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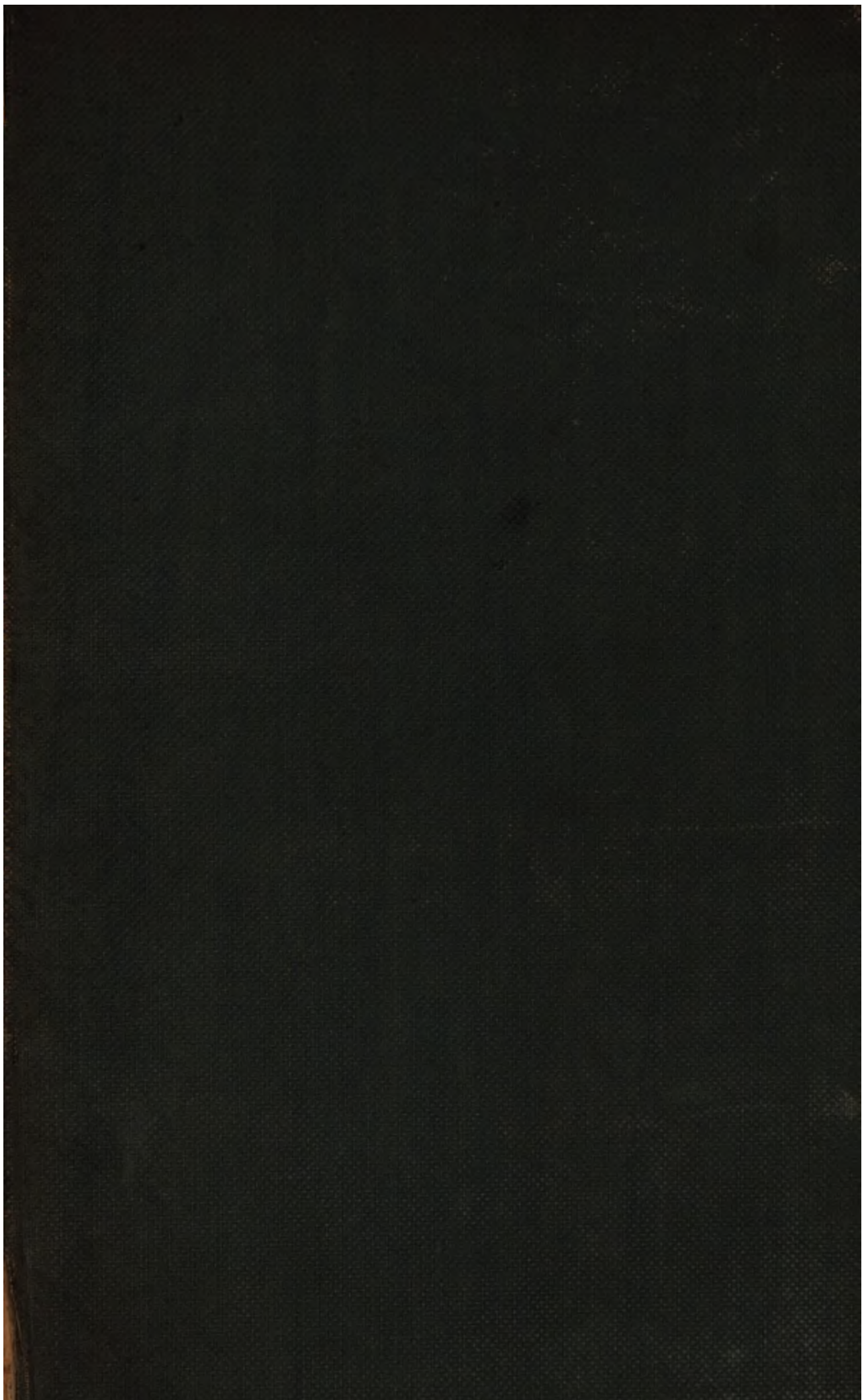
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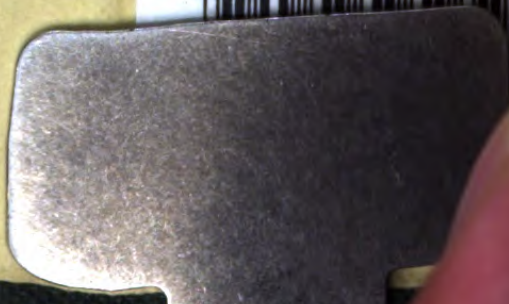


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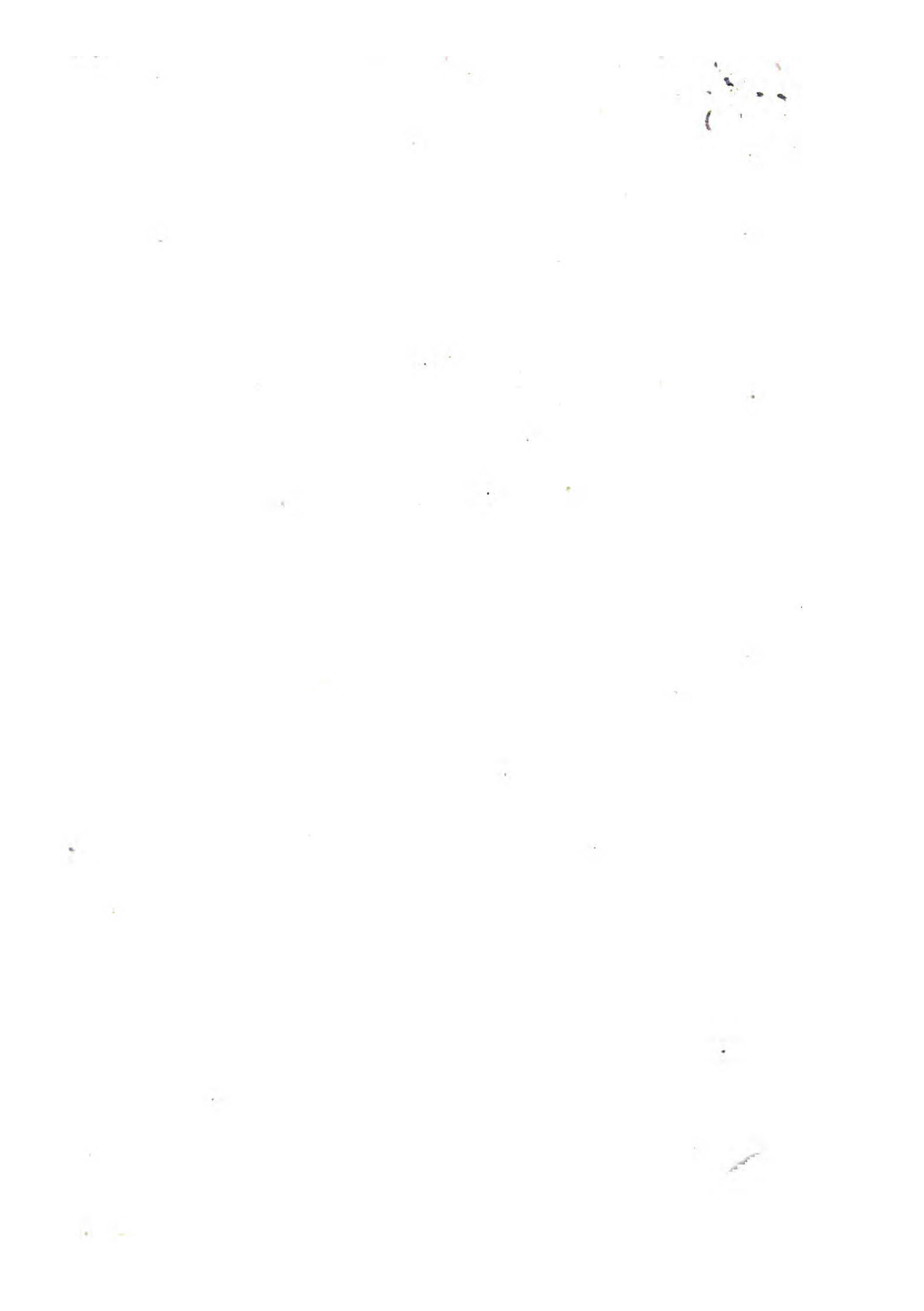
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CHARACTERISTICS:

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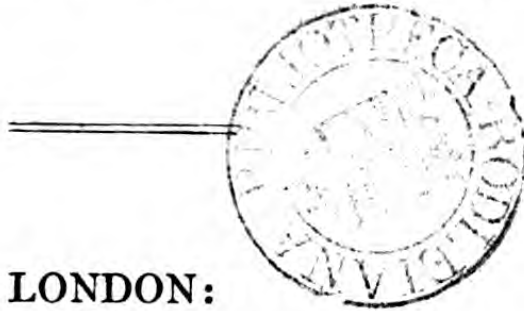
OF ROCHEFOUCAULT'S MAXIMS.

By WILLIAM HAZLITT.

SECOND EDITION.

WITH INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BY THE EDITOR OF THE "MONTHLY REPOSITORY."



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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IN the silence and overshadowing of that night, whose fitful meteoric fires only herald the descent of a superficial fame into lasting oblivion, the imbecile and unavailing resistance which is made against the doom, must often excite our pity for the pampered child of market-gilded popularity. It is not with such feelings that we behold the dark thralldom and long-suffering of true intellectual strength. Its brief, though frequent soundings beneath the earthy pressure, will be heard even amidst the din of flaunting crowds, or the solemn conclaves of common-place minds; its obscured head will often shed forth ascending beams that can only be lost in eternity; and its mighty struggles to upheave its own weight, and that of the superincumbent mass of prejudice, envy, ignorance, folly, or uncongenial force, must ever ensure the deepest sympathy of all those who can appreciate the spirit of its qualities. The full results of fortitude are a protracted triumph, but with genuine power they are at least as certain as the protraction; and those who can afford to wait, both possess and bequeath an all-sufficing consolation. Great and original minds, requir-

ing large scope for action, must necessarily be delayed till there is room enough, seeing they can neither skip nor come side-ways into the light. Levity and narrowness are always first admitted, and their rapid successions only leave space at rare intervals for the advent of solid and capacious attainments.

“Great wits in every age,” says Lord Bacon, “have been overborne, and, in a sort, tyrannized over; whilst men of capacity and comprehension above the vulgar (yet consulting their own credit and reputation) have submitted themselves to the over-swaying judgment of time and multitude. Therefore, if in any time and place, more profound contemplations have perchance emerged and revealed themselves, they have been forthwith tost and extinguished by the winds and tempests of popular opinions.” Thus it has hitherto been with the writings of William Hazlitt, though there were strong political and personal causes, in addition, to account for it. Some of his admirers will object that the above remarks hardly apply to him, and that, considering all things, he is already appreciated by as large and “fit” an audience as could have been expected in the time? Perhaps so; but I consider that neither the extent nor the *degree* of appreciation, with very few exceptions, is yet, by comparison, more than a fraction of that which he will eventually obtain.

I believe it was Mr Procter who said, in speaking of Hazlitt in the *New Monthly*, shortly after his death,—“his books are full of wisdom.” If those quarterly and monthly reviews, and other lion-and-unicorn periodicals, in whose pages he has been most traduced and insulted, should be extant fifty years hence, they will all say the same. He will then have been tried and approved by very different powers, and by very different processes, from such as belong to that species of pantomime criticism, wherein we distinguish nothing but the making of mouths, and posture-masterly attitudes of obscene offence, like those of Christophero North,—the clown of *Blackwood's Magazine*.

To the aphorism previously quoted from the great philosopher of Verulam, the following poetical corollary is appended :—“So that time, like a river, carries down to us that which is light and blown up; but sinks and drowns that which is weighty and solid.” But here, however satisfactory the reflection might be to those whom it most concerns, a humble protest must be made against the proposition conveyed in the simile. For if the noble works that have been handed down to us from the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin poets, philosophers and historians, are mere levities compared with those that are sunk and lost, what super-human folks those ancients must have been! The solid and

the weighty must always sink, it is true; they must find their natural level; but there, in the profound depths of their distress they will also find the centre of the human intellect and the human heart—the only elements of perpetuity—which will identify all Truth with themselves, and rise into universal sympathy at the appointed hour.

These “Characteristics” of Hazlitt are, perhaps, less known than any of his works. For some private reason—most likely to avoid, for once, the venomous attacks of party—he stipulated with the publisher not to put his name to the book. It contains, nevertheless, the spirit of most of his essays, except that it is divested of political bias, as much as was possible with one who felt so strongly the rights and wrongs of mankind. Such political bias as there may be, is latent only, and never rises into startling prominence. It may hence be inferred that these condensed theories and reflections, as they combine, should also *convey* the entire essence of his moral and philosophical essays? But those who are well acquainted with his writings, will scarcely think it safe to admit this to be the case, since many complicated propositions will here be found briefly stated, which require the clear and convincing elaboration elsewhere bestowed, in order to obtain a general appreciation; such, for

instance, as “The secret of our self-love is just the same as that of our liberality and candour,” &c.—“If we are not first, we may as well be last in any pursuit.” &c., with many others, that, to the running reader, will seem sheer paradox and provocation. But when you find that, in the former, he means to include the pleasure we ourselves derive from conferring approbation, or benefits, upon others; and to show that self-love is, in a great measure, the mere result of self-communion, or habitual consciousness, and *not* the mere result of selfish exclusiveness; his proposition, whether we admit or reject it, is plain enough. As to the latter, that “if we are not first we may as well be last in any pursuit,” the apparent solecism vanishes when he suggests that to be the worst possible in anything often argues the capacity for acquiring an opposite excellence of some kind. If Paganini and O’Connell had been changed in their cradles, and expressly educated for the present stations of each other, the world would doubtless have had the worst fiddler, and the worst leader of a political band, that could possibly be conceived? Several of these “Characteristics” will also be found to merge into one another, the truth of the first not being apparent until you arrive at the end of the last, which illustrates, instances, or proves.

It is not to be denied but many of the ensuing reflections and maxims originate in a strong *personal* bias, the result of private and public experience. "The public," he deliberately says, "have neither shame nor gratitude." And he, together with many 'dead deliverers,' had every reason to say so. But then, some fortunate individuals might say, and with equal reason, that the public is *very* grateful,—though never, perhaps, very shame-faced? His remarks on friendship, and on women, are also the result of wounded feelings; but if sundry contemptuous philippics on the latter excite vexation or disgust in those whose experience induces an opposite opinion, let them turn to the reflection at page 111, Aphorism 312, which embalms, if it does not explain, the whole. It seems, also, he had no cause to love the Scotch. Be it remembered, however, to use the author's own words, that "Truth is not one, but many; and an observation may be true in itself that contradicts another equally true, according to the point of view from which we contemplate the subject." This is a fair argument for the individualities of reason, as well as circumstances, time, and place; nor is it very liable to be refuted by any of our speculations on human nature.

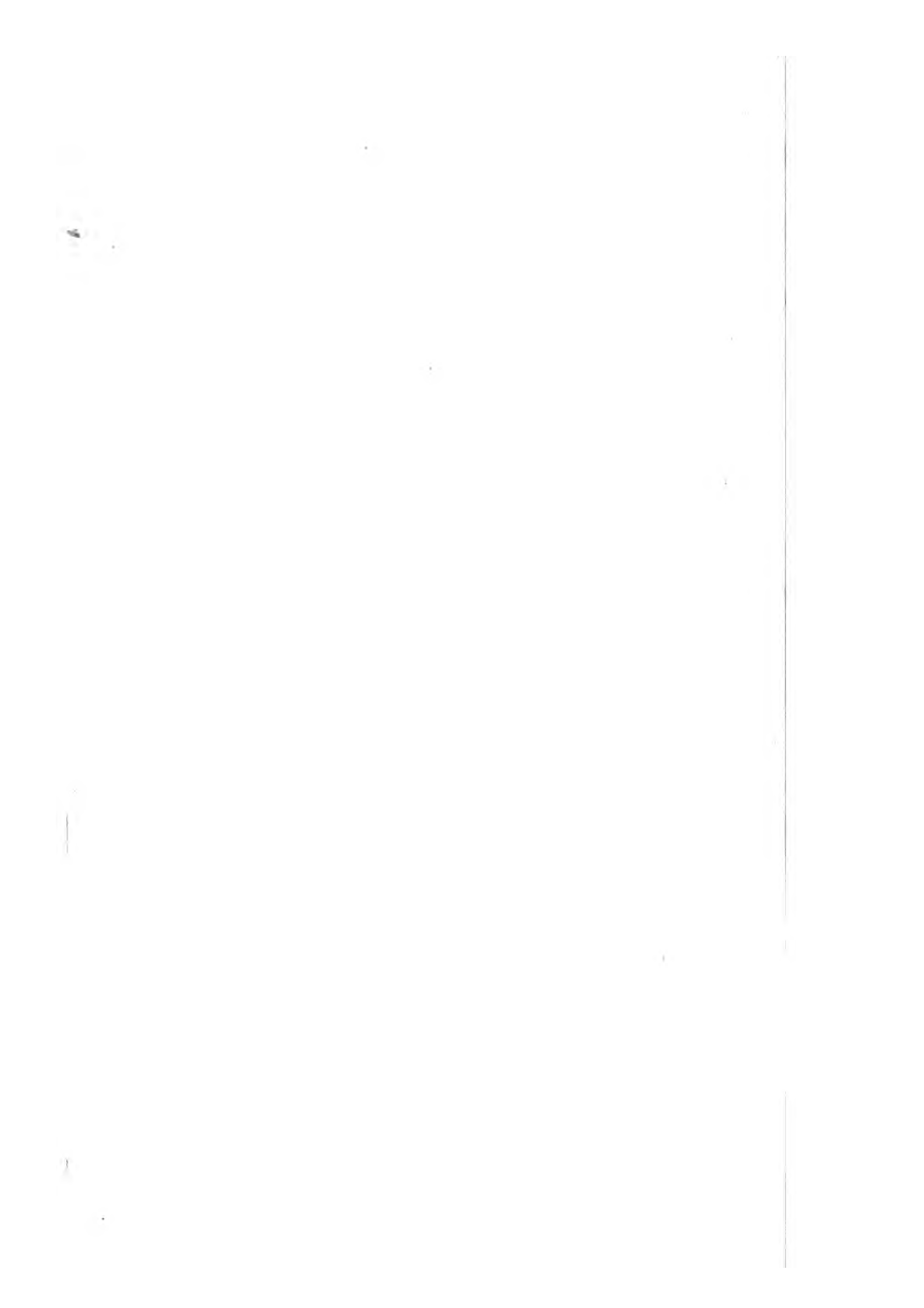
These "Characteristics" contain much that is cynical, though nothing malevolent, and the author utters

many bitter sarcasms, some of which are distinctly levelled at himself. In his most cutting truths it is a striking peculiarity with Hazlitt, that he always brings himself in for his full share. But for profound and original thought, and clear as well as masterly analysis, I would particularly call the reader's attention to pages 51, 52, 56, 63, 98, 108, &c. ; to his remarks on Mandeville and Rochefoucault, at page 44 ; and to the sharply-finished outline of his noble theory of Human Action, contained in the arguments that follow.

