, nor virtue, can bestow it; it is so purely the gift of fashion and fashionable society, that the want of it is an absolute disqualification for the privileges which attend them.

Under this head of mental endowments, I may suggest the propriety of

—— forgetting their religion.

It is possible, that in the country they may have given way to some vulgar prejudices, which it were highly improper to retain in town. It may not be amiss, however, to inform them, in this place,

what they might otherwise have scrupled to believe, that the church has of late become a place of fashionable resort in Edinburgh; and, what is still more odd, that fine people actually attend to the sermon. The eloquence of some of our preachers, like the dagger of Macbeth, has "murdered sleep" there; for which reason, it will not be so convenient as formerly, to go thither after a late supper, or a long party at whist, the night before.

In point of external qualities, the ladies are to

—— forget their complexions.

In the morning they are to be much paler, and in the evening much more blooming than they were in the country. If other people remember them from the one period to the other, there is no help for it; —as things go now, it does not much signify. Very fine ladies may sometimes forget to dress at all; it will show ease, and

a certain contempt for their company, to which people of high fashion are entitled.

On the subject of dress, I may add, by way of caution, that the ladies would do well

—— not to forget themselves.

I don't mean this in the common acceptation of the phrase, which it may be sometimes very proper and convenient to do. What I mean, is simply to put them in mind, that a lady in town, in the modern dress, takes up so much more room than she does in the country, that very serious consequences might ensue from her not attending to the space which she necessarily occupies. An acquaintance of mine, who is somewhat of an antiquarian, observed to me, what an opinion our great-grand-children might be led to form of the size of the ladies' heads towards the close of the 18th century, if any of the fashionable hats should happen to be preserved

in the cabinets of the curious. But, in reply, I desired him to take notice, that they would be set right as to the dimensions of the race, by examining the walking-sticks of the men, which are just as much below the medium standard, as the hats of the other sex are beyond it. By the hats, they might conjecture us to be a breed of Patagonians; by the sticks, they would conclude us to be a generation of Laplanders.

But I find I am wandering from my subject. I must put myself in mind, that it is time to conclude this hasty scrawl, by having the honour to subscribe myself, with all possible consideration and respect,

SIR,

Your most obedient and
most devoted humble Servant,
MEMORY MODISH.

No. 53. Saturday, *February* 4, 1786.

Minima contentos nocte Britannos. Juv.

In a late paper, I laid before my readers a letter from a correspondent, subscribing himself Senex, on the little attention which is now-a-days paid to the rights and jurisdiction of time. Since the publication of that paper, I received the following application from a personage who claims my attention and regard, by desiring me to observe, that she is still older than Senex, and has had more opportunities of witnessing that corruption of modern manners, of which he so warmly complains.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

The humble Petition of NIGHT,

SHEWETH,

THAT, from the remotest antiquity, your petitioner was acknowledged, and understood to have right to the undisturbed possession of silence and quiet, and, in company with her relation Darkness, was invested with the power of staying the works and labours of men, and of consigning them to the dominion of your petitioner's ancient and approved ally Sleep. Sleep in his turn yielded them to the renewed power of Day, to whom was committed the charge of their active employments. That this regular distribution of time was agreeable to the laws of nature, and highly conducive to the interests of society, and the welfare of individuals.

That, this notwithstanding, your petitioner has to complain, that for a considerable time past, in civilized and polite nations, there have been many violent and unjust inroads made into that province, which, in the order of nature, has been assigned her. That in the metropolis of the British empire, in particular, the distinguishing privileges above set forth, to which the petitioner conceives herself well intitled, have been violently infringed, insomuch that the hours over which she and her associates above-named ought to have had command and controul, have been almost entirely appropriated to action, bustle, and disquiet, to the great disturbance of your said petitioner, and her friends beforementioned.

That certain persons, assuming to themselves the style and title of Men of Pleasure, had long since a licence of acting in their several occupations in despite of your petitioner's exclusive privileges herein be-

fore recited; and being confederated with the powers of wine, play, and other disorderly associates, had made forcible entries into the territories of your petitioner, and subjected her faithful vassals to much vexation and annoyance. But as those men of pleasure were in some sort acknowledged to be independent of reason and nature, from whom your petitioner holds in fief, she was contented to pass over their enormities for the present; being assured, from very great and respectable authority, that most of those persons would, at a future period, be particularly consigned to her power and dominion.

But of late, your petitioner has observed, with the greatest alarm, that persons of business, and even those from whose high sanction such irregular proceedings will be most apt to come into example and precedent, have made very unwarrantable encroachments on her most acknowledged and determinate boundaries.

Such persons, in order to conceal the injuries done by them to your petitioner, have added the crime of falsehood and forgery to their other offences; and have marked their proceedings, as if carried on under the sanction of day, with the Latin words, *Die Martis*, *Die Jovis*, and so forth; though it is an undoubted fact, and can be proved by the most indisputable authority, that these were transacted within the jurisdiction and precincts of your petitioner. Some of the persons, indeed, chiefly and principally concerned in such transactions, were frequently observed to have in some sort allowed the authority of your petitioner, by submitting to the controul and dominion of Sleep, her well-known and faithful associate above-mentioned.

That your petitioner, amidst all those injuries which she suffered, had yet the consolation of thinking, that they were chiefly confined to the city of London

and liberties of Westminster; but that in the country, and the metropolis of this ancient kingdom of Scotland, her proper and just rights were more acknowledged and attended to; and that there, associations both of business and amusement generally preserved a certain degree of respect for her dominion, and did not wantonly and violently encroach upon her boundaries. But within these few years she has seen, with equal surprise and regret, a remarkable alteration in this matter; and that in particular the last mentioned persons, the partisans and followers of amusement in this city, never begin their course of action till that period arrives, which, by the original charter of your petitioner, was granted to her and her fellow proprietors herein before particularly enumerated.

That your petitioner is not hardy enough to imagine, that she can prevail on those persons to relinquish the encroachments

herein complained of. She is willing, therefore, for the sake of peace, to which she has always had a strong propensity, to give up such a portion of her territory and domain, as to accommodate them in their avocations and employments, provided she shall be ascertained in certain limits, to be henceforward observed without infringement; and she submits to you, on behalf of herself and her sister Day, the under-written propositions on the subject. They contain a new table of time, to be observed by the polite and fashionable classes only; reserving to the good folks in the country, and the lower orders of mankind, their ancient and accustomed reckoning.

It is proposed, then,

1st, That the year in Edinburgh shall commence from the 18th day of January, and shall end and determine the 18th of April. The lesser divisions of time, called months and weeks, to be nowise af-

fected or affectable by such abridged computation of the year or season; except that, among the higher ranks and orders of the people, for whom this new computation is intended, the space commonly known by the title of Honey Moon, shall be shortened in proportion to the comparative durations of this newly-computed year, and of that formerly established and observed.

2d, That the day shall begin at the hour of two in what is now called the afternoon, and end at six, in what is vulgarly called the morning; the space between the latter hour and the former to appertain and belong to your petitioner.

3d, Day agrees to cede to your petitioner for the hours above-mentioned, the Sun, and its various appendages; your petitioner, on the other part, guarantees to her sister Day for the hours allotted to her, the Moon, with all its properties and appurtenances whatsoever.

4th, Day agrees, that notwithstanding the cession contained in the immediately preceding article, your petitioner may continue her amnesty to all those little irregularities which were formerly covered by her shade, and which she may in this period now settled happen to witness; because the fashionable circle, to which only this new kalendar applies, is above being ashamed of such practices, and can let the Sun look on them without blushing.

5th, During the period of this newly-settled year, which is too short to allow any interruption in its course, your petitioner's ally Rest, gives up her ancient claim to every seventh day: on which seventh day, therefore, every fashionable employment, business, or diversion, may be carried on as usual; any such ancient claim, law, or commandment, in any wise notwithstanding: Proviso, That such con-

cession shall not bar people from sleeping in church on that day.

Your petitioner humbly requests, That you will be pleased to take the premises into your consideration; and, on behalf of her and her sister Day, accede to the proposals above set forth, as well as publish them for the consent and concurrence of the polite world in this part of the kingdom.

NIGHT.

No. 54. Saturday, *February* 11, 1786.

Ils ne tardent pas a obeir a cette maladie generale qui precipite toute la jeunesse de province vers l'abîme de corruption. Tableau de Paris.

To the historian and the antiquary it is matter of curious investigation, to trace the progress of expence and luxury through the different stages of increasing wealth and advancing refinement in a country, and to observe the war which for some time is carried on between the restraining powers of grave and virtuous legislators, and the dissipated inclinations of a rich and luxurious people. In this contest, indeed, the inequality of the parties is easily discernible, and the effects of that

inequality readily foreseen. The first sumptuary law that is passed is the signal of that growing opulence which is soon to overturn it; and the weak barriers of successive restraints and regulations, are in vain opposed to a force, which the progress of time and of manners daily renders more irresistible. Luxury, like a river, is harmless amidst the barren mountains where it first begins to rise; but in the fruitful valleys of its after-course, its size is enlarged, and its power increased, in proportion to the mischief it may cause; and the mounds which were opposed to ts encroachments, only serve to mark the desolation it has made.

Great cities are the natural stages for luxury and dissipation of every sort. Against great cities, therefore, the lawgiver sometimes, as well as the moralist, has exerted his authority, and endeavoured to hinder people from crowding together, to waste their means, and to corrupt their

principles, in that circle of extravagance, of vanity, and of vice, to which a town gives scope and encouragement. In Scotland, at a very early period, attempts were made to controul this abuse, as it was thought, by law. More than three centuries ago, it was "statute and ordained, That the Lords should dwell in their castles and manours, and expend the fruit of their lands in the country where their lands lay."—And King James I. of England, when transplanted into the richer soil of our sister kingdom, had not forgotten the wholesome restrictions of his ancestors. In his speech in the Star-chamber, *anno* 1616, he inveighs against the overgrown size of London, which he declares was become a nuisance to the whole kingdom. After enumerating many pernicious consequences, of which this was the cause, and ascribing the evil in terms rather ungallant, as well as coarse,

to the influence of the ladies,* he goes so far as to say, that he would have the new buildings pulled down, and the builders committed to prison.

In these days of liberty and enlarged ideas, the restraints of law, or the recommendations of royalty, are not employed to check abuses of that sort, which do not violate the great bonds of society, or openly disturb the good order and government of the state. The law is contented to punish public crimes; private vices and private follies it leaves to the cog-

* "One of the greatest causes of all gentlemen's desire, that have no calling or errand to dwell in London, is apparently the pride of the women; for if they be wives, then their husbands, and if they be maids, then their fathers, must bring them up to London, because the new fashion is to be had no where but in London; and here, if they be unmarried, they marr their marriages; and if they be married, they lose their reputations, and rob their husbands' purses.

Works of K. James in folio, p. 567, 568.

nizance and the censure of the preacher and the moralist, or to the lighter correction of the satirist or the comedian. These reformers are of that milder class, who are satisfied if they can circumscribe, though they do not extirpate the mischief. Indeed it is to be doubted if they desire to extirpate it; or whether they do not, like good sportsmen with foxes, only wish to run down part of the game, and leave a breed for their own amusement behind.

Of these hunters of folly and of dissipation, great cities have not failed to attract the notice, and awaken the censure. Rome, Paris, and London, have found Juvenals, Boileaus, and Johnsons, to attack them. But on this subject in general, I know nobody who has hit on a better idea for exposing them than the author of "Tristram Shandy," who, in some passage of that eccentric and witty performance, makes one of his personages propose, that judges should be appointed at the avenues

of every metropolis, where each person, when he arrives from the country, should be obliged to give an account of the business which brings him to town. Unfortunately, he has only started, without pursuing the thought; and the imagination is left to suppose the general effect of the inquiry, without being led to any particular examination of individuals.

I was mentioning this the other day to a brother Lounger of mine, whom I have for some time remarked as the humourist of his circle, in the coffee-house where we occasionally meet. He catched the idea immediately; and having smiled some moments to himself, as if inwardly enjoying it, "What a precious catalogue of fools," said he, "might one have had even here, if such an examination had taken place of those who resort to Edinburgh for the winter! But for this season I can in some degree supply the omission: you must know I am sworn brother, as Prince Hal

says, to some of the most intelligent waiters at one or two of the hotels here in the neighbourhood; and these rascals, who are as smoky as the devil, entertain me now and then with an account of arrivals, as they call it, not only in their own houses, but in those around them; for they have all a hawk's eye for a post-chaise or a travelling coach, and mark those who go past, as well as those who stop at their doors. I have actually taken down some memoranda of their intelligence; but I have not the pocket-book here at present: put me in mind, and I will shew it you to-morrow."—I did not fail to require the fulfilment of the promise; and next day my acquaintance, being in a hurry, gave me the book home with me, from which I made some extracts, which I shall take the liberty of laying before my readers, along with the notes which the gentleman seemed to have set down as a sort of common-place on

the facts he had collected. They were entered under several leaves, on the first of which was this motto:

———They run,
Some to undo, and some to be undone.

December 20. A coach with eight insides, besides two boys and their governor in the Dilly, came to town for the education of their children;—a large family; could not afford to keep them in the country; therefore taken a house in town at sixteen guineas a month, next door to Lady Rumpus.—The two eldest misses went straight to the milliner's over the way.—Mamma called for the assembly subscription-book.—Lady Rumpus had been so obliging as to set down her name; she added Miss Eliza's and Miss Sophia's:—"They must not," she said, "be foundered in their education."—The two young ladies returned from Mrs Robertson's with new hats on their heads,

new bosoms, and new behinds in a band-box.—(*Note*. Verification of the cant vulgarism about a band-box.)—Miss Sophia tore her hat in getting in at the parlour door.

January 2. Another family with three tall young ladies—came to town for husbands,—'squired by a gentleman in a hunting uniform on a handsome bay gelding. The housekeeper, who came some time after, mounted on a pad behind one of the footmen, said the gentleman on the bay gelding was an admirer of the eldest of the three young ladies; that they hoped it would have been a match before now, but people were so shy in the country; they would be better acquainted in town. The young gentleman's valet bespoke a room for his master next door to his sweetheart's.

In the afternoon, two ladies in mourning, in an old-fashioned chariot, drove by a fat coachman in jack-boots, and at-

tended by a plough-boy on a rat-tailed coach-horse. Humphrey called for a tankard of porter, and told all about the ladies, in the kitchen. The young one, an heiress, who has lately buried her brother, and taken possession of his estate, and is come to town to learn how to make a figure. The elder, a widow, a relation, who has been with her young kinswoman ever since her brother's death; a wise lady, who is to teach her young friend fashion and sentiment. Their carriage was stopped on the street by a drove of cattle, and one of them gored the rat-tailed horse behind. The widow scolded, and asked if they knew whose chariot it was they incommoded.

(Note. A parallel between the widow and the grazier; but he came to town to sell his own cattle.)

January 3. Two young gentlemen and a pointer in a chaise and four, splashed to the eyes. The youngest called by his com-

panion Sir John. Sir John pulled out his watch at the door—" Run it in an hour and seventeen minutes, damme." Gave the post-boys a crown. His companion ordered their beds, and every thing in the house for supper. Sent the boot-ketch to Hart's for a pair of Spanish boots; to Bruce's for patent spurs, a bludgeon stick, a pair of buckles, and a tobacco-box. Called for a bottle of gin, a caraff of water, and a pack of cards, to take a hand at brag till supper-time.

(Note. The young fellow in scarlet is at present a natural; his companion will turn him into a maker.)

Same day. An elderly grave-looking gentleman, with a grey-haired servant in a plush-coat, and velvet cap, riding after him, with a large portmanteau and a wax-cloth bag. An excise-officer, who was passing, talked of examining his baggage. John opened the portmanteau and bag, and shewed him what was within. No-

thing but parchments and papers relating to a law-suit, about two roods of ground, which had lasted for six winter sessions, between him and his neighbour Dr Testy. A little squat man rode by him on a dun poney: John said this was his master's country-lawyer, who had been of the greatest use to him in his process, and who indeed scarce did any thing else but attend to this gentleman's affairs.

January 5. A jolly, red-faced, middle-aged gentleman, with his servant in the chaise along with him, and a little medicine chest, as he called it, with square bottles, and labels upon them written in Dutch. Came to town to consult about his gout; but his man told the chamber-maid, he always left the country when a club broke up in a little town near him, of which he was the oldest member. John said he wished the winter were fairly over, and they were got safe out of Edinburgh again; because it was hard living in this

town of ours. "In the country," said John, "we get drunk but once a-day, and are generally in bed by eleven."

January 6. In a return-chaise from the west, Richard III. and Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. Set down the queen at the tap-room. Ophelia and her three children to come by the caravan.

Mem. to the waiter, who is an old acquaintance of Richard's, to send to the waggon for the parcels: my legs and back to my own lodgings: Falstaff's belly, and Bardolph's nose, to Hallion's.

January 8. Passed a coach with ladies; two maid-servants, and an old butler, in a chaise behind, the gentleman and his son on horseback. Mr —— from —— shire, gone to his own house, No. 7. Send word to the poor widow, who lost her husband last week.——

Here the journal stopped short, for that gentleman's good actions are not easily traced; but I could supply the blank, for

No. 7. is the house of my excellent friend Benevolus. From the country, where he has encouraged industry, and diffused happiness all around him, he comes at this season, like the sun, to cheer and gladden the inhabitants of another hemisphere. He comes to town to find a new scene for his own virtues, and to shew his children that world which is to profit by theirs. The society which he enjoys, and into which he introduces his family, is chiefly of that sort which is formed to instruct and to improve them. If sometimes of a gayer or more thoughtless kind, it is, however, always untainted with vice, and undebased by folly; for there are no social moments, however much unbent or unrestrained, on which a wise and good man does not stamp somewhat of the purity and dignity of his own nature. At Benevolus's table, I have seen the same guests behave with the most perfect propriety and good manners, who but a few doors

from him held a conversation and deportment equally repugnant to both. Nor does his benignity hold out less encouragement to the worthy, than his good sense and virtue impose reverence on the unthinking. At his table, unassuming merit sits always at her ease, and conscious obligation feels perfect independence. Nobody ever cites his power or his rank, but to illustrate the nobleness of his mind; nor speaks of his wealth, but as the instrument of his benevolence.

No. 56. Saturday, *February* 25, 1786.

Quæ virtus et quanta, boni, sit vivere parvo,
Discite, non inter lances mensasque nitentes.

Hor.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Sir,

I troubled you some time ago with a letter from the country; now that I am come to town, I use the freedom to write to you again. I find the same difficulty in being happy, with every thing to make me so, here as there. When I tell this to my country friends, they won't believe me. Lord! to see how the Miss Homespuns looked when they came to take leave of me the morning we set out for Edin-

burgh!—I had just put on my new riding-habit, which my brother fetched me from London; and my hat, with two green and three white feathers; and Miss Jessy Homespun admired it so much! and when I let her put it on, she looked in the glass, and said with a sigh, how charming it was! I had a sad headach with it all the morning, but I kept that to myself. "And do, my dear," said she, "write sometimes to us, poor moping creatures, in the country. But you won't have leisure to think of us; you will be so happy, and so much amused." At that moment my brother's post-coach rattled up to the door, and the poor Homespuns cried so when we parted! To be sure, they thought that a town life, with my brother's fortune to procure all its amusements, must be quite delightful. Now, Sir, to let you know how I have found it.

I was content to be lugged about by my sister for the first week or two, as I knew that in a large town I should be like a fish out of water, as the saying is. But my sister-in-law was always putting me in mind of my ignorance: and "you country girls—and we, who have been in London—and we, who have been abroad." However, between ourselves, I don't find that she knows quite so much as she would make me believe; for it seems they can't learn many things in the Indies; and when she went out, she knew as little as myself; and as for London, she was only a fortnight there on her way home.

So we have got masters that come in to give us lessons in French, and music, and dancing. The two first I can submit to very well. I could always get my tongue readily enough about any thing; and I could play pretty well on the virginals at home, though my master says

my fingering is not what it should be. But the dancing is a terrible business. My sister-in-law and I are put into the stocks every morning to teach us the right position of our feet; and all the steps I was praised for in the country are now good for nothing, as the cotillon step is the only thing fit for people of fashion; and so we are twisted and twirled till my joints ache again; and after all, we make, I believe, a very bad figure at it. Indeed I have not yet ventured to try my hand, my feet I mean, before any body. But my sister-in-law, who is always praised for every thing she does, would needs try her cotillon steps at the assembly; and her partner Captain Coupée, a constant visitor at my brother's, told her what an admirable dancer she was: but in truth she was out of time every instant, and I heard the people tittering at her country fling, as they called it. And so in the same manner (which I do not think is at

all fair, Mr Lounger) the Captain one day at our house swore she sung like an angel, (drinking her health in a bumper of my brother's champaigne;) and yet as I walked behind him next morning in Prince's-street, I overheard him saying to one of his companions, that Mushroom's dinners were damn'd good things, if it were not for the bore of the singing; and that the little Nabobina squalled like a pea-hen.

But no doubt it is good manners to commend people to their faces, whatever one may say behind their backs. And I perceive they have got fashionable words for praising things, which it is one of my sister's lessons and mine to have at our tongues ends, whether we think so or not. Such a thing, she tells me (as she has been taught by her great companion Miss Gusto,) must be charming, another ravishing, (indeed, Mr Lounger, that is the word,) and a third divine. As for me, I have

yet got no farther than charming; I can only say ravishing in a whisper; and as for divine, I think there is something heathenish in it: though indeed I have been told, since I came here, that the commandments were only meant for the country.

Here, as before, *comme il faut* (I can spell the words now that I am turned a French scholar) is still held out as a law to us. We have besides got another phrase, which is perpetually dinned into my ears by my sister-in-law, and that is the *ton*. Such a person is a very good kind of a person, but such another is more the *ton*: such a lady is handsomer, more witty, more polite, and more good-humoured than another; but that other is much more the *ton*. I have often asked my sister, and even my French master, to explain the meaning of this word *ton*; but they told me there was no translation for it. I think, however, I have found it out to be a very convenient thing for some

people. It is like what my grandfather, who was a great admirer of John Knox, used to tell us of Popish indulgences: folks who are the *ton* may do any thing they like, without being in the wrong; and every thing that is the *ton* is right, let it be what it will.

Alas! Sir, if the *ton* would let poor people alone, who don't wish for distinction, there would be the less to complain of: but the misfortune is, that one must be in the *ton* whether one's mind gives them to it or not; at least I am told so. We have a French *friseur*, whom our *Maitre d'hotel* Sabot recommended, who makes great use of this phrase. He screw-up my hair, till I thought I should have fainted with the pain, and I did not sleep a wink all the night after, because he said that a hundred little curls were now become the *ton*. He recommended a shoemaker, who, he said, made for all the people of the *ton*, who pinched my toes till

I could hardly walk across the room; because little feet were the *ton*. My stay-maker, another of the same set, brought me home a pair of stays that were but a few inches round at the waist: and my maid and Sabot broke three laces before they could get them to meet; because small waists were the *ton*. I sat at two dinners without being able to eat a morsel; because (I am ashamed to tell it, Sir,) my stays would not hold a bit. However, I would submit to the *ton* no longer in that article; and when I got home in the evening, I took out my scissars in a passion, and cut a great slash in the sides. I was resolved I would not be squeezed to death for all the *tons* in the world.

And moreover, the *ton* is not satisfied with tearing the hair out of our heads, with pinching our feet, and squeezing the pit of our stomach; but we must have manners which, under favour, Sir, I think very odd, and which my grandmother (I

was bred up at my grandmother's) would have whipped me for, that she would, if I had ventured to shew them when I was with her. I am told, that none but a Ninny would look down in the sheepish way I do; but that when I meet a gentleman in our walks, I must look as full at him as I can, to shew my eyes; and laugh to shew my teeth, (all our family have white teeth;) flourish my rattan, to shew my shapes. And though in a room, I am to speak as low and mumbling as I can, to look as if I did not care whether I was heard or not; yet in a public place, I am to talk as loud and as fast as possible, and call the men by their plain surnames, and tell all about our last night's parties, and a great many other things, Mr Lounger, which I can't do for the heart of me; but my sister-in-law comes on amazingly, as Miss Gusto says. But then she has been in India, and she was not brought up with my grandmother. I protest, though I would be

ashamed to let Miss Gusto know it, that often, when I am wishing to practise some of her lessons, I think I see my grand-mother with her bunch of keys at her apron-string, her amber-headed stick in one hand, and the Ladies Calling in the other, looking at me from under her spectacles, with such a frown, Mr Lounger!—it frightens the *ton* quite out of my head.

After all, I am apt to believe, that the very great trouble, and the many inconveniences to which we put ourselves to attain this distinction of the *ton*, are in a great measure labour in vain; that our music, our dancing, and our good breeding, will perhaps be out of fashion before we have come to any degree of perfection in all or any of these accomplishments; for some of the fine ladies and fine gentlemen who visit us, say, that the *ton* here is no *ton* at all, for that the true and genuine *ton* (like the true and genuine milk of roses) is only to be found in London.

Nay, some of the finest of those fine ladies and gentlemen go a step farther, and inform us, that the *ton* of London itself is mere twaddle, and that the only right *ton* is to be found in Paris. I hope in goodness, however, that my sister, if she is determined, as she sometimes hints, to chase the *ton* that length, will drop me by the way, or rather allow me to return again to the country. Old sparrows (the proverb says, Mr Lounger) are ill to tame.—Not that I am old neither; but I believe I am not quite young enough to learn to be happy in the sort of life we lead here: and though I try all I can to think it a happy one, and am sure to say so in every place to which we go, yet I can't help often secretly wishing I were back again at my father's, where I should not be obliged to be happy whether I would or not.

Your afflicted (if I may venture to say so) humble servant,

MARJORY MUSHROOM.

P. S. La! what do you think, Mr Lounger? they tell me we are to go to a masked ball. My sister-in-law is quite in raptures about it. "Mr Dunn," she says, "is to open his whole hotel, bed-rooms and all, for the occasion; and she is to be a shepherdess, and captain Coupée a shepherd; and they are to dance an *allemande* together." And she wants me to be a nun, or, as captain Coupée advises, a vestal virgin; but I told them, I had no mind to be a nun, nor a vestal virgin neither, that I had not. But my sister says, it is only in sport; and captain Coupée declares it will be the farthest in the world from making people nuns or vestals.—Well, I am half afraid, Mr Lounger; and yet I think I shall go. Were my grandmother to lift up her head now! I will think no more of her till the masked ball is over.

No. 58. Saturday, *March* 11, 1786.

Inter sylvas Academi querrere verum. Hor.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Sir,

Among the various complaints, which I observe from your papers, your correspondents occasionally make to you, you may not, perhaps, have met with any more whimsical, or which at first sight will appear more unjust, than mine. I have, thank God, very few evils, either real or imaginary, in my lot; I am neither too rich nor too poor to be contented; I am neither so dull as not to be pleased with a good thing, nor so refined as to be proud of finding faults in it; I am neither nervous in my body, nor tremblingly alive

in my mind: one thing only plagues and vexes me, and plagues and vexes the whole family in which I live. The evil of which I complain, Mr Lounger, is, I am told, one of the "first of virtues:"—the evil I complain of is Truth.

You must know I have a sister married to a very good and a very learned gentleman, in whose family, by his and his wife's pressing invitation, I have lived ever since his marriage; and for several years no set of people could be happier. But of late my brother-in-law has become a philosopher, and is perpetually hunting after truth; and a pretty chace she leads him! His poring over books in quest of her would only weaken his own eyes, and break his own rest; but his running after her wherever she is to be found, at all times, and in all companies, breaks the rest of every body around him. With my sister and me he has but little play for his humour. His wife indeed is of so gentle

and complying a temper, that she never disputes his propositions, as he calls them. I am not quite so yielding; and we have now and then little bouts at an argument: but with our guests and visitors he is constantly at it; and I believe, in my conscience, he often chuses companies as your chess-players do, because they are nearly matches at their favourite game; having observed that of late, since he took to this kind of sport, he generally invites those people oftenest who argue stoutest with him when they come. For these same truth-hunters, Mr Lounger, seem, like true sportsmen, to find little pleasure in the chace when it is soon run down, or when there are no hazards in the way. They like to leap hedges and ditches; to scramble amidst briars and thorns; to splash through mire and bog; to be a terrible long while before they come to the end of their labour; and at last, as I am told it often happens in the field, they

sometimes find themselves just where they set out.

But, as the frogs in the fable say, "This is sport to them, but death to us."—You cannot imagine what mischiefs and inconveniences it produces in our family. Before this disease of disputation took hold of him, Mr Category was attentive to his affairs, kind to his friends, polite to his acquaintance, and one of the best husbands and fathers in the world; but now he neglects his business, quarrels with his relations, is rude to every body about him, and minds his wife and children no more than if they were so many broomsticks. Indeed I begin to be of opinion, that my sister has lost a good deal of his affection, from that same meekness of spirit which I mentioned her to be possessed of; and I think he likes me much better since I grew tired of yielding every point, as I used to do for peace sake, and now and then wrangle a little with him.

It is not difficult to find an opportunity. Were it about important concerns alone, it would happen only now and then, and might be easily avoided, or endured. But it is all one what the matter in dispute is, so it but affords a dispute. Every thing is fair game (to come back to the simile of the chace):—If we can't start a hare, a mole or a mouse will serve our turn. It was but yesterday at dinner we had half a dozen battles between him and an odd sort of an old man he has lately taken a great liking to, who I am told was a tutor at one of the universities, till he lost all employment from this same crazy humour of truth-hunting. The soup was not half helped round, when a question arose as to the Spartan broth. The fish introduced a dissertation about a mullet, I think it was, at some great supper in Rome; and the cloth was no sooner taken away, than a violent altercation arose about the favourite liquors of the

ancients. My hair-dresser happening to call in the afternoon, set them off upon the head-dress of Poppea; and an old lady, who drank tea with us, puzzling herself to trace the relation between our grandfathers, introduced an inquiry, which lasted till near supper-time, on the family of Sesostris.

Were he confined to those old out-of-the-way topics, though the matter might never be exhausted, the number of the disputants would at least be abridged, and we might find a quiet hour when there was no scholar in the house but himself. But he is as keen about ascertaining modern facts as those of ancient times. If he can get hold of any body who has travelled where few have travelled before, if it is but a lame seaman, whom he has found begging in the street, there is no end of his questions. Not that he always acquiesces in what they tell him; on the contrary, he of-

ten disputes with them about things which they have seen, which he says cannot be true, because they are contrary to his philosophy; but, on the other hand, he tells them many things which they might have seen in those far countries, which they are obliged to confess they never either saw or heard of. Truth, he says, is not easily discernible by common eyes: truth, he says, according to the old proverb, lies in the bottom of a well. God forgive me, Mr Lounger, I am sometimes tempted to wish he were there along with her!

Not but that I have an affection for him too, for he has many good qualities, and that makes me the more vexed at this strange humour he has got into, which, besides plaguing us all as it does, is often of real prejudice to himself and to his affairs. For he is not contented with this search after truth in speculation only, but often carries it into practice in the ordi-

nary concerns of life; and there too he always looks for her in some place where nobody ever thought of her being to be found. He was, I don't know whether fortunately or not, left a sufficiency by his father to enable him to live without a profession; but during one half of the year, when we reside in the country, he is a very keen farmer, planter, and gardener. But his method of farming, planting, and gardening, is quite different from that of any body else, and, as he tells us, the only true one in the country. It happens, however, that he has scantier crops, less thriving trees, and worse flavoured fruit, than any body around us; but that don't signify, he maintains the contrary, and has the pleasure of finding a dispute with every body that visits his farm, his plantations, or his garden. Last season, he spoiled a whole crop of grass by a new method of hay-making. He was positive that it was excellent hay notwithstanding,

and much more nourishing than if it had been made after the usual method; but he could never persuade his horses to eat it.