I cannot assume for a moment that in these brief introductory observations anything like an adequate idea has been conveyed of the contents of this book. I have endeavoured, however, to supercede some erroneous impressions that might result from hasty glances, and to express a conviction of its value. I earnestly hope that other periodical writers will not hesitate to do the same, in proportion as they may entertain such a conviction.

R. H. HORNE,

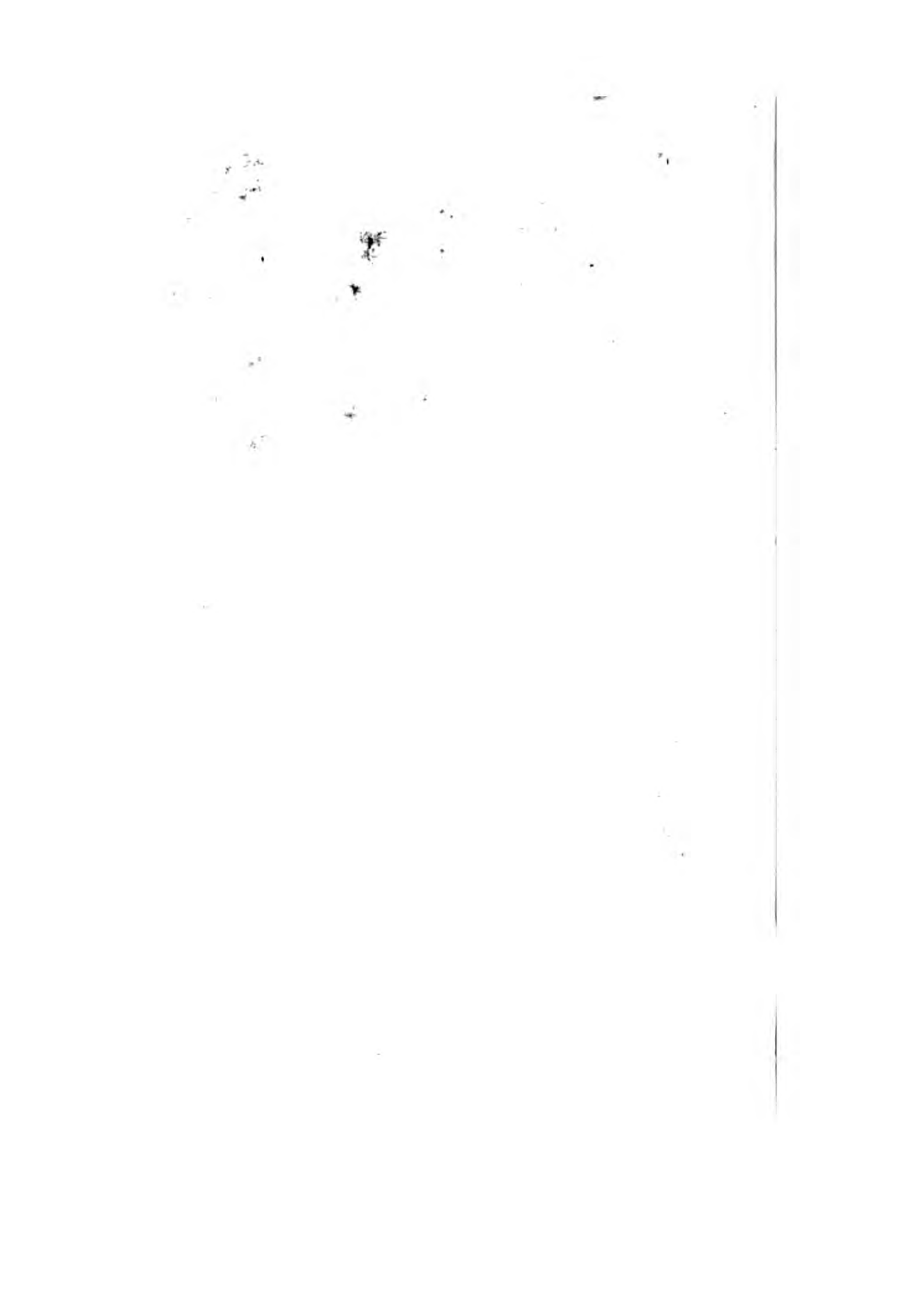
Author of the "Exposition of the False Medium," &c.



PREFACE.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE following work was suggested by a perusal of Rochefoucault's *MAXIMS AND MORAL REFLECTIONS*. I was so struck with the force and beauty of the style and matter, that I felt an earnest ambition to embody some occasional thoughts of my own in the same form. This was much easier than to retain an equal degree of spirit. Having, however, succeeded indifferently in a few, the work grew under my hands; and both the novelty and agreeableness of the task impelled me forward. There is a peculiar *stimulus*, and at the same time a freedom from all anxiety, in this mode of writing. A thought must tell at once, or not at all. There is no opportunity for considering how we shall make out an opinion by labour and prolixity. An observation must be self-evident; or a reason or illustration (if we give one) must be pithy and concise. Each *MAXIM* should contain the essence or ground-work of a separate Essay, but so developed as of itself to suggest a whole train of reflections to the reader; and it is equally necessary to avoid paradox or common-place. The style also must be sententious and epigrammatic, with a certain pointedness and involution of expression, so as to keep the thoughts distinct, and to prevent them from running endlessly into one another. Such are the conditions to which it seemed to me necessary to conform, in order to insure anything like success to a work of this kind; or to render the pleasure of the perusal equal to the difficulty of the execution. There is only one point in which I dare even allude to a comparison with Rochefoucault—*I have had no theory to maintain*; and have endeavoured to set down each thought as it occurred to me, without bias or prejudice of any sort.



CHARACTERISTICS.

I.

OF all virtues, magnanimity is the rarest. There are a hundred persons of merit for one who willingly acknowledges it in another.

II.

It is often harder to praise a friend than an enemy. By the last we may acquire a reputation for candour; by the first we only seem to discharge a debt, and are liable to a suspicion of partiality. Besides, though familiarity may not breed contempt, it takes off the edge of admiration; and the shining points of character are not those we chiefly wish to dwell upon. Our habitual impression of any one is very different from the light in which he would choose to appear before the public. We think of him *as a friend*: we must forget that he is one, before we can extol him to others.

III.

To speak highly of one with whom we are intimate, is a species of egotism. Our modesty as well as our jealousy teaches us caution on this subject.

IV.

What makes it so difficult to do justice to others is, that we are hardly sensible of merit, unless it falls in with our own views and line of pursuit; and where this is the case, it interferes with our own pretensions. To be forward to praise others, implies either great eminence, that can afford to part with applause; or great quickness of discernment, with confidence in our own judgments; or great sincerity and love of truth, getting the better of our self-love.

V.

Many persons are so narrow in this respect, that they cannot bring themselves to allow the most trifling merit in any one else. This is not altogether ill-nature, but a meanness of spirit or want of confidence in themselves, which is upset and kicks the beam, if the smallest particle of praise is thrown into another's scale. They are poor feeble insects tottering along

the road to fame, that are crushed by the shadow of opposition, or stopped by a whisper of rivalry.

VI.

There are persons, not only whose praise, but whose very names we cannot bear to hear.

VII.

There are people who cannot praise a friend for the life of them. With every effort and all the goodwill in the world, they shrink from the task through a want of mental courage; as some people shudder at plunging into a cold-bath from weak nerves.

VIII.

Others praise you behind your back, who will not, on any account, do so to your face. Is it that they are afraid of being taken for flatterers? Or that they had rather any one else should know they think well of you than yourself; as a rival is the last person we should wish to hear the favourable opinion of a mistress, because it gives him most pleasure?

IX.

To deny undoubted merit in others, is to deny

its existence altogether, and consequently our own. The example of illiberality we set is easily turned against ourselves.

X.

Magnanimity is often concealed under an appearance of shyness, and even poverty of spirit. Heroes, according to Rousseau, are not known by the loftiness of their carriage; as the greatest braggarts are generally the merest cowards.

XI.

Men of the greatest genius are not always the most prodigal of their encomiums. But then it is when their range of power is confined, and they have in fact little perception, except of their own particular kind of excellence.

XII.

Popularity disarms envy in well-disposed minds. Those are ever the most ready to do justice to others, who feel that the world has done them justice. When success has not this effect in opening the mind, it is a sign that it has been ill-deserved.

XIII.

Some people tell us all the harm—others as carefully conceal all the good they hear of us.

XIV.

It signifies little what we say of our acquaintance, so that we do not tell them what others say against them. Tale-bearers make all the real mischief.

XV.

The silence of a friend commonly amounts to treachery. His not daring to say any thing in our behalf implies a tacit censure.

XVI.

It is hard to praise those who are dispraised by others. He is little short of a hero, who perseveres in thinking well of a friend who has become a butt for slander, and a bye-word.

XVII.

However we may flatter ourselves to the contrary, our friends think no higher of us than the world do. They see us with the jaundiced or distrustful eyes of others. They may know

better, but their feelings are governed by popular prejudice. Nay, they are more shy of us (when under a cloud) than even strangers; for we involve them in a common disgrace, or compel them to embroil themselves in continual quarrels and disputes in our defence.

XVIII.

We find those who are officious and troublesome through sheer imbecility of character. They can neither resolve to do a thing, nor to let it alone; and by getting in the way, hinder where perhaps they meant to help. To *volunteer* a service and shrink from the performance, is to prevent others from undertaking it.

XIX.

Envy, among other ingredients, has a mixture of the love of justice in it. We are more angry at undeserved than at deserved good-fortune.

XX.

We admit the merit of some, much less willingly than that of others. This is because there is something about them, that is at vari-

ance with their boasted pretensions, either a heaviness importing stupidity, or a levity inferring folly, &c.

XXI.

The assumption of merit is easier, less embarrassing, and more effectual than the positive attainment of it.

XXII.

Envy is the most universal passion. We only pride ourselves on the qualities we possess or think we possess; but we envy the pretensions we have, and those which we have not, and do not even wish for. We envy the greatest qualities and every trifling advantage. We envy the most ridiculous appearance or affectation of superiority. We envy folly and conceit: nay, we go so far as to envy whatever confers distinction or notoriety, even vice and infamy.

XXIII.

Envy is a littleness of soul, which cannot see beyond a certain point, and if it does not occupy the whole space, feels itself excluded.

XXIV.

Or, it often arises from weakness of judgment. We cannot make up our minds to admit the soundness of certain pretensions; and therefore hate the appearance, where we are doubtful about the reality. We consider every such tax on our applause as a kind of imposition or injustice; so that the withholding our assent is from a fear of being tricked out of our good opinion under false pretences. This is the reason why sudden or upstart advantages are always an object of such extreme jealousy, and even of contempt; and why we so readily bow to the claims of posthumous and long-established reputation. The last is the sterling coin of merit, which we no longer question or cavil at. The other, we think, may be tinsel; and we are unwilling to give our admiration in exchange for a bauble. It is not that the candidates for it in the one case are removed out of our way, and make a diversion to the more immediate claims of our cotemporaries; but that their own are so clear and universally acknowledged, that they come home to our feelings and bosoms with their full weight, without any drawbacks of doubt in our

own minds, or objection on the part of others. If our envy were intrinsically and merely a hatred of excellence and of the approbation due to it, we should hate it the more, the more distinguished and unequivocal it was. On the other hand, our faith in standard reputation is a kind of religion; and our admiration of it, instead of a cold, servile offering, an enthusiastic homage. There are people who would attempt to persuade us that we read Homer or Milton with pleasure, only to *spite* some living poet. With them, all our best actions are hypocrisy; and our best feelings, affectation.

XXV.

The secret of our self-love is just the same as that of our liberality and candour. We prefer ourselves to others, only because we have a more intimate consciousness and confirmed opinion of our own claims and merits than of any other person's.

XXVI.

It argues a poor opinion of ourselves, when we cannot admit any other class of merit besides our own, or any rival in that class.

CHARACTERISTICS.

9

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XXVII.

Those who are the most distrustful of themselves, are the most envious of others; as the most weak and cowardly are the most revengeful.

XXVIII.

Some persons of great talents and celebrity have been remarkable for narrowness of mind and an impatience of every thing like competition. Garrick and other public favourites might be mentioned as instances. This may perhaps be accounted for, either from an undue and intoxicating share of applause, so that they became jealous of popularity, as of a mistress; or from a want of other resources, so as to be unable to repose on themselves without the constant stimulus of incense offered to their vanity.

XXIX.

We are more jealous of frivolous accomplishments with brilliant success, than of the most estimable qualities without it. Dr. Johnson envied Garrick whom he despised, and ridiculed Goldsmith whom he loved.

XXX.

Persons of slender intellectual *stamina* dread

competition, as dwarfs are afraid of being run over in the street. Yet vanity often prompts them to hazard the experiment, as women through fool-hardiness rush into a crowd.

XXXI.

We envy others for any trifling addition to their acknowledged merit, more than for the sum-total, much as we object to pay an addition to a bill, or grudge an acquaintance an unexpected piece of good fortune. This happens, either because such an accession of accomplishment is like stealing a march upon us, and implies a versatility of talent we had not reckoned upon; or it seems an impertinence and affectation for a man to go out of his way to distinguish himself; or it is because we cannot account for his proficiency mechanically and as a thing of course, by saying, *It is his trade!* In like manner, we plume ourselves most on excelling in what we are not bound to do, and are most flattered by the admission of our most questionable pretensions. We nurse the rickety child, and want to have our faults and weak sides pampered into virtues. We feel little obliged to any one for owning the merit we are

known to have—it is an old story—but we are mightily pleased to be complimented on some fancy we set up for—it is *a feather in our cap*, a new conquest, an extension of our sense of power. A man of talent aspires to a reputation for personal address or advantages. Sir Robert Walpole wished to pass for a man of gallantry, for which he was totally unfit. A woman of sense would be thought a beauty, a beauty a great wit, and so on.

XXXII.

Some there are who can only find out in us those good qualities which nobody else has discovered: as there are others who make a point of crying up our deserts, after all the rest of the world have agreed to do so. The first are patrons, not friends: the last are not friends, but sycophants.

XXXIII.

A distinction has been made between acuteness and subtlety of understanding. This might be illustrated by saying, that acuteness consists in taking up the points or solid atoms, subtlety in feeling the *air* of truth.

XXXIV.

Hope is the best possession. None are completely wretched but those who are without hope; and few are reduced so low as that.

XXXV.

Death is the greatest evil; because it cuts off hope.

XXXVI.

While we desire, we do not enjoy; and with enjoyment desire ceases, which should lend its strongest zest to it. This, however, does not apply to the gratifications of sense, but to the passions, in which distance and difficulty have a principal share.

XXXVII.

To deserve any blessing is to set a just value on it. The pains we take in its pursuit are only a consequence of this.

XXXVIII.

The wish is often "father to the thought:" but we are quite as apt to believe what we dread as what we hope.

XXXIX.

The *amiable* is the voluptuous in expression or manner. The sense of pleasure in ourselves is that which excites it in others; or, the art of pleasing is to seem pleased.

XL.

Let a man's talents or virtues be what they may, we only feel satisfaction in his society, as he is satisfied in himself. We cannot enjoy the good qualities of a friend, if he seems to be none the better for them.

XLI.

We judge of others for the most part by their good opinion of themselves: yet nothing gives such offence or creates so many enemies as that extreme self-complacency or superciliousness of manner, which appears to set the opinion of every one else at defiance.

XLII.

Self-sufficiency is more provoking than rudeness or the most unqualified or violent opposition, inasmuch as the latter may be retorted, and implies that we are worth notice; whereas

the former strikes at the root of our self-importance, and reminds us that even our good opinion is not worth having. Nothing precludes sympathy so much as a perfect indifference to it.

XLIII.

The confession of our failings is a thankless office. It savours less of sincerity or modesty than of ostentation. It seems as if we thought our weaknesses as good as other people's virtues.

XLIV.

A coxcomb is generally a favorite with women. To a certain point his self-complacency is agreeable in itself; and beyond that, even if it grows fulsome, it only piques their vanity the more to make a conquest of *his*. He becomes a sort of rival to them in his own good opinion, so that his conceit has all the effect of jealousy in irritating their desire to withdraw his admiration from himself.

XLV.

Nothing is more successful with women than that sort of condescending patronage of the sex,

which goes by the name of *general gallantry*. It has the double advantage of imposing on their weakness and flattering their pride. By being indiscriminate, it tantalizes and keeps them in suspense; and by making a profession of an extreme deference for the sex in general, naturally suggests the reflection, what a delightful thing it must be to gain the exclusive regard of a man who has so high an opinion of what is due to the female character. It is possible for a man, by talking continually of what is *feminine* or *unfeminine*, *vulgar* or *genteel*, by saying *how shocking such an article of dress is*, or *that no lady ought to touch a particular kind of food*, fairly to starve or strip a whole circle of simpletons half-naked, by mere dint of impertinence, and an air of common-place assurance. How interesting to be acquainted with a man whose every thought turns upon the sex! How charming to make a conquest of one who sets up for a consummate judge of female perfections!

XLVI.

We like characters and actions which we do not approve. There are amiable vices and obnoxious virtues, on the mere principle that our

sympathy with a person who yields to obvious temptations and agreeable impulses (however prejudicial) is itself agreeable; while to sympathize with exercises of self-denial or fortitude, is a painful effort. Virtue costs the spectator, as well as the performer, something. We are touched by the immediate motives of actions, we judge of them by the consequences. We like a convivial character better than an abstemious one, because the idea of conviviality in the first instance is pleasanter than that of sobriety. For the same reason, we prefer generosity to justice, because the imagination lends itself more easily to an ebullition of feeling, than to the suppression of it on remote and abstracted principles; and we like a good-natured fool, or even knave better than the severe professors of wisdom and morality. Cato, Brutus, &c. are characters to admire and applaud, rather than to love or imitate.

XLVII.

Personal pretensions alone ensure female regard. It is not the eye that sees whatever is sublime or beautiful in nature that the fair delight to see gazing in silent rapture on themselves, but that which is itself a pleasing object

to the sense. I may look at a Claudè or a Raphael by turns, but this does not alter my own appearance; and it is that which women attend to.

XLVIII.

There are persons that we like, though they do not like us. This happens very rarely; and indeed it argues a strong presumption of merit both in them and in ourselves. We fancy they only want to know us better, to be convinced of the prize they would obtain in our friendship. There are others, to whom no civilities or good offices on their parts can reconcile us, from an original distaste: yet even this repugnance would not, perhaps, be proof against time and custom.

XLIX.

We may observe persons who seem to have a peculiar delight in the *disagreeable*: They catch all sorts of uncouth tones and gestures, the manners and dialect of clowns and hoydens, and aim at vulgarity as others ape gentility. (This is what is often understood by a love of low life.) They say all sorts of disagreeable things without meaning or feeling what they say. What startles or shocks other people is to them an

amusing excitement, a fillip to their constitutions; and from the bluntness of their perceptions and a certain wilfulness of spirit, not being able to enter into the refined and pleasurable, they make a merit of being insensible to every thing of the kind. Masculine women, for instance, are those who, not being possessed of the charms and delicacy of the sex, affect a superiority over it by throwing aside all decorum.

L.

We find another class who continually do and say what they ought not, and what they do not intend; and who are governed almost entirely by an instinct of absurdity. Owing to a perversity of imagination or irritability of nerve, the idea that a thing is improper acts as a mechanical inducement to it; the fear of committing a blunder is so strong, that they *bolt* out whatever is uppermost in their minds, before they are aware of it. The dread of some object haunts and rivets attention to it; and a continual, uneasy, morbid apprehensiveness of temper takes away their self-possession, and hurries them into the very mistakes they wish to avoid.

LI.

There are few people quite above, or completely below *par*.

LII.

Society is a more level surface than we imagine. Wise men or absolute fools are hard to be met with, as there are few giants or dwarfs. The heaviest charge we can bring against the general texture of society is, that it is common-place; and many of those who are singular, had better be common-place. Our fancied superiority to others is in some one thing, which we think most of, because we excel in it, or have paid most attention to it; whilst we overlook their superiority to us in something else, which they set equal and exclusive store by. This is fortunate for all parties. I never felt myself superior to any one, who did not go out of his way to affect qualities which he had not. In his own individual character and line of pursuit, every one has knowledge, experience, and skill:—and who shall say which pursuit requires most, thereby proving his own narrowness and incompetencè to decide? Particular talent or genius does not

imply general capacity. Those who are most versatile are seldom great in any one department: and the stupidest people can generally do something. The highest pre-eminence in any one study commonly arises from the concentration of the attention and faculties on that one study. He who expects from a great name in politics, in philosophy, in art, equal greatness in other things, is little versed in human nature. Our strength lies in our weakness. The learned in books is ignorant of the world. He who is ignorant of books is often well acquainted with other things: for life is of the same length in the learned and unlearned; the mind cannot be idle; if it is not taken up with one thing, it attends to another through choice or necessity; and the degree of previous capacity in one class or another is a mere lottery.

LIII.

Some things, it is true, are more prominent, and lead to more serious consequences than others, so as to excite a greater share of attention and applause. Public characters, authors, warriors, statesmen, &c. nearly monopolize public consideration in this way, and are apt to

judge of their merit by the noise they make in the world. Yet none of these classes would be willing to make the rule absolute; for a favourite player gains as much applause as any of them. A poet stands a poor chance either of popularity with the vulgar, or influence with the great, against a fashionable opera-dancer or singer. Reputation or notoriety is not the stamp of merit. Certain professions, like certain situations, bring it into greater notice, but have, perhaps, no more to do with it than birth or fortune. Opportunity sometimes indeed "throws a cruel sunshine on a fool." I have known several celebrated men, and some of them have been persons of the weakest capacity: yet accident had lifted them into general notice, and probably will hand their memories down to posterity. There are names written in her immortal scroll, at which FAME blushes!

LIV.

The world judge of men by their ability in their profession, and we judge of ourselves by the same test; for it is that on which our success in life depends. Yet how often do our talents and pursuits lie in different directions!

The best painters are not always the cleverest men; and an author who makes an unfavourable or doubtful impression on the public, may in himself be a person of rare and agreeable qualifications. One cause of this is affectation. We constantly aim at what we are least fit for, thwarting or despising our natural bent; so that our performances and our characters are unaccountably at variance.

LV.

If a man is disliked by one woman, he will succeed with none. The sex (one and all) have the same secret, or *free-masonry*, in judging of men.

LVI.

Any woman may act the part of a coquet successfully, who has the reputation without the scruples of modesty. If a woman passes the bounds of propriety for our sakes, and throws herself unblushingly at our heads, we conclude it is either from a sudden and violent liking, or from extraordinary merit on our parts, either of which is enough to turn any man's head, who has a single spark of gallantry or vanity in his composition.

LVII.

The surest way to make ourselves agreeable to others is by seeming to think them so. If we appear fully sensible of their good qualities, they will not complain of the want of them in us.

LVIII.

We often choose a friend as we do a mistress, for no particular excellence in themselves, but merely from some circumstance that flatters our self-love.

LIX.

Silence is one great art of conversation. He is not a fool who knows when to hold his tongue; and a person may gain credit for sense, eloquence, wit, who merely says nothing to lessen the opinion which others have of these qualities in themselves.

LX.

There are few things in which we deceive ourselves more than in the esteem we profess to entertain for our friends. It is little better than a piece of quackery. The truth is, we think of them as we please—that is, as *they* please or displease us. As long as we are in good humour with them, we see nothing but

their good qualities; but no sooner do they offend us than we rip up all their bad ones (which we before made a secret of, even to ourselves) with double malice. He who but now was little less than an angel of light shall be painted in the blackest colours for a slip of the tongue, "some trick not worth an egg," for the slightest suspicion of offence given or received. We often bestow the most opprobrious epithets on our best friends, and retract them twenty times in the course of a day, while the man himself remains the same. In love, which is all rhapsody and passion, this is excusable; but in the ordinary intercourse of life, it is preposterous.

LXI.

A man who is always defending his friends from the most trifling charges, will be apt to make other people their enemies.

LXII.

There are those who see every thing through a medium of enthusiasm or prejudice; and who therefore think, that to admit any blemish in a friend, is to compromise his character altogether. The instant you destroy their heated ex-

aggerations, they feel that they have no other ground to stand upon.

LXIII.

We are ridiculous enough in setting up for patterns of perfection ourselves, without becoming answerable for that of others. It is best to confine our absurdities at home.

LXIV.

We do not like our friends the worse, because they sometimes give us an opportunity to rail at them heartily. Their faults reconcile us to their virtues. Indeed, we never have much esteem or regard, except for those that we can afford to speak our minds of freely; whose follies vex us in proportion to our anxiety for their welfare, and who have plenty of redeeming points about them to balance their defects. When we "spy abuses" of this kind, it is a wiser and more generous proceeding to give vent to our impatience and ill-humour, than to brood over it, and let it, by sinking into our minds, poison the very sources of our goodwill.

LXV.

To come to an explanation with a friend is to

do away half the cause of offence ; as to declare the grounds of our complaints and chagrin to a third party, is tacitly to pass them over. Our not daring to hint at the infirmities of a friend implies that we are ashamed to own them, and that we can only hope to keep on good terms with him by being blind to his real character.

LXVI.

It is well that there is no one without a fault ; for he would not have a friend in the world. He would seem to belong to a different species.

LXVII.

Even among actors, painters, &c. those who are the most perfect, are not always the most admired. It is those who strike by their inequalities, and whose faults and excellences keep up a perpetual warfare between the partizans on both sides, that are the most talked of and produce the greatest effect. Nothing is prominent that does not act as a foil to itself. Emery's acting was without a fault. This was all that was ever said about it. His merit was one of those things that nobody insisted on, because it was taken for granted. Mr. Kean agitates

and almost convulses the public mind by contrary extremes. It is a question whether Raphael would have acquired so great a name, if his colouring had been equal to his drawing or expression. As it is, his figures stand out like a rock, severed from its base: while Corregio's are lost in their own beauty and sweetness. Whatever has not a mixture of imperfection in it, soon grows insipid, or seems "stupidly good."

LXVIII.

I have known persons without a friend—never any one without some virtue. The virtues of the former conspired with their vices to make the whole world their enemies.

LXIX.

The study of metaphysics has this advantage, at least—it promotes a certain integrity and uprightness of understanding, which is a cure for the spirit of lying. He who has devoted himself to the discovery of truth feels neither pride nor pleasure in the invention of falsehood, and cannot condescend to any such paltry expedient. If you find a person given to vulgar shifts and rhodomontade, and who at the same

time tells you he is a metaphysician, do not believe him.

LXX.

It is the mischief of the regular study of all art and science, that it proportionably unfits a man for those pursuits or emergencies in life, which require mere courage and promptitude. To any one who has found how difficult it is to arrive at truth or beauty, with all the pains and time he can bestow upon them, every thing seems worthless that can be obtained by a mere assumption of the question, or putting a good face upon the matter. Let a man try to produce a fine picture, or to solve an abstruse problem by giving himself airs of self-importance, and see what he will make of it. But in the common intercourse of life, too much depends on this sort of assurance and quackery. This is the reason why scholars and other eminent men so often fail in what personally concerns themselves. They cannot take advantage of the follies of mankind; nor submit to arrive at the end they have in view by unworthy means. Those who cannot make the progress of a single step in a favourite study without infinite pains and preparation, scorn to carry the world

before them, or to win the good opinion of any individual in it, by vapouring and impudence. Yet these last qualities often succeed without an atom of true desert; and "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." In nine cases out of ten, the mere sanguineness of our pursuit ensures success; but the having tasked our faculties as much as they will bear, does not tend to enhance our overweening opinion of ourselves. The labours of the mind, like the drudgery of the body, impair our animal spirits and alacrity. Those who have done nothing, fancy themselves capable of every thing: while those who have exerted themselves to the utmost, only feel the limitation of their powers, and evince neither admiration of themselves nor triumph over others. Their work is still to do, and they have no time or disposition for *fooling*. This is the reason why the greatest men have the least appearance of it.

LXXI.

Persons who pique themselves on their understanding are frequently reserved and haughty: persons who aim at wit are generally courteous and sociable. Those who depend at every turn

on the applause of the company, must endeavour to conciliate the good opinion of others by every means in their power.

“ A jest’s prosperity lies in the ear
Of him who hears it.”

If a habit of jesting lowers a man, it is to the level of humanity. Wit nourishes vanity; reason has a much stronger tincture of pride in it.

LXXII.

Satirists gain the applause of others through fear, not through love.

LXXIII.

Some persons can do nothing but ridicule others.

LXXIV.

Parodists, like mimics, seize only on defects, or turn beauties into blemishes. They make bad writers and indifferent actors.

LXXV.

People of the greatest gaiety of manners are often the dullest company imaginable. Nothing is so dreary as the serious conversation or writing of a professed wag. So the gravest per-

sons, divines, mathematicians, and so on, make the worst and poorest jokes, puns, &c.

LXXVI.

The expression of a Frenchman's face is often as melancholy when he is by himself, as it is lively in conversation. The instant he ceases to talk, he becomes "quite chop-fallen."

LXXVII.

To point out defects, one would think it necessary to be equally conversant with beauties. But this is not the case. The best caricaturists cannot draw a common outline; nor the best comic actors speak a line of serious poetry without being laughed at. This may be perhaps accounted for in some degree by saying, that the perfection of the ludicrous implies that looseness or disjointedness of mind, which receives most delight and surprise from oddity and contrast, and which is naturally opposed to the steadiness and unity of feeling required for the serious, or the sublime and beautiful.

LXXVIII.

Different persons have different limits to their

capacity. Thus, some excel in one profession generally, such as acting; others in one department of it, as tragedy; others in one character only. Garrick was equally great in tragedy and comedy; Mrs. Siddons only shone in tragedy; Russell could play nothing but Jerry Sneak.*

LXXIX.

Comic actors have generally attempted tragedy first; and have a hankering after it to the last. It was the case with Weston, Shuter, Munden, Bannister, and even Liston. *Prodigious!* The mistake may perhaps be traced to the imposing *eclat* of tragedy, and the awe produced by the utter incapacity of such persons to know what to make of it.

LXXX.

If we are not first, we may as well be last in any pursuit. To be *worst* is some kind of distinction, and implies, by the rule of contrary,

* There is a pleasant instance of this mentioned in the Tatler. There was an actor of that day who could play nothing but the Apothecary in Romeo and Juliet. He succeeded so well in this, that he grew fat upon it, when he was set aside; and having then nothing to do, pined away till he became qualified for the part again, and had another run in it.

that we ought to excel in some opposite quality. Thus, if any one has scarcely the use of his limbs, we may conceive it is from his having exercised his mind too much. We suppose that an awkward boy at school is a good scholar. So if a man has a strong body, we compliment him with a weak mind, and *vice versâ*.

LXXXI.

There is a natural principle of *antithesis* in the human mind. We seldom grant one excellence but we hasten to make up for it by a contrary defect, to keep the balance of criticism even. Thus we say, *Titian was a great colourist, but did not know how to draw*. The first is true: the last is a mere presumption from the first, like alternate rhyme and reason; or a compromise with the weakness of human nature, which soon tires of praise.

LXXXII.

There is some reason for this cautious distribution of merit; for it is not necessary for one man to possess more than one quality in the highest perfection, since no one possesses all, and we are in the end forced to collect the idea of per-

fection in art from a number of different specimens. It is quite sufficient for any one person to do any one thing better than every body else. Any thing beyond this is like an impertinence. It was not necessary for Hogarth to paint his *Sigismunda*; nor for Mrs. Siddons to abridge *Paradise Lost*.

LXXXIII.

On the stage none but originals can be counted as any thing. The rest are "men of no mark or likelihood." They give us back the same impression we had before, and make it worse instead of better.

LXXXIV.

It was ridiculous to set up Mr. Kean as a rival to Mr. Kemble. Whatever merits the first might have, they were of a totally different class, and could not possibly interfere with, much less injure those of his great predecessor. Mr. Kemble stood on his own ground, and he stood high on it. Yet there certainly was a *re-action* in this case. Many persons saw no defect in Mr. Kemble till Mr. Kean came, and then finding themselves mistaken in the abstract idea of perfection they had indulged in, were

ready to give up their opinion altogether. When a man is a great favourite with the public, they incline by a natural spirit of exaggeration and love of the marvellous, to heap all sorts of perfections upon him, and when they find by another's excelling him in some one thing that this is not the case, they are disposed to strip their former idol, and leave him "bare to weather." Nothing is more unjust or capricious than public opinion.

LXXXV.

The public have neither shame nor gratitude.

LXXXVI.

Public opinion is the mixed result of the intellect of the community acting upon general feeling.

LXXXVII.

Our friends are generally ready to do every thing for us, except the very thing we wish them to do. There is one thing in particular they are always disposed to give us, and which we are as unwilling to take, namely, *advice*.

LXXXVIII.

Good-nature is often combined with ill tem-

per. Our own uncomfortable feelings teach us to sympathize with others, and to seek relief from our own uneasiness in the satisfactions we can afford them. Ill-nature combined with good temper is an unnatural and odious character. Our delighting in mischief and suffering, when we have no provocation to it from being ill at ease ourselves, is wholly unpardonable. Yet I have known one or two instances of this sort of callous levity, and gay, laughing malignity. Such people "poison in jest."

LXXXIX.

It is wonderful how soon men acquire talents for offices of trust and importance. The higher the situation, the higher the opinion it gives us of ourselves; and as is our confidence, so is our capacity. We *assume* an equality with circumstances.

XC.

The difficulty is for a man to rise to high station, not to fill it; as it is easier to stand on an eminence than to climb up to it. Yet he alone is truly great who is so without the aid of circumstances and in spite of fortune, who is as little lifted up by the tide of opinion, as he is

depressed by neglect or obscurity, and who borrows dignity only from himself. It is a fine compliment which Pope has paid to Lord Oxford—

“ A soul supreme, in each hard instance tried,
Above all pain, all passion, and all pride;
The rage of power, the blast of public breath,
The lust of lucre, and the dread of death!”

XCI.

The most silent people are generally those who think most highly of themselves. They fancy themselves superior to every one else; and not being sure of making good their secret pretensions, decline entering the lists altogether. They thus “lay the flattering unction to their souls,” that they *could* have said better things than others, or that the conversation was beneath them.

XCII.

There are writers who never do their best; lest if they should fail, they should be left without excuse in their own opinion. While they trifle with a subject, they feel superior to it. They will not take pains, for this would be a test of what they are actually able to do, and set a

limit to their pretensions, while their vanity is unbounded. The more you find fault with them, the more careless they grow, their affected indifference keeping pace with and acting as a shield against the disapprobation or contempt of others. They fancy whatever they condescend to write must be good enough for the public.