He is rather more successful in making experiments of a similar kind on himself. He once took it into his head, having found, as he told us, the most incontestible evidence of its truth, that men could live very well without sleep; and actually went the length of disturbing the whole house for two nights together, by having himself pinched and buffetted about to keep him awake. On another occasion, he took nearly the same fancy with regard to food, and lived three or four days on a few boiled potatoes and some water-gruel. This, however, was got the better of, by the warm fumes of a venison-pasty, which happens to be a favourite dish of his. He insisted, however, on the superior healthfulness of the former diet; but owned, that in this, as in many other

things, the wrong way was the pleasantest.

This rage of experiment, as well as of inquiry, may lead to very serious consequences, if indulged as far as he sometimes gives us reason to think him inclined to do. He told us the other morning, he was not at all surprised at the ancient philosopher, who leaped into Etna, to be satisfied about the causes of its burning; and we have received intelligence, that he has actually been in treaty for a seat in a balloon, to resolve some doubts he has entertained on the subject of that singular invention. Now, Mr Lounger, as, however troublesome his doubts are to his family, we by no means wish to have them cleared up quite so soon; it would be conferring a great favour on us all, if you, who are a philosopher like himself, would try to persuade Mr Category to be contented to take things a little more on credit than he is at present

disposed to do; particularly, that he would neither think of burning himself alive, or breaking his neck, for the sake of coming at the truth all of a hurry, but submit for the sake of his wife and children, to grope about a while longer in this world of errors.

I am, &c.

MARY PLAIN.

P. S. Pray don't forget to put him in mind, that there will be no disputing in heaven.

No. 61. SATURDAY, *April* 1, 1786.

IN treating of the moral duties which apply to different relations of life, men of humanity and feeling have not forgotten to mention those which are due from masters to servants. Nothing indeed can be more natural than the attachment and regard to which the faithful services of our domestics are entitled; the connection grows up, like all the other family-charities, in early life, and is only extinguished by those corruptions which blunt the others, by pride, by folly, by dissipation, or by vice.

I hold it indeed as the sure sign of a mind not poised as it ought to be, if it is insensible to the pleasures of home, to the little joys and endearments of a family, to

the affection of relations, to the fidelity of domestics. Next to being well with his own conscience, the friendship and attachment of a man's family and dependents seems to me one of the most comfortable circumstances in his lot. His situation, with regard to either, forms that sort of bosom comfort or disquiet that sticks close to him at all times and seasons, and which, though he may now and then forget it amidst the bustle of public or the hurry of active life, will resume its place in his thoughts, and its permanent effects on his happiness, at every pause of ambition, or of business.

In situations, and with dispositions such as mine, there is perhaps less merit in feeling the benevolent attachment to which I allude, than in those of persons of more bustling lives, and more dissipated attentions. To the Lounger, the home which receives him from the indifference of the circles in which he sometimes loiters his

time, is naturally felt as a place of comfort and protection; and an elderly man-servant, whom I think I govern quietly and gently, but who perhaps quietly and gently governs me, I naturally regard as a tried and valuable friend. Few people will perhaps perfectly understand the feeling I experience when I knock at my door, after any occasional absence, and hear the hurried step of Peter on the stairs; when I see the glad face with which he receives me, and the look of honest joy with which he pats Cæsar (a Pomeranian dog, who attends me in all my excursions) on the head, as if to mark his kind reception of him too; when he tells me he knew my rap, makes his modest inquiries after my health, opens the door of my room, which he has arranged for my reception, places my slippers before the fire, and draws my elbow-chair to its usual stand; I confess I sit down in it with a self-com-

placency, which I am vain enough to think a bad man would be incapable of feeling.

It appears to me a very pernicious mistake, which I have sometimes seen parents guilty of in the education of their children, to encourage and incite in them a haughty and despotic behaviour to their servants; to teach them an early conceit of the difference of their conditions; to accustom them to consider the services of their attendants as perfectly compensated by the wages they receive, and as unworthy of any return of kindness, attention, or complacency. Something of this kind must indeed necessarily happen in the great and fluctuating establishments of fashionable life; but I am sorry to see it of late gaining ground in the country of Scotland, where, from particular circumstances, the virtues and fidelity of a great man's household were wont to be conspicuous, and exertions of friendship and magnanimity in the cause of a master

used to be cited among the traditional *memorabilia* of most old families.

When I was last autumn at my friend Colonel Caustic's in the country, I saw there, on a visit to Miss Caustic, a young gentleman and his sister, children of a neighbour of the colonel's, with whose appearance and manner I was peculiarly pleased. "The history of their parents," said my friend, "is somewhat particular, and I love to tell it, as I do every thing that is to the honour of our nature. Man is so poor a thing taken in the gross, that when I meet with an instance of nobleness in detail, I am fain to rest upon it long, and to recal it often; as, in coming hither over our barren hills, you would look with double delight on a spot of cultivation, or of beauty.

"The father of those young folks, whose looks you were struck with, was a gentleman of considerable domains, and extensive influence, on the northern fron-

tier of our county. In his youth he lived, as it was then more the fashion than it is now, at the seat of his ancestors, surrounded with Gothic grandeur, and compassed with feudal followers and dependents, all of whom could trace their connection, at a period more or less remote, with the family of their chief. Every domestic in his house bore the family name, and looked on himself as in a certain degree partaking its dignity, and sharing its fortunes. Of these, one was in a particular manner the favourite of his master. Albert Bane (the sirname, you know, is generally lost in a name descriptive of the individual) had been his companion from his infancy. Of an age so much more advanced as to enable him to be a sort of tutor to his youthful lord, Albert had early taught him the rural exercises and rural amusements, in which himself was eminently skilful; he had attended him in the course of his education

at home, of his travels abroad, and was still the constant companion of his excursions, and the associate of his sports.

"On one of those latter occasions, a favourite dog of Albert's, which he had trained himself, and of whose qualities he was proud, happened to mar the sport which his master expected, who, irritated at the disappointment, and having his gun ready cocked in his hand, fired at the animal, which, however, in the hurry of his resentment, he missed. Albert, to whom Oscar was as a child, remonstrated against the rashness of the deed, in a manner rather too warm for his master, ruffled as he was with accident, and conscious of being in the wrong, to bear. In his passion he struck his faithful attendant, who suffered the indignity in silence; and retiring, rather in grief than in anger, left his native country that very night; and when he reached the nearest town, enlisted with a recruiting party of

a regiment then on foreign service. It was in the beginning of the war with France which broke out in 1744, rendered remarkable for the rebellion which the policy of the French court excited, in which some of the first families of the Highlands were unfortunately engaged. Among those who joined the standard of Charles, was the master of Albert.

"After the battle of Culloden, so fatal to that party, this gentleman, along with others who had escaped the slaughter of the field, sheltered themselves from the rage of the unsparing soldiery, among the distant recesses of their country. To him his native mountains offered an asylum; and thither he naturally fled for protection. Acquainted, in the pursuits of the chace, with every secret path and unworn track, he lived for a considerable time like the deer of his forest, close hid all day, and only venturing down at the fall of evening, to obtain from some of his

cottagers, whose fidelity he could trust, a scanty and precarious support. I have often heard him, for he is one of my oldest acquaintances, describe the scene of his hiding-place, at a later period, when he could recollect it in its sublimity, without its horror." "At times," said he, "when I ventured to the edge of the wood, among some of those inaccessible crags which you remember a few miles from my house, I have heard in the pauses of the breeze, which rolled solemn through the pines beneath me, the distant voices of the soldiers, shouting in answer to one another amidst their inhuman search. I have heard their shouts re-echoed from cliff to cliff, and seen reflected from the deep still lake below, the gleam of those fires which consumed the cottages of my people. Sometimes shame and indignation well-nigh overcame my fear, and I have prepared to rush down the steep, unarmed as I was, and to die at once by

the swords of my enemies; but the instinctive love of life prevailed, and starting as the roe bounded by me, I have again shrunk back to the shelter I had left.

"One day," continued he, "the noise was nearer than usual; and, from the cave in which I lay, I heard the parties immediately below so close upon me, that I could distinguish the words they spoke. After some time of horrible suspense, the voices grew weaker, and more distant; and at last I heard them die away at the farther end of the wood. I rose and stole to the mouth of the cave; when suddenly a dog met me, and gave that short quick bark by which they indicate their prey. Amidst the terror of the circumstance, I was yet master enough of myself to discover that the dog was Oscar; and I own to you I felt his appearance like the retribution of justice and of heaven. Stand! cried a threatening voice,

and a soldier pressed through the thicket, with his bayonet charged. It was Albert! Shame, confusion, and remorse, stopped my utterance, and I stood motionless before him. "My master!" said he, with the stifled voice of wonder and of fear, and threw himself at my feet. I had recovered my recollection. "You are revenged," said I, "and I am your prisoner." "Revenged! Alas! you have judged too hardly of me; I have not had one happy day since that fatal one on which I left my master; but I have lived, I hope, to save him. The party to which I belong are passed; for I lingered behind them among those woods and rocks, which I remembered so well in happier days. There is, however, no time to be lost. In a few hours this wood will blaze, though they do not suspect that it shelters you. Take my dress, which may help your escape, and I will endeavour to dispose of yours. On the coast, to the westward,

we have learned there is a small party of your friends, which, by following the river's track till dusk, and then striking over the shoulder of the hill, you may join without much danger of discovery." I felt the disgrace of owing so much to him I had injured, and remonstrated against exposing him to such imminent danger of its being known that he had favoured my escape, which, from the temper of his commander, I knew would be instant death. Albert, in an agony of fear and distress, besought me to think only of my own safety. "Save us both," said he; "for if you die, I cannot live. Perhaps we may meet again; but whatever becomes of Albert, may the blessing of God be with his master!"

Albert's prayer was heard. His master, by the exercise of talents, which, though he had always possessed, adversity only taught him to use, acquired abroad a station of equal honour and emolument; and

when the proscriptions of party had ceased, returned home to his own country, where he found Albert advanced to the rank of a lieutenant in the army, to which his valour and merit had raised him, married to a lady by whom he had got some little fortune, and the father of an only daughter, for whom nature had done much, and to whose native endowments it was the chief study and delight of her parents to add every thing that art could bestow. The gratitude of the chief was only equalled by the happiness of his follower, whose honest pride was not long after gratified by his daughter's becoming the wife of that master whom his generous fidelity had saved. That master, by the clemency of more indulgent and liberal times, was again restored to the domain of his ancestors, and had the satisfaction of seeing the grandson of Albert enjoy the hereditary birthright of his race. I accompanied Colonel Caustic on a visit

to this gentleman's house, and was delighted to observe his grateful attention to his father-in-law, as well as the unassuming happiness of the good old man, conscious of the perfect reward which his former fidelity had met with. Nor did it escape my notice, that the sweet boy and girl, who had been our guests at the colonel's, had a favourite brown and white spaniel, whom they caressed much after dinner, whose name was Oscar.

No. 62. Saturday, *April* 8, 1786.

Absentem rusticus urbem,
Tollis ad astra levis. Hor.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

SIR, Mushroom Hall, April 1, 1786.

The indulgence which you shewed to my correspondence when in town, emboldens me to hope for the same favourable reception of my letters from the country. Here, Mr Lounger, I have much more time to write; but unfortunately I have much fewer subjects; and those too none of the most enlivening. I think there is a sort of fatality in it, that I am always in low spirits when I sit down to write to you. These constant easterly winds do affect one's nerves so!

I told you in my last, that my sister-in-law talked of going to London, and perhaps to the continent; and how unwilling I should be to accompany her. She is actually gone some weeks ago, and I was not asked to be of the party; but she has taken her favourite Miss Gusto, because she can talk French a little more glibly, having been bred at a London boarding-school; though my French master says it is execrable *patois*, and won't be understood by people of fashion. Well! I don't desire to detract from any body; but some people are singular in their favourites. But it don't signify; we can be very happy at home, though it was a little cross to leave Edinburgh just when one had got into the humour of it; and when one began to know people a little, and people began to know one, which takes some time, you know, Mr Lounger, especially with people who are not quite so forward as some people, who are greater

favourites with some people than other people are.

You must know, that our society in Edinburgh had latterly become much more agreeable to me, from our intimacy with Mrs Rattle, who came lately from Spa, where she had gone for the recovery of her health, being vastly subject to low spirits whenever she remains long in this climate. Mrs Rattle was pleased to take very particular notice of me, being delighted, she said, with a certain *naïveté*, of which I was possessed; though Mrs Mushroom, who was jealous of her attention to me, said it was only because I was the best hearer of her acquaintance. Be that as it may, she was always remarkably civil and obliging to me; declared she looked upon me as her particular *protegée*; and that, except one or two gentlemen with whom she had been acquainted abroad, I was the only person to whom she gave the constant *en-*

trée to her *boudoir*. I was invited to most of her parties, which made the town appear quite a different thing to me from what it did when I wrote to you last. Unfortunately these pleasant days did not last long; my dear Mrs Rattle was suddenly taken ill soon after her husband's arrival in Edinburgh, (for he did not come till some time after,) and was obliged to leave town without being able to see even me. My brother and Mrs Mushroom, as I mentioned before, have set off for London with Miss Gusto; and so, Mr Lounger, I am come back to the country again.

I had but a very disagreeable journey of it, though my maid, (who was my sister-in-law's, till she got a gentlewoman of Miss Gusto's recommending,) and a very good sort of a young man, to whom my brother has promised a church on an estate he has bought lately, took all possible care of me by the way. But the roads

were miserably bad, and the post-chaises terribly jolting and uneasy.——Though we talk so much of improvements, there must certainly be a great change to the worse in that article; for I remember travelling part of that road once before, along with my mother, in the diligence, which we found a very comfortable, easy sort of machine; and the roads were then remarkably smooth, and well made. Nor is the accommodation at the inns less fallen off from what it was at that time.

The weather has been dreadful since my arrival; and I have been perfectly starved with cold ever since I reached my father's; yet they tell me it was still colder some weeks before, though I am sure it was not so with us in town. Except one night at the play, when it was a very thin house, most of the fashionable company having gone to the dancing dogs; and one other time when I waited a great while in the lobby of the assem-

bly-room for my sister and another lady, who had dined at Mrs Midnight's, I don't recollect having felt it disagreeably cold all the time I was in Edinburgh. On that last occasion I caught a little cold, which, however, has been infinitely worse since I removed to the country; though they say change of air is good for a cough, I have found mine much more troublesome here than in Edinburgh. Indeed, one cannot stir out of doors without wetting one's feet; and I was the other day over the shoes in dirt going to see my brother's Temple of Venus, which, one of his improving advisers, Dr ——, planned for him last autumn. Yet the doctor was at no small pains making a walk to it, which consumed, as he told us, Lord knows how many waggon-loads of gravel; but unfortunately one of the twists led into a bog; for it is so artfully twisted, that I have heard the doctor say, the temple, which is scarce 200 yards from

the house as the crow flies, is a good half mile off by the serpentine. I am sure I thought it far enough when they would needs have me go and visit it. Besides, one meets cattle in this field, and dogs in that; and they are certainly grown much worse-natured since I left the country.

I am glad, however, to take a long walk, though it should be somewhat dirty and disagreeable, to pass off a while of the morning, (afternoon they call it here,) from one to three, as well as to get a little wearied, that I may be able to sleep when we go to bed by eleven. My cough plagues me so all the night long, and then I hear some of the out-of-door servants getting up when I have scarce slept a wink. It was but this very morning they broke off one of the charmingest dreams!—Methought I was at the masquerade, (what a cross thing it was, Mr Lounger, to give up the mas-

querade!) and there was my sister-in-law, and Captain Coupée, and Miss Gusto, and Lady Rumpus, and Mrs Rattle, and goodness knows how many fine people besides; and a Highlander in his plaid and philabeg followed me up and down, and I was told it was a duke in disguise; and methought I was just standing up to dance a Strathspey with him—when I was waked by one of our brutes in the stable-yard bawling out something about the first yoking with the brown mare.—I could have cried, Mr Lounger, when I thought that it was but a dream! and I had nobody whom I could even tell it to here; for neither my mother nor sisters know any thing about a masquerade, and they never saw Captain Coupée, nor Miss Gusto, nor Lady Rumpus, nor Mrs Rattle.

The Homespuns, indeed, are very good girls, and they come to me as often as their father will let them; and we have

long conversations about Edinburgh, and what I saw and heard there; and they are so charmed with what I tell them, and so distracted to get thither! We sometimes sit up talking of it two or three hours after all the rest of the family are quiet. My sister-in-law, to say truth, has not been unmindful of us since she has been gone, but has sent us down, among other things, a parcel of new books and magazines, which I now and then read to the Homespuns at those sittings up of ours. I dare not lend them a reading of any, since their father took it into his head to burn one for having a new *tête à tête* in it.

To be sure Mr Homespun is a very odd sort of a man, and if it were not for Mrs Homespun, there would be no bearing of him; he is always railing at fine gentlemen, and fine ladies, and new fashions—he is certainly ten times more rude and disagreeable than he was before I went to

town; and he says, that since I came, I have infected his daughters with ridiculous small waists and large heads; and yet their mother and they all agree how much better they look since I brought them their new stays and heads. The first day they walked over here to welcome me home, they looked so red and so blouzy, I thought I never saw two such frights in my life; I could hardly believe they were the same girls I had left but four months before: and they were both astonished at my improvement in so short a time; only the eldest thought, as she has confessed to me since, that my complexion was somewhat of the palest. Now, to tell you a secret, Mr Lounger, I can mend that when I choose, though I never ventured to try but once, for diversion's sake, that I rubbed a very little out of Mrs Rattle's French box on my cheeks, and every body observed how handsome I looked that day, and what a

sparkle my eyes had; but I did not let any body know how they came by it.

Indeed, if there is any sin in it, I am sure it is not worth the while here; for there is nobody to see one needs care how one looks for. I used to be joked about our neighbour young Broadcast, who is reckoned one of the best matches in our neighbourhood, and my father brought him to see me the very day after my arrival. But he is grown so fat and so coarse since I left this, and talks and laughs so loud, and speaks of nothing but the value of land, and the laying out of farms! I received him very coldly, and he has not come back since: for my own part, I don't care if he should never come back.

There is, however, some pleasure in dressing one's self, to have the amusement of making the people stare and wonder as they do. It is very diverting to me to hear the observations of some of the good ladies, our neighbours, when I put on some of

my town things, on purpose to provoke them. La! what a head!—Good gracious! what a neck!—and, mercy upon us! what a bunch behind!—Sunday last, being the first opportunity for my appearing in public, I resolved to make a figure; and so I went to church with my head as well curled as my maid and I could make it, my newest-fashioned hat, and a round hoop Mrs Mushroom had just sent me from London. Would you think it, Mr Lounger, I had like to have been mobbed in the coming out? and the people followed the carriage till it came to the churchway ford in our way home.

But this will only do now and then; and, on the whole, I find my time hang very heavy on my hands; though I try all I can to coax away a great part of the day too. As I am a person of some consequence since my late journey to town, they indulge me a good deal in the dis-

posal of my time, even though it sometimes runs a little cross to the regularity of theirs; only my father growls now and then; but we don't mind that much. I seldom rise till near eleven, and generally breakfast in bed. I read the newspapers my brother sends down, all except the politics. I stroll out, as I told you before, between one and three; then, if I dress, or perhaps alter the sit of my cap, or change my feathers before the glass, I am seldom ready till long past dinner-time: they put it back an hour ever since my brother came first home. In the evening I play the new minuets, teach my sisters cards, or we guess the riddles in the Lady's Magazine; and I think of the promenade in Prince's Street, and of Dunn's rooms, and of being in Edinburgh next winter if I can.

I am told there is to be a ball in our county-town, when the Judges come this

way on their circuit, in about a fortnight hence, which the Homespuns talk of with great glee. And they tell me there is a set of players, who are to perform there at that time, and the German tumbler with his bear and dogs. But, for my part, I have very little inclination to go. After seeing Lamash, and Wilson, and Kippling; not to mention Woods and Mrs Crawford.—But above all, to think of the German tumbler after Richer and Dubois; and his dogs forsooth, after the dear little dogs at the Black Bull!—Oh! Mr Lounger, as Macbeth says,

> What a falling off is there!

It will be really compassionate in you to give us a paper now and then about what is going on in town. And do, Mr Lounger, let there be plenty of characters in it. I have told the Homespuns, the owners of all the characters in your paper, from the very beginning, without missing

one. For, believe me, I am, dear Mr Lounger, whether in town or country, your constant reader and admirer,

MARJORY MUSHROOM.

No. 64. SATURDAY, *April* 22, 1786.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

SIR,

THAT distress finds some consolation from revealing its misfortunes, is a trite observation, which perhaps is in no instance more strongly felt, than where we have ourselves to blame for our calamities. There is something in making a confession, though but on paper, (even if it should never be communicated to any one,) which unloads the mind of a weight that bears it down in secret; and, though it cannot pluck the thorn from memory, has certainly the effect of blunting its poignancy. Suffer me then, Sir, to tell you, or to write as if I were telling you,

how unhappy I am, and by what means I have become so.

I was left by my father, at the age of thirteen, the elder of two daughters, under the charge of one of the best and most indulgent of mothers. Our circumstances were affluent, our society respectable, and our education, from its very commencement, had been attended to with care, and provided for with the utmost liberality. No instruction was neglected, no accomplishment unattended to. In attaining these, my sister was not quite so fortunate as I. Born, as I have been often told, with uncommon quickness of parts, I found no difficulty in mastering the studies that were taught me, or of acquiring the embellishments it was wished I should acquire. My sister was often deficient in the one, and awkward at the other. She possessed, however, a sound, plain understanding, and an excellent temper. My superiority never

excited envy in her, and I think never vanity in me. We loved one another most sincerely; and after some years had blunted the grief which my mother felt for her husband's death, there were, I believe, few happier families than ours.

Though our affections were cordial, however, our dispositions were very different. My sister was contented to think as other people thought, and to feel as other people felt: she rarely ventured to speculate in opinion, or to soar in fancy. I was often tempted to reject, if not to despise, the common opinions of mankind, and to create to myself a warm, and, I am afraid, a visionary picture of happiness, arising from a highly refined sensibility. My mother was at pains to combat these enthusiastic ideas, and to represent the danger of indulging in them. From a desire, perhaps, of overcoming that tendency towards them which she perceived in me, her discourse, when we

were alone, almost constantly turned on this subject. As she always allowed us the liberty of argument with her, I stood up in these conversations the warm defender of my own maxims, in contradiction to those prudent ones which she recommended. Hers, I am persuaded, admitted of better reasoning; but my cause gave greater room for eloquence. All my little talents were exerted in the contest; and I have often since thought, that my mother had from nature a bent to my side of the question, which all her wisdom and experience had not been able to overcome; that, though she constantly applauded the prudent system of my sister, she was in truth rather partial to mine, and vain of that ability with which I defended it. However that might be, I myself always rose from the dispute more and more convinced of the justness of my own opinions, and proud of that

superiority which I thought they conferred on me.

We had not long attained a marriageable age, when we found ourselves surrounded with those whom the world terms admirers. Our mother's benevolence and sweetness of temper inclined her to society, and we were too innocent for prudery; we had therefore a number of visitors of the other sex, many of whom were so particular in their attentions, that women who wished to boast of conquests, would have called them lovers. With us they did not always assume that title; my sister was too prudent, and I was too nice, easily to believe a man a lover.

Among those, however, were two gentlemen, whose attachment was declared to me in terms too strong to be misunderstood. Florio's person was universally allowed to be handsome; many, of whom I was one, thought it elegant. With the external accomplishments which his education had

furnished him, his manner was easy and unembarrassed; some called it assuming, I thought it natural. His conversation was full of the language of sensibility; in my idea, it spoke a mind replete with sensibility itself. Other people sometimes suspected him of shallowness and affectation; I praised him for avoiding the pedantry of knowledge, and the rusticity of men proud of its acquirements.

Alcander was the only son of a particular friend of my mother's, and therefore on a very intimate footing in our family. My mother, with whom he was a favourite, discovered in him a great fund of good sense and of useful knowledge. I was struck with the inelegance of his appearance and address, and the want of refinement in his sentiments and conversation. His goodness and candour were often the topics of my mother's commendation; I remarked his want of discernment, and the coldness of his attachments

and aversions. My mother often repeated her own eulogiums of Alcander, and the criticisms of the world on Florio; I always heard her with a determined opposition of sentiment, and therefore rose from the conversation more averse to the first, and more attached to the latter. Alcander, after persisting for some time under a very marked disinclination to him, gave up the pursuit; but as he still continued his visits to the family, particularly during any occasional absence of mine, he transferred by degrees his affections to my sister. When he had ceased to be my lover, I was willing to be very much his friend: my mother had always shewn her partiality in his favour; my sister was won by his virtues, and after some time became his wife.

Florio's suit to me was opposed by my mother with rather more vehemence than was natural to her. She often insisted on the infatuation, as she called it, of that

deception which I was under with regard to him, a deception which she predicted I should one day be convinced of. Her opposition, however, though it over-ruled my conduct, never overcame my attachment: I would not be his without the consent of my mother; but my affection it was not in her power to shake. Her love for me overcame her resolution; and at last she gave, however unwillingly, my hand to Florio.

I was now the happiest of women. The scenes I had often pictured of conjugal tenderness and domestic happiness, I thought now realized in the possession of a man who, I had taught myself to believe, was to love me for ever, and was himself every thing I ought to love; and I often looked with a degree of pity on the situation of my sister, whose happiness (for she called it happiness) with Alcander was of a kind so inferior to mine.

How long this lasted I cannot exactly say. I fear I begun to be unhappy long before I would allow myself to believe it. I have often wept alone at the coldness and neglect of Florio; when on meeting him, a few words of seeming tenderness and affection made me again reproach my doubts of his love, and think my own situation the most enviable of any. Alas! he at length drove me from this last strong-hold, in which my affection for him had entrenched itself. It is now three years since he has treated me in such a manner as to leave me no apology for his treatment. During the last, my mother's death has deprived me of one of the few comforts I had left. From my mother I carefully concealed my distress; but I believe in vain: she lived to guess at my misery; and I fear her sense of it added to the pressure of that disease which brought her to her grave.

After the loss of my husband's love, it is little to talk of my disappointment in his talents and accomplishments. It was long, however, before I allowed myself to see defects, which less penetration than I have been flattered with possessing, had long before discovered. My mother had often before our marriage expressed her surprise, that one of my abilities should be so deceived, as not to see his inferiority: I believe it is by these abilities that the deception is aided. They are able to form a picture to which more ordinary minds are unequal; and in the weakness of their rash attachment, they find the likeness where they wish to find it.——

I was interrupted by my sister. Why are her looks so serene? and why does she tell me, how much mine are altered? I am too proud to allow a witness to my distresses; and from her, of all womankind, I would conceal them. This dissimulation is due to my pride, perhaps to

my duty; yet if you knew, Sir, what it is to smile in public, to seem to be happy with such feelings as mine; to act contentment all day long, and to retire at night to my lonely pillow with the anguish my heart has treasured up all the while! But the subject overpowers me. Farewell.

CONSTANTIA.

No. 65. Saturday, *April* 29, 1786.

Malignitati falsa species Libertatis inest. Tac.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Sir,

Some time ago, a female correspondent was obliged to enter a complaint with you against one of the Virtues, and set forth the hardships which a family endures from the circumstances of its master's extreme cultivation of Truth. I am sorry, Sir, to be obliged to enter a similar complaint against another of the Virtues, of the same family with that of which the lady complains; and to relate to you the effects which I happened lately to witness from the extreme cultivation of Freedom.

The word Freedom, Sir, till this late incident in my life, carried with it a sound at once so sacred and so animating, as I thought was entitled to my warmest love and veneration. Yet a young man, and full of the classic remembrances of Roman virtue, I connected with the love of liberty every thing that dignifies and humanizes man; and I heard the cautions of some of my elder and more experienced acquaintance with the secret triumph of a superior mind, whose vigour was unsubdued by age, whose honest warmth was unextinguished by interest, or the world.

By one of those advisers, I was lately carried on a visit to the house of a common relation of ours, with whose person, as he resided in a different part of the country, I was not at all acquainted; but whose character, having often heard him celebrated as a warm partisan of liberty, I had long learned to revere; and I was happy to find, that I should have now an

opportunity of acquiring an intimate acquaintance with him; our visit being proposed to be as long as it was distant, and meant to last during thewhole Easter Holidays, according to their longest computation.

When we arrived at the house, and I was introduced to my cousin, I was somewhat disappointed with his aspect and manner, neither of which possessed a great deal of that dignity which, from an assertor of Freedom, according to my classic notions of the character, I had taught myself to expect. I found Mr Wilfull a thick squat figure, with an appearance of great strength and freshness for his age, with a person rather lusty, and somewhat of rubicundity in his face. His motions were more quick than graceful; his voice rough and strong, which last, however, I was inclined, on the first hearing it, to call firm and manly. These qualities I afterwards found employed to give force and emphasis

to a variety of oaths, of which the gentleman was very profuse in the course of his conversation. He gave us a very cordial welcome, and insisted on our recruiting ourselves after our journey with a glass of his cordial waters, which I found so strong as to make my eyes water the first mouthful I swallowed; but Mr Wilfull himself took off a bumper, without seeming to feel any such inconvenience.

When dinner came, the ladies of the family appeared, who consisted of Mrs Wilfull and two daughters, on whom our landlord bestowed a hearty scold for making us wait, as he said, a quarter of an hour for their damned hair-dressing. This reprimand the ladies bore with great submission. Mrs Wilfull, indeed, made a silent sort of reply, by pulling out her watch, by which I saw it wanted several minutes of four. But Mr Wilfull swore another oath, that a woman's watch was like her judgment, very little to be depen-

ded on; and desired her to take notice, that his watch was to be the only regulator in his house.

During the time of dinner, Mr Wilfull made use of the same sort of freedom to criticise several dishes, which were not quite dressed to his liking. On his lady making some attempts at explanation and apology, he told her he knew she must always have her own way, but that he could not help believing his own smell and taste: on some further remonstrance, though a very gentle one, he carried the liberty of his tongue a little farther; he swore at her, and cursed the cook.

The cloth had not been removed above a few minutes, when our landlord, by asking the ladies toasts, one after another as fast as they could be drank, gave them a hint, that he expected they should retire, and leave us to enjoy "that liberty he loved." As the first fruits of which, the door was scarce shut behind them,

when he began to give us some toasts which seemed to have been at his tongue's end all the time they staid, and waited there impatient for utterance till they should be gone. At the close of these moral sentiments, he gave us some political sentiments, (for Mr Wilfull is extremely sentimental,) which tended to fix the creed of the company in patriotism, as the former set of healths had established their principles in point of virtue and morality. The first of these, "Liberty and the Constitution," we were desired to drink, not in the ordinary glasses of the table, but in an old-fashioned rummer of a particular shape and magnitude, which had been in his family for several generations, and was marked with certain words and figures more emblematical of freedom than of taste or politeness. This dose of wine, it was absolutely incumbent on every guest to swallow at a draught; on somebody's venturing to remonstrate, that his making

himself sick, would tend neither to the increase of liberty, nor to the establishment of the constitution; his plea was immediately over-ruled, in a very vociferous manner, by our host, from whose decision I found there was no appeal. He contrived to furnish us with such a variety of bumper-toasts in favour of freedom, which none of us were at liberty to decline, that I was carried speechless to bed, (as, I was afterwards told, were several other members of the company,) and waked next morning with so violent a headach, that had I not been informed of Mr Wilfull's being that day engaged at a county meeting, on some public measure, I believe I should have hardly been prevailed on to rise.