XCIII.

Authors who acquire a high celebrity and conceal themselves, seem superior to fame. Producing great works *incognito* is like doing good by stealth. There is an air of magnanimity in it, which people wonder at. Junius, and the Author of Waverley are striking examples. Junius, however, is really unknown; while the Author of Waverley enjoys all the credit of his writings without acknowledging them. Let any one else come forward and claim them; and we should then see whether Sir Walter Scott would stand idle by. It is a curious argument that he cannot be the author, because the real author could not help making himself known; when, if he is not so, the real author has never even been hinted at, and lets another run away with all the praise.

XCIV.

Some books have a *personal* character. We are attached to the work for the sake of the author. Thus we read WALTON'S ANGLER as we should converse with an agreeable old man, not for what he says, so much as for his manner of saying it, and the pleasure he takes in the subject.

XCV.

Some persons are exceedingly shocked at the cruelty of WALTON'S ANGLER—as if the most humane could be expected to trouble themselves about fixing a worm on a hook, at a time when they burnt men at a stake “in conscience and tender heart.” We are not to measure the feelings of one age by those of another. Had Walton lived in our day, he would have been the first to cry out against the cruelty of angling. As it was, his flies and baits were only a part of his tackle. *They* had not, at this period, the most distant idea of setting up as candidates for our sympathy! Man is naturally a savage, and emerges from barbarism by slow degrees. Let us take the streaks of light, and be thankful for them, as they arise and tinge the horizon

one by one, and not complain because the noon is long after the dawn of refinement.

XCVI.

Livery-servants (I confess it) are the only people I do not like to sit in company with. They offend not only by their own meanness, but by the ostentatious display of the pride of their masters.

XCVII.

It has been observed, that the proudest people are not nice in love. In fact, they think they raise the object of their choice above every one else.

XCVIII.

A proud man is satisfied with his own good opinion, and does not seek to make converts to it. Pride erects a little kingdom of its own, and acts as sovereign in it. Hence we see why some men are so proud they cannot be affronted, like kings who have no peer or equal.

XCIX.

The proudest people are as soon repulsed as the most humble. The last are discouraged by

the slightest objection or hint of their conscious incapacity, while the first disdain to enter into any competition, and resent whatever implies a doubt of their self-evident superiority to others.

c.

What passes in the world for talent or dexterity or enterprize, is often only a want of moral principle. We may succeed where others fail, not from a greater share of invention, but from not being nice in the choice of expedients.

ci.

Cunning is the art of concealing our own defects, and discovering other people's weaknesses. Or it is taking advantages of others which they do not suspect, because they are contrary to propriety and the settled practice. We feel no inferiority to a fellow who picks our pockets; though we feel mortified at being overreached by trick and cunning. Yet there is no more reason for it in the one case than in the other. Any one may win at cards by cheating — *till he is found out*. We have been playing against odds. So any one may deceive us by lying, or take an unfair advantage of us, who is

not withheld by a sense of shame or honesty from doing so.

CII.

The completest hypocrites are so by nature. That is, they are without sympathy with others to distract their attention—or any of that nervous weakness, which might revolt or hesitate at the baseness of the means necessary to carry on their system of deception. You can no more tell what is passing in the minds of such people than if they were of a different species. They, in fact, are so to all moral intents and purposes; and this is the advantage they have over you. You fancy there is a common link between you, while in reality there is none.

CIII.

The greatest hypocrites are the greatest dupes. This is either because they think only of deceiving others and are off their guard, or because they really know little about the feelings or characters of others from their want of sympathy, and of consequent sagacity. Perhaps the resorting to trick and artifice in the first instance implies not only a callousness of feeling, but an obtuseness of intellect, which

cannot get on by fair means. Thus a girl who is ignorant and stupid may yet have cunning enough to resort to silence as the only chance of conveying an opinion of her capacity.

CIV.

The greatest talents do not generally attain to the highest stations. For though high, the ascent to them is narrow, beaten, and crooked. The path of genius is free, and its own. Whatever requires the concurrence and co-operation of others, must depend chiefly on routine and an attention to rules and *minutiæ*. Success in business is therefore seldom owing to uncommon talents or original power, which is untractable and self-willed, but to the greatest degree of common-place capacity.

CV.

The error in the reasonings of Mandeville, Rochefoucault, and others, is this : they first find out that there is something mixed in the motives of all our actions, and they then proceed to argue, that they must all arise from one motive, *viz.* self-love. They make the exception the rule. It would be easy to reverse the argument, and

prove that our most selfish actions are disinterested. There is honour among thieves. Robbers, murderers, &c. do not commit those actions, from a pleasure in pure villainy or for their own benefit only, but from a mistaken regard to the welfare or good opinion of those with whom they are immediately connected.

CVI.

It is ridiculous to say, that compassion, friendship, &c. are at bottom only selfishness in disguise, because it is *we* who feel pleasure or pain in the good or evil of others; for the meaning of self-love is not that it is I who love, but that I love myself. The motive is no more selfish because it is I who feel it, than the action is selfish, because it is I who perform it. To prove a man selfish, it is not surely enough to say, that it is *he who feels* (this is a mere quibble) but to shew that he does not feel *for another*; that is, that the idea of the suffering or welfare of others does not excite any feeling whatever of pleasure or pain in his mind, except from some reference to or reflection on himself. Self-love or the love of self means, that I have an immediate interest in the contemplation of

my own good, and that this is a motive to action; and benevolence or the love of others means in like manner, that I have an immediate interest in the idea of the good or evil that may befall them, and a disposition to assist them, in consequence. Self-love, in a word, is sympathy with myself, that is, it is I who feel it, and I who am the object of it: in benevolence or compassion, it is I who still feel sympathy, but another (not myself) is the object of it. If I feel sympathy with others at all, it must be disinterested. The pleasure it may give me is the consequence, not the cause, of my feeling it. To insist that sympathy is self-love because we cannot feel for others, without being ourselves affected pleasurable or painfully, is to make nonsense of the question; for it is to insist that in order to feel for others properly and truly, we must in the first place feel nothing. *C'est une mauvaise plaisanterie.* That the feeling exists in the individual must be granted, and never admitted of a question: the only question is, how that feeling is caused, and what is its object—and it is to express the two opinions that may be entertained on this subject, that the terms, *self-love* and *benevolence*, have been appropriated.

Any other interpretation of them is an evident abuse of language, and a subterfuge in argument, which, driven from the fair field of fact and observation, takes shelter in verbal sophistry.

CVII.

Humility and pride are not easily distinguished from each other. A proud man, who fortifies himself in his own good opinion, may be supposed not to put forward his pretensions through shyness or deference to others: a modest man, who is really reserved and afraid of committing himself, is thought distant and haughty: and the vainest coxcomb who makes a display of himself and his most plausible qualifications, often does so to hide his deficiencies and to prop up his tottering opinion of himself by the applause of others. Vanity does not refer to the opinion a man entertains of himself, but to that which he wishes others to entertain of him. Pride is indifferent to the approbation of others; as modesty shrinks from it, either through bashfulness, or from an unwillingness to take any undue advantage of it. I have known several very forward, loquacious, and even overbearing persons, whose confidential communications were oppressive from the sense they entertained of

their own demerits. In company they talked on in mere *bravado*, and for fear of betraying their weak side, as children make a noise in the dark.

CVIII.

True modesty and true pride are much the same thing. Both consist in setting a just value on ourselves—neither more nor less. It is a want of proper spirit to fancy ourselves inferior to others in those things in which we really excel them. It is conceit and want of common sense to arrogate a superiority over others, without the most well-founded pretensions.

CIX.

A man may be justly accused of vanity and presumption, who either thinks he possesses qualifications which he has not, or greatly over-rates those which he has. An egotist does not think well of himself because he possesses certain qualities, but fancies he possesses a number of excellences, because he thinks well of himself through mere idle self-complacency. True moderation is the bounding our self-esteem within the extent of our acquirements.

CX.

Conceit is the most contemptible and one of the most odious qualities in the world. It is vanity driven from all other shifts, and forced to appeal to itself for admiration. An author, whose play has been *dammed* over-night, feels a paroxysm of conceit the next morning. Conceit may be defined a restless, overweening, petty, obtrusive, mechanical delight in our own qualifications, without any reference to their real value, or to the approbation of others, merely because they are ours, and for no other reason whatever. It is the extreme of selfishness and folly.

CXI.

Confidence or courage is conscious ability—the sense of power. No man is ever afraid of attempting what he knows he can do better than any one else. Charles Fox felt no diffidence in addressing the House of Commons: he was reserved and silent in company, and had no opinion of his talent for writing; that is, he knew his powers and their limits. The torrent of his eloquence rushed upon him from his knowledge of the subject and his interest in it, unchecked and unbidden, without his once

thinking of himself or his hearers. As a man is strong, so is he bold. The thing is, that wherever we feel at home, there we are at our ease. The late Sir John Moore once had to review the troops at Plymouth before the King; and while he was on the ground and had to converse with the different persons of the court, with the ladies, and with Mr. Pitt whom he thought a great man, he found himself a good deal embarrassed; but the instant he mounted his horse and the troops were put in motion, he felt quite relieved, and had leisure to observe what an awkward figure Mr. Pitt made on horseback.

CXII.

The truly proud man knows neither superiors nor inferiors. The first he does not admit of: the last he does not concern himself about. People who are insolent to those beneath them crouch to those above them. Both shew equal meanness of spirit and want of conscious dignity.

CXIII.

No elevation or success raises the humble man in his own opinion. To the proud the slightest repulse or disappointment is the last

indignity. The vain man makes a merit of misfortune, and triumphs in his disgrace.

CXIV.

We reserve our gratitude for the *manner* of conferring benefits; and we revolt against this, except when it seems to say we owe no obligation at all, and thus cancels the debt of gratitude as soon as it is incurred.

CXV.

We do not hate those who injure us, if they do not at the same time wound our self-love. We can forgive any one sooner than those who lower us in our own opinion. It is no wonder, therefore, that we as often dislike others for their virtues as their vices. We naturally hate whatever makes us despise ourselves.

CXVI.

When you find out a man's ruling passion, beware of crossing him in it.

CXVII.

We sometimes hate those who differ from us in opinion worse than we should for an attempt

to injure us in the most serious point. A favourite theory is a possession for life; and we resent any attack upon it proportionably.

CXVIII.

Men will die for an opinion as soon as for any thing else. Whatever excites the spirit of contradiction, is capable of producing the last effects of heroism, which is only the highest pitch of obstinacy in a good or a bad cause, in wisdom or folly.

CXIX.

We are ready to sacrifice life, not only for our own opinion, but in deference to that of others. Conscience, or its shadow, honour, prevails over the fear of death. The man of fortune and fashion will throw away his life, like a bauble, to prevent the slightest breath of dishonour. So little are we governed by self-interest, and so much by imagination and sympathy.

CXX.

The most impertinent people are less so from design than from inadvertence. I have known a person who could scarcely open his lips without offending some one, merely because he

harboured no malice in his heart. A certain excess of animal spirits with thoughtless good-humour will often make more enemies than the most deliberate spite and ill-nature, which is on its guard, and strikes with caution and safety.

CXXI.

It is great weakness to lay ourselves open to others, who are reserved towards us. There is not only no equality in it, but we may be pretty sure they will turn a confidence, which they are so little disposed to imitate, against us.

CXXII.

A man has no excuse for betraying the secrets of his friends, unless he also divulges his own. He may then seem to be actuated not by treachery, but indiscretion.

CXXIII.

As we scorn them who scorn us, so the contempt of the world (not seldom) makes men proud.

CXXIV.

Even infamy may be oftentimes a source of secret self-complacency. We smile at the im-

potence of public opinion, when we can survive its worst censures.

CXXV.

Simplicity of character is the natural result of profound thought.

CXXVI.

The affected modesty of most women is a decoy for the generous, the delicate, and unsuspecting; while the artful, the bold, and unfeeling either see or break through its slender disguises.

CXXVII.

We as often repent the good we have done as the ill.

CXXVIII.

The measure of any man's virtue is what he would do, if he had neither the laws nor public opinion, nor even his own prejudices, to control him.

CXXIX.

We like the expression of Raphael's faces without an edict to enforce it. I do not see why there should not be a taste in morals formed on the same principle.

CXXX.

Where a greater latitude is allowed in morals, the number of examples of vice may increase, but so do those of virtue: at least, we are surer of the sincerity of the latter. It is only the exceptions to vice, that arise neither from ignorance nor hypocrisy, that are worth counting.

CXXXI.

The fear of punishment may be necessary to the suppression of vice; but it also suspends the finer motives to virtue.

CXXXII.

No wise man can have a contempt for the prejudices of others; and he should even stand in a certain awe of his own, as if they were aged parents and monitors. They may in the end prove wiser than he.

CXXXIII.

We are only justified in rejecting prejudices, when we can explain the grounds of them; or when they are at war with nature, which is the strongest prejudice of all.

CXXXIV.

Vulgar prejudices are those which arise out of accident, ignorance, or authority. Natural prejudices are those which arise out of the constitution of the human mind itself.

CXXXV.

Nature is stronger than reason : for nature is, after all, the text, reason but the comment. He is indeed a poor creature, who does not *feel* the truth of more than he *knows* or can explain satisfactorily to others.

CXXXVI.

The mind revolts against certain opinions, as the stomach rejects certain foods.

CXXXVII.

The drawing a certain positive line in morals, beyond which a single false step is irretrievable, makes virtue formal, and vice desperate.

CXXXVIII.

Most codes of morality proceed on a supposition of *Original Sin*; as if the only object was to coerce the headstrong propensities to vice,

and there were no natural disposition to good in the mind, which it was possible to improve, refine, and cultivate.

CXXXIX.

This *negative* system of virtue leads to a very low style of moral sentiment. It is as if the highest excellence in a picture was to avoid gross defects in drawing; or in writing, instances of bad grammar. It ought surely to be our aim in virtue, as well as in other things, "to snatch a grace beyond the reach of art."

CXL.

We find many things, to which the prohibition of them constitutes the only temptation.

CXLI.

There is neither so much vice nor so much virtue in the world, as it might appear at first sight that there is. Many people commit actions that they hate, as they affect virtues that they laugh at, merely because others do so.

CXLII.

When the imagination is continually led to the brink of vice by a system of terror and de-

nunciations, people fling themselves over the precipice from the mere dread of falling.

CXLIII.

The maxim—*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*—has not been fully explained. In general, it is taken for granted, that those things that our reason disapproves, we give way to from passion. Nothing like it. The course that persons in the situation of Medea pursue has often as little to do with inclination as with judgment: but they are led astray by some object of a disturbed imagination, that shocks their feelings and staggers their belief; and they grasp the phantom to put an end to this state of tormenting suspense, and to see whether it is human or not.

CXLIV.

Vice, like disease, floats in the atmosphere.

CXLV.

Honesty is one part of eloquence. We persuade others by being in earnest ourselves.

CXLVI.

A mere sanguine temperament often passes for genius and patriotism.

CXLVII.

Animal spirits are continually taken for wit and fancy; and the want of them, for sense and judgment.

CXLVIII.

In public speaking, we must appeal either to the prejudices of others, or to the love of truth and justice. If we think merely of displaying our own ability, we shall ruin every cause we undertake.

CXLIX.

Those who cannot miss an opportunity of saying a good thing or of bringing in some fantastical opinion of their own, are not to be trusted with the management of any great question.

CL.

There are some public speakers who commit themselves and their party by extravagances uttered in heat and through vanity, which they retract in cold blood through cowardice and caution. They outrage propriety, and trim to self-interest.

CLI.

An honest man is respected by all parties.

We forgive a hundred rude or offensive things that are uttered from conviction or in the conscientious discharge of a duty—never one, that proceeds from design or a view to raise the person who says it above us.

CLII.

Truth from the mouth of an honest man, or severity from a good-natured one, has a double effect.

CLIII.

A person who does not endeavour to *seem* more than he *is*, will generally be thought nothing of. We habitually make such large deductions for pretence and imposture, that no real merit will stand against them. It is necessary to set off our good qualities with a certain air of plausibility and self-importance, as some attention to fashion is necessary to decency.

CLIV.

If we do not aspire to admiration, we shall fall into contempt. To expect sheer, even-handed justice from mankind, is folly. They take the gross inventory of our pretensions; and not to have them overlooked entirely, we must

place them in a conspicuous point of view, as men write their trades or fix a sign over the doors of their houses. Not to conform to the established practice in either respect, is false delicacy in the commerce of the world.

CLV.

There has been a considerable change in dress and manners in the course of a century or two, as well as in the signs and badges of different professions. The streets are no longer encumbered with numberless emblems of mechanical or other occupations, nor crowded with the pomp and pageantry of dress, nor embroiled by the insolent airs assumed by the different candidates for rank and precedence. Our pretensions become less gross and obtrusive with the progress of society, and as the means of communication become more refined and general. The simplicity and even slovenliness of the modern beau form a striking contrast to the dazzling finery and ostentatious formality of the old-fashioned courtier; yet both are studied devices and symbols of distinction. It would be a curious speculation to trace the various modes of affectation in dress from the age

of Elizabeth to the present time, in connection with the caprices of fashion, and the march of opinion; and to shew in what manner Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia* or Rousseau's *Emilius* have contributed to influence the gliding movements and curtail the costume of a modern *dandy*!

CLVI.

Unlimited power is helpless, as arbitrary power is capricious. Our energy is in proportion to the resistance it meets. We can attempt nothing great, but from a sense of the difficulties we have to encounter: we can persevere in nothing great, but from a pride in overcoming them. Where our will is our law, we eagerly set about the first trifle we think of, and lay it aside for the next trifle that presents itself, or that is suggested to us. The character of despotism is apathy or levity—or the love of mischief, because the latter is easy and suits its pride and wantonness.

CLVII.

Affectation is as necessary to the mind, as dress is to the body.

CLVIII.

Man is an intellectual animal, and therefore an everlasting contradiction to himself. His senses centre in himself, his ideas reach to the ends of the universe; so that he is torn in pieces between the two, without a possibility of its ever being otherwise. A mere physical being, or a pure spirit, can alone be satisfied with itself.

CLIX.

Our approbation of others has a good deal of selfishness in it. We like those who give us pleasure, however little they may wish for or deserve our esteem in return. We prefer a person with vivacity and high spirits, though bordering upon insolence, to the timid and pusillanimous; we are fonder of wit joined to malice, than of dulness without it. We have no great objection to receive a man who is a villain as our friend, if he has plausible exterior qualities; nay, we often take a pride in our harmless familiarity with him, as we might in keeping a tame panther: but we soon grow weary of the society of a good-natured fool who puts our patience to the test, or of an awkward clown, who puts our pride to the blush.

CLX.

We are fonder of visiting our friends in health than in sickness. We judge less favourably of their characters, when any misfortune happens to them ; and a lucky hit, either in business or reputation, improves even their personal appearance in our eyes.

CLXI.

An heiress, with a large fortune and a moderate share of beauty, easily rises into a reigning toast.

CLXII.

One shining quality lends a lustre to another, or hides some glaring defect.

CLXIII.

We are never so much disposed to quarrel with others as when we are dissatisfied with ourselves.

CLXIV.

We are never so thoroughly tired of the company of any one else as we sometimes are of our own.

CLXV.

People outlive the interest, which, at different

periods of their lives, they take in themselves. When we forget old friends, it is a sign we have forgotten ourselves; or despise our former ways and notions, as much as we do their present ones.

CLXVI.

We fancy ourselves superior to others, because we find that we have improved; and at no time did we think ourselves inferior to them.

CLXVII.

The notice of others is as necessary to us as the air we breathe. If we cannot gain their good opinion, we change our battery, and strive to provoke their hatred and contempt.

CLXVIII.

Some malefactors, at the point of death, confess crimes, of which they have never been guilty, thus to raise our wonder and indignation in the same proportion; or to shew their superiority to vulgar prejudice, and brave that public opinion, of which they are the victims.

CLXIX.

Others make an ostentatious display of their

penitence and remorse, only to invite sympathy, and create a diversion in their own minds from the subject of their impending punishment. So that we excite a strong emotion in the breasts of others, we care little of what kind it is, or by what means we produce it. We have equally the feeling of power. The sense of insignificance or of being an object of perfect indifference to others, is the only one that the mind never covets nor willingly submits to.

CLXX.

There are not wanting instances of those, who pass their whole lives in endeavouring to make themselves ridiculous. They only tire of their absurdities when others are tired of talking about and laughing at them, so that they have become a stale jest.

CLXXI.

People in the grasp of death wish all the evil they have done (as well as all the good) to be known, not to make atonement by confession, but to excite one more strong sensation before they die, and to leave their interests and passions

a legacy to posterity, when they themselves are exempt from the consequences.

CLXXII.

We talk little, if we do not talk about ourselves.

CLXXIII.

We may give more offence by our silence than even by impertinence.

CLXXIV.

Obstinate silence implies either a mean opinion of ourselves or a contempt of our company: and it is the more provoking, as others do not know to which of these causes to attribute it, whether to humility or pride.

CLXXV.

Silence proceeds either from want of something to say, or from a phlegmatic indifference which closes up our lips. The sea, or any other striking object, suddenly bursting on a party of mutes in a stage-coach, will occasion a general exclamation of surprise; and the ice being once broken, they may probably be good company for the rest of the journey.

CLXXVI.

We compliment ourselves on our national reserve and taciturnity by abusing the loquacity and frivolity of the French.

CLXXVII.

Nations, not being willing or able to correct their own errors, justify them by the opposite errors of other nations.

CLXXVIII.

We easily convert our own vices into virtues, the virtues of others into vices.

CLXXIX.

A person who talks with equal vivacity on every subject, excites no interest in any. *Repose* is as necessary in conversation as in a picture.

CLXXX.

The best kind of conversation is that which may be called *thinking aloud*. I like very well to speak my mind on any subject (or to hear another do so) and to go into the question according to the degree of interest it naturally inspires, but not to have to get up a thesis upon

every topic. There are those, on the other hand, who seem always to be practising on their audience, as if they mistook them for a DEBATING-SOCIETY, or to hold a general retainer, by which they are bound to explain every difficulty, and answer every objection that can be started. This, in private society and among friends, is not desirable. You thus lose the two great ends of conversation, which are to learn the sentiments of others, and see what they think of yours. One of the best talkers I ever knew had this defect—that he evidently seemed to be considering less what he felt on any point than what might be said upon it, and that he listened to you, not to weigh what you said, but to reply to it, like counsel on the other side. This habit gave a brilliant smoothness and polish to his general discourse, but, at the same time, took from its solidity and prominence: it reduced it to a tissue of lively, fluent, ingenious *common-places*, (for original, genuine observations are like “minute drops from off the eaves,” and not an incessant shower) and, though his talent in this way was carried to the very extreme of cleverness, yet I think it seldom, if ever, went beyond it.

CLXXXI.

Intellectual excellence can seldom be a source of much satisfaction to the possessor. In a gross period, or in vulgar society, it is not understood; and among those who are refined enough to appreciate its value, it ceases to be a distinction.

CLXXXII.

There is, I think, an essential difference of character in mankind, between those who wish *to do*, and those who wish *to have* certain things. I observe persons expressing a great desire to possess fine horses, hounds, dress, equipage, &c. and an envy of those who have them. I myself have no such feeling, nor the least ambition to shine, except by doing something better than others. I have the love of power, but not of property. I should like to be able to outstrip a greyhound in speed; but I should be ashamed to take any merit to myself from possessing the fleetest greyhound in the world. I cannot transfer my personal identity from myself to what I merely call *mine*. The generality of mankind are contented to be estimated by what they possess, instead of what they are.

CLXXXIII.

Buonaparte observes, that the diplomatists of the new school were no match for those brought up under the ancient *regime*. The reason probably is, that the modern style of intellect inclines to abstract reasoning and general propositions, and pays less attention to individual character, interests, and circumstances. The moderns have, therefore, less *tact* in watching the designs of others, and less closeness in hiding their own. They perhaps have a greater knowledge of things, but less of the world. They calculate the force of an argument, and rely on its success, moving *in vacuo*, without sufficiently allowing for the resistance of opinion and prejudice.

CLXXXIV.

The most comprehensive reasoners are not always the deepest or nicest observers. They are apt to take things for granted too much, as parts of a system. Lord Egmont, in a speech in Parliament, in the year 1750, has the following remarkable observations on this subject. "It is not common sense, but downright madness, to follow general principles in this wild manner

without limitation or reserve ; and give me leave to say one thing, which I hope will be long remembered, and well thought upon by all those who hear me—that those gentlemen who plume themselves thus upon their open and extensive understandings, are in fact, the men of the narrowest principles in the kingdom. For what is a narrow mind ? It is a mind that sees any proposition in one single contracted point of view, unable to complicate any subject with the circumstances, or considerations, that are or may or ought to be combined with it. And pray, what is that understanding which looks upon the question of *naturalization* only in this general view, that naturalization is an increase of the people, and the increase of the people is the riches of the nation ? Never admitting the least reflection, what the people are whom you let in upon us ; how, in the present bad regulation of the police, they are to be employed or maintained ; how their principles, opinions, or practice may influence the religion or politics of the state, or what operation their admission may have upon the peace and tranquillity of the country. Is not such a genius equally contemptible and narrow with that of the poorest mortal upon earth, who

grovels for his whole life within the verge of the opposite extreme?"

CLXXXV.

In an Englishman, a diversity of profession and pursuit (as the having been a soldier, a valet, a player, &c.) implies a dissipation and dissoluteness of character, and a fitness for nothing. In a Frenchman, it only shews a natural vivacity of disposition, and a fitness for every thing.

CLXXXVI.

Impudence, like every thing else, has its limits. Let a man be ever so hardened and unblushing, there is a point at which his courage is sure to fail him; and not being able to carry off the matter with his usual air of confidence, he becomes more completely confused and awkward than any one else would in the same circumstances.

CLXXXVII.

Half the miseries of human life proceed from our not perceiving the incompatibility of different attainments, and consequently aiming at too much. We make ourselves wretched in vainly aspiring after advantages we are deprived

of; and do not consider that if we had these advantages, it would be quite impossible for us to retain those which we actually do possess, and which, after all, if it were put to the question, we would not consent to part with for the sake of any others.

CLXXXVIII.

If we use no ceremony towards others, we shall be treated without any. People are soon tired of paying trifling attentions to those who receive them with coldness, and return them with neglect.

CLXXXIX.

Surly natures have more pleasure in dis-obliging others than in serving themselves.

CXC.

People in general consult their prevailing humour or ruling passion (whatever it may be) much more than their interest.

CXCI.

One of the painters (Teniers,) has represented monkeys with a monk's cloak and cowl. This has a ludicrous effect enough. To a superior race of beings the pretensions of mankind to

extraordinary sanctity and virtue must seem equally ridiculous.

CXCII.

When we speak ill of people behind their backs, and are civil to them to their faces, we may be accused of insincerity. But the contradiction is less owing to insincerity than to the change of circumstances. We think well of them while we are with them; and in their absence recollect the ill we durst not hint at or acknowledge to ourselves in their presence.

CXCIII.

Our opinions are not our own, but in the power of sympathy. If a person tells us a palpable falsehood, we not only dare not contradict him, but we dare hardly disbelieve him *to his face*. A lie boldly uttered has the effect of truth for the instant.

CXCIV.

A man's reputation is not in his own keeping, but lies at the mercy of the profligacy of others. Calumny requires no proof. The throwing out malicious imputations against any character

leaves a stain, which no after-refutation can wipe out. To create an unfavourable impression, it is not necessary that certain things should be *true*, but that they *have been said*. The imagination is of so delicate a texture, that even words wound it.

CXCIV.

A nickname is a mode of insinuating a prejudice against another under some general designation, which, as it offers no proof, admits of no reply.

CXCVI.

It does not render the person less contemptible or ridiculous in vulgar opinion, because it may be harmless in itself, or even downright nonsense. By repeating it incessantly, and leaving out every other characteristic of the individual, whom we wish to make a bye-word of, it seems as if he were an abstraction of insignificance.

CXCVII.

Want of principle is power. Truth and honesty set a limit to our efforts, which impudence and hypocrisy easily overleap.

CXCVIII.

There are many who talk on from ignorance, rather than from knowledge; and who find the former an inexhaustible fund of conversation.

CXCIX.

Nothing gives such a blow to friendship as the detecting another in an untruth. It strikes at the root of our confidence ever after.

CC.

In estimating the value of an acquaintance or even friend, we give a preference to intellectual or convivial over moral qualities. The truth is, that in our habitual intercourse with others, we much oftener require to be amused than assisted. We consider less, therefore, what a person with whom we are intimate is ready to do for us in critical emergencies, than what he has to say on ordinary occasions. We dispense with his services, if he only saves us from *ennui*. In civilized society, words are of as much importance as things.

CCI.

We cultivate the society of those who are above us in station, and beneath us in capacity.

The one we do from choice, the other from necessity. Our interest dictates our submission to the first; our vanity is flattered by the homage of the last.

CCII.

A man of talents, who shrinks from a collision with his equals or superiors, will soon sink below himself. We improve by trying our strength with others, not by shewing it off. A person who shuts himself up in a little circle of dependants and admirers for fear of losing ground in his own opinion by jostling with the world at large, may continue to be gaped at by fools, but will forfeit the respect of sober and sensible men.

CCIII.

There are others, who entertaining a high opinion of themselves, and not being able (for want of plausible qualities) to gather a circle of butterflies round them, retire into solitude, and there worship the ECHOES and themselves. They gain this advantage by it—the ECHOES do not contradict them. But it is a question, whether by dwelling always on their own virtues and merits, unmolested, they increase the stock. They, indeed, pamper their ruling vices,

and pile them mountain-high ; and looking down on the world from the elevation of their retreat, idly fancy that the world has nothing to do but to look up to them with wondering eyes.

CCIV.

It is a false principle, that because we are entirely occupied with ourselves, we must equally occupy the thoughts of others. The contrary inference is the fair one.

CCV.

It is better to desire than to enjoy—to love than to be loved.

CCVI.

Every one would rather be Raphael than Hogarth. Without entering into the question of the talent required for their different works, or the pleasure derived from them, we prefer that which confers dignity on human nature to that which degrades it. We would wish to *do* what we would wish to *be*. And, moreover, it is most difficult to do what it is most difficult to be.

CCVII.

A selfish feeling requires less moral capacity than a benevolent one : a selfish expression re-

quires less intellectual capacity to execute it than a benevolent one; for in expression, and all that relates to it, the intellectual is the reflection of the moral. Raphael's figures are sustained by *ideas*: Hogarth's are distorted by mechanical habits and instincts. It is elevation of thought that gives grandeur and delicacy of expression to passion. The expansion and refinement of the soul are seen in the face, as in a mirror. An enlargement of purpose gives a corresponding enlargement of form. The *mind*, as it were, acts over the whole body, and animates it equally, while petty and local interests seize on particular parts, and distract it by contrary and mean expressions. Now, if mental expression has this superior grandeur and grace, we can account at once for the superiority of Raphael. For there is no doubt, that it is more difficult to give a whole continuously and proportionably than to give the parts separate and disjointed, or to diffuse the same subtle but powerful expression over a large mass than to caricature it in a single part or feature. The actions in Raphael are like a branch of a tree swept by the surging blast; those in Hogarth like straws whirled and twitched about in the gusts and eddies of passion. I do not mean to say

that goodness alone constitutes greatness, but mental power does. Hogarth's *GOOD APPRENTICE* is insipid : Raphael has clothed Elymas the Sorcerer with all the dignity and grandeur of vice. Selfish characters and passions borrow greatness from the range of imagination, and strength of purpose ; and besides, have an advantage in natural force and interest.

CCVIII.

We find persons who are actuated in all their tastes and feelings by a spirit of contradiction. They like nothing that other people do, and have a natural aversion to whatever is agreeable in itself. They read books that no one else reads ; and are delighted with passages that no one understands but themselves. They only arrive at beauties through faults and difficulties ; and all their conceptions are brought to light by a sort of Cæsarean process. This is either an affectation of singularity ; or a morbid taste, that can relish nothing that is obvious and simple.

CCIX.

An unaccountable spirit of contradiction is sometimes carried into men's behaviour and actions. They never do any thing from a direct mo-

tive, or in a straight-forward manner. They get rid of all sorts of obligations, and rush on destruction without the shadow of an excuse. They take a perverse delight in acting not only contrary to reason, but in opposition to their own inclinations and passions, and are for ever in a state of cross-purposes with themselves.

CCX.

There are some persons who never decide from deliberate motives at all, but are the mere creatures of impulse.

CCXI.

Insignificant people are a necessary relief in society. Such characters are extremely agreeable, and even favourites, if they appear satisfied with the part they have to perform.

CCXII.

Little men seldom seem conscious of their diminutive size; or make up for it by the erectness of their persons, or a peculiarly dapper air and manner.

CCXIII.

Any one is to be pitied, who has just sense enough to perceive his deficiencies.

CCXIV.

I had rather be deformed, than a dwarf and well-made. The one may be attributed to accident; the other looks like a deliberate insult on the part of nature.

CCXV.

Personal deformity, in the well-disposed, produces a fine, placid expression of countenance; in the ill-tempered and peevish, a keen, sarcastic one.

CCXVI.

People say ill-natured things without design, but not without having a pleasure in them.

CCXVII.

A person who blunders upon system, has a secret motive for what he does, unknown to himself.

CCXVIII.

If any one by his general conduct contrives to part friends, he may not be aware that such is the tendency of his actions, but assuredly it is their motive. He has more pleasure in seeing others cold and distant, than cordial and intimate.

CCXIX.

A person who constantly meddles to no purpose, means to do harm, and is not sorry to find he has succeeded.

CCXX.

Cunning is natural to mankind. It is the sense of our weakness, and an attempt to effect by concealment what we cannot do openly and by force.

CCXXI.

In love we never think of moral qualities, and scarcely of intellectual ones. Temperament and manner alone (with beauty) excite love.

CCXXII.

There is no one thoroughly despicable. We cannot descend much lower than an idiot; and an idiot has some advantages over a wise man.

CCXXIII.

Comparisons are odious, because they reduce every one to a standard he ought not to be tried by, or leave us in possession only of those claims which we can set up, to the entire exclusion of

others. By striking off the common qualities, the remainder of excellence is brought down to a contemptible fraction. A man may be six feet high, and only an inch taller than another. In comparisons, this difference of an inch is the only thing thought of or ever brought into question. The greatest genius or virtue soon dwindles into nothing by such a mode of computation.

CCXXIV.

It is a fine remark of Rousseau's, that the best of us differ from others in fewer particulars than we agree with them in. The difference between a tall and a short man is only a few inches, whereas they are both several feet high. So a wise or learned man knows many things, of which the vulgar are ignorant; but there is a still greater number of things, the knowledge of which they share in common with him.

CCXXV.

I am always afraid of a fool. One cannot be sure that he is not a knave as well.

CCXXVI.

Weakness has its hidden resources, as well as

strength. There is a degree of folly and meanness which we cannot calculate upon, and by which we are as much liable to be foiled, as by the greatest ability or courage.

CCXXVII.

We can only be degraded in a contest with low natures. The advantages that others obtain over us are fair and honourable to both parties.

CCXXVIII.

Reflection makes men cowards. There is no object that can be put in competition with life, unless it is viewed through the medium of passion, and we are hurried away by the impulse of the moment.

CCXXIX.

The youth is better than the old age of friendship.

CCXXX.

In the course of a long acquaintance we have repeated all our good things and discussed all our favourite topics several times over, so that our conversation becomes a mockery of social intercourse. We might as well talk to ourselves. The soil of friendship is worn out with constant

use. Habit may still attach us to each other, but we feel ourselves fettered by it. Old friends might be compared to old married people without the tie of children.