When he took his departure after breakfast, which he did with some apologies, extremely unnecessary, for leaving us with his wife, I was very agreeably disappointed to find Mrs Wilfull and the young

ladies not at all so much given to silence as from their deportment on the preceding day I had been led to imagine them. I found the one had learned, and the other inherited some of Mr Wilfull's love of liberty, which they were exceedingly fond of exercising in the absence of that gentleman, and which shewed itself in a very free discussion of his temper, disposition, and management of his family. In the course of this conversation, in which, indeed, I was a hearer only, I learned, that Mr Wilfull was perfectly the lord and master of his own house, in which he exercised the most dictatorial sway, no doubt according to the old Roman maxim, *Ne quid detrimenti Respublica capiat*, for the pure good of the family. Of this, however, the family, as perhaps was sometimes the case with the state, were not quite so sensible as they should have been. Mrs Wilfull complained that her husband was a little particular in his temper. The

daughters talked more plainly, and said, that papa was one of the strangest out-of-the-wayest men in the world; that he would not allow them education like other girls in town, because, he said, in a town they would learn nothing but French dances, and French fashions, both which he hated, because the French were slaves. His son, it seems, he also kept at home, with a tutor he had provided for him, who was but very little of a scholar; his scholarship, Mrs Wilfull said, her husband did not much mind, as he had never found Greek or Latin of any use to himself; but that this young man was a favourite with him, because of his staunch political principles, and being what he called a strong-headed fellow; but in what sense the word was applied, Mrs Wilfull did not explain. She added, that neither her son or daughters had much opportunity of improvement from society, as political quarrels

had estranged the principal families in the neighbourhood from their house.

In domestic matters, Mrs Wilfull hinted the difficulties she frequently laboured under to keep things tolerably quiet. The servants, she said, were frequently leaving them at short warnings; and that they had several law-suits with discarded footmen about wages and board-wages. Mr Wilfull, she said, was in the main a very good sort of man; but it must be confessed he liked his own way in every thing; and that he would not allow any body the liberty of giving him an answer.

From the parson of Mr Wilfull's parish, who happened to come in during this conversation, I learned that his patron's tenants had all very short leases, as it was his principle, that a man's estate was not his own, if a low fellow had the use of it for twenty or thirty years. Afterwards, in the course of a walk with this same clergyman, I had an opportunity of see-

ing somewhat of the state and culture of Mr Wilfull's estate. The barn-yards were but thinly stored, and the farm-houses but in indifferent repair. Several of the farms were in a state of open uncultivated wildness, with here a patch of broom, there a corner of furze, and now and then a ridge or two of rushes and thistles. A person of a sportive imagination might have traced an analogy between Mr Wilfull's principles and the state of his grounds. Xerxes chained the Hellespont, because he was accustomed to govern slaves: Mr Wilfull, one might say, left the very soil at liberty, and neither constrained it by culture, nor fettered it by inclosures.

This state of his private property, however, my companion partly accounted for from Mr Wilfull's attention having been for some time much occupied by some public and national concerns, in which his love of liberty had involved him. There was a little town in the neighbour-

hood of his estate, in which it seems he had, from patriotic motives, projected a thorough reformation. It was at present, according to the parson's account, in the hands of about a dozen people, who Mr Wilfull complained, had the entire disposal of it. He wished its government to be in the people at large; by which, however, the clergyman frankly confessed his patron meant, if possible, to get the management of it to himself. Meantime he had taught the inhabitants, every soul of them, proper ideas of freedom and independence; in cultivating these indeed they had lost some others, which people who don't know the value of liberty might reckon as useful. There were formerly one or two thriving manufactures in the town; but they had of late been driven out of it as hostile to its freedom. I asked the clergyman, what branches they now carried on there? "Oh! now,

Sir," said he, " they are all busy in making—reforms."

In short, Mr Lounger, (for I am afraid of tiring you with my recital,) I found, from this day's information, as well as my own experience during another which I spent at Mr Wilfull's, that this gentleman is so very fond of liberty, that he is inclined to monopolize it entirely to himself. Not caring either to suffer in silence, or to quarrel with my kinsman by asserting my freedom, I contrived some apology for putting an end to my visit on the morning of the fourth day; and I confess was very happy to leave this champion for independence, to return to the government of an elderly aunt, who keeps house for me; who, though of old-fashioned Tory principles, is yet very fond of her nephew, very indulgent to the servants, and very hospitable to the neighbours; and who, though she does not trouble herself about the good of her country, feeds the

best fowls, makes the best mince-pies, and brews the best ale in the world. I am, &c.

LIBERCULUS.

No. 67. Saturday, *May* 13, 1786.

Studiumque immane loquendi. Ovid.

Nobody will deny the superiority of the modern over the ancient world in almost all the arts and sciences. But perhaps that superiority is not more observable when we think of the articles of modern acquirement in detail, than when we consider the facility which the present times have introduced in the art of obtaining knowledge in general; or, when that idea is applied to the young, the highly improved system of education which we have invented, so much simpler and more concise than that which the ignorance of our forefathers led them to adopt. Were it not beneath the dignity of the subject,

one might apply to our present system of education, what some venders of little books of arithmetic, mathematics, and astronomy, have advertised of their performances—it is education "made easy to the meanest capacities."

The ancient system for the acquisition of knowledge, was by listening to the instructions of the wise and experienced; and in some of the old schools a probationary silence for a very long period was insisted on for that purpose. In those times, that might perhaps be suitable enough; but now when life, according to some philosophers, is so much shortened, and there are so many more things to talk about, the ancient mode would surely be very preposterous. Indeed there is much reason to doubt if, even in ancient times, this method of listening was so much practised as has sometimes been represented. Pythagoras, it is presumed, like some philosophers of our own days,

chose to talk for all the rest of the company, and enjoined silence to his scholars, that he might have hearers; but Socrates, who had been taught better breeding by his wife, let them have more than word about with him. Plutarch indeed, another of their wise men, says, in a treatise upon education, that " man has two powers, which give him the pre-eminence over all other amimals, understanding and speech; that the first is made to command, and the latter to obey; that understanding or mind is superior to accident or fortune, that sickness or disease has no power over it, and that the wrinkles of age do not diminish its beauty; that time, which conquers all things, has no effect on it, but, by a privilege peculiar to itself, it maintains its youth in old age. This Plutarch, however, was himself one of the most talkative fellows in the world, and delighted in story-telling beyond any man of his time; and the

description he has given as above, of understanding or intelligence, applies equally to the other faculty he meant to set it over, to wit, that of speech. We have every day examples to convince us, that neither loss of fortune, bad health, or old age, has any power over the tongue; to it indeed the circumstance of its superior vigour, when old, applies so strikingly, that one would almost suppose an error in the text, and that there was here a mistake, which those Greeks had a hard word to express, but which signified, that one had put first what should have been last: on this supposition, what the author really meant to say is, that it is the business of the tongue to command, and the part of the understanding to obey.

Now this, when so corrected, is pretty nearly the modern idea, which is, that knowledge is to be acquired fully as much, or rather more by speaking than by hearing; and this rule, like the other rules of

education, is to be attended to from the earliest years. Mothers, who, according to the ablest opinions on the head, are the best instructors of early youth, have particularly an excellent method of inculcating this doctrine on their pupils. As they grow up, those pupils are to be confirmed in the practice of it. When brought into company, they are to be particularly cautioned against that antique bashfulness which used to disqualify young people from this attainment; as far indeed as youth might be used by way of argument for silence, they are to forget altogether their being young, and to talk, with the authority of experience, and the loquacity of age, in all places, public and private. Neither the church nor the playhouse is to be excepted; and in public exhibitions of greater moment, if a young man, for example, happens to get into the House of Commons, and gives himself any trouble about what is

going on there, it is wonderful how much he may learn merely by speaking, as the daily examples of orators, who get up without knowing any thing of what they are to talk about, evince.

There is one part of the course of modern education, which might at first view be supposed unfavourable to this mode of acquiring knowledge—and that is, the article of travelling; because it often happens, that, from a want of the languages of those countries through which he is to pass, a young traveller cannot speak so much as is proper for the purpose. But this may be almost entirely remedied in Paris, and other capitals of every foreign country, by conversing with English only, or with such of the natives as already understand a little of the English tongue, and are very willing to learn more of it, as *friseurs*, *tailors*, *valets de place*, &c. From such companions, one not only may obtain a very competent knowledge

of the manners and customs of such foreign countries; but one has also a favourable opportunity of communicating to them the manners and customs of one's own, which can be done with much more freedom and truth to such hearers than to others. In this manner travel, instead of a hindrance, will be of very great use in promoting this new and improved mode of education; it will promote speaking, and insure an audience, both while a young man remains abroad, and after he comes home; while abroad he will speak of nothing but his own country, which will enable him to speak of nothing but foreign countries when he returns.

This general maxim, which I am here endeavouring to enforce, must however be understood to apply to people of a certain fortune only. With those in less favoured circumstances, hearing and receiving instruction are necessary, at least in particular situations and societies. In

the company of the great or the rich, which they are at all times to seek after and frequent, they must listen with as unlimited assent, though not quite so rigid a silence, as the disciples of the philosopher we first mentioned; but, when they leave this society, and get among their equals, they will then have the privilege of communicating what knowledge they have received, and are entitled to impose silence on their auditory, by the decisive authority of those great and rich men, of whose school they are. This leads me to mention a method of acquiring knowledge, the most easy and compendious of any, which is, by growing rich or great one's self; a truth which I have seen many very wise and learned men confess, by the deference they paid to the opinions and information of one lately come to the possession of a fortune or a title, whom, before he attained that wealth or rank, they had been obliged

to pronounce very ignorant and uninformed.

But as those who are poor may acquire knowledge instantaneously by growing rich, so those who are rich may in some cases acquire knowledge very rapidly by growing poor. Adversity, says some ancient sage, is the greatest of all teachers; in some of her schools, however, people learn slowly, which was the old method; in others she communicates knowledge with astonishing rapidity, which is the new mode; as, for instance, at that modern seminary of instruction, the gaming-table. It is indeed surprising what universality of knowledge is there to be attained, as may be judged of from the manner in which many people in eminent stations, both civil and military, have acquitted themselves, who had acquired the qualifications necessary for such appointments at that fountain of knowledge alone.

Another method by which a young man may attain knowledge with very little trouble to himself, is by purchasing a commission in the army. There is something in the bare putting on of a cockade, which inspires knowledge, or at least the confidence of it, which answers most purposes as well, and which gives the title to speak, so essential to this modern system of education. Unless the course of his studies be interrupted by actual service, which is not often the case, there are many opportunities of improvement for a soldier, of which, in a civil capacity, he would be entirely deprived. During one half of the year at country quarters, he has the advantage of that solitude which so many philosophers and poets have panted after, as the nurse of contemplation, as the mother of knowledge; the other half he can contrive, by a leave of absence, to spend in the edifying society of the capital. In

the first case, he can avail himself of the science of the exciseman, the learning of the curate, and sometimes the knowledge of the squire; in the other, he can resort to the sources of that multifarious information, which is to be found at the coffee-house, the tavern, the playhouses, and Ranelagh.

As for the female world, the same rule of obtaining knowledge, or educating themselves, by talking, not listening, is equally expedient, and indeed seems more particularly adapted to the genius of the sex. In this they may, by a prudent choice of their society among the other sex, be much assisted: as they can easily find a pretty numerous class of well-bred young gentlemen, who will never introduce any subject, nor treat any subject already introduced, but in such a manner as does not at all require being listened to; so that every member of the party may with

great ease, and without any material injury, speak at one and the same time.

But as I enumerated some very easy and speedy methods of the men's acquiring knowledge, so there is one way, as easy as any of those by which the ladies may attain it—I mean by being married; which perhaps is the reason why some prudent and economical mothers defer all sorts of instruction till that period, except some particular pieces of knowledge, which may tend to procure their daughters that opportunity of immediate improvement. In a married state, a young lady has an increased advantage of that power of talking, which I have mentioned as so essential to the cultivation of the mind. Besides the superior privileges of a matron to use her tongue, she has by marriage acquired a necessary assistant for a speaker; she has provided herself with a hearer in her husband.

The Lounger has been favoured with two communications from female correspondents, which, contrary to his established custom, he thinks himself obliged to acknowledge.

Mrs Invoice has told her story in a very natural and forcible manner; and the wrongs of which she complains from the partner of her late husband, exhibit such an impudent abuse of public indulgence, as justly deserves every reprehension a pen so able as hers can inflict. But her recital admits of so directly personal an allusion, as notwithstanding all its merit, unavoidably precludes its insertion. Though the pictures which this work occasionally exhibits, to be of any value at all, must be true to nature; yet it were equally averse to the feelings of the author, and to the dignity of his pa-

per, to make them the portraits of individuals.

The verses of Delia are written with ease and spirit; there is but one objection to their being inserted, their very high praise of the Lounger, which, though it were ingratitude in him not to acknowledge, it might be deemed vanity to publish.

No. 68. SATURDAY, *May* 20, 1786.

THAT "Poet and Creator are the same," is equally allowed in criticism as in etymology; and that, without the powers of invention and imagination, nothing great or highly delightful in poetry can be atchieved.

I have often thought, that the same thing holds, in some measure, with regard to the reader, as well as the writer of poetry. Without somewhat of a congenial imagination in the former, the works of the latter will afford a very inferior degree of pleasure. The mind of him who reads, should be able to imagine what the productive fancy of the poet creates and presents to his view; to look on the world of fancy set before him with a native's eye,

and to hear its language with a native's ear; to acknowledge its manners, to feel its passions, and to trace, with somewhat of an instinctive glance, those characters with which the poet has peopled it.

If in the perusal of any poet this is required, Shakespeare, of all poets, seems to claim it the most. Of all poets, Shakespeare appears to have possessed a fancy the most prolific, an imagination the most luxuriantly fertile. In this particular he has been frequently compared to Homer, though those who have drawn the parallel, have done it, I know not why, with a sort of distrust of their assertion. Did we not look at the Greek with that reverential awe which his antiquity impresses, I think we might venture to affirm, that in this respect the other is more than his equal. In invention of incident, in diversity of character, in assemblage of images, we can scarcely indeed conceive Homer to be surpassed; but in the mere

creation of fancy, I can discover nothing in the Iliad, that equals the Tempest, or the Macbeth, of Shakespeare. The machinery of Homer is indeed stupendous; but of that machinery the materials were known; or, though it should be allowed that he added something to the mythology he found, yet still the language and the manners of his deities are merely the language and the manners of men. Of Shakespeare, the machinery may be said to be produced as well as combined by himself. Some of the beings of whom it is composed, neither tradition nor romance afforded him; and of those whom he borrowed thence, he invented the language and the manners; language and manners peculiar to themselves, for which he could draw no analogy from mankind. Though formed by fancy, however, his personages are true to nature; and a reader of that pregnant imagination which I have mentioned above, can immediately decide on the just-

ness of his conceptions; as he who beholds the masterly expression of certain portraits, pronounces with confidence on their likeness, though unacquainted with the persons from whom they were drawn.

But it is not only in those untried regions of magic or of witchery that the creative power of Shakespeare has exerted itself. By a very singular felicity of invention, he has produced, in the beaten field of ordinary life, characters of such perfect originality, that we look on them with no less wonder at his invention, than on those preternatural beings which "are not of this earth;" and yet they speak a language so purely that of common society, that we have but to step abroad into the world to hear every expression of which it is composed. Of this sort is the character of Falstaff.

On the subject of this character I was lately discoursing with a friend, who is very much endowed with that critical

imagination of which I have suggested the use in the beginning of this paper. The general import of his observations may form neither an useless nor unamusing field for speculation to my readers.

Though the character of Falstaff, said my friend, is of so striking a kind as to engross almost the whole attention of the audience, in the representation of the play in which it is first introduced; yet it was probably only a secondary and incidental object with Shakespeare in composing that play. He was writing a series of historical dramas, on the most remarkable events of the English history, from the time of King John downwards. When he arrived at the reign of Henry IV. the dissipated youth and extravagant pranks of the Prince of Wales, could not fail to excite his attention, as affording at once a source of moral reflection in the serious department, and a fund of infinite humour in the comic part of the drama. In providing him with as-

sociates for his hours of folly and of riot, he probably borrowed, as was his custom, from some old play, interlude, or story, the names and incidents which he has used in the first part of Henry IV. Oldcastle, we know, was the name of a character in such a play, inserted there, it is probable, (in those days of the church's omnipotence in every department of writing,) in odium of Sir John Oldcastle, chief of the Lollards, though Shakespeare afterwards, in a Protestant reign, changed it to Falstaff. This leader of the gang, which the wanton extravagance of the prince was to cherish and protect, it was necessary to endow with qualities sufficient to make the young Henry, in his society,

> "doff the world aside,
> And bid it pass."

Shakespeare, therefore, has endowed him with infinite wit and humour, as well as an admirable degree of sagacity and

acuteness in observing the characters of men; but has joined those qualities with a grossness of mind, which his youthful master could not but see, nor seeing but despise. With talents less conspicuous, Falstaff could not have attracted Henry; with profligacy less gross and less contemptible, he would have attached him too much. Falstaff's was just "that unyoked humour of idleness," which the prince could "a while uphold," and then cast off for ever. The audience to which this strange compound was to be exhibited, were to be in the same predicament with the prince, to laugh and to admire while they despised; to feel the power of his humour, the attraction of his wit, the justice of his reflections; while their contempt and their hatred attended the lowness of his manners, the grossness of his pleasures, and the unworthiness of his vice.

Falstaff is truly and literally *ex Epicuri grege porcus,* placed here within the pale

of this world to fatten at his leisure, neither disturbed by feeling, nor restrained by virtue. He is not, however, positively much a villain, though he never starts aside in the pursuit of interest, or of pleasure, when knavery comes in his way. We feel contempt, therefore, and not indignation, at his crimes, which rather promotes than hinders our enjoying the ridicule of the situation, and the admirable wit with which he expresses himself in it. As a man of this world, he is endowed with the most superior degree of good sense and discernment of character; his conceptions, equally acute and just, he delivers with the expression of a clear and vigorous understanding; and we see that he thinks like a wise man, even when he is not at the pains to talk wisely.

Perhaps, indeed, there is no quality more conspicuous throughout the writings of Shakespeare, than that of good sense, that intuitive sagacity with which he looks on

the manners, the characters, and the pursuits of mankind. The bursts of passion, the strokes of nature, the sublimity of his terrors, and the wonderful creation of his fancy, are those excellencies which strike spectators the most, and are therefore most commonly enlarged on; but to an attentive peruser of his writings, his acute perception and accurate discernment of ordinary character and conduct, that skill, if I may so express it, with which he delineates the plan of common life, will, I think, appear no less striking, and perhaps rather more wonderful, because we cannot so easily conceive that power of genius by which it tells us what actually exists, though it has never seen it, than that by which it creates what never existed. This power, when we read the works, and consider the situation of Shakespeare, we shall allow him in a most extraordinary degree. The delineation of manners found in the Greek tragedians is

excellent and just; but it consists chiefly of those general maxims which the wisdom of the schools might inculcate, which a borrowed experience might teach. That of Shakespeare marks the knowledge of intimacy with mankind. It reaches the elevation of the great, and penetrates the obscurity of the low; detects the cunning, and overtakes the bold; in short, presents that abstract of life in all its modes, and indeed in every time, which every one without experience must believe, and every one with experience must know to be true.

With this sagacity and penetration into the characters and motives of mankind, which himself possessed, Shakespeare has invested Falstaff in a remarkable degree: he never utters it, however, out of character, or at a season where it might better be spared. Indeed his good sense is rather in his thoughts than in his speech; for so we may call those soliloquies in which he generally utters it. He knew what

coin was most current with those he dealt with, and fashioned his discourse according to the disposition of his hearers; and he sometimes lends himself to the ridicule of his companions, when he has a chance of getting any interest on the loan.

But we oftener laugh with than at him; for his humour is infinite, and his wit admirable. This quality, however, still partakes in him of that Epicurean grossness which I have remarked to be the ruling characteristic of his disposition. He has neither the vanity of a wit, nor the singularity of a humourist, but indulges both talents, like any other natural propensity, without exertion of mind, or warmth of enjoyment. A late excellent actor, whose loss the stage will long regret, used to represent the character of Falstaff in a manner different from what had been uniformly adopted from the time of Quin downwards. He exchanged the comic gravity of the old school, for those bursts of laugh-

ter in which sympathetic audiences have so often accompanied him. From accompanying him it was indeed impossible to refrain; yet though the execution was masterly, I cannot agree in that idea of the character. He who laughs, is a man of feeling in merriment. Falstaff was of a very different constitution. He turned wit, as he says he did, "disease into commodity."—"Oh! it is much, that a lie with a slight oath, and a jest with a sad brow, will do with a fellow that never had the ache in his shoulders."

No. 69. SATURDAY, *May* 27, 1786.

CONTINUATION OF THE REMARKS ON THE CHARACTER OF FALSTAFF.

To a man of pleasure, of such a constitution as Falstaff, temper and good humour were necessarily consequent. We find him, therefore, but once I think angry, and then not provoked beyond measure. He conducts himself with equal moderation towards others; his wit lightens, but does not burn; and he is not more inoffensive when the joker, than unoffended when joked upon: "I am not only witty myself, but the cause that wit is in other men." In the evenness of his humour he bears himself thus, (to use his own expression,) and takes in the points of all assail-

ants without being hurt. The language of contempt, of rebuke, or of conviction, neither puts him out of liking with himself, or with others. None of his passions rise beyond this controul of reason, of self-interest, or of indulgence.

Queen Elizabeth, with a curiosity natural to a woman, desired Shakespeare to exhibit Falstaff as a lover: he obeyed her, and wrote the "Merry Wives of Windsor;" but Falstaff's love is only factor for his interest, and he wishes to make his mistress "his Exchequer, his East and West Indies, to both of which he will trade."

Though I will not go so far as a paradoxical critic has done, and ascribe valour to Falstaff; yet if his cowardice is fairly examined, it will be found to be not so much a weakness, as a principle. In his very cowardice there is much of the sagacity I have remarked in him; he has the sense of danger, but not the discomposure of fear. His presence of mind saves

him from the sword of Douglas, where the danger was real; but he shews no sort of dread of the sheriff's visit, when he knew the prince's company would probably bear him out: when Bardolph runs in frightened, and tells, that the sheriff, with a most monstrous watch, is at the door, "Out, you rogue! (answers he,) play out the play; I have much to say in behalf of that Falstaff." Falstaff's cowardice is only proportionate to the danger; and so would every wise man's be, did not other feelings make him valiant.

Such feelings, it is the very characteristic of Falstaff to want. The dread of disgrace, the sense of honour, and the love of fame, he neither feels, nor pretends to feel:

——"Like the fat weed,'
"That roots itself at ease on Lethe's wharf,"

he is contented to repose on that earthy corner of sensual indulgence in which his

fate has placed him, and enjoys the pleasures of the moment, without once regarding those finer objects of delight, which the children of fancy and of feeling so warmly pursue.

The greatest refinement of morals, as well as of mind, is produced by the culture and exercise of the imagination, which derives, or is taught to derive, its objects of pursuit, and its motives of action, not from the senses merely, but from future considerations, which fancy anticipates and realizes. Of this either as the prompter, or the restraint of conduct, Falstaff is utterly devoid; yet his imagination is wonderfully quick and creative in the pictures of humour, and the associations of wit. But the "pregnancy of his wit," according to his own phrase, "is made a tapster;" and his fancy, how vivid soever, still subjects itself to the grossness of those sensual conceptions which are familar to his mind. We are astonished at that art

by which Shakespeare leads the powers of genius, imagination, and wisdom, in captivity to this son of earth; it is as if, transported into the enchanted island in the Tempest, we saw the rebellion of Caliban successful, and the airy spirits of Prospero ministering to the brutality of his slave.

Hence, perhaps, may be derived great part of that infinite amusement, which succeeding audiences have always found from the representation of Falstaff. We have not only the enjoyment of those combinations, and of that contrast, to which philosophers have ascribed the pleasure we derive from wit in general, but we have that singular combination and contrast, which the gross, the sensual, and the brutish mind of Falstaff exhibits, when joined and compared with that admirable power of invention, of wit, and of humour, which his conversation perpetually displays.

In the immortal work of Cervantes, we

find a character with a remarkable mixture of wisdom and absurdity, which in one page excites our highest ridicule, and in the next is entitled to our highest respect. Don Quixote, like Falstaff, is endowed with excellent discernment, sagacity, and genius; but his good sense holds fief of his diseased imagination, of his over-ruling madness for the atchievements of knight-errantry, for heroic valour, and heroic love. The ridicule in the character of Don Quixote, consists in raising low and vulgar incidents, through the medium of his disordered fancy, to a rank of importance, dignity, and solemnity, to which in their nature they are the most opposite that can be imagined. With Falstaff it is nearly the reverse; the ridicule is produced by subjecting wisdom, honour, and other the most grave and dignified principles, to the controul of grossness, buffoonery, and folly. It is like the pastime of a family masquerade, where laughter is equally excited by

dressing clowns as gentlemen, or gentlemen as clowns. In Falstaff, the heroic attributes of our nature are made to wear the garb of meanness and absurdity. In Don Quixote, the common and the servile are clothed in the dresses of the dignified and the majestic; while, to heighten the ridicule, Sancho, in the half-deceived simplicity, and half-discerning shrewdness of his character, is every now and then employed to pull off the mask.

If you would not think me whimsical in the parallel, continued my friend, I should say, that Shakespeare has drawn, in one of his immediately subsequent plays, a tragic character very much resembling the comic one of Falstaff, I mean that of Richard III. Both are men of the world, both possess that sagacity and understanding which is fitted for its purposes, both despise those refined feelings, those motives of delicacy, those restraints of virtue, which might obstruct the course they have

marked out for themselves. The hypocrisy of both costs them nothing, and they never feel that detection of it to themselves, which rankles in the conscience of less determined hypocrites. Both use the weaknesses of others, as skilful players at a game do the ignorance of their opponents; they enjoy the advantage, not only without self-reproach, but with the pride of superiority. Richard indeed aspires to the crown of England, because Richard is wicked and ambitious: Falstaff is contented with a thousand pounds of Justice Shallow's, because he is only luxurious and dissipated. Richard courts Lady Anne, and the Princess Elizabeth, for his purposes: Falstaff makes love to Mrs Ford, and Mrs Page, for his. Richard is witty like Falstaff, and talks of his own figure with the same sarcastic indifference. Indeed so much does Richard, in the higher walk of villainy, resemble Falstaff in the lower region of roguery and dissipation,

that it were not difficult to shew, in the dialogue of the two characters, however dissimilar in situation, many passages and expressions in a style of remarkable resemblance.

Of feeling, and even of passion, both characters are very little susceptible; as Falstaff is the knave and the sensualist, so Richard is the villain of principle. Shakespeare has drawn one of passion in the person of Macbeth. Macbeth produces horror, fear, and sometimes pity; Richard detestation and abhorrence only. The first he has led amidst the gloom of sublimity, has shown agitated by various and wavering emotions. He is sometimes more sanguinary than Richard, because he is not insensible of the weakness, or the passion, of revenge; whereas the cruelty of Richard is only proportionate to the object of his ambition, as the cowardice of Falstaff is proportionate to the object of his fear: but the bloody and revengful

Macbeth is yet susceptible of compassion, and subject to remorse. In contemplating Macbeth, we often regret the perversion of his nature; and even when the justice of heaven overtakes him, we almost forget our hatred at his enormities, in our pity for his misfortunes. Richard, Shakespeare has placed amidst the tangled paths of party and ambition, has represented cunning and fierce from his birth, untouched by the sense of humanity, hardly subject to remorse, and never to contrition; and his fall produces that unmixed and perfect satisfaction, which we feel at the death of some savage beast that had desolated the country from instinctive fierceness, and natural malignity.

The weird-sisters, the gigantic deities of northern mythology, are fit agents to form Macbeth. Richard is the production of those worldly and creeping demons, who slide upon the earth their instruments of mischief to embroil and plague man-

kind. Falstaff is the work of Circe, and her swinish associates, who, in some favoured hour of revelry and riot, moulded this compound of gross debauchery, acute discernment, admirable invention, and nimble wit, and sent him for a consort to England's madcap prince, to stamp currency on idleness and vice, and to wave the flag of folly and dissipation over the seats of gravity, of wisdom, and of virtue.

No. 72. SATURDAY, *June* 17, 1786.

——— *Sors ista Senectæ*
Debita. VIRG.

IN every man's lot there are certain incidents, either regarding himself, or those with whom he is closely connected, which, like mile-stones on a road, mark the journey of life, and call our attention both to that portion of it which we have already passed, and to that which it is probable we have still to go. The death or the marriage of a friend, his departure for a distant country, or his return from it, not only attract our notice to such events themselves, but naturally recal to our memories, and anticipate to our imaginations, a chain of other events connected

with, or dependent upon them. Those little prominent parts of life stop the even and unheeded course of our ordinary thoughts; and, like him who has gained a height in his walk, we not only look on the objects which lie before us, but naturally turn to compare them with those we have left behind.

Though my days, as my readers may have gathered from the accounts I have formerly given, pass with as much uniformity as those of most men; yet there are now and then occurrences in them which give room for this variety of reflection. Some such lately crossed me in the way; and I came home, after a solitary walk, disposed to moralize on the general tenor of life, to look into some of the articles of which it consists, and to sum up their value and their use. When Peter let me in, methought he looked older than he used to do. I opened my memorandum-book for 1775.—I can turn

over the leaves between that time and this (said I to myself) in a moment—thus!—and, casting my eye on the blank paper that remained, began to meditate on the decline of life, on the enjoyments, the comforts, the cares, and the sorrows of age.

Of domestic comforts, I could not help reflecting how much celibacy deprives us; how many pleasures are derived from a family, when that family is happy in itself, is dutiful, affectionate, good-humoured, virtuous. I cannot easily account for the omission of Cicero, who, in his treatise "*De Senectute*," enumerates the various enjoyments of old age, without once mentioning those which arise from the possession of worthy and promising children. Perhaps the Roman manners and customs were not very much calculated to promote this: they who could adopt the childen of others, were not likely to be so exclusively attached to their own, or to feel from that attachment a very high degree of

pleasure; or, it may be, the father of Marcus felt something on the subject of children, of which he was willing to spare himself the recollection. But though a bachelor myself, I look with equal veneration and complacency on the domestic blessings of a good old man, surrounded by a virtuous and flourishing race, in whom he lives over the best days of his youth, and from whose happiness he draws so much matter for his own. It is at that advanced period of life that most of the enjoyments of a bachelor begin to leave him, that he feels the solitariness of his situation, linked to no surrounding objects, but those from which the debility or the seriousness of age must necessarily divorce him. The club, the coffee-house, and the tavern, will make but a few short inquiries after his absence; and weakness or disease may imprison him to his home, without their much feeling the want of his company, or any of their mem-

bers soothing his uneasiness with theirs. The endearing society, the tender attentions of a man's own children, give to his very wants and weakness a sort of enjoyment, when those wants are supplied, and that weakness aided, by the hands he loves.

Though the celibacy of the female sex is still more reproached, and is thought more comfortless than that of ours, yet I confess it seems to me to possess several advantages of which the other is deprived. An old maid has been more accustomed to home and to solitude than an old bachelor, and can employ herself in many little female occupations, which render her more independent of society for the disposal of her time, and the amusement of her mind. The comparatively unimportant employments of the female world, which require neither much vigour of body, nor much exertion of soul, occupy her hours and her attention, and prevent that

impatience of idleness, or of inactivity, which so often preys on men who have been formerly busy or active. The negative and gentler virtues which characterise female worth, suit themselves more easily to the languid and suffering state of age or infirmity, than those active and spirit-stirring qualities which frequently constitute the excellence of the male character. There are, no doubt, some females to whom this will not apply; to whom age must be more terrible than to any other being, because it deprives them of more. She whose only endowment was beauty, must tremble at the approach of those wrinkles which spoil her of her all; she to whom youthful amusements and gaieties were the whole of life, must dread more than death that period when they can be no longer enjoyed.

It needs scarce be suggested, that, to lesson the evils, and increase the comforts of age in either sex, the surest means are

to be found in the cultivation and improvement of the mind in youth: to have something, as it were, in bank, on which to subsist the mind when the sources of external supply are cut off; to allow it some room for its natural activity when external employments have ceased; to preserve that energy of soul, without which life is not only useless, but burdensome. The former exercise of the imagination creates numberless pleasures, and its former soundness prevents numberless evils, to an old man. In proportion to the excellence of those objects over which it has formerly ranged, the review of age will be delightful or dreary, will call up elegant or gross, comfortable or distressing, elevating or humiliating, remembrances.

When I say, that of this better cultivated old age the remembrances will be more delightful, I do not mean that they will be always more gay. Of melancholy re-

membrances this state will naturally be more susceptible, than those in which memory has less store, and active employment tends more to dissipate thought. But who would exchange melancholy remembrances for the apathy of him who thinks only of the present? Who would exchange, for unfeeling contentment, that creative memory which peoples the present time with past joys, past friendships, past love, though the recollection carries sadness along with it? The most melancholy of all reflections which an old man can make, when he looks around him, and misses the companions of his youth, the associates of his active days, and exclaims, in the natural language of Petrarch, *Ed Io pur vivo!*—even in this, to one of a good and pious mind, there is a certain elevation above the world, that sheds (so to speak) a beam of heavenly light upon the darkness around him.

A late correspondent, under the signature of Atticus, pleases and interests me much, by a natural, though it is not a new description, of the various occupations and feelings of his old age. After mentioning the chequered nature of his past life, on the dark side of which he places the loss of an excellent wife, and several promising children, "The memory of those dear objects," says he, "and the soothing hope that we shall soon meet again, is now the source of extreme pleasure to me. In my retired walks in the country, I am never alone; those dear shades are my constant companions." Shenstone, with a felicity which perhaps our language could not have afforded him, has expressed this feeling in eight or nine words, to the force and tenderness of which, I believe, no other words could add. It is in the inscription on Miss Dolman's urn, *Heu quanto minus est cum reliquis versari quam tui meminisse!*

In recollecting those whom time has swept from our remembrance, there are some characters whom, though we less respected, and, reasonably speaking, must less regret, we yet cannot help remembering with a feeling, if not so tender, perhaps fully as sympathetic, as the loss of much more dignified personages might produce. "Alas, poor Yorick!"—Even in what I have passed of life, I recal at this moment the jests, the sallies, the thoughtless gaiety of several such characters, with whom one cannot easily connect an idea so serious as that of death, whom I still wonder at not meeting in the accustomed haunts of their amusement, and cannot, without violence to my imagination, think of as gone for ever.

The regrets of the old for such companions may be the more easily allowed, from the circumstance of their time of life preventing them from the acquisition

of any such again. But though nothing less becomes an old man than the levity of youthful society and youthful amusements, yet to keep up such an interest in them as may preserve to himself the complacency of the young, and a certain enjoyment of their happiness, is one of the great ingredients of a happy old age. I smiled one day at seeing my friend Colonel Caustic busied in fitting up a fishing-rod for a school-boy, the son of a neighbouring gentleman, who wished to go an angling on the stream that runs through the grounds. "You think me very foolishly employed," said the colonel; "but do not blame me, till your philosophy can shew a happier face of its making than my friend Billy's there."

Some old men forget that they are old, and some that they ever were young; the first are ridiculous in the imitation, the latter peevish in the restraint, of youthful gaiety. This is, generally, the effect nei-

ther of good nature in the one, or of wisdom in the other; but results, in the first, from a foolish vanity, and from an incapacity of those better employments and pleasures which suit their age; in the latter, from a splenetic regret of their incapacity for those employments and pleasures which suit it not.

Very different from this peevish intolerance of youth, is that sort of gentle dissatisfaction with the present time, which some of the best-tempered old men are inclined to shew. As a young man, I never complained of this partiality which my seniors discovered for their own times, or the injustice they sometimes did to the present. It is on the warmest and worthiest hearts that the impression of the former age remains the deepest. The *prisci conscius ævi*, is one whom his coevals loved, and whom his juniors, whom he sometimes under-rates, should regard; as he who is warmest in the cause of his

absent friend, is the man whose friendship we should be most solicitous to gain. Perhaps it may be accounted a sort of proof of my approaching the period of partiality for the past, when I observe, that the present race of young men seem not likely ever to recal their younger days with the enthusiasm which some of my older acquaintance express for theirs. That indifference which modern fashion teaches her votaries will have nothing hereafter to remember with delight, or to record with partiality. "What audience," (said the same excellent friend whom I above quoted,) "What audience will they find in the nineteenth century, for their eulogium of the size of buckles, the height of capes, or the fashion of boots, in the year 1785?"

Of the foibles of age, avarice has long been cited as the most unreasonable and preposterous; yet, I think, it is much less to be wondered at, though not less to be blamed, than the declamation of moralists

has generally supposed. When excluded from the pleasures which the use of money might procure, we substitute, if I may be allowed the expression, the archetype of enjoyment for enjoyment itself, and prize wealth as the end, when it has ceased to be the means. Old men are niggard of their money, as they are profuse of their talk, because the possession of wealth is one of those pleasures in which they can equal younger men; as daws and starlings can pilfer and hoard, who are destitute of plumage and of song.

But there are uses of wealth which some worthy and wise old men discover, that may supply this want of object for its appropriation. To bestow it in the purposes of beneficence, is one of the ways of spending money for which a man is never too old; or if some are so unhappy as to have outlived the relish of this, it is only where they have been at little pains to keep up in their minds those better feelings, which

prompt and reward good deeds. That pleasure which Colonel Caustic mentioned, of making happy faces, is a sort of fine art, which some people never attain, and others easily lose.

No. 75. Saturday, *July* 8, 1786.

E' troppo barbara quella legge, che vuol disporre del cuor delle donne a costo della loro rovina.

Goldoni.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Sir, *Avignon, May* 1786.

You will perhaps be surprised at receiving a letter from this place; but if you possess that benevolence which from your writings one is led to ascribe to you, the unfortunate from any quarter may claim some of your notice. My story, I believe, will not be without its use; and if you knew that sort of melancholy indulgence which I feel in addressing a letter to my native country!—But I will not give way to feeling: I mean simply to relate; and

situated as I am, banished from the world, and lost to myself, I can tell my story,—I think I can,—as that of a third person, in which though I may be interested, I will yet be impartial.

My father possessed a small patrimonial estate in the county of——, and married, in early life, a lady whose birth was much above her fortune, and who unluckily retained all the pride of the first, though it but ill suited the circumstances of the latter. The consequences were such as might naturally be looked for. My father was involved in an expensive style of life, which in a few years obliged him to sell his estate for payment of his debts. He did not live to feel the distresses to which he might have been reduced; and, after his death, my mother took up her residence in a country-town, where the pittance that remained from the reversion of my father's effects, assisted by a small pension from government, which a distant relation of

my mother's procured for us, enabled her to educate me on that sober plan which necessity had now taught her to adopt.

Our situation, however, still allowed her to mix something of the genteel in my education: and the place in which we lived was inhabited by several families, who, like us, had retired from more public and expensive life, and still retained somewhat of that polish which former intercourse with the fashionable world had conferred. At the age of seventeen, therefore, I was, I believe, tolerably accomplished; and though I knew nothing of high life, nor indeed wished to know it, yet I possessed a degree of refinement and breeding rather above what the circumstances of my mother might have been expected to allow.

Of my beauty, I was, like other girls, somewhat vain; but my mother was proud to an extreme degree. She looked upon it as a gift by which my fortune and hers were to be made, and consequently spa-

red no possible pains to set it off to advantage. Its importance and its power were often inculcated on me; and my ambition was daily inflamed by the recital of the wealth and station which other girls had acquired by marriages, to which their beauty alone had entitled them. I think I heard those instances with more indifference than my mother wished I should; and could not easily be brought to consider all happiness as centered in riches or in rank, to which her wishes and hopes were constantly pointed.

These hopes, however, accident put it in her power to accomplish. At the house of one of the genteelest of our acquaintance (who had two daughters nearly of my age) we met with Mr M——, a gentleman whom the lady of the house introduced particularly to us, as a man of great fortune and singular worth. Mr M—— was past the meridian of life; he had the look and air of a man who had seen the

world, and talked on most subjects with a degree of shrewd and often sarcastic observation, which met with much applause from the older part of the company, but which was not at all calculated to please the younger. The enthusiasm of attachment, of feeling, and of virtue, which our reading sometimes induced us to mention, he ridiculed as existing only in the dreams of poetry, or the fanciful heroes of romance; but which sense or experience neither looked to find in others, nor ventured to indulge in ourselves. In short, my companions and I hated and feared him; and neither our aversion, nor our fear, was at all removed by the lectures of our mothers on his good sense and agreeable manners.

These lectures were at last bestowed with particular emphasis on me, and, after a day or two's preamble of general commendations, he was formally proposed to me by my mother as a husband. He himself, though he made his court

chiefly to her, was now pretty sedulous in his attentions to me; and made many speeches to my beauty, and protestations of his love, which I heard with little emotion, but which my mother, and her friend, whose guests we were, represented as the genuine expressions of the most sincere and ardent attachment. Of love I had formed such ideas as girls of my age generally do; and though I had no particular preference for any one else, I did not hesitate in refusing him, for whom I had hitherto conceived nothing but disgust. My refusal increased the ardour of my lover in his suit: to me he talked in common-place language of the anguish it caused him; to my mother he spoke in the language of the world, and increased his offers in point of settlement to an exorbitant degree. Her influence was proportionally exerted. She persuaded, implored, and was angry. The luxury and happiness of that state which I might acquire

were warmly painted; the folly, the impiety, of depriving myself and her of so comfortable an establishment, was strongly held forth; the good qualities and generosity of Mr M—— were expatiated on; those ideas which I ventured to plead as reasons for my rejection, were ridiculed and exploded.—At my time of life, unused to resistance, fond of my mother, and accustomed to be guided by her; perhaps, too, somewhat dazzled with the prospect of the situation which this marriage would open to me; it is not surprising that my first resolutions were overcome. I became the wife of Mr M——.

For some time the happiness they had promised seemed to attend me. My husband was warm, if not tender in his attachment; my wishes for myself were not only indulged, but prompted; and his kindness to my mother and my friends was unbounded. I was grateful to Mr M——; I regarded, I esteemed, I wished to love

him. On the birth of a son, which happened about a year after our marriage, he redoubled his assiduities about me. I was more happy, more grateful; I looked on my boy, his father caressed him; and then it was that I loved Mr M—— indeed.

This happiness, however, it was not my good fortune long to enjoy. Some projects of political ambition, in which Mr M—— was engaged, called him from those domestic enjoyments which seemed for a while to have interested him, into more public life. We took up our residence in the capital, and Mr M—— introduced me to what is called the best company. Of his own society I soon came to enjoy but little. His attachment for me began visibly to decay, and by degrees he lost altogether the attentions which for a while outlived it. Sullen and silent when we were alone, and either neglectful, or con-

temptuous, when we had company, he treated me as one whom it would have degraded him to love, or to respect; whom it was scarce worth while to hate, or to despise. I was considered as merely a part of his establishment; and it was my duty to do the honours of his table, as it was that of his butler to attend to his sideboard, or of his groom to take care of his horses. Like them, too, I was to minister to his vanity, by the splendour of my appearance; I was to show that beauty of which he was master, in company, and at public places, and was to carry the trappings with which he had adorned it, to be envied by the poor, and admired by the wealthy. While my affection for him continued, I sometimes remonstrated against this. His answers were first indifferent, and then peevish. Young, giddy, and fond of amusement, I at last began to enjoy the part he assigned me, and entered warmly into that

round of dissipation, which, for a while, I had passed through without relish, and often with self-reproach. My son, who had been my tie to home, he took from me, to place him in the family of a former tutor of his own, who now kept a French academy; and I never had a second child. My society was made up of the gay and the thoughtless; women, who, like me, had no duty to perform, no laudable exertion to make, but who, in the bustle of idleness, were to lose all thought, and in the forms of the world all honest attachment.

For a considerable time, however, a sense of right, which I had imbibed in my infancy, rose up occasionally to embitter my pleasures, and to make me ashamed of the part I was acting. Whenever Mr M—— took the trouble of perceiving this, it served him but as a subject for ridicule. The restraints of religion, or nice morality, he was at pains to repre-

sent as the effects of fanaticism and pedantry; and when I seemed surprised, or shocked, at the principles he held forth, he threw in a sneer at my former situation, and hinted, that but for him I had been still the awkward ignorant thing he found me.

Yet this man expected that I should be virtuous, as that word is used by the world; that I should guard that honour which was his, while every other principle of my own rectitude was extinguished. For a long time it was so. My horror at that degree of depravity was not to be overcome, even amidst the levity, to call it no worse, of manners which I saw continually around me, and which, as far as it was a mark of fashion, he seemed to wish me to participate. Still in the possession of youth and beauty, I did not escape solicitations; but I repelled them with a degree of resentment which I often heard the very man, whose honour it guarded,

treat as affectation in any woman who should pretend it. He would frequently repeat, from the Letters of Lord Chesterfield, that a declaration of love to a woman was always to be ventured, because, even though it was rejected, she would accept of it as a compliment to her attractions. I had soon opportunities of knowing, that Mr M—— was as loose in his practice as in his principles. His infidelities, indeed, he was not at much pains to conceal; and while I continued to upbraid him, was at almost as little pains to excuse.

In such circumstances, was it to be wondered at, if my virtue was not always proof against the attacks to which it was exposed? With a husband unequal in years, lost to my affection, as I was cast from his, and treating me as one from whom no love or duty was to be expected; a husband, whose principles were corrupt, whose conversation was loose, whose

infidelity gave a sort of justice to mine; surrounded at the same time by young men, whose persons were attractive, whose manners were engaging, whose obsequious attentions were contrasted with my husband's neglect, and whose pretended adoration and respect were opposed to his rudeness and contempt:—Was it wonderful, that thus situated, exposed to temptation, and unguarded by principle, I should forget first the restraints of prudence, and then the obligations of virtue?

Resigned as I now am to my situation, I can look on it as a kind interposition of Providence, that detection soon followed my first deviations from virtue, before I had lost the feelings of shame and contrition, before I had wandered an irrecoverable distance from duty, from principle, from religion. Here, in this place of banishment which the mercy of my husband allotted me, I have met with some benevolent guides, who have led me to the on-

ly sources of comfort for misery and remorse like mine; who have given me a station in which, amidst the obloquy of the world, amidst the humiliation of repentance, I can still in some degree respect myself; who have taught me to cultivate my mind, to improve its powers, to regulate its principles; who have led me to a juster value of this life, to a sincere hope of the next.

Humbled, and I trust improved by affliction, I will not indulge either vindication, or resentment; the injuries I have done my husband, I am willing to expiate (as alas! he knows I do) by penitence and by suffering; yet, for his own sake, and for the warning of others, let me ask him, If, for these injuries to him, and sufferings to me, he never imputes any blame to himself? I am told he is loud in his charges of my ingratitude and perfidy. I again repeat, that I will not offer to apologise for my weakness, or my crimes. But

it would be more dignified in him, as well as more just, were he to forget rather than to reproach the woman, whose person he bought, whose affections he despised, whose innocence he corrupted,—whose ruin he has caused!

SOPHIA M——.

No. 76. Saturday, *July* 15, 1786.

This day's paper I devote to correspondents. The first of the following letters I was particularly desirous to insert soon, as its subject is of that transient kind which might suffer from delay. In dress, as well as in character, there is often, in these times of change, "the Cynthia of the minute."

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Brown Square, Edinburgh,
July 6, 1786.

SIR,

I understand that the gentlemen who formerly held the same sort of office which you now exercise among us, were in use to appoint certain deputies, to whom they

committed particular departments. As you, Sir, seem now to be so well established in yours, that you may possibly think of following their example, I make bold to solicit an appointment, or, failing of that, your patronage at least to an undertaking, of which this town seems to stand much in need, and for which I flatter myself I am tolerably well qualified.

One of your extensive observation, Mr Lounger, must have remarked, how defective we are in point of general or early information in dress, and how long it is before we accommodate ourselves universally to that perfect standard which the metropolis of England affords. We are often miserably in the rear of the fashion; and, except one or two favoured ladies, who have been accidentally in London, the bulk of our fine women don't get into the mode till it is quite upon the wane among our southern neighbours. The ostrich head did not make its appear-

ance here till half a season after it had been worn in London. The other end of the ostrich was still later of reaching us. That was indeed partly owing to an accident; the first set (as it is a bulky article) was coming down by sea in a ship that was wrecked, and a friend of mine, who had the merit of the first commission, lost considerably in bottomry on the vessel. At this very moment I see pass my door a great many Brimstone ribbons, though it is two months since my letters from London inform me they were quite out there. As long ago as the Commemoration, there were none but Celestials present, not a single Brimstone in the Abbey.

This inconvenience, Sir, might easily be remedied, by a speedier communication of intelligence between the capitals of England and of Scotland; more especially if a public appointment were made of some person, from whom such intelli-

gence could here be obtained, and who should be answerable for its authenticity. It is for this office, Mr Lounger, I venture to propose myself. I have been at a good deal of pains, Sir, to establish such a correspondence at London, and even at Paris, as I trust will enable me to supply myself, not only with intelligence, but with models of every article of dress, as soon as it grows into confirmed fashion; and I will take care to exhibit, at certain stated seasons, a set of Poupées, which I flatter myself will convey from my shop-window a perfect idea of the reigning dress and undress of the fashionable world. At present, the little figures which are stationed there, are looked on merely as toys for children; but I hereby give notice, that, with your leave, Mr Lounger, I shall, on the first day of the ensuing race-week, convert them to a more dignified, as well as a more useful purpose; that they will then represent, on one side

of my window, a set of fashionably dressed gentlemen, and on the other a party of fashionably dressed ladies.

There never, I imagine, Sir, was a period when such a standard was of so much importance in this country. The proportion of the value of dress to that of the wearer, particularly in the fair sex, is wonderfully increased of late years in Edinburgh. Of the first I think I am a tolerably good judge, and can estimate, I believe, within a few shillings (supposing the underworks to be of the ordinary materials,) the value of any lady's apparel. Of the value of the lady herself I do not pretend to be a judge: in some instances, within my little experience, I have observed the estimate to differ considerably at two different periods, as it happened to be made by the lover or the husband; at the first, they bore a premium, as we say in business; at the latter, there was rather a discount. But taking things at an

average, I am told, our mothers and grandmothers were as precious in themselves as our wives and daughters. But as for their covering, there is, in all ranks, a great increase of cost, even in my time: for though the old Points and Brocades came high at first, they went through generations, like an entailed estate; our dress has as much the advantage in variety as in elegance; it does not outlast a lady's fancy. It was but the other morning I sold some of my Bloom of Roses to the wife of a grocer of my acquaintance, who looked at some of my toys from beneath a bonnet that must have stood her in a couple of guineas at the least; yet were she to be set up to auction—but I wish to avoid all personal reflections, Mr Lounger.

You, Sir, who understand such subjects, might perhaps wish to correct the disproportion between apparel and station, between the gaudiness of dress, and the age

and character of the wearer: I only pretend to regulate it according to the mode, or perhaps a little according to the complexion. In both I see the greatest mistakes at present. There is a lamentable neglect among us of all propriety in that matter. We are ill informed even of the names of the articles we wear. People come to years of discretion scarce know the difference between a plain hat and a Lunardi; and I have heard a lady, who I was told had a very good education, mistake a Parachute for a Fitzherbert.

Besides the knowledge of dress in the abstract, Mr Lounger, there is another branch of instruction, which lies, if I may presume to say so, in the middle between your province and mine, that is, the art of making the most of one's self in one's dress, after one has got it on. I believe, Sir, I can find an assistant, who will undertake this department; who can teach the ladies the smart toss suitable to the new-fashion-

ed turned-up hat, the languish of eye that is to be practised under the curtain of the Lunardi, and the hoydenish roll that becomes the Laitiere; and in the same way, who will shew the gentlemen the lolling air that suits the open waistcoat and slender switch, and the fierce one that accords with the knotted neckcloth and short thick bludgeon. In the mean time, however, I shall content myself with exhibiting my figures in a quiet state: if I meet with suitable encouragement, I may, with my friend's assistance, turn them into Automata, and teach them to go through their exercise after the most approved method.—I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your most obedient

and most humble servant,

W. JENKIN.

I own I was a little surprised at the style of Mr Jenkin's letter, till, turning over the leaf, I found a postscript, in which (after urging a plea of favour on account of the late imposition of the perfumery-tax, which was to take place the very day his letter is dated) he candidly acknowledges, that the substance only of the letter is his own, but that his proposal was put into shape by a neighbour and customer of his. I am perfectly satisfied of the usefulness of his plan; and, as far as I may assume any jurisdiction in the matter, am extremely willing to invest him with the appointment in question, provided the gentleman who wrote his letter continues to act as his secretary.

As to his proposal of teaching young ladies and gentlemen the exercise of dress, I shall take time to consider of it. At present I am rather inclined to believe it unnecessary. I think he does my countrymen and countrywomen injustice, in

supposing them to require instruction in that particular. On some late field-days, or rather field-evenings, at which I happened to be present, I have seen some of them go through their evolutions in a very masterly and mistressly manner.

The second letter was left at my editor's, as the shop-boy informed Mr Creech, by a short round-faced gentleman, who seemed, when he gave it in, to be very much out of humour.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

SIR,

I CANNOT help complaining to you of a grievance which I do not remember to have seen taken notice of, at least not exactly in the way it affects me, in any treatise on conversation.

Here in the coffeehouse I frequent (and

you, for aught I know, may have often witnessed the thing in your proper person) is one Mr Glib, who is the greatest questioner I ever met with in the whole course of my life. This however, though plague enough of itself, is but half the injury of which we have to complain from him. Mr Glib, Sir, not content with the question, always takes the answer upon him likewise; so that it is impossible to get in a word. I shall illustrate my meaning, by giving you, verbatim, his conversation this morning. He came in wiping his forehead, and, as I hoped, out of breath; but he was scarcely seated when he began as usual: "Mercy on us! how hot it is! Boy, fetch me a glass of port and water.—Dr Phlogiston, did you observe what the thermometer stood at this morning? Mine was at 76 in the shade. —Well, this has cleared my throat of the dust a little.—What a dust there is in the New Town! Gentlemen, were any of you

in Prince's Street since breakfast? I went to call on a friend who lives at the farther side of the square, and I had like to have been smothered.—Sir John, how were you entertained at the play last night? Mrs Pope's playing was admirable. Were not you amazed at the thinness of the house? But fashion, not taste, rules every thing. Give the women but a crowd within, and a squeeze at the door, and they don't care a pin for the excellence of the entertainment.—Captain Paragraph, how long is it since the post came in? I got my paper about an hour ago.—When is it thought Parliament will rise? I have a letter that says the 12th.——Mr M'Blubber, you are a Highlander, what is your opinion of those encouragements to the fishery? I have no great notion of building towns; find the birds, say I, and they will find nests for themselves.—Mr Rupée, (you have been in India), what do you say to this impeachment? I am inclined to

think it will come to nothing.—Pray, what is the exact definition of a *bulse*? I understand it to be a package for diamonds, as a *rouleau* is for guineas.—Ha! is not that Mr Hazard walking yonder, who came yesterday from London? Yes it is, I know him by his gait.—Sir, is my cane any where near you? Oh! yes, I left it in the corner of the box.—Boy, how much did I owe the house since yesterday? Eighteen-pence. Here it is."

Now, Mr Lounger, you must be satisfied what an aggravated offence this way of talking of Mr Glib's is, against other people, who wish to have some share in the conversation. The most unconscionable querists, if they keep within their own department, are contented with half the talk of the company; Mr Glib cuts it in two, and very modestly helps himself to both pieces. When he has set the fancy agog, and one's tongue is just ready to give it vent, pop, he comes between one

and the game he has started, and takes the word out of one's mouth. Do write a few lines, Sir, to let Mr Glib know how unreasonable and how ridiculous his behaviour is; it is as if one should play at shuttlecock alone, or take a game at piquet, one's right hand against one's left, or sit down with three dead men at whist. —I should never have done, were I to say all I think of its absurdity.

I am a married man, Mr Lounger, and have a wife and three grown-up daughters at home. I am a pretty constant frequenter of the coffeehouse, where I go to have the pleasure of a little conversation; but if Mr Glib is to come there every morning as he does at present, never to have done asking questions, and never to allow any body but himself to answer them, I may just as well stay at home.

Yours, &c.

GABRIEL GOSSIP.

Before I stir further in this matter, Mr Gossip will be kind enough to inform me, whether it would satisfy him, if Mr Glib were allowed to ask questions, and he, Mr Gossip, to answer them, for all the rest of the coffeehouse.

No. 78. Saturday, *July* 29, 1786.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Sir,

One of your earliest correspondents gave us an account of a worthy Baronet, a relation of his, who spent all his life intending to do many things, without ever having actually done any thing. Though this may not be a useful, it seems to me a very harmless way of passing one's days. I am the wife, Sir, of quite another kind of gentleman. My husband, Mr Bustle, always does things first, and then thinks of them afterwards.

One of the most important concerns of his life, I must own to you, he conducted in this manner, and I was his accomplice.

We married on three days' acquaintance at the house of a relation of his, where we happened to meet on a visit. We have, however, been a very decently happy couple, and have a family of very fine children. Mr Bustle, indeed, does not depend very much on us for the happiness of his life, and he has no time for conferring much happiness, or bestowing much attention on us. He is of so active a spirit, so busy, so constantly employed, that pleasures of a domestic or a quiet kind do not enter at all into his plan of life.

His father was a careful economical man, and left him in a very comfortable situation, with a large estate, a set of thriving tenants, a good house, a well-laid-out farm, and a well-stocked garden. When we went home, we had nothing to do, as the saying is, but to draw in our chairs, and sit down. But sitting, however much at his ease, was not my husband's way. He soon made a great deal of business,

though he had found none. It was discovered, that the principal apartments of our house were too low; so it was unroofed, to have some feet added to its height, and a new lead-covered platform put a-top, to command a view of a particular turn of the river that runs through the grounds. This kept us two winters in one of our tenant's houses, in which too, all the time we were in it, something or other was a-doing; so that the carpenter's hammer was heard every hour of the day. We had scarce got back to our own house again, when it was found that the water came through our lead-covered platform: so he had the pleasure of having that changed into a cupola, with a roof of a different construction, for the view of the river was still to be preserved. But next year, my husband discovered, that a plantation was necessary on a particular knoll; so the view of the river we had paid so much for, was shut out by a clump. The

garden was the next subject of amendment, in which an excellent fruit-wall was pulled down, to have it rebuilt on a new plan; by which new plan we have got a very beautiful wall, and trees admirably well dressed, but unfortunately we have lost all our fruit. The same thing happened by our acquisition of a new pigeon-house, which, notwithstanding the well-known superstition of its boding the death of the wife, my husband ventured to build. Luckily I survive the omen; but we have scarcely had a pigeon-pie since. In point of ornamental alteration, the same variety has taken place: We had first a smooth green lawn, though at the expence of cutting down some of the finest timber in the country; we then got a serpentine shrubbery, which within these two years has been dug up, to make room for a field with dropping trees, fenced by a ha-ha!

While he was beautifying his house and grounds, Mr Bustle was not inatten-

tive to the improvement of his estate. After getting a new survey made of it, by a very fine gentleman, who came from your town in a post-chaise and four, he sat down one morning with the plan before him, a scale and a pair of compasses in his hand, and that gentleman at his elbow; and while I was pouring out their tea, they raised the rents 200 per cent. as Mr Quadrant was pleased to express himself. Presently all our former tenants were turned out of their farms, except a few young men whom the late Mr Bustle, for what reason I know not, had marked in his rent-roll with a +, and a new set put into possession, who, as Mr Quadrant said, knew the capabilities of ground. Then there was such a pulling down of walls to make little fields large, and a planting of hedges to make large fields little; every thing, in short, was turned topsy-turvy: but what won't people do to get rich? Mr Quadrant's calculations, however, have

not answered with all the exactness we expected. The estate indeed, as our old steward told me, was considerably increased in its rent; "but a-well-a-day! my lady," said he, "it nets nothing." So Mr Bustle was obliged to alter that plan, after he had tried it for several years. He has got some of the old tenants back again; but a considerable part of his estate he has reserved in his own hands, of which he says he will treble the produce, by turning it into a sheep-walk. During this period, likewise, he has made several attempts to discover coal; and about three years ago, narrowly missed being worth 10,000l. a-year by the unexpected failure of a lead-mine. These are Mr Bustle's serious occupations; his amusements are no less various, and he is equally ardent in his pursuit of them. He is a hunter, a shooter, and an angler: breaks his own horses, trains his own dogs, and is reckoned the

most expert cocker within a hundred miles of us.

To do him justice, however, he is by no means selfish, either in his business, or his pleasures. If any of his neighbours have an estate to be sold, a farm to be let, a garden to be laid out, a house to be built, a horse to be broke, or a pointer to be made; Mr Bustle will ride half a dozen miles at any time to give them his assistance and advice.

Unfortunately his own family are almost the only persons of whom he does not busy himself in the management and superintendance. To our two daughters I have endeavoured to give some little education at home; for my husband was always so occupied, either with his own affairs, or the affairs of other people, that, though I often pressed him to send them to some place where they could acquire the accomplishments suitable to their sex and rank in life, he always delayed the

measure till somehow or other the opportunity was lost. As for our three boys, they have cost me many an uneasy moment. They were sent to an academy in Yorkshire, to grass, as my husband phrased it, at first, with a long plan for their education afterwards; but at grass they continued till within these few months, when they returned home perfect colts indeed, with abundance of health and strength to be sure, but without a word of language that could be understood, in their mouths, or a single idea, worth the having, in their heads. They had acquired, it is true, some knowledge, of which their father has made considerable use since their return, and with which he appears so well pleased, as to have little thoughts of sending them any where else. I have heard him declare, with much exultation, that he would back them, at riding a horse, trowling for a pike, or

trimming a cock, against any three boys of their age in the kingdom.