CCXXXI.

We grow tired of ourselves, much more of other people. Use may in part reconcile us to our own tediousness, but we do not adopt that of others on the same paternal principle. We may be willing to tell a story twice, never to hear one more than once.

CCXXXII.

If we are long absent from our friends, we forget them: if we are constantly with them, we despise them.

CCXXXIII.

There are no rules for friendship. It must be left to itself: we cannot force it any more than love.

CCXXXIV.

The most violent friendships soonest wear themselves out.

CCXXXV.

To be capable of steady friendship or lasting

love, are the two greatest proofs, not only of goodness of heart, but of strength of mind.

CCXXXVI.

It makes us proud when our love of a mistress is returned: it ought to make us prouder that we can love her for herself alone, without the aid of any such selfish reflection. This is the religion of love.

CCXXXVII.

An English officer who had been engaged in an intrigue in Italy going home one night, stumbled over a man fast asleep on the stairs. It was a bravo who had been hired to assassinate him. Such, in this man, was the force of conscience!

CCXXXVIII.

An eminent artist having succeeded in a picture which drew crowds to admire it, received a letter from a shuffling old relation in these terms, "Dear Cousin, now you may draw good bills with a vengeance." Such is the force of habit! This man only wished to be Raphael that he might carry on his old trade of drawing bills.

CCXXXIX.

Mankind are a herd of knaves and fools. It is necessary to join the crowd, or get out of their way, in order not to be trampled to death by them.

CCXL.

To think the worst of others, and do the best we can ourselves, is a safe rule, but a hard one to practise.

CCXLI.

To think ill of mankind and not wish ill to them, is perhaps the highest wisdom and virtue.

CCXLII.

We may hate and love the same person, nay even at the same moment.

CCXLIII.

We never hate those whom we have once loved, merely because they have injured us. "We may kill those of whom we are jealous," says Fielding, "but we do not hate them." We are enraged at their conduct and at ourselves as the objects of it, but this does not alter our passion for them. The reason is, we loved them without their loving us; we do not hate them

because they hate us. Love may turn to indifference with possession, but is irritated by disappointment.

CCXLIV.

Revenge against the object of our love is madness. No one would kill the woman he loves, but that he thinks he can bring her to life afterwards. Her death seems to him as momentary as his own rash act. *See Othello.*—“My wife! I have no wife,” &c. He stabbed not at her life, but at her falsehood; he thought to kill the wanton, and preserve the wife.

CCXLV.

We revenge in haste and passion: we repent at leisure and from reflection.

CCXLVI.

By retaliating our sufferings on the heads of those we love, we get rid of a present uneasiness, and incur lasting remorse. With the accomplishment of our revenge our fondness returns; so that we feel the injury we have done them, even more than they do.

CCXLVII.

I think men formerly were more jealous of

their rivals in love—they are now more jealous of their mistresses, and lay the blame on them. That is, we formerly thought more of the mere possession of the person, which the removal of a favoured lover prevented, and we now think more of a woman's affections, which may still follow him to the tomb. To kill a rival is to kill a fool; but the Goddess of our idolatry may be a sacrifice worthy of the Gods. Hackman did not think of shooting Lord Sandwich but Miss Ray.

CCXLVIII.

Many people in reasoning on the passions make a continual appeal to common sense. But passion is without common sense, and we must frequently discard the one in speaking of the other.

CCXLIX.

It is provoking to hear people at their ease talking reason to others in a state of violent suffering. If you can remove their suffering by a word speaking, do so; and then they will be in a state to hear calm reason.

CCL.

There is nothing that I hate as I do to hear

a common-place set up against a feeling of truth and nature.

CCLI.

People try to reconcile you to a disappointment in love, by asking why you should cherish a passion for an object that has proved itself worthless. Had you known this before, you would not have encouraged the passion; but that having been once formed, knowledge does not destroy it. If we have drank poison, finding it out does not prevent its being in our veins: so passion leaves its poison in the mind! It is the nature of all passion and of all habitual affection; we throw ourselves upon it at a venture, but we cannot return by choice. If it is a wife that has proved unworthy, men compassionate the loss, because there is a tie, they say, which we cannot get rid of. But has the heart no ties? Or if it is a child, they understand it. But is not true love a child? Or when another has become a part of ourselves, "where we must live or have no life at all," can we tear them from us in an instant?—No: these bargains are for life; and that for which our souls have sighed for years, cannot be forgotten with a breath, and without a pang.

CCLII.

Besides, it is uncertainty and suspense that chiefly irritate jealousy to madness. When we know our fate, we become gradually reconciled to it, and try to forget a useless sorrow.

CCLIII.

It is wonderful how often we see and hear of Shakespear's plays without being annoyed with it. Were it any other writer, we should be sick to death of the very name. But his volumes are like that of nature, we can turn to them again and again :—

“ Age cannot wither, nor custom stale
His infinite variety.”

CCLIV.

The contempt of a wanton for a man who is determined to think her virtuous, is perhaps the strongest of all others. He officiously reminds her of what she ought to be; and she avenges the galling sense of lost character on the fool who still believes in it.

CCLV.

To find that a woman whom we loved has for-

feited her character, is the same thing as to learn that she is dead.

CCLVI.

The only vice that cannot be forgiven is hypocrisy. The repentance of a hypocrite is itself hypocrisy.

CCLVII.

Once a renegado, and always a renegado.

CCLVIII.

By speaking truth to the really beautiful, we learn to flatter other women.

CCLIX.

There is a kind of ugliness which is not disagreeable to women. It is that which is connected with the expression of strong but bad passions, and implies spirit and power.

CCLX.

People do not persist in their vices because they are not weary of them, but because they cannot leave them off. It is the nature of vice to leave us no resource but in itself.

CCLXI.

Our consciousness of injustice makes us add to the injury. By aggravating a wrong, we seem to ourselves to justify it. The repetition of the blow inflames our passion and deadens reflection.

CCLXII.

In confessing the greatest offences, a criminal gives himself credit for his candour. You and he seem to have come to an amicable understanding on his character at last.

CCLXIII.

A barefaced profligacy often succeeds to an overstrained preciseness in morals. People in a less licentious age carefully conceal the vices they have; as they afterwards, with an air of philosophic freedom, set up for those they have not.

CCLXIV.

It is a sign that real religion is in a state of decay, when passages in compliment to it are applauded at the theatre. Morals and sentiment fall within the province of the stage; but religion, except where it is considered as a beautiful

fiction which ought to be treated with lenity, does not depend upon our suffrages.

CCLXV.

There are persons to whom success gives no satisfaction, unless it is accompanied with dishonesty. Such people willingly ruin themselves, in order to ruin others.

CCLXVI.

Habitual liars invent falsehoods not to gain any end or even to deceive their hearers, but to amuse themselves. It is partly practice and partly habit. It requires an effort in them to speak truth.

CCLXVII.

A knave thinks himself a fool, all the time he is not making a fool of some other person.

CCLXVIII.

Fontenelle said, "If his hand were full of truths, he would not open his fingers to let them out." Was this a satire on truth or on mankind?

CCLXIX.

The best kind of conversation is that which

is made up of observations, reflections, and anecdotes. A string of stories without application is as tiresome as a long-winded argument.

CCLXX.

The most insignificant people are the most apt to sneer at others. They are safe from reprisals, and have no hope of rising in their own esteem, but by lowering their neighbours. The severest critics are always those, who have either never attempted, or who have failed in original composition.

CCLXXI.

More remarks are made upon any one's dress, looks, &c. in walking twenty yards along the streets of Edinburgh, or other provincial towns, than in passing from one end of London to the other.

CCLXXII.

There is less impertinence and more independence in London than in any other place in the kingdom.

CCLXXIII.

A man who meets thousands of people in a day who never saw or heard of him before, if he thinks at all, soon learns to think little of himself. Lon-

don is the place where a man of sense is soonest cured of his coxcombry, or where a fool may indulge his vanity with impunity, by giving himself what airs he pleases. A valet and a lord are there nearly on a level. Among a million of men, we do not count the units ; for we have not time.

CCLXXIV.

There is some virtue in almost every vice, except hypocrisy ; and even that, while it is a mockery of virtue, is at the same time a compliment to it.

CCLXXV.

It does not follow that a man is a hypocrite, because his actions give the lie to his words. If he at one time seems a saint, and at other times a sinner, he possibly is both in reality, as well as in appearance. A person may be fond of vice and of virtue too ; and practise one or the other, according to the temptation of the moment. A priest may be pious, and a sot or bigot. A woman may be modest, and a rake at heart. A poet may admire the beauties of nature, and be envious of those of other writers. A moralist may act contrary to his own precepts, and yet be sincere in recommending them to

others. These are indeed contradictions, but they arise out of the contradictory qualities in our nature. A man is a hypocrite only when he affects to take a delight in what he does not feel, not because he takes a perverse delight in opposite things.

CCLXXVI.

The greatest offence against virtue is to speak ill of it. To recommend certain things is worse than to practise them. There may be an excuse for the last in the frailty of passion; but the former can arise from nothing but an utter depravity of disposition. Any one may yield to temptation, and yet feel a sincere love and aspiration after virtue; but he who maintains vice in theory, has not even the idea or capacity for virtue in his mind. Men err: fiends only make a mock at goodness.

CCLXXVII.

The passions make antitheses and subtle distinctions, finer than any pen.

CCLXXVIII.

I used to think that men were governed by their passions more than by their interest or reason, till I heard the contrary maintained in

Scotland, *viz.* that the *main-chance* is the great object in life, and the proof given of it was, that every man in the street where we were talking, however he might have a particular *hobby*, minded his business as the principal thing, and endeavoured to make both ends meet at the end of the year. This was a shrewd argument, and it was Scotch. I could only answer it in my own mind by turning to different persons among my acquaintance who have been ruined with their eyes open by some whim or fancy. One, for instance, married a girl of the town: a second divorced his wife to marry a wench at a lodging-house, who refused him, and whose cruelty and charms are the torment of his own life, and that of all his friends: a third drank himself to death; a fourth is the dupe and victim of quack advertisements: a fifth is the slave of his wife's ill-humour: a sixth quarrels with all his friends without any motive: a seventh lies on to the end of the chapter, and to his own ruin, &c. It is true, none of these are Scotchmen; and yet they live in houses, rather than in the open air, and follow some trade or vocation to avoid starving outright. If this is what is meant by a calculation of consequences, the doctrine may

hold true ; but it does not infringe upon the main point. It affects the husk, the shell, but not the kernel of our dispositions. The pleasure or torment of our lives is in the pursuit of some favourite passion or perverse humour.

“ Within our bosoms reigns another lord,
Passion, sole judge and umpire of itself.”

CCLXXIX.

There are few things more contemptible than the conversation of men of the town. It is made up of the technicalities and cant of all professions, without the spirit or knowledge of any. It is flashy and vapid, and is like the rinsings of different liquors at a night-cellar instead of a bottle of fine old port. It is without clearness or body, and a heap of affectation.

CCLXXX.

The conversation of players is either dull or bad. They are tempted to say gay or fine things from the habit of uttering them with applause on the stage, and unable to do it from the habit of repeating what is set down for them by rote. A good comic actor, if he is a sensible man, will generally be silent in company. It is

not his profession to invent *bon mots*, but to deliver them; and he will scorn to produce a theatrical effect by grimace and mere vivacity. A great tragic actress should be a *mute*, except on the stage. She cannot raise the tone of common conversation to that of tragedy, and any other must be quite insipid to her. Repose is necessary to her. She who died the night before in *Cleopatra*, ought not to revive till she appears again as *Cassandra* or *Aspasia*. In the intervals of her great characters, her own should be a blank, or an unforced, unstudied part.

CCLXXXI.

To marry an actress for the admiration she excites on the stage, is to imitate the man who bought PUNCH.

CCLXXXII.

To expect an author to talk as he writes is ridiculous; or even if he did, you would find fault with him as a pedant. We should *read* authors, and not converse with them.

CCLXXXIII.

Extremes meet. Excessive refinement is of-

ten combined with equal grossness. They act as a relief to each other, and please by contrast.

CCLXXXIV.

The seeds of many of our vices are sown in our blood: others we owe to the bile, or a fit of indigestion. A sane mind is generally the effect of a sane body.

CCLXXXV.

Health and good temper are the two greatest blessings in life. In all the rest, men are equal, or find an equivalent.

CCLXXXVI.

Poverty, labour, and calamity, are not without their luxuries; which the rich, the indolent, and the fortunate, in vain seek for.

CCLXXXVII.

Good and ill seem as necessary to human life as light and shade are to a picture. We grow weary of uniform success, and pleasure soon surfeits. Pain makes ease delightful; hunger relishes the homeliest food, fatigue turns the hardest bed to down; and the difficulty and uncertainty of pursuit in all cases enhance the va-

lue of possession. The wretched are in this respect fortunate, that they have the strongest yearnings after happiness; and to desire is in some sense to enjoy. If the schemes of Utopians could be realized, the tone of society would be changed from what it is, into a sort of insipid high life. There could be no fine tragedies written; nor would there be any pleasure in seeing them. We tend to this conclusion already with the progress of civilization.

CCLXXXVIII.

The pleasure derived from tragedy is to be accounted for in this way, that, by painting the extremes of human calamity, it by contrast kindles the affections, and raises the most intense imagination and desire of the contrary good.

CCLXXXIX.

The question respecting dramatic illusion has not been fairly stated. There are different degrees and kinds of belief. The point is not whether we do or do not believe what we see to be a positive reality, but how far and in what manner we believe in it. We do not say every moment to ourselves, "This is real:" but neither

do we say every moment, "This is not real." The involuntary impression steals upon us, till we recollect ourselves. The appearance of reality, in fact, is the reality, so long and in as far as we are not conscious of the contradictory circumstances that disprove it. The belief in a well-acted tragedy never amounts to what the witnessing the actual scene would prove, and never sinks into a mere phantasmagoria.—Its power of affecting us is not, however, taken away, even if we abstract the feeling of identity; for it still suggests a stronger idea of what the reality *would be*, just as a picture reminds us more powerfully of the person for whom it is intended, though we are conscious it is not the same.

CCXC.

We have more faith in a well-written romance, while we are reading it, than in common history. The vividness of the representations in the one case, more than counterbalances the mere knowledge of the truth of the facts in the other.

CCXCI.

It is remarkable how virtuous and generously disposed every one is at a play. We uniformly applaud what is right and condemn what is

wrong, when it costs us nothing but the sentiment.

CCXCII.

Great natural advantages are seldom combined with great acquired ones, because they render the labour required to attain the last superfluous and irksome. It is only necessary to be admired; and if we are admired for the graces of our persons, we shall not be at much pains to adorn our minds. If Pope had been a beautiful youth, he would not have written the Rape of the Lock.* A beautiful woman, who has only to shew herself to be admired, and is famous by nature, will be in no danger of becoming a *blue-stocking*, to attract notice by her learning, or to hide her defects.

CCXCIII,

Those people who are always *improving*, never become great. Greatness is an eminence, the ascent to which is steep and lofty, and which a man must seize on at once by natural boldness and vigour, and not by patient, wary steps.

CCXCIV.

The late Mr. Opie remarked, that an artist

* Milton was a beautiful youth, and yet he wrote Paradise Lost.

often put his best thoughts into his first works. His earliest efforts were the result of the study of all his former life, whereas his later and more mature performances (though perhaps more skilful and finished) contained only the gleanings of his after-observation and experience.

CCXCV.

The effort necessary to overcome difficulty urges the student on to excellence. When he can once do well with ease, he grows comparatively careless and indifferent, and makes no farther advances to perfection.

CCXCVI.

When a man can do better than every one else in the same walk, he does not make any very painful exertions to outdo himself. The progress of improvement ceases nearly at the point where competition ends.

CCXCVII.

We are rarely taught by our own experience; and much less do we put faith in that of others.

CCXCVIII.

We do not attend to the advice of the sage

and experienced, because we think they are old, forgetting that they once were young and placed in the same situations as ourselves.

CCXCI.

We are egotists in morals as well as in other things. Every man is determined to judge for himself as to his conduct in life, and finds out what he ought to have done, when it is too late to do it. For this reason, the world has to begin again with each successive generation.

CCC.

We should be inclined to pay more attention to the wisdom of the old, if they shewed greater indulgence to the follies of the young.

CCCI.

The best lesson we can learn from witnessing the folly of mankind is not to irritate ourselves against it.

CCCII.

If the world were good for nothing else, it is a fine subject for speculation.

CCCIII.

In judging of individuals, we always allow

something to *character*; for even when this is not agreeable or praise-worthy, it affords exercise for our sagacity, and baffles the harshness of our censure.

CCCIV.

There are persons to whom we never think of applying the ordinary rules of judging. They form a class by themselves and are curiosities in morals, like non-descripts in natural history. We forgive whatever they do or say, for the singularity of the thing, and because it excites attention. A man who has been hanged, is not the worse subject for dissection; and a man who deserves to be hanged, may be a very amusing companion or topic of discourse.

CCCV.

Every man, in his own opinion, forms an exception to the ordinary rules of morality.

CCCVI.

No man ever owned to the title of a *murderer*, a *tyrant*, &c. because, however notorious the facts might be, the epithet is accompanied with a reference to motives and marks of opprobrium

in common language and in the feelings of others, which he does not acknowledge in his own mind.

CCCVII.

There are some things, the *idea* of which alone is a clear gain to the human mind. Let people rail at virtue, at genius and friendship as long as they will—the very *names* of these disputed qualities are better than any thing else that could be substituted for them, and embalm even the most angry abuse of them.

CCCVIII.

If goodness were only a theory, it were a pity it should be lost to the world.

CCCIX.

Were good and evil ever so nearly balanced in reality, yet imagination would add a casting-weight to the favourable scale, by anticipating the bright side of what is to come, and throwing a pleasing melancholy on the past.

CCCX.