He finds the more occasion for their assistance as deputies in matters of this kind, as of late he has betaken himself chiefly to the business of the public, having taken a very strong inclination to promote the good of his country. The death of a gentleman who had been long in the commission of the peace, has thrown the business of that department chiefly on Mr Bustle, who now does little else but study law-cases, convene meetings about highways, turnpikes, bridges, and game-licences, and ride all over the country, dispensing justice, redressing wrongs, removing nuisances, and punishing delinquents. In this the activity and eagerness of his nature has sometimes, I am afraid, in the practice of his office, got the better of the knowledge he had stored up on the theory of it. Besides receiving several incendiary letters, which he did

not value a rush, and even I should have had the courage to despise, there are two or three actions of assault and false imprisonment raised against him, for acts done in the course of keeping the peace of the country. Indeed his plans for keeping the peace have turned out, like some others formed with the best intention in the world, exactly the reverse of what he expected from them, the country having been in perpetual war ever since he began putting them in execution. There have been such bickerings amongst the gentlemen about widening of roads, removing of dunghills, pulling down cottages, and punishing of vagrants, that one half of the neighbours are scarce in speaking-terms with the other. Some of them, who are enemies to the patriotic measures of Mr Bustle, have, I understand, privately stirred up and supported those law-suits, in which his public spirit has involved him. These I cannot

help being uneasy about, as of very serious consequence to his fortune and family; but he himself seems not to regret them in the least. He assures me, he shall carry them all with costs, and talks rather with satisfaction of going to town, to assist in their management. If you should happen to meet with him, Mr Lounger, I should be happy, for my part, if you could teach him somewhat of your love of ease and indolence. I have many reasons for wishing to forego all the reputation he will acquire by his activity, for a little peace and quiet. There is a saying of his father's, which I have heard the same old steward I mentioned before repeat very often, but Mr Bustle would never pay any regard to it: "When things are well as they are, he's a fool who tries how they may be."

I am, &c.

BARBARA BUSTLE.

No. 80. Saturday, *August* 12, 1786.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Dic mihi cras istud, Posthume, quando venit?
Mart.

Sir,

I flatter myself you will not think me unworthy of your correspondence. Most of the members of my family have taken the liberty of communicating the particulars of their situation, or of praying redress of their grievances from the authors of the periodical works of the time; and a certain dark-complexioned relation of mine has had a petition to yourself, laid before the public in your 53d number. I think, Mr Lounger, I may say without much arrogance, I am not less deserving

of your favour than her. She, I know, pretends to have sometimes assisted you in your labours; but it is to me you look for their reward.

Of that relation, Mr Lounger, since I have mentioned her, I may first complain. She was naturally of a serious and rather melancholy cast; but of late a fashionable life has quite altered her disposition. She has become intolerably light-headed, gay, as her friends call it, and allows her affairs to get into the greatest confusion and disorder; all of which it falls upon me to re-establish and put to rights again. Her gaiety, when carried the ridiculous length to which in town she frequently pushes it, is the occasion of much sadness to me; her festivity gives me many a headach; her extravagance has frequently threatened me with a jail; and her impertinence brought me in danger of my life.

I am, generally speaking indeed, the most unfortunate person in the world, in regard to my predecessors. They got a thousand things upon trust, which they have left me to answer for. With all ranks and conditions of men, I am constantly the scape-goat for every thing that is amiss, the bail for all misdemeanors, the security in all obligations. My burdens are now become so intolerable, that I am resolved (through your channel, if you will allow me) to rid myself of them at once, and to take out a commission of bankruptcy in the Lounger. What sort of division my circumstances will allow, you will please signify to the principal classes of my creditors in your next paper.

Tell such of them as may look for me at court, that I do not hold myself bound for above one shilling in the pound of the promises and notes of hand of my ancestors. With some people in place there,

I have pretty long accounts to settle; but to these I know they do not pay much attention, for a very good reason indeed, that the balance is generally against them.

Let that class, who frequent courts of law, know, that I will not pretend to clear above a tenth part of the incumbrances that are there laid upon me. In all the courts, I must leave the other nine parts to be settled by my successors. In chancery, I don't know whether my great-great-grandson will be able to discharge them.

Be so kind as acquaint the projectors of various denominations, who are so deep in my books, that I cannot answer above one in a thousand of the draughts they will probably make upon me. Nay, I will frankly tell them, that it is likely they may lose more than even the money they were made to advance for me. But as most of them expected usurious inte-

rest, their losses do not touch me very nearly.

I must inform those lovers, who have trusted me, that they are of all my creditors the most likely to be offended with me. They are indeed in a very singular situation, with regard to the securities of mine in their possession. If they receive payment, it is a hundred to one but they will be undone by it.

My bonds to beauties must suffer a very great discount. They are indeed of such a nature, that prescription soon bars them; and most of them are so conceived, that coverture or marriage in the obligee renders them absolutely void.

Authors will be often disappointed in the claims they pretend to have upon me. I never receive a fiftieth part of the books that modern writers desire their booksellers to send me. In order, however, to conciliate your favour, Sir, I will give you my promise, (though it is but fair to

confess that I sometimes forget my promises,) that the Lounger shall make one of my library.

Your most obedient servant,

TO-MORROW.

I HAVE lately received several letters on the subject of the stage, and among others, one signed Nerva, censuring, in very strong terms, that boisterous and noisy kind of applause which, in the midst of the most affecting passages of a tragedy, the bulk of a British audience are disposed to indulge in. It seems to have been written during the time of Mrs Pope's late performance in our theatre, whose tones of pity and of tenderness, my correspondent complains, were often interrupted, or rendered inaudible, by the drumming of sticks, and the clapping of hands, in the pit and gallery.

He was the more struck with the impropriety, he says, from his being accompanied by a gentleman, a native of Italy, though enough a proficient in our language to understand the play. He describes "the surprise and horror of the susceptible Albani," (so it seems the stranger is called,) accustomed as he had been to the decorum of the Italian stage, to find, instead of silent and involuntary tears, the roar and riot with which our audience received the most pathetic speeches of one of the best of our tragedies.

"On Sunday," continues my correspondent, "Albani and I went to church. The plainness of the edifice, and the simplicity of our worship, struck him much; yet he was pleased with the decency which prevailed, and charmed with the discourse." "I am surprised," said he, as we walked home, "that so elegant a preacher is not a greater favourite with the public." "You are mistaken," I replied, "he has long

been their favourite." Nay," said he, "do not tell me so; you saw they did not give him a single mark of applause during the whole discourse, nor even at the end." "I laughed, Mr Lounger, and so perhaps will you; but I believe you will find it difficult to assign any good reason, why silence, attention, and tears, which are thought ample approbation in the one place, should be held insufficient in the other; or why that boisterous applause, which is thought so honourable in the theatre, should be thought a disgrace to merit in the pulpit, or at the bar."

I cannot, however, perfectly agree with my correspondent in this last observation. At the bar, indeed, the clapping of hands, and the beating the floor with people's sticks, might do well enough; but at the bar it is a rule, never to make a noise for nothing. In the church, not to mention the indecency of the thing, disturbances

of that kind are perfectly averse to the purpose for which many grave and good Christians go thither.

In the playhouse, besides the prescriptive right which the audience have now acquired to this sort of freedom, I think that part of the house by which it is commonly exercised, have much to plead in its defence. The boxes frequently contrive to drown the noise of the stage, and it is but fair that the pit and gallery should in their turn drown the noise of the boxes.

My correspondent seems to allow this sort of applause at the representation of comedy, or at least of farce; and indeed I am inclined to think, that in some of our late farces, a very moral use may be made of it, as the less that is heard of them by the boxes the better. The cudgels of the audience, of the barbarity of which Nerva complains so warmly, cannot be better employed, except perhaps they could be applied to recompense the

merit of the author, instead of the talents of the actors. Moral writers on the subject of the stage used to vent their reproaches against the comic authors of the last age, who mixed so much indecency with their wit. The censure does not exactly apply to the *petite piece* writers of our days; for they keep strictly to the unity of composition, and mix no wit with their indecency. I fairly confess, that I have been obliged to abate somewhat of the severity of my former opinion with regard to the wicked wits of the old school, and am content to go back to Wycherley and Congreve, having always thought, with my friend Colonel Caustic, that if one must sin, it is better to sin like a gentleman. Besides, a very dull or a very innocent person may possibly miss the allusion of a free speech, when it is covered with the veil of wit or of irony. But the good things of our modern farce-mongers have nothing of disguise about them; the dishes

they are pleased to serve up to us are not garlicked ragouts, but ragouts of garlic. I was much pleased with the answer which I heard a plain country-gentleman give to another in the pit some weeks ago, who observed to him, that the farce was droll and laughable enough, but that there was a good deal of *double entendre* in it. "I don't know what you may think double," said he in reply; "but in my mind, it was as plain *single entendre* as ever I heard in my life."

No. 82. Saturday, *August* 26, 1786.

Je n'arme contre lui que le fruit de son crime.
Crebillon.

The effects of moral instruction and precept on the mind have been rated very highly by some grave and worthy men; while by others, the experience of their inefficacy, in regulating the conduct of the hearer or reader, has been cited as an indisputable proof of their unimportance. Among those, say they, on whom moral eloquence has employed all her powers, who have been tutored by the wisest and most virtuous teachers, and have had the advice and direction of the ablest and most persuasive guides, how few are there whose future conduct has answered to the instruc-

tion they received, or the maxims which were so often repeated to them. Natural disposition, or acquired habits, regulate the tenor of our lives; and neither the sermon that persuades, nor the relation that moves, has any permanent effect on the actions of him who listens, or who weeps.

Yet, though examples of their efficacy are not very frequent, it does not altogether follow, that the discourse or the story are useless and vain. Stronger motives will no doubt overpower weaker ones, and those which constantly assail will prevail over others which seldom occur. Passion, therefore, will sometimes be obeyed when reason is forgotten, and corrupt society will at length overcome the best early impressions. But the effects of that reason, or of those impressions, we are not always in condition to estimate fairly. The examples of their failure are easily known, and certain of being observed; the instances of such as have been preserved

from surrounding contagion by their influence, are traced with difficulty, and strike us less when they are traced.

Formal precepts and hypothetical cautions are indeed frequently offered to youth and inexperience, in a manner so ungracious, as neither to command their attention, nor conciliate their liking. He who says I am to instruct and to warn, with a face of instruction or admonition, prepares his audience for hearing what the young and the lively always avoid as tiresome, or fear as unpleasant. A more willing and a deeper impression will be made, when the observation arises without being prompted, when the understanding is addressed through the feelings. It was this which struck me so forcibly in the story of Father Nicholas. I never felt so strongly the evils of dissipation, nor ever was so ashamed of the shame of being virtuous.

It was at a small town in Brittany, in which there was a convent of Benedictines,

where particular circumstances had induced me to take up my residence for a few weeks. They had some pictures, which strangers used to visit. I went with a party, whose purpose was to look at them: mine in such places is rather to look at men. If in the world we behold the shifting scene which prompts observation, we see in such secluded societies a sort of still life, which nourishes thought, which gives subject for meditation. I confess, however, I have often been disappointed; I have seen a group of faces under their cowls, on which speculation could build nothing; mere common-place countenances, which might have equally well belonged to a corporation of bakers, or butchers. Most of those in the convent I now visited were of that kind: one, however, was of a very superior order; that of a monk, who kneeled at a distance from the altar, near a Gothic window, through the painted panes of which, a gleamy light touch-

ed his forehead, and threw a dark Rembrandt shade on the hollow of a large, black, melancholy eye. It was impossible not to take notice of him. He looked up, involuntarily, no doubt, to a picture of our Saviour bearing his cross; the similarity of the attitude, and the quiet resignation of the two countenances, formed a resemblance that could not but strike every one. "It is father Nicholas," whispered our conductor, "who is of all the brotherhood the most rigid to himself, and the kindest to other men. To the distressed, to the sick, and to the dying, he is always ready to administer assistance and consolation. Nobody ever told him a misfortune in which he did not take an interest, or requested good offices which he refused to grant: yet the austerity and mortifications of his own life are beyond the strictest rules of his order; and it is only from what he does for others, that one supposes him to feel any touch of humanity." The

subject seemed to make our informer eloquent. I was young, curious, enthusiastic; it sunk into my heart, and I could not rest till I was made acquainted with Father Nicholas. Whether from the power of the introduction I procured, from his own benevolence, or from my deportment, the good man looked on me with the complacency of a parent. "It is not usual," said he, "my son, for people at your age to solicit acquaintance like mine. To you the world is in its prime; why should you anticipate its decay? Gaiety and cheerfulness spring up around you; why should you seek out the abodes of melancholy and of woe? Yet though dead to the pleasures, I am not insensible to the charities of life. I feel your kindness, and wish for an opportunity to requite it."——He perceived my turn for letters, and shewed me some curious MSS. and some scarce books, which belonged to their convent: these were not the communications I sought;

accident gave me an opportunity of obtaining the knowledge I valued more, the knowledge of Father Nicholas, the story of his sorrows, the cause of his austerities.

One evening when I entered his cell, after knocking at the door without being heard, I perceived him kneeling before a crucifix, to which was affixed a small picture, which I took to be that of the blessed Virgin. I stood behind him, uncertain whether I should wait the close of his devotional exercise, or retire unperceived as I came. His face was covered with his hand, and I heard his stifled groans. A mixture of compassion and of curiosity fixed me to my place. He took his hands from his eyes with a quickened movement, as if a pang had forced them thence: he laid hold of the picture, which he kissed twice, pressed it to his bosom, and then, gazing on it earnestly, burst into tears. After a few moments, he clasped his hands together, threw a look up to hea-

ven, and, muttering some words which I could not hear, drew a deep sigh, which seemed to close the account of his sorrows for the time, and, rising from his knees, discovered me. I was ashamed of my situation, and stammered out some apology for my unintentional interruption of his devotions.—" Alas!" said he, " be not deceived; these are not the tears of devotion; not the meltings of piety, but the wringings of remorse. Perhaps, young man, it may stead thee to be told the story of my sufferings, and of my sins: ingenuous as thy nature seems, it may be exposed to temptations like mine; it may be the victim of laudable feelings perverted, of virtue betrayed, of false honour, and mistaken shame."

My name is St Hubert; my family ancient and respectable, though its domains, from various untoward events, had been contracted much within their former extent. I lost my father before I knew the

misfortune of losing him; and the indulgence of my mother, who continued a widow, made up, in the estimation of a young man, for any want of that protection or guidance which another parent might have afforded. After having passed with applause through the ordinary studies which the capital of our province allowed an opportunity of acquiring, my mother sent me to Paris, along with the son of a neighbouring family, who, though of less honourable descent, was much richer than ours. Young Delaserre (that was my companion's name) was intended for the army; me, from particular circumstances, which promised success in that line, my mother and her friends had destined for the long robe, and had agreed for the purchase of a charge for me when I should be qualified for it. Delaserre had a sovereign contempt for any profession but that of arms, and took every opportunity of inspiring me with the same

sentiments. In the capital I had this prejudice every day more and more confirmed. The *fierté* of every man who had served, the insolent superiority he claimed over his fellow-citizens, dazzled my ambition, and awed my bashfulness. From nature I had that extreme sensibility of shame, which could not stand against the ridicule even of much inferior men. Ignorance would often confound me in matters of which I was perfectly well informed, from his superior effrontery; and the best established principles of my mind would sometimes yield to the impudence of assuming sophistry, or of unblushing vice. To the profession which my relations had marked out for me, attention, diligence, and sober manners, were naturally attached; having once set down that profession as humiliating, I concluded its attendant qualities to be equally dishonourable. I was ashamed of virtues to which I was naturally incli-

ned, a bully in vices which I hated and despised. Delaserre enjoyed my apostacy from innocence, as a victory he had gained. At school he was much my inferior, and I attained every mark of distinction to which he had aspired in vain. In Paris he triumphed in his turn; his superior wealth enabled him to command the appearances of superior dignity and show; the cockade in his hat inspired a confidence which my situation did not allow; and, bold as he was in dissipation and debauchery, he led me as an inferior, whom he had taught the art of living, whom he had first trained to independence and to manhood. My mother's ill-judged kindness supplied me with the means of those pleasures which my companions induced me to share, if pleasures they might be called, which I often partook with uneasiness, and reflected on with remorse. Sometimes, though but too seldom, I was as much a hypocrite on the other side: I was self-denied,

beneficent, and virtuous, by stealth; while the time and money which I had so employed, I boasted to my companions of having spent in debauchery, in riot, and in vice.

The habits of life, however, into which I had been led, began by degrees to blunt my natural feelings of rectitude, and to take from vice the restraints of conscience. But the dangerous connection I had formed was broken off by the accident of Delaserre's receiving orders to join his regiment, then quartered at Dunkirk. At his desire I gave him the convoy as far as to a relation's house in Picardy, where he was to spend a day or two in his way. "I will introduce you," said he in a tone of pleasantry, "because you will be a favourite; my cousin Santonges is as sober and precise as you were, when I first found you." The good man, whom he thus characterised, possessed indeed all those virtues of which the ridicule of Delaserre had sometimes made me ashamed, but

which it had never made me entirely cease to revere. In his family I regained the station which, in our dissipated society at Paris, I had lost. His example encouraged, and his precepts fortified, my natural disposition to goodness; but his daughter, Emilia de Santonges, was a more interesting assistant to it. After my experience of the few of her sex with whom we were acquainted in town, the native beauty, the unaffected manners of Emilia, were infinitely attractive. Delaserre, however, found them insipid and tiresome. He left his kinsman's the third morning after his arrival, promising, as soon as his regiment should be reviewed, to meet me in Paris. "Except in Paris," said he, "we exist merely, but do not live." I found it very different. I lived but in the presence of Emilia de Santonges. But why should I recal those days of purest felicity, or think of what my Emilia was! for not long after she was mine. In the winter they

came to Paris, on account of her father's health, which was then rapidly on the decline. I tended him with that assiduity which was due to his friendship, which the company of Emilia made more an indulgence than a duty. Our cares, and the skill of his physicians, were fruitless. He died, and left his daughter to my friendship. It was then that I first dared to hope for her love; that over the grave of her father I mingled my tears with Emilia's, and tremblingly ventured to ask, if she thought me worthy of comforting her sorrows? Emilia was too innocent for disguise, too honest for affectation. She gave her hand to my virtues, (for I then was virtuous,) to reward at the same time, and to confirm them. We retired to Santonges, where we enjoyed as much felicity as perhaps the lot of humanity will allow. My Emilia's merit was equal to her happiness; and I may say, without vanity, since it is now my shame, that

the since wretched St Hubert was then thought to deserve the blessings he enjoyed.

No. 83. Saturday, *September* 2, 1786.

CONTINUATION OF THE STORY OF FATHER NICHOLAS.

In this state of peaceful felicity we had lived something more than a year, when my Emilia found herself with child. On that occasion my anxiety was such as a husband who dotes upon his wife may be supposed to feel. In consequence of that anxiety, I proposed our removing for some weeks to Paris, where she might have abler assistance, than our province could afford in those moments of danger which she soon expected. To this she objected with earnestness, from a variety of motives; but most of my neighbours applauded my resolution; and one, who was the nephew of a farmer-general, and had

purchased the estate on which his father had been a tenant, told me, the danger from their country *accoucheurs* was such, that nobody, who could afford to go to Paris, would think of trusting them. I was a little tender on the reproach of poverty, and absolutely determined for the journey. To induce my wife's consent, I had another pretext, being left executor to a friend who had died in Paris, and had effects remaining there. Emilia at last consented, and we removed to town accordingly.

For some time I scarce ever left our hotel: it was the same at which Emilia and her father had lodged when he came to Paris to die, and leave her to my love. The recollection of those scenes, tender and interesting as they were, spread a sort of melancholy indulgence over our mutual society, by which the company of any third person could scarcely be brooked. My wife had some of those sad pre-

sages, which women of her sensibility often feel in the condition she was then in. All my attention and solicitude were excited to combat her fears. "I shall not live," she would say, "to revisit Santonges: but my Henry will think of me there: in those woods in which we have so often walked, by that brook to the fall of which we have listened together, and felt in silence what language, at least what mine, my love, could not speak." —The good Father was overpowered by the tenderness of the images that rushed upon his mind, and tears for a moment choked his utterance. After a short space he began, with a voice faultering and weak.

Pardon the emotion that stopped my recital. You pity me; but it is not always that my tears are of so gentle a kind; the images her speech recalled softened my feelings into sorrow; but I am not worthy of them.—Hear the confession of my remorse.

The anxiety of my Emilia was at last dissipated by her safe delivery of a boy; and on this object of a new kind of tenderness we gazed with inexpressible delight. Emilia suckled the infant herself, as well from the idea of duty and of pleasure in tending it, as from the difficulty of finding in Paris a nurse to be trusted. We proposed returning to the country as soon as the re-establishment of her strength would permit: mean time, during her hours of rest, I generally went out to finish the business which the trust of my deceased friend had devolved upon me.

In passing through the Thuilleries, in one of those walks, I met my old companion Delaserre. He embraced me with a degree of warmth which I scarce expected from my knowledge of his disposition, or the length of time for which our correspondence had been broken off. He had heard, he said, accidentally, of my being in town, but had sought me for several

days in vain. In truth, he was of all men one whom I was the most afraid of meeting. I had heard in the country of his unbounded dissipation and extravagance; and there were some stories to his prejudice, which were only not believed, from an unwillingness to believe them in people whom the corruptions of the world had not familiarized to baseness; yet I found he still possessed a kind of superiority over my mind, which I was glad to excuse, by forcing myself to think him less unworthy than he was reported. After a variety of inquiries, and expressing his cordial satisfaction at the present happiness I enjoyed, he pressed me to spend that evening with him so earnestly, that though I had made it a sort of rule to be at home, I was ashamed to offer an apology, and agreed to meet him at the hour he appointed.

Our company consisted only of Delaserre himself, and two other officers, one a good deal older than any of us, who had the

cross of St Louis, and the rank of colonel, whom I thought the most agreeable man I had ever met with. The unwillingness with which I had left home, and the expectation of a very different sort of party where I was going, made me feel the present one doubly pleasant. My spirits, which were rather low when I went in, from that constraint I was prepared for, rose in proportion to the pleasantry around me, and the perfect ease in which I found myself with this old officer, who had information, wit, sentiment, every thing I valued most, and every thing I least expected in a society selected by Delaserre. It was late before we parted; and at parting, I received, not without pleasure, an invitation from the colonel to sup with him the evening after.

The company at his house, I found enlivened by his sister, and a friend of hers, a widow, who, though not a perfect beauty, had a countenance that impressed one

much more in her favour than mere beauty could. When silent, there was a certain softness in it infinitely bewitching; and when it was lightened up by the expression which her conversation gave, it was equally attractive. We happened to be placed next each other. Unused as I was to the little gallantries of fashionable life, I rather wished than hoped to make myself agreeable to her. She seemed, however, interested in my attentions and conversation, and in hers, I found myself flattered at the same time, and delighted. We played, against the inclination of this lady and me, and we won rather more than I wished. Had I been as rich as Delaserre, I should have objected to the deepness of the stakes: but we were the only persons of the company that seemed uneasy at our success, and we parted with the most cordial good-humour. Madame de Trenville, (that was the widow's name,) smiling to the colonel, asked him to take his revenge

at her house, and said, with an air of equal modesty and frankness, that as I had been the partner of her success, she hoped for the honour of my company, to take the chance of sharing a less favourable fortune.

At first my wife had expressed her satisfaction at my finding amusement in society, to relieve the duty of attending her. But when my absence grew very frequent, as indeed I was almost every day at Madame de Trenville's, though her words continued the same, she could not help expressing, by her countenance, her dissatisfaction at my absence. I perceived this at first with tenderness only, and next evening excused myself from keeping my engagement. But I found my wife's company not what it used to be: thoughtful, but afraid to trust one another with our thoughts, Emilia shewed her uneasiness in her looks, and I covered mine but ill with an assumed gaiety of appearance.

The day following Delaserre called, and saw Emilia for the first time. He rallied me gently for breaking my last night's appointment, and told me of another which he had made for me, which my wife insisted on my keeping. Her cousin applauded her conduct, and joked on the good government of wives. Before I went out in the evening, I came to wish Emilia good-night. I thought I perceived a tear on her cheek, and would have staid, but for the shame of not going. The company perceived my want of gaiety, and Delaserre was merry on the occasion. Even my friend the colonel threw in a little raillery on the subject of marriage, It was the first time I felt somewhat awkward at being the only married man of the party.

We played deeper and sat later than formerly; but I was to shew myself not afraid of my wife, and objected to neither. I lost considerably, and returned home

mortified and chagrined. I saw Emilia next morning, whose spirits were not high. Methought her looks reproached my conduct, and I was enough in the wrong to be angry that they did so. Delaserre came to take me to his house to dinner. He observed as we went, that Emilia looked ill. "Going to the country will re-establish her," said I.—"Do you leave Paris?" said he.—"In a few days."—"Had I such motives for remaining in it as you have—" —"What motives?"—"The attachment of such friends; but friendship is a cold word: the attachment of such a woman as De Trenville." I know not how I looked, but he pressed the subject no farther; perhaps I was less offended than I ought to have been.

We went to that lady's house after dinner. She was dressed most elegantly, and looked more beautiful than ever I had seen her. The party was more numerous than usual, and there was more vivacity in it,

The conversation turned upon my intention of leaving Paris; the ridicule of country-manners, of country-opinions, of the insipidity of country-enjoyments, was kept up with infinite spirit by Delaserre, and most of the younger members of the company. Madame de Trenville did not join in their mirth, and sometimes looked at me as if the subject was too serious for her to be merry on. I was half ashamed, and half sorry, that I was going to the country; less uneasy than vain at the preference that was shewn me.

No. 84. SATURDAY, *September* 9, 1786.

CONCLUSION OF THE STORY OF FATHER NICHOLAS.

I WAS a coward, however, in the wrong, as well as in the right, and fell upon an expedient to screen myself from a discovery that might have saved me. I contrived to deceive my wife, and to conceal my visits to Madame de Trenville's, under the pretence of some perplexing incidents that had arisen in the management of those affairs with which I was intrusted. Her mind was too pure for suspicion, or for jealousy. It was easy, even for a novice in falsehood, like me, to deceive her. But I had an able assistant in Delaserre, who now resumed the ascendency over me he had formerly possessed, but

with an attraction more powerful, from the infatuated attachment which my vanity and weakness, as much as her art and beauty, had made me conceive for Madame de Trenville.

It happened that just at this time a young man arrived from our province, and brought letters for Emilia from a female friend of her's in the neighbourhood of Santonges. He had been bred a miniature-painter, and came to town for improvement in his art. Emilia, who doted on her little boy, proposed to him to draw his picture in the innocent attitude of his sleep. The young painter was pleased with the idea, provided she would allow him to paint the child in her arms. This was to be concealed from me, for the sake of surprising me with the picture when it should be finished. That she might have a better opportunity of effecting this little concealment, Emilia would often hear, with a sort of satisfac-

tion, my engagements abroad, and encourage me to keep them, that the picture might advance in my absence.

She knew not what, during that absence, was my employment. The slave of vice and of profusion, I was violating my faith to her, in the arms of the most artful and worthless of women, and losing the fortune that should have supported my child and her's, to a set of cheats and villains. Such was the snare that Delaserre and his associates had drawn around me. It was covered with the appearance of love and generosity. De Trenville had art enough to make me believe, that she was every way the victim of her affection for me. My first great losses at play she pretended to reimburse from her own private fortune, and then threw herself upon my honour, for relief from those distresses into which I had brought her. After having exhausted all the money I possessed, and all my credit could command, I would

have stopped short of ruin: but when I thought of returning in disgrace and poverty to the place I had left respected and happy, I had not resolution enough to retreat. I took refuge in desperation, mortgaged the remains of my estate, and staked the produce to recover what I had lost, or to lose myself. The event was such as might have been expected.

After the dizzy horror of my situation had left me power to think, I hurried to Madame de Trenville's. She gave me such a reception as suited one who was no longer worth the deceiving. Conviction of her falsehood, and of that ruin to which she had been employed to lead me, flashed upon my mind. I left her with execrations, which she received with the coolness of hardened vice, of experienced seduction. I rushed from her house, I knew not whither. My steps involuntarily led me home. At my own door I stopped, as if it had been death to enter.

When I had shrunk back some paces, I turned again; twice did I attempt to knock, and could not; my heart throbbed with unspeakable horror, and my knees smote each other. It was night, and the street was dark and silent around me; I threw myself down before the door, and wished some ruffian's hand to ease me of life and thought together. At last the recollection of Emilia, and of my infant boy, crossed my disordered mind, and a gush of tenderness burst from my eyes. I rose, and knocked at the door. When I was let in, I went up softly to my wife's chamber. She was asleep, with a night-lamp burning by her, her child sleeping on her bosom, and its little hand grasping her neck. Think what I felt as I looked! She smiled through her sleep, and seemed to dream of happiness. My brain began to madden again; and as the misery to which she must wake crossed my imagination, the horrible idea arose within

me,—I shudder yet to tell it,—to murder them as they lay, and next myself!—I stretched my hand towards my wife's throat!—The infant unclasped its little fingers, and laid hold of one of mine. The gentle pressure wrung my heart; its softness returned; I burst into tears; but I could not stay to tell her of our ruin. I rushed out of the room, and, gaining an obscure hotel in a distant part of the town, wrote a few distracted lines, acquainting her of my folly and of my crimes; that I meant immediately to leave France, and not return till my penitence should wipe out my offences, and my industry repair that ruin in which I had involved her. I recommended her and my child to my mother's care, and to the protection of that Heaven which she had never offended. Having sent this, I left Paris on the instant, and had walked several miles from town before it was light. At sun-rise a stage-coach overtook me. It was going

on the road to Brest. I entered it without arranging any future plan, and sat in sullen and gloomy silence, in the corner of the carriage. That day and next night I went on mechanically, with several other passengers, regardless of food, and incapable of rest. But the second day I found my strength fail, and when we stopped in the evening, I fell down in a faint in the passage of the inn. I was put to bed, it seems, and lay for more than a week in the stupefaction of a low fever.

A charitable brother of that order to which I now belong, who happened to be in the inn, attended me with the greatest care and humanity; and when I began to recover, the good old man ministered to my soul, as he had done to my body, that assistance and consolation he easily discovered it to need. By his tender assiduities I was now so far recruited, as to be able to breathe the fresh air at the window of a little parlour. As I sat there one

morning, the same stage-coach in which I had arrived, stopped at the door of the inn, when I saw alight out of it the young painter, who had been recommended to us at Paris. The sight overpowered my weakness, and I fell lifeless from my seat. The incident brought several people into the room, and amongst others the young man himself. When they had restored me to sense, I had recollection enough to desire him to remain with me alone. It was some time before he recognized me; when he did, with horror in his aspect, after much hesitation, and the most solemn intreaty from me, he told me the dreadful sequel of my misfortunes. My wife and child were no more. The shock which my letter gave, the state of weakness she was then in had not strength to support. The effects were a fever, delirium, and death. Her infant perished with her. In the interval of reason preceding her death, she called him to her bed-side; gave him

the picture he had drawn; and with her last breath charged him, if ever he could find me out, to deliver that and her forgiveness to me. He put it into my hand. I know not how I survived. Perhaps it was owing to the outworn state in which my disease had left me. My heart was too weak to burst; and there was a sort of palsy on my mind, that seemed insensible to its calamities. By that holy man who had once before saved me from death, I was placed here, where, except one melancholy journey to that spot where they had laid my Emilia and her boy, I have ever since remained. My story is unknown, and they wonder at the severity of that life by which I endeavour to atone for my offences.—But it is not by suffering alone that Heaven is reconciled; I endeavour, by works of charity and beneficence, to make my being not hateful in its sight. Blessed be God! I have attained the consolation I wished.—Already, on my wast-

ing days a beam of mercy sheds its celestial light. The visions of this flinty couch are changed to mildness. It was but last night my Emilia beckoned me in smiles; this little cherub was with her!"——His voice ceased,—he looked on the picture, then towards heaven; and a faint glow crossed the paleness of his cheek. I stood awe-struck at the sight. The bell for vespers tolled—he took my hand—I kissed his, and my tears began to drop on it.—"My son," said he, "to feelings like yours, it may not be unpleasing to recal my story:—if the world allure thee, if vice ensnare with its pleasures, or abash with its ridicule, think of Father Nicholas—be virtuous, and be happy."

No. 87. Saturday, *September* 30, 1786.

——Sed in longum tamen ævum
Manserunt hodieque manent vestigia ruris.

Hor.

That there is nobody in town, is the observation of every person one has met for several weeks past; and though the word *nobody*, like its fellow-vocable *everybody*, has a great latitude of signification, and in this instance means upwards of threescore thousand people, yet undoubtedly, in a certain rank of life, one finds, at this season, a very great blank in one's accustomed society. He whom circumstances oblige to remain in town, feels a sort of imprisonment from which his more fortunate acquaintance have escaped to purer air, to fresher breezes, and

a clearer sky. He sees, with a very melancholy aspect, the close window-shutters of deserted houses, the rusted knockers, and mossy pavement of unfrequented squares, and the few distant scattered figures of empty walks; while he fancies, in the country, the joyousness of the reapers, and the shout of the sportsman enlivening the fields; and within doors, the hours made jocund by the festivity of assembled friends, the frolic, the dance, and the song.

Though the prevailing incidents of my latter part of life have fixed it almost constantly to a town, yet nobody is more enthusiastically fond of the country than I; and, amidst all my banishment from it, I have contrived still to preserve a relish for its pleasures, and an enjoyment of its sports, which few who visit it so seldom are able to retain. I can still weave an angling-line, or dress a fly, am a pretty sure shot, and have not forgotten the tune of a View Holla, or the encouraging Hark forward!

to a cautious hound. But though these are a set of capacities, which mark one's denizenship to the country, and which therefore I am proud to retain, yet I confess I am more delighted with its quieter and less turbulent pleasures. There is a sort of moral use of the country, which every man who has not lost the rural sentiment will feel; a certain purity of mind and imagination which its scenes inspire; a simplicity, a colouring of nature on the objects around us, which correct the artifice and interestedness of the world. There is in the country a pensive vacancy (if the expression may be allowed me) of mind, which stills the violence of passion, and the tumult of desire. One can hardly dream on the bank of some nameless brook without waking a better and a wiser man. I early took the liberty of boasting to my readers, that, as a Lounger, I had learned to be idle without guilt, and indolent without indifference. In the country, methinks,

I find this disposition congenial to the place; the air which breathes around me, like that which touches the Æolian harp, steals on my soul a tender but varied tone of feeling, that lulls while it elevates, that soothes while it inspires. Not a blade that whistles in the breeze, not a weed that spreads its speckled leaves to the sun, but may add something to the ideas of him, who can lounge with all his mind open about him.

I am not sure if, in the regret which I feel for my absence from the country, I do not rate its enjoyments higher, and paint its landscapes in more glowing colours, than the reality might afford. I have long cultivated a talent very fortunate for a man of my disposition, that of travelling in my easy-chair, of transporting myself, without stirring from my parlour, to distant places and to absent friends, of drawing scenes in my mind's eye, and of peopling them with the groups of fancy,

or the society of remembrance. When I have sometimes lately felt the dreariness of the town, deserted by my acquaintance; when I have returned from the coffeehouse where the boxes were unoccupied, and strolled out from my accustomed walk, which even the lame beggar had left; I was fain to shut myself up in my room, order a dish of my best tea (for there is a sort of melancholy which disposes one to make much of one's self,) and calling up the powers of memory and imagination, leave the solitary town for a solitude more interesting, which my younger days enjoyed in the country, which I think, and if I am wrong I do not wish to be undeceived, was the most Elysian spot in the world.

It was at an old lady's, a relation and godmother of mine, where a particular incident occasioned my being left during the vacation of two successive seasons. Her house was formed out of the remains

of an old Gothic castle, of which one tower was still almost entire; it was tenanted by kindly daws and swallows. Beneath, in a modernized part of the building, resided the mistress of the mansion. The house was skirted with a few majestic elms and beeches, and the stumps of several others shewed, that they had once been more numerous. To the west, a clump of firs covered a ragged rocky dell, where the rooks claimed a prescriptive seignory. Through this a dashing rivulet forced its way, which afterwards grew quiet in its progress; and gurgling gently through a piece of downy meadow-ground, crossed the bottom of the garden, where a little rustic paling inclosed a washing-green, and a wicker-seat, fronting the south, was placed for the accommodation of the old lady, whose lesser tour, when her fields did not require a visit, used to terminate in this spot. Here, too, were ranged the hives for her bees, whose hum, in a still, warm sunshine, soothed the good

old lady's indolence, while their proverbial industry was sometimes quoted for the instruction of her washers. The brook ran brawling through some underwood on the outside of the garden, and soon after formed a little cascade, which fell into the river that winded through a valley in front of the house. When hay-making or harvest was going on, my godmother took her long stick in her hand, and overlooked the labours of the mowers or reapers; though I believe there was little thrift in the superintendency, as the visit generally cost her a draught of beer or a dram, to encourage their diligence.

Within doors she had so able an assistant, that her labour was little. In that department an old man-servant was her minister, the father of my Peter, who serves me not the less faithfully that we have gathered nuts together in my godmother's hazel bank. This old butler (I call him by his title of honour, though in truth he

had many subordinate offices) had originally enlisted with her husband, who went into the army a youth, though he afterwards married and became a country gentleman, had been his servant abroad, and attended him during his last illness at home. His best hat, which he wore o' Sundays, with a scarlet waistcoat of his master's, had still a cockade in it.

Her husband's books were in a room at the top of a screw stair-case, which had scarce been opened since his death; but her own library for Sabbath or rainy days, was ranged in a little book-press in the parlour. It consisted, as far as I can remember, of several volumes of sermons, a Concordance, Thomas a'Kempis, Antoninus's Meditations, the works of the author of the Whole Duty of Man, and a translation of Boethius; the original editions of the Spectator and Guardian, Cowley's Poems, Dryden's Works, (of which I had lost a volume soon after I first came about

her house,) Baker's Chronicle, Burnet's History of his own Times, Lamb's Royal Cookery, Abercromby's Scots Warriors, and Nisbet's Heraldry.

The subject of the last-mentioned book was my godmother's strong ground; and she could disentangle a point of genealogy beyond any body I ever knew. She had an excellent memory for anecdote; and her stories, though sometimes long, were never tiresome; for she had been a woman of great beauty and accomplishment in her youth, and had kept such company as made the drama of her stories respectable and interesting. She spoke frequently of such of her own family as she remembered when a child, but scarcely ever of those she had lost, though one could see she thought of them often. She had buried a beloved husband and four children. Her youngest, Edward, "her beautiful, her brave," fell in Flanders, and was not entombed with his ancestors.

His picture, done when a child, an artless red and white portrait, smelling at a nosegay, but very like withal, hung at her bedside, and his sword and gorget were crossed under it. When she spoke of a soldier, it was in a style above her usual simplicity; there was a sort of swell in her language, which sometimes a tear (for her age had not lost the privilege of tears) made still more eloquent. She kept her sorrows, like the devotions that solaced them, sacred to herself. They threw nothing of gloom over her deportment; a gentle shade only, like the fleckered clouds of summer, that increase, not diminish, the benignity of the season.

She had few neighbours, and still fewer visitors, but her reception of such as did visit her was cordial in the extreme. She pressed a little too much, perhaps; but there was so much heart and good-will in her importunity, as made her good things seem better than those of any other table. Nor

was her attention confined only to the good fare of her guests, though it might have flattered her vanity more than that of most exhibitors of good dinners, because the cookery was generally directed by herself. Their servants lived as well in her hall, and their horses in her stable. She looked after the airing of their sheets, and saw their fires mended if the night was cold. Her old butler, who rose betimes, would never suffer any body to mount his horse fasting.

The parson of the parish was her guest every Sunday, and said prayers in the evening. To say truth, he was no great genius, nor much a scholar. I believe my godmother knew rather more of divinity than he did; but she received from him information of another sort; he told her who were the poor, the sick, the dying of the parish, and she had some assistance, some comfort for them all.

I could draw the old lady at this moment!—dressed in grey, with a clean white hood nicely plaited, (for she was somewhat finical about the neatness of her person,) sitting in her straight-backed elbow-chair, which stood in a large window, scooped out of the thickness of the ancient wall. The middle panes of the window were of painted glass, the story of Joseph and his brethren. On the outside waved a honeysuckle-tree, which often threw its shade across her book or her work; but she would not allow it to be cut down. "It has stood there many a day," said she, "and we old inhabitants should bear with one another." Methinks I see her thus seated, her spectacles on, but raised a little on her brow for a pause of explanation, their shagreen-case laid between the leaves of a silver-clasped family-bible. On one side, her bell and snuff-box; on the other, her knitting apparatus in a blue damask bag.—Between her and the fire,

an old Spanish pointer, that had formerly been her son Edward's, teased, but not teased out of his gravity, by a little terrier of mine. All this is before me, and I am a hundred miles from town, its inhabitants, and its business. In town I may have seen such a figure; but the country scenery around, like the tasteful frame of an excellent picture, gives it a heightening, a relief, which it would lose in any other situation.

Some of my readers, perhaps, will look with little relish on the portrait. I know it is an egotism in me to talk of its value; but over this dish of tea, and in such a temper of mind, one is given to egotism. It will be only adding another to say, that when I recal the rural scene of the good old lady's abode, her simple, her innocent, her useful employments, the afflictions she sustained in this world, the comforts she drew from another; I

feel a serenity of soul, a benignity of affections, which I am sure confer happiness, and I think must promote virtue.

No. 89. Saturday, *October* 14, 1786.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Sir,

I read with infinite satisfaction your 87th number, on the pleasures of the country, and the moral use of that "rural sentiment," the effects of which you know so well how to paint. But thus it is that brilliant fiction ever delights us; while you were describing in town, I was witnessing in the country. I have just returned from an excursion into a distant county, "a hundred miles from town, its inhabitants, and its business." It was at the house of Mr L——, a relation and intimate acquaintance of mine, where I have been pressingly invited these several

years past, to spend a month or two of the autumn; to leave the thick air and unwholesome streets, the bustle, cares, and dissipation of the town, for the pure breeze, the healthful walk, the quiet, the peacefulness, and sobriety of the country. I had often heard of my friend L——'s charming place, his excellent house, his every thing, in short, that great wealth (for he is a man of a very large estate) could bestow, and taste (for every body talked of his and Mrs L——'s taste) could adorn. I pictured his groves, his lawns, and his water-falls, with somewhat of that enthusiasm for country-scenery which you seem to feel; and I thought of his daughters (two elegant girls, whom I had just seen for a few minutes in their way from London) as the wood-nymphs of the scene. All this "rural sentiment" I set out with; and the sight of my friend's country-seat and beautiful grounds, which I reached on the third evening, did not belie it.

How it has improved by my stay there, you shall judge by a short sketch of the country life people lead at L—— Hall.

The party there, which my relation had told me was to be a select one, and which made him doubly urgent in his desire to have me there this autumn, consisted of an elderly dowager of rank and fortune, and her two unmarried daughters; a member of parliament, and his brother, a clergyman from England; and two young officers of family, companions of Mr L——'s eldest son, who has been about a year in the army. These, with your humble servant, in addition to Mr L——'s own family, made up the standing establishment of the house. There were besides, every day, numerous occasional visitors from the neighbourhood; Mr L—— representing the county in parliament, and receiving the instructions of his constituents at this time of the year only.

The night of my arrival, I took the liberty of retiring before the rest of the company, being a good deal fatigued with my journey. Next morning, however, I got up betimes to enjoy the beauties of the season, and of the calm clear landscape around me. But when I would have gone out, I found the house-door locked. After various unsuccessful attempts to discover the retreat of the servants, I met a ragged little fellow, who told me he was boy to the porter's man, and the only creature beside myself stirring in the house; for that Mr L——'s gentleman had given a supper to the servants who had lately arrived from town, and they had all sat up at cards till five in the morning. By the interest of this young friend, I at last procured the key, and was let out. I strolled the way of the stable, of which I found the entry much easier than the exit from the house, the door being left very conveniently open.

The horses from town had not been quite so well entertained as the servants; for they were standing with empty mangers, and the dirt of the day before hardened on their skins. But this was not much to be wondered at, as a pack of cards certainly affords a much pleasanter occupation than a curry-comb.

Having rubbed down a favourite poney, which I had brought to the country for an occasional ride, and locked the stable-door, I turned down a little path that led to the shrubbery; but I was afraid to enter any of the walks, as it was notified, by very legible inscriptions, that there were men-traps and steel-guns, for the reception of intruders. I was forced therefore to restrict myself to a walk amidst the dust of the high-road till ten, when, on my return to the house, I found no less dust within doors, and was obliged to take refuge in my bed-room till the breakfasting parlour was put in order. By one of

the servants, whom, from his surly look, I supposed to be a loser of the preceding night, I was informed, that breakfast for some of the company would be ready by eleven.

At eleven I found some of the company assembled accordingly. The dowager did not appear, nor Mrs L—— herself, but had chocolate in their different apartments: it seems they could not be made up, as one of the young ladies expressed it, so early: their daughters seemed to have been made up in haste; for they came down in rumpled night-caps, and their hair in a brown paste upon their shoulders. The young gentlemen joined us with the second tea-pot; their heads were in disorder too, but of a different kind; they had drank, as they told us, three bowls of gin-toddy after the rest of the company had gone to bed. The master of the house entered the room when breakfast was nearly over: he asked pardon of

his brother senator and the clergyman for being so late; but he had been detained, he said, looking over his farm; for he is a great improver of the value, as well as the beauty, of his estate. "Did you ride or walk, Sir?" said I. Mr L—— smiled. "I walked only to the easy chair in my library; I always view my farm upon paper: Mr Capability, my governor in these matters, drives through it in his phaeton, and lays down every thing so accurately, that I have no occasion to go near it."

Breakfast ended about one. The young gentlemen talked of going out a-shooting; but the weather was such as to scare any but hardy sportsmen; so they agreed to play billiards and cards within doors, in which they were joined by all the senior gentlemen except myself. I proposed to betake myself to the library; but I found an unwillingness in our host to let me take down any of the books, which were so elegantly bound and gilt, and ranged

in such beautiful order, that it seemed contrary to the etiquette of the house to remove any of them from the shelves; but there was a particular selection in the parlour, which the company was at liberty to peruse; it was made up of Hoyle's Games, the List of the Army, two Almanacks, the Royal Register, a file of the Morning Herald, Boswell's Tour, the Fashionable Magazine, the Trial of the Brighton Tailor, and an odd volume of the last collection of farces.

Mrs L——, and her friend the dowager, made their appearance about two. As I was neither of the billiard or the whist party, and had finished my studies in the parlour, they did me the honour to admit me of their *conversazione*. It consisted chiefly of a dissertation on some damask and chintz furniture Mrs L—— had lately bespoke from the metropolis, and a dispute about the age of a sulky set of china she had bought last winter,

at a sale of Lord Squanderfield's. In one of the pauses of the debate, the day having cleared up beautifully, I ventured to ask the two ladies, if they ever walked in the country. The dowager said, she never walked on account of her corns; Mrs L—— told me, she had not walked since she caught a sore throat in one of the cold evenings of the year 1782.

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the young ladies, with half a score of packing-boxes, just received by a ship from London. These changed the current of the discourse to the subject of dress, to caps, feathers, hats, and riding-habits. The military men now joined us, and made a very valuable addition to this board of inquiry, by their commentaries on walking boots, riding slippers, clubs, buckles, and buttons. We had, not long after, an opportunity of judging of the practice, as well as theory, of those branches of the fine arts. Dinner was

half cold, waiting for the dowager's eldest daughter, and the Major. They had spent about two hours at their toilets; yet the hurry of the Major appeared, by his man having forgot to put in the false straps to his buckles; and of the young lady from one cheek being at least half a shade redder than the other. The ladies went to tea at nine o'clock, and we joined them at eleven, after having discussed the prices of different sets of boroughs at one end of the table, and the qualities of several race-horses and game-cocks at the other.

Such, Sir, is the detail of one day at the rural retirement of my friend Mr L——, which may serve for the history of most of those I spent there. We had, however, our Sabbath-day's employment, and our Sabbath-day's guest, as well as your godmother. The first Sunday after my arrival being a rainy one, Mrs L——, and most of our party accompanying her, went to the parish church. The English

clergyman would not consent to so wicked a thing as going to a Presbyterian place of worship, and therefore staid at home, to look over a party at picquet in the dowager's dressing-room between her and his brother. I went with the church-going people for that one time, but shall never do so profane a thing again. The young folks nodded and laughed all the time of the service, and during the sermon drew back their chairs from the front of the gallery, eat nuts, and pelted the shells. The Major only was more seriously employed, in drawing caricatures of the congregation below, for which, it must be confessed, some of them afforded no unfavourable subjects.

The parson of the parish, like your old lady's, was always a Sunday visitor at L—— Hall. He had been tutor to the heir and his second brother, and had the honour of inspiring them both with a most sovereign contempt and detestation of learning. He,

too, like your godmother's clergyman, communicated information; to the ladies he related the little scandalous anecdotes of the parish, and gave his former pupils intelligence of several coveys of partridges. Himself afforded them game within doors, being what is commonly called a butt to the unfledged arrows of the young gentlemen's wit. To their father he was extremely useful in drawing corks, and putting him in mind where the toast stood. In short, he seemed a favourite with all the branches of the family. As to religion, it fared with that as with the literature he had been employed to instil into his pupils; he contrived to make all the house think it a very ridiculous thing.

About a fortnight after I went to L—— Hall, the arrival of an elderly baronet from town, an old club-companion of Mr L——'s, added one other rural idea to the stock we were already in possession of; I mean that of eating, in which our

new guest, Sir William Harrico, was a remarkable adept. Every morning at breakfast we had a dissertation on dinner, the bill of fare being brought up for the revisal of Sir William. He taught us a new way of dressing mushrooms, oversaw the composition of the grouse-soup in person, and gave the venison a reprieve to a certain distant day, when it should acquire the exactly proper fumet for the palate of a connoisseur.

Such, Mr Lounger, is the train of "rural sentiment" which I have cultivated during my autumn abode at L—— Hall. I think I might, without leaving town, have acquired the receipt for the mushroom ragout, and have eat stinking venison there as easily as in the country. I could have played cards or billiards at noon-day with as much satisfaction in a crowded street, as in view of Mr L——'s woods and mountains. The warehouse in Prince's Street might have afforded me in-

formation as to chintz and damask chair-covers; and your ingenious correspondent Mr Jenkin could have shewn me a model of the newest-fashioned buckle on the foot of some of his little scarlet beaux, or of a rouged cheek on one of the miniature ladies of his window. In short, I am inclined to believe, that folly, affectation, ignorance, and irreligion, might have been met with in town, notwithstanding the labours of the Lounger; that I might have saved myself three days journey, the expence of a post-chaise, and a six weeks loss of time; and, what was perhaps more material than all the rest, I might have preserved that happy enthusiasm for country pleasures, which you seem still to enjoy, and which, in the less-informed days of my youth, I also was fortunate enough to possess.

I am, &c.

URBANUS.

No. 90. Saturday, *October* 21, 1786.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Sir,

Though, from my rank in life, being a tradesman's daughter, left an orphan at six years old, I had little title to know any thing about sensibility or feeling; yet having been very kindly taken into a family, where there were several young ladies, who were great readers, I had opportunities of hearing a good deal about these things. By the same young ladies I was made acquainted with your Paper, and it was a favourite employment of mine to read the Lounger to them every Saturday morning. In one of the numbers published

some time ago, we met with Mrs Alice Heartly's account of an old lady with whom she lives; and from the experience of our own feelings, could not help pitying the connection with one so destitute of all tender sentiments as my Lady Bidmore. I had soon after occasion to congratulate myself on a very different sort of establishment, having been recommended by my young patronesses to a lady, who used frequently to visit at their house, whom we all knew (indeed it was her pride, she used to say, to acknowledge her weakness on that side) to be a perfect pattern, or, according to her own phrase, a perfect martyr, of the most acute and delicate sensibility. At our house I saw her once in the greatest distress imaginable, from the accidental drowning of a fly in the cream-pot; and got great credit with her myself, for my tenderness about a goldfinch belonging to one of our young ladies, which I had taught to perch upon my shoulder,

and pick little crumbs out of my mouth. I shall never forget Mrs Sensitive's crying out, "Oh! how I envy her the sweet little creature's kisses!" It made me blush to hear her speak so; for I had never thought of kisses in the matter.

That little circumstance, however, procured me her favour so much, that, on being told of my situation, she begged I might, as she was kind enough to express it, be placed under her protection. As I had heard so much of her tender-heartedness and her feeling; as she was very rich, having been left a widow, with the disposal of her husband's whole fortune; as she had nobody but herself in family, so that it promised to be an easy place; all these things made me very happy to accept of her offer; and I agreed to go home to her house immediately, her last attendant having left her somewhat suddenly. I heard indeed, the very morning after I went thither, that her servants did not use to stay

long with her, which gave me some little uneasiness; but she took occasion to inform me, that it was entirely owing to their cruelty, and want of feeling, having turned them all off for some neglect or ill usage of her little family, as she called it. This little family, of which I had not heard before, consists of a number of birds and beasts, which it is the great pleasure of Mrs Sensitive's life to keep and to fondle, and on which she is constantly exercising her sensibilities, as she says. My chief employment is to assist her in the care of them.

The waiting on this family of Mrs Sensitive's is not so easy a task as I at first had flattered myself it would have been. We have three lap-dogs, four cats, some of the ladies of which are almost always lying-in, a monkey, a flying squirrel, two parrots, a parroquet, a Virginia nightingale, a jack-daw, an owl, besides half a hundred smaller birds, bulfinches, canaries, linnets,

and white sparrows. We have a dormouse in a box, a set of guinea-pigs in the garret, and a tame otter in the cellar; besides out-pensioners of pigeons and crows at our windows, and mice that come from a hole in the parlour wainscotting, to visit us at breakfast and dinner time. All these I am obliged to tend and watch with the utmost care and assiduity; not only to take care that their food and their drink be in plenty, and good order; not only to wash the lap-dogs, and to comb the cats, to play on the bird-organ for the instruction of the canaries and goldfinches, and to speak to the parrots and jack-daw for theirs; but I must accommodate myself, as my mistress says, to the feelings of the sweet creatures; I must contribute to their amusement, and keep them in good spirits; I must scratch the heads of the parrots; I must laugh to the monkey, and play at cork-balls with the kittens. Mrs Sensitive says, she can understand their

looks and their language from sympathy; and that she is sure it must delight every susceptible mind to have thus an opportunity for extending the sphere of its sensibilities.

She sometimes takes an opportunity of extending something else with poor me. You can hardly suppose what a passion she gets into, if any thing about this family of hers is neglected; and when she chuses to be angry, and speak her mind to me a little loud or so, her favourites, I suppose from sympathy too, join in the remonstrance, and make such a concert! —What between the lap-dogs, the parrots, the jack-daw, and the monkey, there is such a barking, squalling, cawing, and chattering!—Mrs Sensitive's ears are not so easily hurt as her feelings.

But the misfortune is, Mr Lounger, that her feelings are only made for brute creatures, and don't extend to us poor Christians of the family. She has no pity

on us, no sympathy in the world for our distresses. She keeps a chambermaid and a boy besides myself; and I assure you it does not fare near so well with us as it does with the lap-dogs and the monkey. Nay, I have heard an old milk-woman say, who has been long about the family, that Mr Sensitive himself was not treated altogether so kindly as some of his lady's four-footed favourites. He was, it seems, a good-natured man, and not much given to complain. The old woman says, she never heard of his finding fault with any thing, but once that Mrs Sensitive insisted on taking into bed a Bologna greyhound, because she said it could not sleep a-nights, from the coldness of the climate in this country. Yet she often talks of her dear, dear Mr Sensitive, and weeps when she talks of him; and she has got a fine tombstone raised over his grave, with an epitaph full of disconsolates, and inconsolables, and what not. To say truth,

that is one way even for a human creature to get into her good graces; for I never heard her mention any of her dead friends without a great deal of kindness and tender regrets: but we are none of us willing to purchase her favour at that rate.

As for the living, they have the misfortune never to be to her liking. Ordinary objects of charity we are ordered never to suffer to come near her; she says she cannot bear to hear their lamentable stories, for that they tear her poor feelings in pieces. Besides, she has discovered, that most of them really deserve no compassion, and many sensible worthy people of her acquaintance have cautioned her against giving way to her sensibility in that way: because, in such cases, the compassion of individuals is hurtful to society. There are several poor relations of her husband's, who, if it had not been for a settlement he made in her favour a short

while before his death, would have had, I am told, by law, the greatest part of his fortune, to whom she never gave a shilling in her life. One little boy, her husband's godson, she consented to take into the house; but she turned him out of doors in less than a week, because of a blow he gave to Fidele, who was stealing his bread and butter.

Some of the other members of the family are almost tempted to steal bread and butter too. Mrs Sensitive is an economist, though she spends a great deal of money on these nasty dogs and monkeys, and contrives to pinch it off us, both back and belly, as the saying is. The chambermaid has given her warning already on this score; and the boy says, he will only stay till he is a little bigger. As for me, she is pleased to say, that I am of an order of beings superior to the others; and she sometimes condescends to reason with me. She would persuade me, Sir, that it

is a sin to eat the flesh of any bird or beast, and talks much of a set of philosophers, who went naked, I think, who believed that people were turned into beasts and birds; and that therefore we might chance to eat our father or mother in the shape of a goose or a turkey. And she says, how delighted she would be in the society of those naked philosophers, and how much their doctrines agree with her fine feelings; and then she coaxes me, and says, that I have fine feelings too: but indeed I have no such feelings belonging to me; and I know her greens and water don't agree with my feelings at all, but quite to the contrary, that there is such a grumbling about me.——And as for people being changed into birds and beasts, I think it is heathenish, and downright against the Bible; and yet it is diverting enough sometimes to hear her fancies about it; and I can't help having my fancies too: as the other morning, when the great horned

owl sat at table by her, on the chair which she has often told me her dear, dear Mr Sensitive used to occupy, and the poor creature looked so grave, and sat as silent as mum-chance;—but then she was so kind to the owl! I don't know what her squirrel was changed from, but it is always getting into some odd corner or other. It was but yesterday I got a sad scold for offering to squeeze it when it had crept Lord knows how far up my petticoats; and my mistress was in such a flurry, for fear I should have hurt it! She lets it skip all about her without ever starting or wincing, for all her feelings are so fine. But these fine feelings are not like the feelings of any other body; and I wish to get into the service of some person who has them of a coarser kind, that would be a little more useful. If Mrs Heartly, therefore, continues in her resolution of quitting Lady Bidmore's, on account of that old lady's want of feeling, I would be very much

obliged to you to recommend me to the place. I think I can bear a pretty good hand at a rubber and hard brush; and as for keeping the furniture clean, it would be perfect pastime only, in comparison of my morning's cleaning out Mrs Sensitive's living collection. I hope Lady Bidmore, from her education, has never heard any thing of the naked philosophers; and if any other set have taught her that people are changed into commodes, chests of drawers, or bedsteads, it signifies very little, as we shall take exceeding good care of them, and the belief will have no effect on our dinners or suppers.

I am, &c.

BARBARA HEARTLESS.

No. 93. Saturday, *November* 11, 1786.

Fortunatus et ille Deos qui novit agrestes.

Virg.

One of the great pleasures of a periodical essayist arises from that sort of friendly and cordial intercourse, which his publication sometimes procures him with worthy and respectable characters. The receipt of the following letter has added to the list of my acquaintance a gentleman whose person indeed I am ignorant of, but whose sentiments I respect, whose sorrows I revere, and whose feelings I am persuaded many of my readers (even in these days, which he holds not very susceptible of such emotions) will warmly participate.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

SIR,

I, AS well as your correspondent Urbanus, was very much pleased with your late Paper on the moral use of the country, and the portrait of the excellent lady it contained. I am an old man, Sir, but, thank God, with all my faculties and feelings entire and alive about me; and your description recalled to my memory some worthy characters with which my youth was acquainted, and which, I am inclined to believe, I should find it a little difficult, were I even disposed to look out for them, to supply now. At my time of life, friends are a treasure which the fortunate may have preserved, but the most fortunate can hardly acquire; and, if I am not mistaken in my opinion of the present race, there are not many friendships among

them which I would be solicitous to acquire, or they will be likely to preserve. It is not of their little irregularities or imprudences I complain; I know these must always be expected and pardoned in the young; and there are few of us old people, who can recollect our youthful days without having some things of that sort to blush for. No, Mr Lounger, it is their prudence, their wisdom, their foresight, their policy, I find fault with. They put on the livery of the world so early, and have so few of the weaknesses of feeling or of fancy! To this cause I impute the want of that rural sentiment which your correspondent Urbanus seems to suppose is banished only from the country-retreats of town-dissipation, from the abodes of fashionable and frivolous people, who carry all the follies and pleasures of a city into scenes destined for rural simplicity and rural enjoyments. But in truth, Sir, the people of the country themselves, who

never knew fashionable life or city-dissipation, have now exchanged the simple-hearted pleasures which in my younger days were common amongst them, for ideas of a much more selfish and interested sort. Most of my young acquaintance there (and I spend at least eight months of the year in the country) are really arrived at that prudent way of estimating things, which we used to be diverted with in Hudibras:

> "For what's the value of a thing,
> But as much money as t'will bring?"

Their ambition, their love, their friendship, all have this tendency; and their no-ambition, their no-love, their no-friendship, or, in one word, their indifference about every object from which some worldly advantage is not to be drawn, is equally observable on the other hand.

On such a disposition, Mr Lounger, what impression is to be made by rural ob-

jects, or rural scenery? The visions which these paint to fancy, or the tender ties they have on remembrance, cannot find room in an imagination, or a heart, made callous by selfish and interested indifference. It is with regret, rather than resentment, that I perceive this sort of turn so prevalent among the young people of my acquaintance, or those with whom I am connected. I have now, alas! no child of my own, in whom I can either lament such a failing, or be proud of the want of it.

I think myself happy, Sir, that, even at my advanced period of life, I am still susceptible of such impressions as those which your 87th number imputes to rural contemplation. At this season, above all others, methinks they are to be enjoyed. Now, in this fading time of the year, when the flush of vegetation, and the glow of maturity, is past, when the fields put on a sober, or rather a saddened appearance,

I look on the well-known scenery around my country-dwelling, as I would on a friend fallen from the pride of prosperity to a more humble and a more interesting situation. The withering grass that whistles on the unsheltered bank; the fallen leaves strewed over the woodland path; the silence of the almost naked copse, which not long ago rung with the music of the birds; the flocking of their little tribes, that seem mute with the dread of ills to come; the querulous call of the partridge in the bare brown field, and the soft low song of the red-breast from the household shed; this pensive landscape, with these plaintive accompaniments, dimmed by a grey October sky, which we look on with the thoughts of its shortened and still shortening light; all this presses on my bosom a certain still and gentle melancholy, which I would not part with for all the pleasure that mirth could give, for all the luxury that wealth could buy.