Women, when left to themselves, talk chiefly

about their dress: they think more about their lovers than they talk about them.

CCCXI.

With women, the great business of life is love; and they generally make a mistake in it. They consult neither the heart nor the head, but are led away by mere humour and fancy. If instead of a companion for life, they had to choose a partner in a country-dance or to trifle away an hour with, their mode of calculation would be right. They tie their true-lover's knot with idle, thoughtless haste, while the institutions of society render it indissoluble.

CCCXII.

When we hear complaints of the wretchedness or vanity of human life, the proper answer to them would be that there is hardly any one who at some time or other *has not been in love*. If we consider the high abstraction of this feeling, its depth, its purity, its voluptuous refinement, even in the meanest breast, how sacred and how sweet it is, this alone may reconcile us to the lot of humanity. That drop of balm turns the bitter cup to a delicious nectar—

“ And vindicates the ways of God to man.”

CCCXIII.

It is impossible to love entirely, without being loved again. Otherwise, the fable of Pygmalion would have no meaning. Let any one be ever so much enamoured of a woman who does not requite his passion, and let him consider what he feels when he finds her scorn or indifference turning to mutual regard, the thrill, the glow of rapture, the melting of two hearts into one, the creation of another self in her—and he will own that he was before only half in love!

CCCXIV.

Women never reason, and therefore they are (comparatively) seldom wrong. They judge instinctively of what falls under their immediate observation or experience, and do not trouble themselves about remote or doubtful consequences. If they make no profound discoveries, they do not involve themselves in gross absurdities. It is only by the help of reason and logical inference, according to Hobbes, that “man becomes excellently wise, or excellently foolish.”*

CCCXV.

Women are less cramped by circumstances or

* Leviathan.

education than men. They are more the creatures of nature and impulse, and less cast in the mould of habit or prejudice. If a young man and woman in common life are seen walking out together on a holiday, the girl has the advantage in point of air and dress. She has a greater aptitude in catching external accomplishments and the manners of her superiors, and is less depressed by a painful consciousness of her situation in life. A Quaker girl is often as sensible and conversable as any other woman: while a Quaker man is a bundle of quaint opinions and conceit. Women are not spoiled by education and an affectation of superior wisdom. They take their chance for wit and shrewdness, and pick up their advantages, according to their opportunities and turn of mind. Their faculties (such as they are) shoot out freely and gracefully, like the slender trees in a forest; and are not clipped and cut down, as the understandings of men are, into uncouth shapes and distorted fancies, like yew-trees in an old-fashioned garden. Women in short resemble self-taught men, with more pliancy and delicacy of feeling.

CCCXVI.

Women have as little imagination as they have reason. They are pure egotists. They cannot go out of themselves. There is no instance of a woman having done any thing great in poetry or philosophy. They can act tragedy, because this depends very much on the physical expression of the passions—they can sing, for they have flexible throats and nice ears—they can write romances about love—and talk forever about nothing.

CCCXVII.

Women are not philosophers or poets, patriots, moralists, or politicians—they are simply women.

CCCXCVIII.

Women have a quicker sense of the *ridiculous* than men, because they judge from immediate impressions, and do not wait for the explanation that may be given of them.

CCCXIX.

English Women have nothing to say on general subjects: French women talk equally well on them or any other. This may be obviously accounted for from the circumstance that the two

sexes associate much more together in France than they do with us, so that the tone of conversation in the women has become masculine, and that of the men effeminate. The tone of apathy and indifference in France to the weightier interests of reason and humanity is ascribable to the same cause. Women have no speculative faculty or fortitude of mind, and wherever they exercise a continual and paramount sway, all must be soon laughed out of countenance, but the immediately intelligible and agreeable—but the shewy in religion, the lax in morals, and the superficial in philosophy.

CCCXX.

The texture of women's minds, as well as of their bodies, is softer than that of men's: but they have not the same strength of nerve, of understanding, or of moral purpose.

CCCXXI.

In France knowledge circulates quickly, from the mere communicativeness of the national disposition. Whatever is once discovered, be it good or bad, is made no secret of; but is spread quickly through all ranks and classes of society. Thought then runs along the surface of the mind

like an electrical fluid ; while the English understanding is a *non-conductor* to it, and damps it with its *torpedo* touch.

CCCXXII.

The French are fond of reading as well as of talking. You may constantly see girls tending an apple-stall in the coldest day in winter, and reading Voltaire or Racine. Such a thing was never known in London as a barrow-woman reading Shakespear. Yet we talk of our widespread civilization, and ample provisions for the education of the poor.

CCCXXIII.

In comparing notes with the French, we cannot boast even of our superior conceit ; for in that too they have the advantage of us.

CCCXXIV.

It is curious that the French, with all their vivacity and love of external splendour, should tolerate nothing but their prosing, didactic style of tragedy on the stage ; and that with all their flutter and levity they should combine the most laborious patience and minute finishing in works of art. A French student will take several weeks

to complete a chalk-drawing from a head of Leonardo da Vinci, which a dull, plodding Englishman would strike off in as many hours.

CCCXXV.

The Dutch perhaps finished their landscapes so carefully, because there was a want of romantic and striking objects in them, so that they could only be made interesting by the accuracy of the details.

CCCXXVI.

An awkward Englishman has an advantage in going abroad. Instead of having his deficiency more remarked, it is less so; for all Englishmen are thought awkward alike. Any slip in politeness or abruptness of address is attributed to an ignorance of foreign manners, and you escape under the cover of the national character. Your behaviour is no more criticised than your accent. They consider the barbarism of either as a compliment to their own superior refinement.

CCCXXVII.

The difference between minuteness and subtlety or refinement seems to be this—that the one relates to the parts, and the other to the whole. Thus, the accumulation of a number

of distinct particulars in a work, as the threads of a gold-laced button-hole, or the hairs on the chin in a portrait of Denner's, is minute or high finishing: the giving the gradations of tone in a sky of Claude's from azure to gold, where the distinction at each step is imperceptible, but the whole effect is striking and grand, and can only be seized upon by the eye of taste, is true refinement and delicacy.

CCCXXVIII.

The *forte* of the French is a certain facility and grace of execution. The Germans, who are the opposite to them, are full of throes and labour, and do every thing by an overstrained and violent effort.

CCCXXIX.

The conversation of a pedantic Scotchman is like a canal with a great number of *locks* in it.

CCCXXX.

The most learned are often the most narrow-minded men.

CCCXXXI.

The insolence of the vulgar is in proportion to their ignorance. They treat every thing with contempt, which they do not understand.

CCCXXXII.

Our contempt for others proves nothing but the illiberality and narrowness of our own views. The English laugh at foreigners, because, from their insular situation, they are unacquainted with the manners and customs of the rest of the world.

CCCXXXIII.

The true barbarian is he who thinks every thing barbarous but his own tastes and prejudices.

CCCXXXIV.

The difference between the vanity of a Frenchman and an Englishman seems to be this—the one thinks every thing right that is French, the other thinks every thing wrong that is not English. The Frenchman is satisfied with his own country; the Englishman is determined to pick a quarrel with every other.

CCCXXXV.

The national precedence between the English and Scotch may be settled by this, that the Scotch are always asserting their superiority over the English, while the English never say a word about their superiority over the Scotch. The

first have got together a great number of facts and arguments in their own favour; the last never trouble their heads about the matter, but have taken the point for granted as self-evident.

CCCXXXVI.

The great characteristic of the Scotch is that of all semi-barbarous people, namely, a hard defiance of other nations.

CCCXXXVII.

Those who are tenacious on the score of their faults shew that they have no virtues to bring as a set-off against them.

CCCXXXVIII.

An Englishman in Scotland seems to be travelling in a conquered country, from the suspicion and precautions which he has to encounter; and this is really the history of the case.

CCCXXXIX.

We learn a great deal from coming into contact and collision with individuals of other nations. The contrast of character and feeling—the different point of view from which they see

things—is an admirable test of the truth or reasonableness of our opinions. Among ourselves we take a number of things for granted, which, as soon as we find ourselves with strangers, we are called upon to account for. With those who think and feel differently from our habitual tone, we must have a reason for the faith that is in us, or we shall not come off very triumphantly. By this comparing of notes, by being questioned and cross-examined, we discover how far we have taken up certain notions on good grounds, or barely on trust. We also learn how much of our best knowledge is built on a sort of acquired instinct, and how little we can analyze those things that seem to us most self-evident. He is no mean philosopher who can give a reason for one half of what he thinks. It by no means follows that our tastes or judgments are wrong, because we may be at fault in an argument. A Scotchman and a Frenchman would differ equally from an Englishman, but would run into contrary extremes. He might not be able to make good his ground against the levity of the one or the pertinacity of the other, and yet he might be right, for they cannot both be so. By visiting different countries and conversing

with their inhabitants, we strike a balance between opposite prejudices, and have an average of truth and nature left.

CCCXL.

Strength of character as well as strength of understanding is one of the guides that point the way to truth. By seeing the bias and prejudices of others marked in a strong and decided manner, we are led to detect our own—from laughing at their absurdities, we begin to suspect the soundness of our own conclusions, which we find to be just the reverse of them. When I was in Scotland some time ago, I learnt most from the person, whose opinions were not most right (as I conceive) but most Scotch. In this case, as in playing a game at bowls, you have only to allow for a certain bias in order to hit the Jack: or, as in an algebraic equation, you deduct so much for national character and prejudice, which is a known or given quantity, and what remains is the truth.

CCCXLI.

We learn little from mere captious controversy, or the collision of opinions, unless where there is this collision of character to account for

the difference, and remind one, by implication, where one's own weakness lies. In the latter case, it is a shrewd presumption that inasmuch as others are wrong, so are we: for the widest breach in argument is made by mutual prejudice.

CCCXLII.

There are certain moulds of national character, in which all our opinions and feelings must be cast, or they are spurious and vitiated. A Frenchman and an Englishman, a Scotchman and an Irishman, seldom reason alike on any two points consecutively. It is in vain to think of reconciling these antipathies: they are something in the juices and the blood. It is not possible for a Frenchman to admire Shakespear, except out of mere affectation: nor is it at all necessary that he should, while he has authors of his own to admire. But then his not admiring Shakespear is no reason why we should not. The harm is not in the natural variety of tastes and dispositions, but in setting up an artificial standard of uniformity, which makes us dissatisfied with our own opinions, unless we can make them universal, or impose them as a law upon the world at large.

CCCXLIII.

I had rather be a lord than a king. A lord is a private gentleman of the first class, amenable only to himself. A king is a servant of the public, dependent on opinion, a subject for history, and liable to be "baited with the rabble's curse." Such a situation is no sinecure. Kings indeed were gentlemen, when their subjects were vassals, and the world (instead of a stage on which they have to perform a difficult and stubborn part) was a deer-park, through which they ranged at pleasure. But the case is altered of late, and it is better and has more of the sense of personal dignity in it to come into possession of a large old family-estate and "ancestral" groves, than to have a kingdom to govern—or to lose.

CCCXLIV.

The affectation of gentility by people without birth or fortune is a very idle species of vanity. For those who are in middle or humble life to aspire to be always seen in the company of the great is like the ambition of a dwarf who should hire himself as an attendant to wait upon a giant. But we find great numbers of this class—whose pride or vanity seems to be sufficiently

gratified by the admiration of the finery or superiority of others, without any farther object. There are sycophants who take a pride in being seen in the train of a great man, as there are fops who delight to follow in the train of a beautiful woman (from a mere impulse of admiration and excitement of the imagination) without the smallest personal pretensions of their own.

CCCXLV.

There is a double aristocracy of rank and letters, which is hardly to be endured—*monstrum ingens, biforme*. A lord, who is a poet as well, regards the House of Peers with contempt as a set of dull fellows; and he considers his brother authors as a Grub-street crew. A king is hardly good enough for him to touch: a mere man of genius is no better than a worm. He alone is all-accomplished. Such people should be *sent to Coventry*; and they generally are so, through their insufferable pride and self-sufficiency.

CCCXLVI.

The great are fond of patronising men of genius, when they are remarkable for personal insignificance, so that they can dandle them like

parroquets or lap-dogs, or when they are distinguished by some awkwardness which they can laugh at, or some meanness which they can despise. They do not wish to encourage or shew their respect for wisdom or virtue, but to witness the defects or ridiculous circumstances accompanying these, that they may have an excuse for treating all sterling pretensions with supercilious indifference. They seek at best to be amused, not to be instructed. Truth is the greatest impertinence a man can be guilty of in polite company; and players and buffoons are the *beau ideal* of men of wit and talents.

CCCXLVII.

We do not see nature, merely from looking at it. We fancy that we see the whole of any object that is before us, because we know no more of it than what we see. The rest escapes us, as a matter of course; and we easily conclude that the idea in our minds and the image in nature are one and the same. But in fact we only see a very small part of nature, and make an imperfect abstraction of the infinite number of particulars, which are always to be found in it, as well as we can. Some do this with more or less accuracy than others, according to habit or natu-

ral genius. A painter, for instance, who has been working on a face for several days, still finds out something new in it which he did not notice before, and which he endeavours to give in order to make his copy more perfect, which shews how little an ordinary and unpractised eye can be supposed to comprehend the whole at a single glance. A young artist, when he first begins to study from nature, soon makes an end of his sketch, because he sees only a general outline and certain gross distinctions and masses. As he proceeds, a new field opens to him; differences crowd upon differences; and as his perceptions grow more refined, he could employ whole days in working upon a single part, without satisfying himself at last. No painter, after a life devoted to the art and the greatest care and length of time given to a single study of a head or other object, ever succeeded in it to his wish or did not leave something still to be done. The greatest artists that have ever appeared are those who have been able to embody some one view or aspect of nature, and no more. Thus Titian was famous for colouring; Raphael for drawing; Correggio for the gradations, Rembrandt for the extremes of light and shade.

The combined genius and powers of observation of all the great artists in the world would not be sufficient to convey the whole of what is contained in any one object in nature; and yet the most vulgar spectator thinks he sees the whole of what is before him, at once and without any trouble at all.

CCCXLVIII.

A copy is never so good as an original. This would not be the case indeed, if great painters were in the habit of copying bad pictures; but as the contrary practice holds, it follows that the excellent parts of a fine picture must lose in the imitation, and the indifferent parts will not be proportionably improved by any thing substituted at a venture for them.

CCCXLIX.

The greatest painters are those who have combined the finest general effect with the highest degree of delicacy and correctness of detail. It is a mistake that the introduction of the parts interferes or is incompatible with the effect of the whole. Both are to be found in nature. The most finished works of the most renowned artists are also the best.

CCCL.

We are not weaned from a misplaced attachment, by (at last) discovering the unworthiness of the object. The character of a woman is one thing; her graces and attractions another; and these last acquire even an additional charm and piquancy from the disappointment we feel in other respects. The truth is, a man in love prefers his passion to every other consideration, and is fonder of his mistress than he is of virtue. Should she prove vicious, she makes vice lovely in his eyes.

CCCLI.

An accomplished coquet excites the passions of others, in proportion as she feels none herself. Her forwardness allures, her indifference irritates desire. She fans the flame that does not scorch her own bosom; plays with men's feelings, and studies the effect of her several arts, at leisure and unmoved.

CCCLII.

Grace in women is the secret charm, that draws the soul into its circle, and binds a spell round it forever. The reason of which is, that habitual grace implies a continual sense of de-

light, of ease and propriety, which nothing can interrupt, ever varying, and adapting itself to all circumstances alike.

CCCLIII.

Even among the most abandoned of the sex, there is generally found to exist one strong and individual attachment, which remains unshaken through all circumstances. Virtue steals, like a guilty thing, into the secret haunts of vice and infamy, clings to their devoted victim, and will not be driven quite away. Nothing can destroy the human heart

CCCLIV.

There is a heroism in crime as well as in virtue. Vice and infamy have their altars and their religion. This makes nothing in their favour, but is a proud compliment to man's nature. Whatever he is or does, he cannot entirely efface the stamp of the Divinity on him. Let him strive ever so, he cannot divest himself of his natural sublimity of thought and affection, however he may pervert or deprave it to ill.

CCCLV.

We judge of character too much from names

and classes, and modes of life. It alters very little with circumstances. The theological doctrines of *Original Sin*, of *Grace*, and *Election*, admit of a moral and natural solution. Outward acts or events hardly reach the inward disposition or fitness for good or evil. Humanity is to be met with in a den of robbers, nay, modesty in a brothel. Nature prevails, and vindicates its rights to the last.

CCCLVI.

Women do not become abandoned with the mere loss of character. They only discover the vicious propensities, which they before were bound to conceal. They do not (all at once) part with their virtue, but throw aside the veil of affectation and prudery.

CCCLVII.

It is enough to satisfy ambition to excel in some one thing. In every thing else, one would wish to be a common man. Those who aim at every kind of distinction turn out mere pretenders and coxcombs. One of the ancients has said that "the wisest and most accomplished man is like the statues of the Gods placed against a

wall—in front an Apollo or a Mercury, behind a plain piece of marble.”

CCCLVIII.

The want of money, according to the poet, has the effect of making men ridiculous. It not only has this disadvantage with respect to ourselves, but it often shews us others in a very contemptible point of view. If we sink in the opinion of the world from adverse circumstances, the world is apt to sink equally in ours. Poverty is the test of civility and the touchstone of friendship.

CCCLIX.

There are those who borrow money, in order to lend it again. This is raising a character for generosity at an easy rate.

CCCLX.

The secret of the difficulties of those people, who make a great deal of money, and yet are always in want of it, is this—they throw it away as soon as they get it on the first whim or extravagance that strikes them, and have nothing left to meet ordinary expenses or discharge old debts.

CCCLXI.

Those who have the habit of *being generous before they are just*, fancy they are getting out of difficulties all their lives, because it is in their power to do so, whenever they will; and for this reason they go on in the same way to the last, because the time never comes for baulking their inclinations or breaking off a bad habit.

CCCLXII.