You say truly, in one of your late Papers, that poetry is almost extinguished among us: it is one of my old-fashioned propensities, to be fond of poetry, to be delighted with its descriptions, to be affected by its sentiments. I find in genuine poetry a sort of opening to the feelings of my mind, to which my own expression could not give vent; I see in its descriptions, a picture more lively and better composed than my own less distinct and less vivid ideas of the objects around me could furnish. It is with such impressions that I read the following lines of Thomson's Autumn, introductive of the solemn and beautiful apostrophe to philosophic melancholy.

"But see the fading many-coloured wood,
Shade deepening over shade, the country round
Imbrown; a crowded umbrage, dusk and dun,
Of every hue, from wan-declining green
To sooty dark. These now the lonesome muse,
Low whispering, lead into their leaf-strown walks,
And give the season in its latest view.

"Meantime, light-shadowing all, a sober calm
Fleeces unbounded ether; whose least wave
Stands tremulous, uncertain where to turn
The gentle current: while illumined wide
The dewy-skirted clouds imbibe the sun,
And through their lucid veil his softened force
Shed o'er the peaceful world. Then is the time,
For those whom wisdom and whom nature charm,
To steal themselves from the degenerate crowd,
And soar above this little scene of things;
To tread low-thoughted vice beneath their feet,
To soothe the throbbing passions into peace,
And woo lone Quiet in her silent walks."

About this time three years, Sir, I had the misfortune to lose a daughter, the last survivor of my family, whom her mother, dying at her birth, left a legacy to my tenderness, who closed a life of the most exemplary goodness, of the most tender filial duty, of the warmest benevolence, of the most exalted piety, by a very gradual, but not unperceived decay. When I think on the returning season of this calamity, when I see the last fading flowers of autumn, which my Harriet used to ga-

ther with a kind of sympathetic sadness, and hear the small chirping note of the flocking linnets, which she used to make me observe as the elegy of the year; when I have drawn her picture in the midst of this rural scenery, and then reflect on her many virtues and accomplishments, on her early and unceasing attentions to myself, her gentle and winning manners to every one around her; when I remember her resignation during the progress of her disorder, her unshaken and sublime piety in its latest stages; when these recollections fill my mind, in conjunction with the drooping images of the season, and the sense of my own waning period of life; I feel a mixture of sadness and of composure, of humility and of elevation of spirit, which I think, Sir, a man would ill exchange for any degree of unfeeling prudence, or of worldly wisdom and indifference.

The attachment to rural objects is like that family-affection which a warm and uncorrupted mind preserves for its relations and early acquaintance. In a town, the lively partiality and predilection for these relations and friends, is weakened or lost in the general intercourse of the multitude around us. In a town, external objects are so common, so unappropriated to ourselves, and are so liable to change and to decay, that we cannot feel any close or permanent connection with them. In the country, we remember them unchanged for a long space of time, and for that space known and frequented by scarce any but ourselves. "Methinks I should hate," says a young lady, the child of fiction, yet drawn with many features like that excellent girl I lost, "methinks I should hate to have been born in a town. When I say my native brook, or my native hill, I talk of friends, of whom the remembrance warms my

heart." When the memory of persons we dearly loved is connected with the view of those objects, they have then a double link to the soul. It were tender enough for me to view some ancient trees that form my common evening-walk, did I only remember what I was when I first sported under their shade, and what I am when I rest under it now; but it is doubly tender, when I think of those with whom I have walked there; of her whom but a few summers ago I saw beneath those beeches, smiling in health, and beauty, and happiness; her present days lighted up with innocence and mirth, and her future drawn in the flattering colours of fancy and of hope.

But I know not why I should trouble you with this recital of the situation and feelings of an individual, or indeed why I should have written to you at all, except that I catched a sort of congenial spirit from your 87th number, and was led by

the letter of Urbanus, to compare your description of a personage in former times, with those whose sentiments I sometimes hear in the present days. I am not sure that these have gained in point of substance what they have lost in point of imagination. Power, and wealth, and luxury, are relative terms; and if address, and prudence, and policy, can only acquire us our share, we shall not account ourselves more powerful, more rich, or more luxurious, than when in the little we possessed we were still equal to those around us. But if we have narrowed the sources of internal comfort and internal enjoyment, if we have debased the powers or corrupted the purity of the mind, if we have blunted the sympathy or contracted the affections of the heart, we have lost some of that treasure which was absolutely our own, and derived not its value from comparative estimation. Above all, if we have allowed the prudence or the interests

of this world, to shut out from our souls the view or the hopes of a better, we have quenched that light which would have cheered the darkness of affliction, and the evening of old age, which at this moment, Mr Lounger, (for, like an old man, I must come back to myself,) I feel restoring me my virtuous friends, my loved relations, my dearest child!

I am, &c.

ADRASTUS.

No. 94. Saturday, *November* 18, 1786.

Vos lene consilium et datis, et dato
Gaudetis. Hor.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Sir,

Though you, and other writers of your sort, are constantly recommending benevolence and social affection, as not only the most laudable, but as the happiest dispositions of mind; yet I confess I am inclined to doubt at least one half of the proposition. The care we take of our neighbours is oftener praised than rewarded, and sometimes it has the misfortune to meet neither with approbation nor recompense. That I have some reason to

say so, Mr Lounger, I fancy you will be inclined to allow, when I tell you how it has fared with myself.

I was, from my earliest years, disposed to think more of other people's advantage than of my own. When at school, I was the great prompter both of study and of amusement; though I was nowise remarkable for excelling in the one, or enjoying the other. I shewed the first boys of our class the easiest way of getting their lessons, and performing their exercises; but I seldom could be at the trouble to get or to perform my own. I laid excellent plans for new games, truant expeditions, and little plots of mischief; but, being of a weakly constitution, and of not a very resolute mind, I seldom was an actor in the amusement or the adventure: as I had, however, a sort of vanity, which was flattered by the imputation of the advice, I was often flogged for tricks I had not played, and idle diversions in which I had

not partaken. I was generally pitched on as a sort of ambassador when a play-day was to be asked, or a boy begged off; because I liked to put myself forward, and was readier with my tongue than my hand. But in this office I was very ill rewarded for my trouble; I was sometimes whipped in place of him whose pardon I had the assurance to ask, and often left out of the party whose play I had been so lucky as to obtain.

These disappointments, however, did not damp the natural ardour of my disposition to serve my friends. Genius, it has been observed, rather grows upon controul: my genius was that of giving advice, and it seemed rather to increase than to abate as I grew up into life. I chose a profession which was very well calculated for indulging this propensity, that of a physician; and went through a regular course of education, to qualify myself for a degree, which, however, I

failed of obtaining at the university in which I studied, having incurred the displeasure of the professors, from being the promoter, as they said, of certain cabals among the students, which disturbed the peace of the community. For obtaining that honorary distinction, I was obliged to go to a foreign university, where, from a want of the language, I was prevented from giving so much good advice as I should otherwise have been inclined to bestow.

When I returned to my native country, I was resolved to make up for this unprofitable interval of silence, by a liberal use of my talent for advising. But I don't know how it happened, except from that disposition which genius has rather to voluntary than to expected exertion, I had not half the pleasure in giving advice as a physician, that I felt in offering my counsel in any other case of doubt or of difficulty. It might perhaps be owing

to this that I was little consulted; and in some houses into which I had got access as a doctor, it was alleged, that I raised such a ferment by my non-medical advice, as all my sedatives were unable to allay. On my skill as a physician I bore attacks without much emotion; but, conscious of the purity of my intentions, I was surprised to hear my conduct as a man arraigned; astonished, when an adviser like myself cautioned me against intermeddling with other people's affairs; told me, that nothing was so hurtful to one's self as the telling people disagreeable truths; and that, if I was not on my guard, I would soon be shunned as a busy-body, and an incendiary, who set every family into which he was admitted by the ears.

In consequence of the caution offered me by this teller of agreeable truths, I was determined, notwithstanding my

natural philanthropy, to withhold the counsel of which I saw most of my neighbours stand so much in need, when an incident happened that put me a good deal in spirits with myself, and in favour with the world. An uncle died, and left me heir to a considerable sum which he possessed in the funds. By his death I found myself to have acquired a great deal of wisdom and persuasion, as well as money; and, while that money lasted, seldom met with a man or a woman who did not find my advice perfectly prudent and useful. It was indeed frequently given in a way exactly the reverse of what my profession (which I now followed only for my amusement) should have taught me. The fee commonly accompanied the prescription, in the form of a loan, a present, a subscription, or some such genteel denomination; and I had among my patients persons of very great

consideration, and of the most eminent talents. I scarce remember any who obstinately and bluntly refused my advice, except one author, whom I earnestly advised to suppress a dedication he shewed me to a small volume of poems, with which he was about to favour the public. This was a matter too in which I thought I had the best title to offer my opinion, as the book was to be dedicated to myself, and I had set down my name for one hundred copies.

In the disposal of the riches with which this unexpected death of my relation had endowed me, I was equally benevolent and disinterested as in the other parts of my conduct. The effects of this were, as in other cases, more beneficial to my friends than to myself; by that hospitality with which I repaid the gratitude of those whose measures I prompted or advised; by the facility with which I entered into money-engagements, in aid of

those measures; by becoming a sharer in several projects, of which I had the chief management and direction, and in which therefore I generally had the honour of making the first and largest advances; and by laying out money according to the advice of some of the ablest men in that department; (for after I grew rich I had got advisers too;) by all these means, Mr Lounger, in the course of ten or twelve years, I found my uncle's inheritance almost entirely exhausted, and I was left in the decline of life with no other provision than a very small annuity, which the wreck of it enabled me to purchase.

I was, however, always of a sanguine, thoughtless disposition, and not easily put out of temper with the circumstances in which fortune had placed me. My annuity, small as it was, enabled me to keep up a decent appearance; and my degree gave me a convenient, and, in this coun-

try, a respectable appellation. I had gained, too, some experience during the vicissitudes of my fortune; and in my days of prosperity had, as I mentioned above, known what it was to receive as well as to offer advice. On this experience, and an attention to my own feelings, I built the system of my future conduct; and, by a diligent attention to the feelings of others, I have been able to pursue it with very tolerable success. I still continue my profession of adviser; but I now give advice after a manner perfectly different from that in which I set out, not according to the case in which I am consulted, but according to the inclination of him or her who consults me.

You cannot easily imagine, sir, how much good-will this deportment has gained me. Instead of the distant acquaintance and cold reception, which in the

days of my honest counsel I generally met with, I now find myself surrounded by friends and well-wishers wherever I go. I dine six days in the week at good tables, have frequent invitations to parties of pleasure; nay, I might have even some professional advantage, if I were inclined to lay hold of it, and might be fee'd for prescribing remedies to people of fashion, of which themselves have first told me the infallibility. I had a present of a gold snuff-box from an old gouty lord, for listening to his account of the virtues of sulphur water; and my Lady Notable lately sent me a suit of damask of her own making, for having staid to witness some experiments with her favourite worm-powder.

Not only indeed in medicine, in which I might be supposed to have some knowledge, but in most other arts and sciences, this same echo-counsel has given me

the character of being very skilful and well informed. I have acquired a great character for connoisseurship in painting, by advising the great collector, Mr Tinto, to purchase, as an original Vandyke, a picture, which his ordinary counsellor in these matters had insisted, in spite of his patron's assertion, was but a copy; and an author of great reputation has mentioned me as one of the justest critics of his acquaintance, because I gave it as my opinion, that he should by all means retain a simile in his new tragedy, which an actor would have had him cut out as too long and unnatural. At the theatre my advice is followed, even by that most unadvisable of all professions, the players, ever since I told Mr —— that he was an incomparable Macbeth, and advised Mrs —— to play Juliet in her grand climacteric.

I sometimes make friends, and establish my reputation for taste, as much by dis-

suading from what should not, as by advising what should be done. I have eat venison half a dozen times at Lord Visto's country-seat, ever since I begged him not to think of building such a clumsy temple as his neighbour Sir Paul Prospect has lately erected; and have been very much a man *à bonnes fortunes* in the good graces of Miss Trippet, since one morning that I dissuaded her from wearing a gypsey hat with pink ribbons, which made Lady Bell Airy look so frightful at the assembly a few evenings before.

On one occasion only I recollect my method of giving counsel to have failed of being acceptable; in my young days, when I had the foolish way of advising inconsiderately, I had given a decided opinion against a friend's marrying his maid-servant, who a few days after first shewed his being estranged from me, by leaving me out of the company he invited to the christening of his first child.

In my wiser days, I was consulted by another friend on a similar occasion. I advised him by all means to marry. I did not see him till a twelvemonth after; he seemed to bear me no good-will for my advice; and the first token of reconciliation I received from him was a few weeks ago, by a letter to his wife's funeral.

I have thus very candidly communicated to you, Mr Lounger, my method of giving advice, so agreeable to the advised, as well as so highly advantageous to the adviser. I communicate it to you from a very friendly motive; because I think I have observed, that in many of your papers you have rather shewn a disposition to give counsel to your readers in my first manner, which, before I had been taught better things, made me so unwelcome a guest, and so disagreeable a companion. Believe me, you will find it much more expedient to perform this

friendly office according to the improved system which at present I follow with so much applause and success. But I forget that it is probable you design your work rather for posterity than the present times; in which case, you are certainly very much in the right to adopt the opposite plan; and in that view of the matter, it has my entire approbation.

I have the honour to be, &c.

VALERIUS VELVET.

No. 95. SATURDAY, *November* 25, 1786.

Here Hunt may box, or Mahomet may dance.

JOHNSON.

WHEN I returned from my morning's walk one day of last week, Peter informed me, that a young gentleman had called, who would not tell his name, but promised to call again in the evening, and in the mean time left a letter which he said would inform me who he was. "I think, Sir," said Peter, while I was opening the letter, "that were he a little older, and had a major wig instead of his own brown hair in round curls on his neck, that one might discover a likeness between him and Colonel Caustic." There

was some reason for the resemblance; for in fact it was a young relation of the Colonel's, who had been two or three years at an English university, and is now come hither for the winter to study some particular branches at ours. He brought me a letter of introduction from my worthy friend his kinsman, which gave him, in the Colonel's delicate way, a great deal of commendation, though I am persuaded, from what I have seen of him, no more than he merits. "He is really a fine boy," said the Colonel's letter, "and I think you will like him the better that he pretends to be no more. He has neither learned to be a fop nor a prig at college; and though a little flighty and light-headed now and then, has a soundness at heart that never deceives one. The lad has a classical taste, and has written some love-verses that would not have disgraced better times, when the women were worthy of them."

When he came in the evening, I found his appearance very prepossessing; and not the less so, that I really imagined I saw some of that resemblance which Peter's sagacity had discovered. Peter laid two covers without my bidding; and the young gentleman accepted the invitation they implied. After our little supper, we got so well acquainted, and found ourselves so much related through the connection of Colonel Caustic, that the young man, as I wished, forgot the difference of our age, and the lateness of his introduction, and we quoted Horace, told college anecdotes, repeated college verses, and laughed at college puns, till midnight.

He pleased me much with the affection he expressed for my old friend and his sister, with whom he had spent several weeks previous to his coming hither. "Don't you think Miss Caustic, Sir," said he, "one of the most excellent

women in the world? and then her brother's affection for her! methinks I like both the better every time he speaks of his sister. We were talking one day of a book of receipts which she had copied. —"There wants one here," said the Colonel, "which my sister possesses beyond any body I know; a receipt for making people happy."—She has a way of doing kind things with so little pretension! She had talked lately of getting some pieces of dress from town, and when she heard of my setting out, had put twenty guineas into my hand as her agent in the business; but when she took leave of me, she said, she found she should have no occasion for any addition to her wardrobe this year.—But you must lay out the twenty guineas," said she, "in looking at the fashionable dresses of this winter, that you may be able to instruct me in my purchases for the next."

"You never saw the colonel," continued his young friend, "in better health or spirits than he is at present. He put one or two of his old guns in order on my account, and walked out with me himself, to shew me the grounds where the game was to be found, which he says was almost as plentiful this season, as it was when he was a shooter."—"Why does he not come to town?" said I.—"I asked him that question, Sir; but he told me he did not intend to be in town; and yet I believe he was much the better for his last excursion hither."—"I am persuaded the journey would be of service to him." —His young relation smiled. "I believe it was not so much the journey to Edinburgh, as the follies he saw there, that did him so much good. He swallowed a thousand impertinences, he says, when here; and his sister tells me he has chewed the cud on them ever since. Every time he related any of them to her or to me, he

seemed to be better pleased with himself, and with the times which he calls his own; though I am happy to believe, that he will live these dozen years, to tell us that he has nothing to do with the present times. He says, he does not intend being in town again, because the novelty that amused him the last time he was there is over. I should only find, said he, the same follies, and the same vices; the same coarse or frivolous men, and the same vulgar or giddy women, I saw there two winters ago."

"But you may assure him," said I, "he is mistaken; that I have received undoubted intelligence, that there is to be no folly, no vice among us this winter; that our private society is to be decent and well-bred, our public places orderly and well regulated; that there will be no bludgeoned beaux to jostle him in his walks, nor female cavaliers to stare him out of countenance; that our dinners are to afford the elegant entertainment of attic convivi-

ality, the feast of reason, and the flow of soul; that the tea-tables of the ladies are to be schools of delicacy, refinement, and instructive conversation; that Lady Rumpus has learned silence, old —— sobriety, and his son decorum; that our assemblies, instead of fine ladies lolloping through country-dances with fine men, are to be filled with fine women, who are to dance minuets with fine gentlemen; that at our concerts people of fashion are to listen to the music, and that the music is to be worth the listening to; that our theatre—But you shall hear what it is to be from better authority. I received this very morning a letter on that subject, which, among other novelties, you may communicate to the colonel. Here it is, sealed with a Shakespeare's head, and dated from Holyroodhouse."

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

SIR,

I PRESUME, from the uniform practice of your predecessors, and indeed from several of your earlier Papers, that the state of the theatre is by no means a subject of indifference to you. In this belief, I make bold to trouble you with a letter concerning our Scottish stage, which I hope will meet with your attention. I think, Sir, I may presume to say, that I am not an unqualified correspondent on that subject, having passed most of my life behind the scenes, in different parts of the kingdom, and have reason to flatter myself with having been of considerable use to the stage, though my labours have not proved so advantageous to myself as I had reason to look for. I was the first who brought any thing like discipline among Bayes's Light

Horse; I had a very principal hand in the sea in Harlequin's Invasion; and gave the plan for the construction of the famous cloud which took up the deities in Midas. These, and many other services of equal importance, have been long forgotten. I will make no personal reflections, Sir; but managers are well known not to be always so attentive to merit as they ought to be. I know it has been said, that I was dismissed from the London theatre, on account of an unfortunate accident, to wit, the falling of a flying dragon, which I had invented for a new pantomime; by which the Devil and Dr Faustus were both killed on the spot. But, in the first place, the story is false in itself, the doctor having only broken his nose, and the devil his tail, by the accident; and at any rate, the dragon was not of my construction, but one borrowed from the opera-house, which had been

foundered by hard riding in the ballet of Jason and Medea.

I understand, Sir, that it is intended this winter to make a very material improvement on the theatre at Edinburgh, by bringing down the Sadler's Wells company to perform here during a considerable part of the season. I will not have the vanity to say, that this was entirely owing to a suggestion of mine; yet it is certain that I hinted at such an improvement several months ago, at the house of a gentleman, an old acquaintance, with whom I sometimes take a Sunday's dinner, who is on very intimate terms with the gentleman who dresses the manager. But whoever may claim the honour of the invention, Sir, I cannot help congratulating this country on the event, which I look on as proceeding from the same liberal and enlarged spirit that has given rise to the commercial treaty with France. Undoubtedly a free and full communica-

tion and interchange of commodities is of advantage both among nations and theatres; and the jealousies and rivalships that used to subsist between contending houses were extremely hurtful to all parties. It is the duty of every good citizen to promote an object so desirable as that of a friendly intercourse and mutual co-operation between such societies, for the entertainment of the public. With such good intentions, I beg leave to lay before you the sketch of a plan for the more close and intimate union of the theatrical and dancing or tumbling kingdoms, by their not only occupying the same ground, and alternately exhibiting on the same stage, but by their mutually coalescing and incorporating with one another, so as to give a play all the decoration and movement of a dance or a tumbling, and a dance or a tumbling all the interest and business of a play. What an excellent entertainment, for instance, would Macbeth or

Hamlet afford, if the plan of the drama were preserved, according to the ancient theatrical mode, and the unfolding and progress of it brought forth according to the new or Sadler's Wells school! The soliloquies might be turned into hornpipes, the battles into country-bumpkins, and the respective courts of Scotland and Denmark might exhibit themselves to great advantage in a cotillon; or the solemn scenes might be performed on the slack wire, the more animated from the tight rope, and the bustle of a full stage would naturally fall into feats of agility and lofty tumbling. In Macbeth, the Little Devil would be quite in his element. In the tragedy of Venice Preserved, what a brilliant high dance might Pierre in the senate-house perform in his chains; (which is indeed but one step beyond his ordinary style of acting in that scene;) and the senators (such of them at least whose robes

would bear looking at behind) might join the inferior conspirators as Figurantes.

Comedy will easily and naturally slide into the department of her sister-arts; and as she has already betaken herself almost entirely to singing on the English stage, she may with great propriety become a dancer on the Scotch theatre. As to farces, or *petites pieces*, I think they may admit of a different set of performers, and be played with applause by actors of the animal creation. General Jackoo, of the Sadler's Wells company, who, I am told, has a very quick study, might soon be made perfect in Fribble; and the wonderful English bull-dog be brought out in the part of Major Sturgeon. It could not but fford pleasure to every rational and philosophic mind, thus to see the lower orders of creation brought forward a step in the scale of being, and assuming, on the stage of Edinburgh, a rank and con-

sequence which partial nature has denied them.

But though the superstructure of dancing and tumbling is thus proposed to be raised on the old theatrical foundation; yet, Sir, it is by no means any part of my plan to discard, or render unnecessary, the present incumbents of the theatre. Their exertions will necessarily be united with their new associates from Sadler's Wells, to get up, as it is called, the pieces which are to be performed in this new manner; and I have too much knowledge of the extent and versatility of their genius, not to be convinced, that they will easily accommodate themselves to the change. Some of the best tragedians of our present company will readily acquire the walk of the tight rope; most of the ladies, I am sure, will have no objection to put themselves under the tuition of the Devil, in the tumbling way; and several of the most celebrated comic performers are already so

excellent in the posture line, as to give assurance of their arriving at the first degree of eminence in that department.

And now, Sir, give me leave to state some of the obvious advantages that will arise from this new and improved mode of conducting the drama.

1*mo*, As the entertainment would be addressed to the eyes, it would allow perfect liberty to the tongues of the audience: of the restraint, in this particular, which arises from the present method of conducting the drama, the most respectable part of the house have great reason to complain, as the players on the stage speak almost as loud as people of the first distinction in the side-boxes.

2*do*, There would be none of that improper or unbecoming freedom, or *double entendre*, against which some of the more rigid moralists inveigh, in the dialogue of our late comic performances. If any part of the pantomime should happen not to

be quite so pure as it ought, (a grievance which even the spoken plays are liable to in the hands of some actors,) it will be easy for the ladies to turn their eyes half aside, or to cover them with the sticks of their fans: putting one's fingers in one's ears is not so graceful an attitude.

3tio, It will very much improve the catastrophe of some of our best English tragedies. George Barnwell may then be played, as I once heard a gentleman of this city propose to a manager, with the hanging thrown into action instead of narrative, as the swing of several actors of the new company can easily be made to imitate that polite entertainment; and some of them, who at present shew such dexterity in twisting their bodies into the collared-eel, and other beautiful forms, will have no difficulty of allowing themselves to be broke on the wheel in the part of Pierre, which being a novelty, and somewhat more natural and affecting than

the mere preparatives at present exhibited, cannot fail of drawing great houses.

4to, It will evidently tend to facilitate the profession of an actor, and to widen the range from which excellence in that line is to be drawn. As things are at present, the British stage, from the circumstance of language, is open only to the natives of England and Ireland; but if plays are to be danced instead of spoken, their language, like that of music, will be universal. This will remove a hardship peculiar to this part of his Majesty's dominions, which, from its provincial pronunciation, is almost entirely excluded from the stage; but in a natural talent for dancing and feats of agility, is supposed rather to have the advantage of its sister kingdoms. If the plan I propose is adopted, I shall not be surprised, if the district of Strathspey should produce a successor to Garrick, and a rival to Mrs Siddons.

Lastly, It will save a great deal of

trouble to authors, who are often exceedingly at a loss how to carry on the dialogue of a piece through the space of five, or even of three acts. In the improved method I have taken the liberty to suggest, an author will not only, like some of our modern dramatists, have no occasion to write well, but he or she may actually compose a very good play, without having ever learned to write or read at all.

Many other advantages might be shewn to result from this proposed alteration of the mode of representing theatrical pieces; but I flatter myself, that even the imperfect announcement of the plan which I have given, will be sufficient to entitle it to the favour and patronage of persons of taste and knowledge; among whom, without flattery, Sir, I class the author of the Lounger in a very distinguished rank.

I have the honour to be, &c.

RICHARD BUSKIN.

I DOUBT not but it will afford pleasure to Mr Buskin to be told, that my young academical friend approved very much of his proposal. "In ancient Greece," said he, "though they did not carry this matter quite so far as your correspondent proposes, yet dancing made a chief part of the entertainment in dramatic representations. The verses indeed of Sophocles and Euripides were recited, but as we have no Sophocleses or Euripideses now, and scarce any actors who could speak their verses if we had, I believe Mr Buskin's plan to be a very expedient one. I remember one of our fellows at college, who liked eccentric anecdotes, used to tell us of a company of comedians he fell in with in a country excursion, who having, by some little misfortune, lost their principal actor, gave out their next day's bill in these

words: "On Monday will be presented the tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmark; the part of Hamlet, for that night, to be left out."

No. 96. SATURDAY, *December* 2, 1786.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat.
VIRG.

SIR,

As in reading, either for instruction or entertainment, one is always most struck with what comes nearest to one's self, we who are in the country have been particularly attentive to your rural papers. The family of which I am a member at present, have been very much entertained with them. We have found out several of our acquaintance in the letter of Urbanus; and even the picture of your godmother, though a little antiquated, was too strongly marked for some of our

party not to discover a resemblance to it. Adrastus's portrait of himself was too serious for our meddling with. We never allow our imaginations to sport with the sacredness of sorrow.

Since the receipt of those papers, it has become an amusement here to draw sketches for the Lounger; and some of us last night after supper proposed, that every one should paint his neighbour. To this fancy and a rainy morning you owe this letter. I will try to give you the whole groupe; I am sure if I could do it justice, it would please your benevolent readers better than the picture of Urbanus, though I give that gentleman perfect credit for the fidelity as well as the power of his pencil. But a family-piece of Greuze is more pleasing, though perhaps less valued, than one of Hemskirk or Teniers.

That I may, however, take no advantage, I will begin with myself. I am not of so serious a disposition as Adrastus,

yet am I not altogether without some of that rural sentiment which he indulges, and which you describe. I own I had acuter feelings some five-and-twenty years ago; but having now lived half a century, I am become a good deal less heroic, less visionary, and less tender than I was; yet I have not forgotten what my own feelings were, and I can perfectly understand what those of younger men are; I confess I like to see them as warm as I myself was at their age, and enjoy a sort of self-flattery in thinking that I have learned to be wiser, by being a little older than they. Something of the same reflection I venture now and then to indulge, from the circumstance of being a bachelor; I think myself as well as I am, and yet I am pleased to see a husband and a father happy. And as I am neither from age nor situation quite condemned to celibacy, I have that sort of interest in an amiable woman, or a promising child, that

makes their company very agreeable to me, and I believe mine not unpleasant to them. I have, thank God, good health and good spirits; was bred somewhat of a scholar by my father, who lived in town, and a pretty complete sportsman by my grandfather, who resided in the country. When at school, I stole an hour or two in the evening to learn music, and had a tolerable knack at making bad verses when at college. In short, there are few things come across me in which I am quite left out, and I have not the vanity of excellence to support in any of them.

I generally spend some months of autumn in the country, and this season have passed them very agreeably at the house of a gentleman, who, from particular circumstances, I am pretty confident is the person you once mentioned under the appellation of Benevolus. A general idea of his character you have given in the paper I allude to: of his family and their

country-life, will you allow me to try a little sketch now?

You have hinted at the use Benevolus makes of his wealth. In the country, as far as we can gather from those around him, he gives largely; but as it is neither from the impulse of sickly sentiment, or shallow vanity, his largesses tend oftener to incite industry than to supply indigence. Indeed, I have been forced to observe, that to nurse poverty, is, politically speaking, to harbour idleness and vice: to prevent it is much the better way; for a man seldom thrives that does not deserve to thrive; and, except from some unfortunate accidents, which Benevolus is ever ready to pity and to redress, a man is seldom poor without deserving to be so. The occupiers of Benevolus's estate are generally thriving: he says, that to promote this is not an expensive indulgence; but, on the contrary, that he gains by it. It is some money advanced at first, says he; but no

capital is more productive than that which is laid out on the happiness of one's people. Some plans indeed have been suggested to him for doubling the revenue of his estate, by dispeopling it of three-fourths of its inhabitants; but he would never consent to them. If I wished for money, he replied to an adviser of these schemes, there are many trades you should rather recommend to me; but the proudest property of a country gentleman is that of men. He has not, however, that inordinate desire for extending the bounds of his estate, that some great proprietors have. A gentleman, whose family had been reduced in its circumstances, offered his land to him for sale. Benevolus expressed his sorrow for the necessity that forced the neighbour to this measure, and, after examining into his affairs, gave him credit to the extent of his debts. The young man went abroad, and, from the recommendation of his honesty and worth, and great

assiduity in business, acquired a fortune sufficient to redeem his affairs. Somebody observed what an enviable purchase that gentleman's land would have been to Benevolus. "But those acres would not have dined with me with such a face of happiness and gratitude as Mr —— did to-day."

Such faces, indeed, are a favourite part of the entertainment at Benevolus's table. One day of the week, which he jokingly calls his wife's rout day, there is an additional leaf put to the table, for the reception of some of the principal farmers on his estate, from whose conversation, he says, he derives much useful knowledge in country business, and in the management of his affairs. He behaves to them in such a way as to remove all restraint from the inequality of rank; and talking to every man on the subject he knows best, makes every man more pleased with himself, and more useful to those who hear

him. The reception indeed of those guests strongly marks the propriety of feeling and of behaviour of the family. There is none of that sneer and tittering which one sees among the young gentlemen and ladies of other tables; the children strive who shall help the senior farmer of the set; they ask questions about the different members of his household, and sometimes send little presents to his children. I have had the charge of some parties of the young people, who dined with the farmers in return; and then we have so many long stories when we come back in the evening. There are no such eggs, nor fowls, nor cream, as we meet with in those excursions. I am always appealed to as a voucher; and I can safely say, that we thought so, especially when we took a long walk, or fished, or shot by the way.

Benevolus has four sons and three daughters. Their education has been scrupulously attended to; and there are, per-

haps, no young people of their age more accomplished. When I speak of their accomplishments, I do not mean only their skill in the ordinary branches of education, music, dancing, drawing, and so forth. I have seen such acquirements pass through the memory and the fingers of young people, yet leave little fruit behind them. It is not so with my young friends here; not only are the faculties employed, but the mind is enriched by all their studies. I have learned a great deal of true philosophy, during the rainy days of this season, from the little philosophers in Benevolus's library; and when I indulge myself in a morning's lounge beside the young ladies and their mother, I always rise with sentiments better regulated, with feelings more attuned, than when I sat down. The young people's accomplishments are sometimes shewn, but never exhibited; brought forth, unassumingly, to bestow pleasure on others,

not to minister to their own vanity, or that of their parents. In music their talents are such as might attract the applause of the most skilful; yet they never refuse to exert them in the style that may please the most ignorant. Music their father confesses he is fond of, beyond the moderation of a philosopher. It is a relaxation, he says, which indulges without debasing the feelings, which employs without wasting the mind. The first time I was here, I had rode in a very bad day through a very dreary road; it was dark before I reached the house. The transition from the battering rain, the howling wind, and a flooded road, to a saloon lighted cheerily up, and filled with the mingled sounds of their family concert, was so delightful, that I shall never forget it.

There is, however, a living harmony in the appearance of the family, that adds considerably to the pleasure of this and

every other entertainment. To see how the boys hang upon their father, and with what looks of tenderness the girls gather round their mother! "To be happy at home," said Benevolus one day to me, when we were talking of the sex, "is one of the best dowries we can give a daughter with a good husband, and the best preventive against her chusing a bad one. How many miserable matches have I known some of my neighbours' girls make, merely to escape from the prison of their father's house! and, having married for freedom, they resolved to be as little as they could in their husband's."

Benevolus's lady, though the mother of so many children, is still a very fine woman. That lofty elegance, however, which, in her younger days, I remember awing so many lovers into adoration, she has now softened into a matron gentleness, which is infinitely engaging. There is a modest neatness in her dress, a chas-

tened grace in her figure, a sort of timid liveliness in her conversation, which we cannot but love ourselves, and are not surprised to see her husband look on with delight. In the management of her household concerns, she exerts a quiet and unperceived attention to her family and her guests, to their convenience, their sports, their amusements, which accommodates every one without the tax of seeing it bustled for. In the little circles at breakfast, where the plans of the day are laid, one never finds those faces of embarrassment, those whispers of concealment, which may be observed in some houses. Mamma is applied to in all arrangements, consulted in schemes for excursions, in the difficulty of interfering engagements, and is often pressed to be of parties, which she sometimes enlivens with her presence.

Benevolus, in the same manner, is frequently the companion of his son's sports,

and rides very keenly after an excellent pack of harriers, though they say he has gone rather seldomer out this season than he used to do, having got so good a deputy in me. He was disputing t'other day, with the clergyman of the parish, a very learned and a very worthy man, on the love of sport. "I allow, my good Sir," said Benevolus, "that there are better uses for time; but, exclusive of exercise to the body, there are so many dissipations more hurtful to the mind, (dissipations even of reading, of thinking, and of feeling, which are never reckoned on as such,) that if sport be harmless, it is useful. I have another reason for encouraging it in my son. It will give him an additional tie to the country, which is to be the chief scene of his future life, as a man likes his wife the better that, besides more important accomplishments, she can sing and dance; and in both cases, a man of a feeling mind will connect with the

mere amusement, ideas of affection, and remembrances of tenderness. Methinks I perceive an error in the system of education which some country-gentlemen follow with their sons. They send them, when lads, to study at foreign universities, and to travel into foreign countries, and then expect them, rather unreasonably, to become country-gentlemen at their return. My son shall travel to see other countries, but he shall first learn to love his own. There is a polish, there are ornaments, I know, which travel gives; but the basis must be an attachment to home. My son's ruffles may be of lace, but his shirt must be of more durable stuff."

In this purpose Benevolus has perfectly succeeded with his son, who is now eighteen, with much of the information of a man, but with all the unassuming modesty of a boy. 'Tis his pleasure and his pride to acknowledge the claims which his native scenes have upon him. He

knows the name of every hamlet, and of its inhabitants; he visits them when he can be of use, gives encouragement to their improvements, and distributes rewards to the industrious. In return, they feel the most perfect fealty and regard to him. The old men observe how like he is to his father; and their wives trace the eyes and the lips of his mother.

The same good sense in their management, and a similar attention to their happiness, is shewn to every inferior member of Benevolus's household. His domestics revere and love him; yet regularity and attention are no where so habitual. Attention to every guest is one of the first lessons a servant learns at this house, and an attention of that useful and benevolent sort which is exactly the reverse of what is practised at some great houses in the country, where a man is vastly well attended, provided he has attendants of his

own that make it needless; but a person of inferior rank may wait some time before he can find a servant, whose province it is to take any care of him. At Benevolus's, it is every man's province to shew a stranger kindness; and there is an aspect of welcome in every domestic one meets. Even the mastiff in the court is so gentle, so humanized by the children, and "bears his faculties so meek," that the very beggar is not afraid of Trusty, though he bays him.

In such quarters, and with such society, I do not count the weeks of my stay, like your correspondent Urbanus. The family talks of not visiting Edinburgh sooner than Christmas, and it is not improbable that I may stay with them till that time; so if your coffeehouse-friend takes notes of arrivals this winter, he may possibly mark me down in my seat in the coach destined for No. 7. answering the questions

of two cherub-faced boys, who are a sort of pupils of mine here in all the idle branches of their education.

I am,

SIR,

Your most obedient servant,

W. G.

No. 97. SATURDAY, *December* 9, 1786.

To the feeling and the susceptible there is something wonderfully pleasing in the contemplation of genius, of that supereminent reach of mind by which some men are distinguished. In the view of highly superior talents, as in that of great and stupendous natural objects, there is a sublimity which fills the soul with wonder and delight, which expands it, as it were, beyond its usual bounds, and which, investing our nature with extraordinary powers and extraordinary honours, interests our curiosity, and flatters our pride.

This divinity of genius, however, which admiration is fond to worship, is best ar-

rayed in the darkness of distant and remote periods, and is not easily acknowledged in the present times, or in places with which we are perfectly acquainted. Exclusive of all the deductions which envy or jealousy may sometimes be supposed to make, there is a familiarity in the near approach of persons around us, not very consistent with the lofty ideas which we wish to form of him, who has led captive our imagination in the triumph of his fancy, overpowered our feelings with the tide of passion, or enlightened our reason with the investigation of hidden truths. It may be true, that "in the olden time" genius had some advantages which tended to its vigour and its growth; but it is not unlikely, that, even in these degenerate days, it rises much oftener than it is observed; that in "the ignorant present time," our posterity may find names which they will dignify, though we neglected, and pay to

their memory those honours which their contemporaries had denied them.

There is, however, a natural, and indeed a fortunate, vanity in trying to redress this wrong which genius is exposed to suffer. In the discovery of talents generally unknown, men are apt to indulge the same fond partiality as in all other discoveries which themselves have made; and hence we have had repeated instances of painters and of poets, who have been drawn from obscure situations, and held forth to public notice and applause by the extravagant encomiums of their introductors, yet in a short time have sunk again to their former obscurity; whose merit, though perhaps somewhat neglected, did not appear to have been much under-valued by the world, and could not support, by its own intrinsic excellence, that superior place which the enthusiasm of its patrons would have assigned it.

I know not if I shall be accused of such

enthusiasm and partiality, when I introduce to the notice of my readers a poet of our own country, with whose writings I have lately become acquainted; but if I am not greatly deceived, I think I may safely pronounce him a genius of no ordinary rank. The person to whom I allude is Robert Burns, an Ayrshire ploughman, whose poems were some time ago published in a county town in the west of Scotland, with no other ambition, it would seem, than to circulate among the inhabitants of the county where he was born, to obtain a little fame from those who had heard of his talents. I hope I shall not be thought to assume too much, if I endeavour to place him in a higher point of view, to call for a verdict of his country on the merit of his works, and to claim for him those honours which their excellence appears to deserve.

In mentioning the circumstance of his humble station, I mean not to rest his pre-

tensions solely on that title, or to urge the merits of his poetry when considered in relation to the lowness of his birth, and the little opportunity of improvement which his education could afford. These particulars, indeed, might excite our wonder at his productions; but his poetry, considered abstractedly, and without the apologies arising from his situation, seems to me fully entitled to command our feelings, and to obtain our applause. One bar, indeed, his birth and education have opposed to his fame,—the language in which most of his poems are written. Even in Scotland, the provincial dialect which Ramsay and he have used is now read with a difficulty which greatly damps the pleasure of the reader: in England it cannot be read at all, without such a constant reference to a glossary, as nearly to destroy that pleasure.

Some of his productions, however, especially those of the grave style, are al-

most English. From one of those I shall first present my readers with an extract, in which I think they will discover a high tone of feeling, a power and energy of expression, particularly and strongly characteristic of the mind and the voice of a poet. It is from his poem entitled the Vision, in which the genius of his native county, Ayrshire, is thus supposed to address him:

With future hope, I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely carolled, chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes,
Fired at the simple, artless lays
Of other times.

I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or, when the North his fleecy store
Drove through the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Strike thy young eye.

Or when the deep-green mantled earth,
Warm-cherished every flowret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In every grove,
I saw thee eye the general mirth
With boundless love.

When ripened fields and azure skies
Called forth the reapers' rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their evening joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In pensive walk.

When youthful love, warm-blushing strong,
Keen-shivering, shot thy nerves along,
Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
The adored name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To sooth thy flame.

I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild, send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor-ray,
By Passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from heaven.

Of strains like the above, solemn and sublime, with that rapt and inspired melancholy in which the poet lifts his eye "above this visible diurnal sphere," the poems entitled Despondency, the Lament, Winter, a Dirge, and the Invocation to Ruin, afford no less striking examples. Of the tender and the moral, specimens equally advantageous might be drawn from the elegiac verses, intitled, Man was made to Mourn, from The Cottar's Saturday Night, the stanzas To a Mouse, or those To a Mountain Daisy, on turning it down with the plough in April 1786. This last poem I shall insert entire, not from its superior merit, but because its length suits the bounds of my paper.

Wee, * modest, crimson-tipped flower,
Thou's met me in an evil hour,
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonie gem.

* *Wee*, little; *maun*, must; *stoure*, dust; *weet*, wet, a substan-

Alas! its no thy neighbour sweet,
The bony lark, companion meet;
Bending thee 'mong the dewy weet
Wi' spreckled breast,
When upward-springing, blythe to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce reared above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High-sheltering woods and wa's maun shield,
But thou beneath the random bield
Of clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stubble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snowy bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head,
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

tive; *cauld*, cold; *glinted*, peeped; *bield*, shelter; *stane*, stone; *wa's*, walls; *histie*, dry, chapt, barren.

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betrayed,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low in the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starred!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven
To misery's brink,
Till, wrenched of every stay but heaven,
He ruined sink.

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the daisy's fate,
That fate is thine——No distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom.

I have seldom met with an image more truly pastoral than that of the lark, in the second stanza. Such strokes as these mark the pencil of the poet, which delineates nature with the precision of intimacy, yet with the delicate colouring of beauty and of taste.

The power of genius is not less admirable in tracing the manners, than in painting the passions, or in drawing the scenery of nature. That intuitive glance with which a writer like Shakespeare discerns the characters of men, with which he catches the many changing hues of life, forms a sort of problem in the science of mind, of which it is easier to see the truth than to assign the cause. Though I am very far from meaning to compare our rustic bard to Shakespeare, yet whoever will read his lighter and more humorous poems, his Dialogue of the Dogs, his Dedication to G—— H——, Esq. his Epistles to a Young Friend, and to W. S——n, will perceive

with what uncommon penetration and sagacity this heaven-taught ploughman, from his humble and unlettered station, has looked upon men and manners.

Against some passages of those last-mentioned poems, it has been objected, that they breathe a spirit of libertinism and irreligion. But if we consider the ignorance and fanaticism of the lower class of people in the country where these poems were written, a fanaticism of that pernicious sort which sets faith in opposition to good works, the fallacy and danger of which, a mind so enlightened as our poet's could not but perceive; we shall not look upon his lighter muse as the enemy of religion, (of which in several places he expresses the justest sentiments,) though she has sometimes been a little unguarded in her ridicule of hypocrisy.

In this, as in other respects, it must be allowed, that there are exceptionable parts of the volume he has given to the public,

which caution would have suppressed, or correction struck out; but poets are seldom cautious, and our poet had, alas! no friends or companions from whom correction could be obtained. When we reflect on his rank in life, the habits to which he must have been subject, and the society in which he must have mixed, we regret perhaps more than wonder, that delicacy should be so often offended in perusing a volume in which there is so much to interest and to please us.

Burns possesses the spirit as well as the fancy of a poet. That honest pride and independence of soul which are sometimes the muse's only dower, break forth on every occasion in his works. It may be, then, I shall wrong his feelings, while I indulge my own, in calling the attention of the public to his situation and circumstances. That condition, humble as it was, in which he found content, and wooed the muse, might not have been deemed un-

comfortable; but grief and misfortunes have reached him there; and one or two of his poems hint, what I have learnt from some of his countrymen, that he has been obliged to form the resolution of leaving his native land, to seek under a West-Indian clime that shelter and support which Scotland has denied him. But I trust means may be found to prevent this resolution from taking place; and that I do my country no more than justice, when I suppose her ready to stretch out her hand to cherish and retain this native poet, whose "wood-notes wild" possess so much excellence. To repair the wrongs of suffering or neglected merit; to call forth genius from the obscurity in which it had pined indignant, and place it where it may profit or delight the world; these are exertions which give to wealth an enviable superiority, to greatness and to patronage a laudable pride.

No. 98. Saturday, *December* 16, 1786.

——Nec domos potentum
Nossemus, nec imagines superbas. Mart.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Sir,

It is a long time since my last correspondence with you; and indeed, I did not know that your Paper continued to come out, till lately that I saw it at a certain great house where I was on a visit. Of that visit, Mr Lounger, if you will give me leave, I will tell you some particulars. Since I find that some of the great folks take in your Paper, it may do them no harm to be told a little how things are about them; or if, as I am apt to believe,

they are not easily to be mended, it will at least give us little folks some satisfaction to get out our thoughts of them.

Your predecessor, the author of the Mirror, who was kind enough to take some interest in my family, was well acquainted with its connection with Lady ——, the great lady who first set my wife and daughters heads agog about fashion and finery. In my last to you, I informed you of our having luckily lost her acquaintance, though I had got into another hobble by our intimacy with my rich neighbour young Mushroom. I am ashamed to tell you, Sir, how things have come about; but, as I told Mr Mirror, I was always rather too easy in my way; I have been myself on a visit at the house of the great lady! (I beg her lord's pardon, but that is the way of speaking in our neighbourhood.) But this comes through Mr Mushroom too. You must know, that since he came home, by presents of shawls

and muslins to my lady, and, as some folks say, by lending some of his spare rupees to my lord, he is become a great favourite at —— Lodge. And so my lord and lady and he have laid their heads together, that Mr Mushroom shall be member for our county the next vacancy; and they have been driving and riding about among us, and giving feasts and dances at ——Lodge and Mushroom Hall. I fought a little shy, as the saying is; but Mrs and Miss Mushroom so tickled the ears of my wife and daughters, and my lady talked so much of the happiness she had formerly enjoyed at my house, and of her regret for having lost the honour of my daughter Mrs ——'s acquaintance, that they were silly enough to forgive all her former neglect of them; and then they so belaboured me with the great things that might be expected from my lord's patronage, and Mr Mushroom's attachment to my family, (and they had some shawls and muslins

too,) that I at last agreed to give my vote as they wished. O! then, there was so much fuss and kindness, and such invitations to go to —— Lodge, and so many honours and pleasures—that, in short, Mr Lounger, having got in my corn, and sold my cattle, I was prevailed on to lay out a little of the money in a new suit, to get a new saddle and bridle for my mare, to trim my brown colt for a portmanteau horse, and mounting John upon him, whom I could best spare at this season too, I accompanied one of my brother freeholders, a plain man like myself, who takes a little of his wife's advice, to —— Lodge.

As I knew something of the hours there, I took care that we should not reach the house till within a few minutes of four, though my neighbour was in a sort of flutter the last three miles for fear of being too late. But when we got off our horses, and walked into the lobby, we found we were

much too early for the house. We had stalked about for some minutes, without knowing where we should go, when, who should I see come in but my old acquaintance Mr Papillot, though it seems he had forgotten me; for when I asked him if my lord or his lady were within, he gave me a broad stare, and said, that some of the servants would inform us. None of the servants, however, chose to be so kind; for though one or two peeped out of this and that door, they took no sort of concern in us, till at last a big surly-looking fellow appeared, pulling down the ruffles of his shirt, and bade us follow him into the saloon. Here we found an open window, and a half-kindled fire, and were left to cool our heels for above an hour before any living creature appeared. At last a civil enough sort of gentleman, whose name I never heard, for the family called him nothing but captain, came in, and after talking a little to us about the weather,

the roads, and the crop, (though he seemed to have but a bad notion of farming,) left the room again, telling us that my lord and lady would soon be down; but that dinner was somewhat later that day than usual, as they and their company had been at a bear-baiting, my lord's bear having been backed against his neighbour Sir Harry Driver's dogs. This accident kept us from our dinner till six o'clock, by which time my neighbour and I, who had breakfasted betimes, were almost famished. Meanwhile we were left to entertain ourselves with the pictures, not to mention my lady's French lap-dog, which a servant brought in (I suppose by the time he had been dressed for dinner) and laid on a cushion at the fire-side. I found indeed one of the late numbers of the Lounger, which I began to read; but my neighbour Broadcast yawned so on the first page, that I laid it by out of complaisance to him. Soon after the lap-dog, some of her

ladyship's company came in, one after another, and did us the honour of staring at us, and speaking to the lap-dog. The dinner-bell was rung before my lady appeared, who, to do her justice, behaved politely enough, and began to ask half a dozen questions about our wives and children, to which she did not wait for an answer; but to say truth, she had her hands full of the bear-baiting company, who, when they were all assembled, made a very numerous party. My lord entered a few minutes after her; he did not give himself much trouble about any of us, till on the captain's whispering something in his ear, he came up to where my neighbour and I stood, and said he was very happy to have the honour of seeing us at —— Lodge.

When we went to dinner, we contrived to place ourselves on each side of our good friend the captain, and things went on pretty well. I knew that at such a table the victuals were not always what they

seemed; and therefore I was cautious of asking for any of your figured dishes. At last, however, I got helped to a mutton-chop, as I would have called it; but the captain told me it was a ragout. When I tasted it, it was so Frenchified, and smelt so of garlic, which I happen to have an aversion to, that I was glad to get rid of it as soon (and that was not very soon) as I could prevail on a servant to take away my plate. The captain, who guessed my taste I suppose, very kindly informed me, there was roast beef on the side-board, and sent a request to a fine gentleman out of livery, who had the carving of it, for a slice to me. But whether he thought I looked like a cannibal, or that the dish, being little in request, was neglected in the roasting, he sent me a monstrous thick cut, so red and raw, that I could not touch a morsel of it; so I was obliged to confine my dinner to the leg and wing of a partridge, which the second course af-

forded me. I did not observe how my friend Broadcast fared at dinner; but I saw he catched a Tartar at the desert; for happening to take a mouthful of a peach, as he thought it, what should it be but a lump of ice, that stung his hollow tooth to the quick, and brought the tears over his cheeks. The wine after dinner might have consoled us for all these little misfortunes, if we had had time to partake of it; but there the French mode came across us again, and we had drank but a few glasses, and had not got half through the history of the bear-baiting, when coffee was brought.

When we went into the drawing-room, we found the card-tables set, and my lady engaged with a party at whist. She recommended some of us to the care of a friend of hers, a lady somewhat advanced in life, though she was still a maiden one, for they called her Miss Lurcher, who made up a table at farthing-loo. As this

was a game I was used to play at home, and the stake was so very trifling, I consented to make one. My neighbour Broadcast refused, and sat down at the other end of the room, to hear one of the young ladies play on the harpsichord, where he affronted himself by falling asleep. It had been as well for some other people, that they had been asleep too. This game, though it began with farthings, soon mounted up to a very considerable sum, and I had once lost to the amount of twenty pounds. A lucky reverse of fortune brought me a little up again, and I went to supper only 5000 farthings, that is, five guineas, out of pocket. It would not become me to suspect any foul play at —— Lodge; but I could not help observing, that Miss Lurcher held Pam plaguily often. I have been told since, that she has little other fortune than what she makes by her good luck at cards: and yet she was as finely drest as my lady, and had as fine a plume of

feathers on her hat: I shall never look on that hat again without thinking that I see Pam in the front of it.

When we were shewn to our rooms, I looked for the attendance of John, to whom I had given strict charge to be watchful in that matter; but he was not to be found, and, I was told, had never appeared at the Lodge after he went with his horses to the inn. Before going to bed, I stole into the chamber where my friend Broadcast lay, and agreed with him, who seemed as willing to be gone as myself, that we should cut short our visit, and (since French was the word) take a French leave early next morning. We were both up by day-light, and groped our way down stairs to get our hats and whips, that we might make our escape to where John and the horses were lodged. But we could not find our road to the lobby, by which we had entered. There did not seem to be a creature stirring in the house; and,

after wandering through several empty halls, in one of which we found a backgammon table open, with a decanter not quite empty, on which was a claret label, we went down a few steps to another passage, where we imagined we heard somebody stirring. But we had not gone many steps when the rattle of a chain made us take to our heels: and it was well we did; for we were within half a yard of being saluted by my lord's bear, whose quarters it seems we had strayed into. The noise of our flight, and his pursuit, brought a chambermaid, who happened to be up, to our assistance, and by her means we had the good fortune to get safely through the lobby into the lawn, from whence we had only a mile or two's walk to the inn where John was put up.

For want of John's attendance, I had comforted myself with the reflection, that if he had not been employed in taking care of me, the horses would fare the better

for it. But when we reached the house, we found that John had been employed in nothing but taking care of himself. The servants of my lord's other guests who were there, kept a very good house, as the landlord called it; and John had been a good deal jollier at dinner the day before than his master. It was with some difficulty we got him on his legs, and brought him along with us. It was a long time before my portmanteau could be found; and my new bridle, with a plated bit, had been exchanged by some clearer-headed fellow, for an old snaffle not worth a groat.

Such, Sir, is the history of my first visit, and I hope my last, to —— Lodge. But as I have found the experience even of one visit a little expensive, I think it is doing a kindness to people in my situation, to let them know what they have to expect there. When my lord asks a vote again, let it be conditioned on the part of

the freeholder, that he shall not be obliged to study the pictures of his saloon above half an hour, that he shall have something to eat and something to drink at dinner, and be insured from falling into the paws of the bear, or the hands of Miss Lurcher.

I am, &c.

JOHN HOMESPUN.

No. 66. Saturday, *May* 6. 1786.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE LOUNGER.

Sir,

No complaints are more commonly made, or more readily listened to, than those of genius neglected, of talents unrewarded, of merit overlooked. That these complaints should often be made on slight pretences, may easily be accounted for from the effects of self-love and of conceit; and that people should attend to them with indulgence will not be wondered at, when we reflect that we are naturally inclined to favour those whose circumstances do not awaken our envy, especially if they furnish us with the means of decrying others whose situation excites it.

But even where genius is actually found to languish in obscurity, or to pine in indigence, the world is not always to be blamed for its neglect. Genius is often too proud to ask favours, which the world is too proud to offer; or too bashful to display abilities, which others are too busy to seek out. Besides that the splendid qualities of which it boasts are often less fitted for the province it has chosen than much more moderate abilities, it sometimes allows them to be mixed with failings, which render their possessor less easily made happy, and those around him less disposed to contribute to his happiness. Temper, moderation, and humility, a toleration of folly, and an attention to trifles, are endowments necessary in the commerce with mankind; often as useful, and generally more attractive, than wisdom, learning, eloquence, or wit, when attended with arrogance, ill-nature, an

ungracious manner, or a forbidding address.

It will likewise be considered, that, in general, those inferior minds, whom genius and talents are apt to despise, are much more easily made happy than those who occupy the rank above them. The measure of our desires is commonly enlarged in proportion to the comprehensiveness of our minds, and the catalogue of our evils frequently increased in proportion to the range of our imaginations. In many occurrences of life, genius and fancy discover evils which dulness and insensibility would escape, and delicacy of feeling mars that pleasure which thoughtless vivacity would perfectly enjoy.

You gave, in one of your earlier papers, an account of two gentlemen, both fortunate in life, but very differently affected by their good fortune. One who was above the enjoyment of any ordinary good; the other, on whom every attainment

conferred happiness, who had no eye for deformity, and no feeling for uneasiness. Allow me to illustrate the same power of a constitutional difference of temper upon the opposite situation, from the example of two persons, whose characters some late incidents gave me a particular opportunity of tracing.

Tom Sanguine and Ned Prospect, like your friends Clitander and Eudocius, were school-fellows. Sanguine was the first boy of the school in point of learning, and very often its leader in every thing. The latter distinction it cost him many a black eye to maintain, as he generally had a battle with every lad who disputed his preeminence, or who objected to any project he had laid down for his companions. Sometimes he was thrown entirely out of his command, and would be whole days in a state of proscription from his fellows, attended only by one or two little boys,

whom he either awed or bribed to continue of his party.

Prospect had a certain influence too, but it was acquired by different means. He had no pretensions to learning, and almost constantly neglected or failed in the tasks that were set him; yet he was a favourite with his masters, from a certain liveliness which looked like genius, and a certain attention to them which looked like application; and with the boys, he was always ready to join any plan which the forward could devise, or the bold could execute. He was in friendship with every one, and did not care with whom he was in friendship; of jealousy or rivalship he was perfectly devoid, and often returned the assistance which Sanguine afforded him at their exercises, by conciliatory endeavours to accommodate differences between him and some of their companions. As for himself, he never remembered quarrels, or resented affronts; disappointments

of every kind he forgot; indeed, if a school allusion may be allowed, there was scarce a past tense in his ideas; they always looked to the future.

When they rose into manhood and life, the two young gentlemen retained the same characteristic difference as when at school. Sanguine was soon remarked for his abilities, and easily flattered himself that every advancement would be open to them. He looked to the goal in business or ambition, without troubling himself to examine the ground between. Full of that pride and self-importance to which he thought his talents entitled him, he would not degrade them by an application to the ordinary means by which inferior men attain success. He would not stoop to solicit what he thought his merit gave him a right to expect: to conciliate the great, he called servility; to be obliged to his equals, he termed dependence. In argument, he was warm and dogmati-

cal; in opposition, haughty and contemptuous; he was proud to show the fallacy of reputed wisdom, and sought for opportunities of treating folly with disdain. His inferiors he loved to awe into silence; and in company with those above him, he often retired into a proud indignant silence himself. To be easily pleased or amused, he thought the mark of a light and frivolous mind; and, as few people cared to be at the expence, he seldom received either pleasure or amusement. When he might have bestowed these on others, he often did not think it worth his while to bestow them. For his learning, his knowledge, or his wit, he demanded such an audience as he rarely could find; and among men of middling capacity, of whom the bulk of society is formed, one half of Sanguine's acquaintance dreaded his talents, and the other half denied them. In his friendships, he was warm and violent; but they were generally connections

in which he was rather to give than to find support, rather to confer than to receive obligation.

With such a cast of mind and disposition, Sanguine, notwithstanding all his natural and all his acquired abilities, has succeeded very ill in life. Of those (and they were but few) by whom he was neither hated nor feared, scarce any one was interested to promote his success. There is always so much of selfishness in our exertions for others, as to claim a sort of property in the good we do them; and him who, like Sanguine, does not allow that claim, we seldom wish to oblige a second time. Nor were his genius and knowledge, great as they were allowed to be, better suited to the ordinary affairs of the world, than those of a much lower order. He often despised that mediocrity, which was a fitter instrument for his purpose than all his boasted excellence: He laboured to shine, where he should

have been contented to convince; to astonish and to dazzle, where it ought to have been his object to persuade and to win.

The neglects of the world Sanguine resented more than he endeavoured to overcome; and, having long lost all hopes of success in it, now employs the powers of his fancy and of his eloquence, to degrade those dignities which he has failed to reach, and to depreciate those advantages he has been unable to attain. He saunters about in places of public resort, like the Evil Genius of the time, sickening at every prosperous, and enjoying every untoward event; suffering without compassion, and unfortunate without the dignity which a good mind allows to misfortune.

Prospect, whose abilities did not promise much eminence in any of the learned professions, was bred a merchant. His master found him not very attentive to his business; but exceedingly serviceable to

him and his family in every thing else. He frequently forgot to make the proper entries in the books; but of the little commissions of his master's wife and children, he took particular care; and once excused himself for a mistake with regard to a valuable cargo from the West-Indies, by shewing how much he had been occupied about a parroquet and a monkey for the young ladies. To himself he made a sort of apology for these neglects, from an idea, that in trade nothing was worth attending to but in the capital; and talked with great fluency, and an appearance of information, on the plans he had formed for entering upon a large scale of commerce in London. To London accordingly he went; but found there that he was still distant from the immediate scene of the trade he had chiefly studied: And, after spending, in amusement rather than in dissipation, half the stock from which he was to have raised a princely fortune, he

procured recommendations to a house in Jamaica, and embarked for that island with the full resolution of being as rich as Alderman Beckford before he returned. He failed of being as rich, but he was fully as happy, and in the course of that happiness spent all the remainder of his patrimony. He afterwards visited several of the American provinces, without any increase of fortune, or decrease of good humour; and at last returned home with no money in his purse, and but little information in his mind, but with that flow of animal spirits which no ill success could overcome, and that sort of buzzing idea of future good fortune, which no experience of disappointment has ever been able to drive out of his head.

By the favour of a person of considerable interest, whom his officious civility had in some instance happened to oblige, he has obtained a small pension, on which he makes shift to live, and to get into

very tolerable company, being admitted as a good-natured oddity, who never offends, and is never offended. He has now given up his plans for bettering his private fortune, except in so far as they are connected with the prosperity of his country, having turned his thoughts entirely to politics and to finance. I know not if it was an ill-natured amusement which I received the other morning, from seeing him attack his old acquaintance Sanguine in the coffee-house, and drive him from the fire-place to the window, from the window to the door, and from the door out into the street, with a paper of observations on Mr Pitt's plan for reducing the national debt. Sanguine was dumb with vexation and contempt, which Prospect (who was full of bustle and of enjoyment from this new-sprung scheme) very innocently construed into the silence of attention, and concluded his pursuit, by thrusting the paper into the other's hand, telling him, that

when next they met he should be glad to have his sentiments on the probability of the plan, and the justness of the calculations.

It would, I believe, Sir, considerably increase the stock of human happiness, if you could persuade men like Mr Sanguine, that misanthropy, comfortless as it is, is yet more an indulgence than a virtue; that a war with the world is generally founded on injustice; and that neither the yieldings of complacency, nor the sportfulness of good humour, are inconsistent with the dignity of wisdom.

I am, &c.

MODERATUS.

END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.

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