It is a mistake that we court the society of the rich and great, merely with a view to what we can obtain from them. We do so, because there is something in external rank and splendour that gratifies and imposes on the imagination, just as we prefer the company of those who are in good health and spirits to that of the sickly and hypochondriacal, or as we would rather converse with a beautiful woman than with an ugly one.

CCCLXIII.

Shakespeare says, "Men's judgments are a parcel of their fortunes." A person in depressed circumstances is not only not listened to—he has not the spirit to say a good thing.

CCCLXIV.

We *are* very much what others *think of us*. The reception our observations meet with, gives us courage to proceed or damps our efforts. A man is a wit and a philosopher in one place, who dares not open his mouth and is considered as a blockhead in another. In some companies nothing will go down but coarse practical jests, while the finest remark or sarcasm would be disregarded.

CCCLXV.

Men of talent rise with their company, and are brought out by the occasion. Coxcombs and pedants have no advantage but over the dull and ignorant, with whom they talk on by rote.

CCCLXVI.

In France or abroad one feels one's-self at a loss ; but then one has an excuse ready in an ignorance of the language. In Scotland they speak the same language, but do not understand a word that you say. One cannot get on in society, without ideas in common. To attempt to convert strangers to your notions, or to alter their whole way of thinking in a short stay among them, is indeed making a toil of a pleasure, and

enemies of those who may be inclined to be friends.

CCCLXVII.

In some situations, if you say nothing, you are called dull ; if you talk, you are thought impertinent or arrogant. It is hard to know what to do in this case. The question seems to be, whether your vanity or your prudence predominates.

CCCLXVIII.

One has sometimes no other way of escaping from a sense of insignificance, but by offending the self-love of others. We should recollect, however, that good manners are indispensable at all times and places, whereas no one is bound to make a figure, at the expense of propriety.

CCCLXIX.

People sometimes complain that you do not talk, when they have not given you an opportunity to utter a word for a whole evening. The real ground of disappointment has been, [that you have not shewn a sufficient degree of attention to what they have said.

CCCLXX.

I can listen with patience to the dullest or

or emptiest companion in the world, if he does not require me to do any thing more than listen.

CCCLXXI.

Wit is the rarest quality to be met with among people of education, and the most common among the uneducated.

CCCLXXII.

Are we to infer from this, that wit is a vulgar faculty, or that people of education are proportionably deficient in liveliness and spirit?

CCCLXXIII.

We seldom hear and seldomer make a witty remark. Yet we read nothing else in Congreve's plays.

CCCLXXIV.

Those who object to wit, are envious of it.

CCCLXXV.

The persons who make the greatest outcry against bad puns, are the very same who also find fault with good ones. A bad pun at least generally leads to a wise remark—*that it is a bad one.*

CCCLXXVI.

A grave blockhead should always go about with a lively one—they shew one another off to the best advantage.

CCCLXXVII.

A lively blockhead in company is a public benefit. Silence or dulness by the side of folly looks like wisdom.

CCCLXXVIII.

It is not easy to write *Essays* like *Montaigne*, nor *Maxims* in the manner of the *Duke de la Rochefoucault*.

CCCLXXIX.

The most perfect style of writing may be that, which treats strictly and methodically of a given subject; the most amusing (if not the most instructive) is that, which mixes up the personal character of the author with general reflection.

CCCLXXX.

The seat of knowledge is in the head; of wisdom, in the heart. We are sure to judge wrong, if we do not feel right.

CCCLXXXI.

He who exercises a constant independence of spirit, and yet seldom gives offence by the freedom of his opinions, may be presumed to have a well-regulated mind.

CCCLXXXII.

There are those who never offend by never speaking their minds; as there are others who blurt out a thousand exceptionable things without intending it, and because they are actuated by no feelings of personal enmity towards any one.

CCCLXXXIII.

Cowardice is not synonymous with prudence. It often happens that the better part of discretion is valour.

CCCLXXXIV.

Mental cowards are afraid of expressing a strong opinion, or of striking hard, lest the blow should be retaliated. They throw themselves on the forbearance of their antagonists, and hope for impunity in their insignificance.

CCCLXXXV.

No one ever gained a good word from friend

or foe, from man or woman, by want of spirit. The public know how to distinguish between a contempt for themselves and the fear of an adversary.

CCCLXXXVI.

Never be afraid of attacking a bully.

CCCLXXXVII.

An honest man speaks truth, *though* it may give offence; a vain man, *in order that* it may.

CCCLXXXVIII.

Those only deserve a monument who do not need one; that is, who have raised themselves a monument in the minds and memories of men.

CCCLXXXIX.

Fame is the inheritance not of the dead, but of the living. It is we who look back with lofty pride to the great names of antiquity, who drink of that flood of glory as of a river, and refresh our wings in it for future flight.

CCCXC.

The inhabitant of a metropolis is apt to think this circumstance alone gives him a decided su-

periority over every one else, and does not improve that natural advantage so much as he ought.

CCCXCI.

A true-bred *cockney* fancies his having been born in London is a receipt in full for every other species of merit. He belongs, in his own opinion, to a *privileged class*.

CCCXCII.

The number of objects we see from living in a large city amuses the mind like a perpetual raree-show, without supplying it with any ideas. The understanding thus becomes habitually mechanical and superficial.

CCCXCIII.

In proportion to the number of persons we see, we forget that we know less of mankind.

CCCXCIV.

Pertness and conceit are the characteristics of a true *cockney*. He feels little respect for the greatest things from the opportunity of seeing them often and without trouble ; and at the same time entertains a high opinion of himself

from his familiarity with them. He who has seen all the great actors, the great public characters, the chief public buildings, and the other wonders of the metropolis, thinks less of them from this circumstance; but conceives a prodigious contempt for all those who have not seen what he has.

CCCXCV.

The confined air of a metropolis is hurtful to the minds and bodies of those who have never lived out of it. It is impure, stagnant—without breathing-space to allow a larger view of ourselves or others—and gives birth to a puny, sickly, unwholesome, and degenerate race of beings.

CCCXCVI.

Those who from a constant change and dissipation of outward objects have not a moment's leisure left for their own thoughts, can feel no respect for themselves, and learn little consideration for humanity.

CCCXCVII.

Profound hypocrisy is inconsistent with vanity: for the last would betray our designs by some premature triumph. Indeed, vanity im-

plies a sympathy with others, and consummate hypocrisy is built on a total want of it.

CCCXCVIII.

A hypocrite despises those whom he deceives, but has no respect for himself. He would make a dupe of himself too, if he could.

CCCXCIX.

There is a degree of selfishness so complete, that it does not feel the natural emotions of resentment, contempt, &c. against those who have done all they could to provoke them. Every thing but itself is a matter of perfect indifference to it. It feels towards others no more than if they were of a different species; and inflicts torture or imparts delight, itself unmoved and immoveable.

CCCC.

Egotism is an infirmity that perpetually grows upon a man, till at last he cannot bear to think of any thing but himself, or even to suppose that others do.

CCCCI.

He will never have true friends who is afraid of making enemies.

CCCCII.

The way to procure insults is to submit to them. A man meets with no more respect than he exacts.

CCCCIII.

What puts the baseness of mankind in the strongest point of view is, that they avoid those who are in misfortune, instead of countenancing or assisting them. They anticipate the increased demand on their sympathy or bounty, and escape from it as from a falling house.

CCCCIV.

Death puts an end to rivalry and competition. The dead can boast no advantage over us; nor can we triumph over them.

CCCCV.

We judge of an author by the quality, not the quantity of his productions. Unless we add as much to our reputation by a second attempt as we did by our first, we disappoint expectation, and lose ground with the public. Those therefore who have done the least have often the greatest reputation. The Author of Waverley

has not risen in public estimation by the extreme voluminousness of his writings; for it seems as if that which is done so continually could not be very difficult to do, and that there is some trick or *knack* in it. The miracle ceases with the repetition! The *Pleasures of Hope* and the *Pleasures of Memory*, on the contrary, stand alone and increase in value, because they seem unrivalled and inimitable even by the authors themselves. An economy of expenditure is the way to grow rich in fame, as well as in other pursuits.

CCCCVI.

It is better to drink of deep griefs than to taste shallow pleasures.

CCCCVII.

Those who can command themselves, command others.

CCCCVIII.

A surfeit of admiration or friendship often ends in an indifference worse than hatred or contempt. It is not a lively perception of faults, but a sickly distaste to the very idea of the person formerly esteemed, a palling of the imagination, or a conscious inertness and inability to

revive certain feelings—a state from which the mind shrinks with greater repugnance than from any other.

CCCCIX.

The last pleasure in life is the sense of discharging our duty.

CCCCX.

Those people who are fond of giving trouble, like to take it; just as those who pay no attention to the comforts of others, are generally indifferent to their own. We are governed by sympathy; and the extent of our sympathy is determined by that of our sensibility.

CCCCXI.

No one is idle, who can do any thing.

CCCCXII.

Friendship is cemented by interest, vanity, or the want of amusement: it seldom implies esteem, or even mutual regard.

CCCCXIII.

Some persons make promises for the pleasure of breaking them.

CCCCXIV.

Praise is no match for blame and obloquy. For, were the scales even, the malice of mankind would throw in the casting-weight.

CCCCXV.

The safest kind of praise is to foretel that another will become great in some particular way. It has the greatest shew of magnanimity, and the least of it in reality. We are not jealous of dormant merit, which nobody recognizes but ourselves, and which in proportion as it developes itself, demonstrates our sagacity. If our prediction fails, it is forgotten; and if it proves true, we may then set up for prophets.

CCCCXVI.

Men of genius do not excel in any profession because they labour in it, but they labour in it, because they excel.

CCCCXVII.

Vice is man's nature: virtue is a habit—or a mask.

CCCCXVIII.

The foregoing maxim shews the difference between truth and sarcasm.

CCCCXIX.

Exalted station precludes even the exercise of natural affection, much more of common humanity.

CCCCXX.

We for the most part strive to regulate our actions, not so much by conscience or reason, as by the opinion of the world. But *by the world* we mean those who entertain an opinion about us. Now, this circle varies exceedingly, but never expresses more than a part. In senates, in camps, in town, in country, in courts, in a prison, a man's vices and virtues are weighed in a separate scale by those who know him, and who have similar feelings and pursuits. We care about no other opinion. There is a moral horizon which bounds our view, and beyond which the rest is air. The public is divided into a number of distinct jurisdictions for different claims; and posterity is but a name, even to those who sometimes dream of it.

CCCCXXI.

We can bear to be deprived of every thing but our self-conceit.

CCCCXXII.

Those who are fond of setting things to rights, have no great objection to seeing them wrong. There is often a good deal of spleen at the bottom of benevolence.

CCCCXXIII.

The reputation of science which ought to be the most lasting, as synonymous with truth, is often the least so. One discovery supersedes another; and the progress of light throws the past into obscurity. What is become of the Blacks, the Lavoisiers, the Priestleys, in chemistry? In political economy, Adam Smith is laid on the shelf, and Davenant and De Witt have given place to the Says, the Ricardos, the Malthuses, and the Macullochs. These persons are happy in one respect—they have a sovereign contempt for all who have gone before them, and never dream of those who are to come after them and usurp their place. When any set of men think theirs the only science worth studying, and themselves the only infallible persons in it, it is a sign how frail the traces are of past excellence in it, and how little connection it has with the general affairs of hu-

man life. In proportion to the profundity of any inquiry, is its futility. The most important and lasting truths are the most obvious ones. Nature cheats us with her mysteries, one after another, like a juggler with his tricks ; but shews us her plain honest face, without our paying for it. The understanding only blunders more or less in trying to find out what things are in themselves : the heart judges at once of its own feelings and impressions ; and these are true and the same.

CCCCXXIV.

Scholastic divinity was of use in its day, by affording exercise to the mind of man. Astrology, and the finding out the philosopher's stone, answered the same purpose. If we had not something to doubt, to dispute and quarrel about, we should be at a loss what to do with our time.

CCCCXXV.

The multitude who require to be led, still hate their leaders.

CCCCXXVI.

It has been said that any man may have any woman.

CCCCXXVII.

Many people are infatuated with ill-success, and reduced to despair by a lucky turn in their favour. While all goes well, they are *like fish out of water*. They have no confidence or sympathy with their good fortune, and look upon it as a momentary delusion. Let a doubt be thrown on the question, and they begin to be full of lively apprehensions again; let all their hopes vanish, and they feel themselves on firm ground once more. From want of spirit or of habit, their imaginations cannot rise from the low ground of humility, cannot reflect the gay, flaunting colours of the rainbow, flag and droop into despondency, and can neither indulge the expectation, nor employ the means of success. Even when it is within their reach, they dare not lay hands upon it, and shrink from unlooked-for prosperity, as something of which they are ashamed and unworthy. The class of *croakers* here spoken of are less delighted at other people's misfortunes than at their own. Querulous complaints and anticipations of failure are the food on which they live, and they at last acquire a passion for that which is the favourite subject of their thoughts and conversation.

CCCCXXVIII.

There are some persons who never succeed, from being too indolent to undertake any thing ; and others who regularly fail, because the instant they find success in their power, they grow indifferent, and give over the attempt.

CCCCXXIX.

To be remembered after we are dead, is but a poor recompense for being treated with contempt while we are living.

CCCCXXX.

Mankind are so ready to bestow their admiration on the dead, because the latter do not hear it, or because it gives no pleasure to the objects of it. Even fame is the offspring of envy.

CCCCXXXI.

Truth is not one, but many ; and an observation may be true in itself, that contradicts another equally true, according to the point of view from which we contemplate the subject.

CCCCXXXII.

Much intellect is not an advantage in court-

ship. General topics interfere with particular attentions. A man to be successful in love, should think only of himself and his mistress. Rochefoucault observes, that lovers are never tired of each other's company, because they are always talking of themselves.

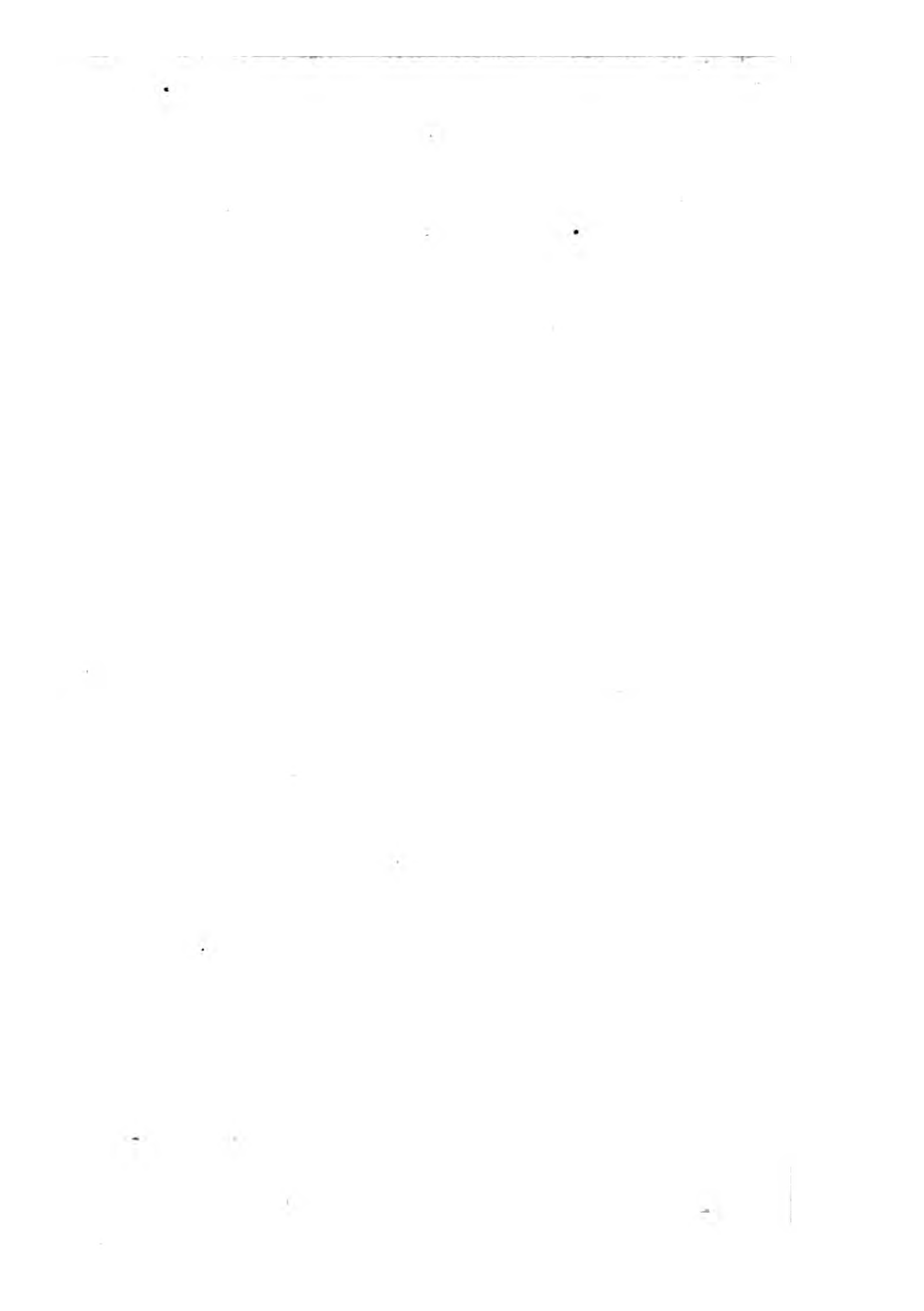
CCCCXXXIII.

The best kind of oratory or argument is not that which is most likely to succeed with any particular person. In the latter case, we must avail ourselves of our knowledge of individual circumstances and character: in the former, we must be guided by general rules and calculations.

CCCCXXXIV.

The picture of the Misers, by Quintin Matsys, seems to proceed upon a wrong idea. It represents two persons of this description engaged and delighted with the mutual contemplation of their wealth. But avarice is not a social passion; and the true miser should retire into his cell to gloat over his treasures alone, without sympathy or observation.

THE END.





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