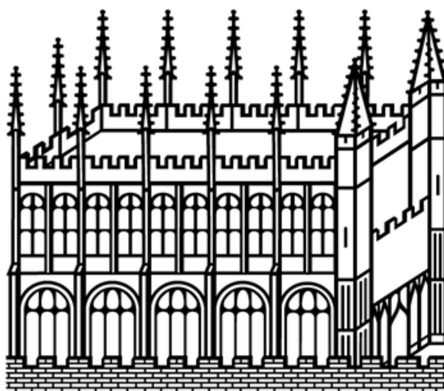

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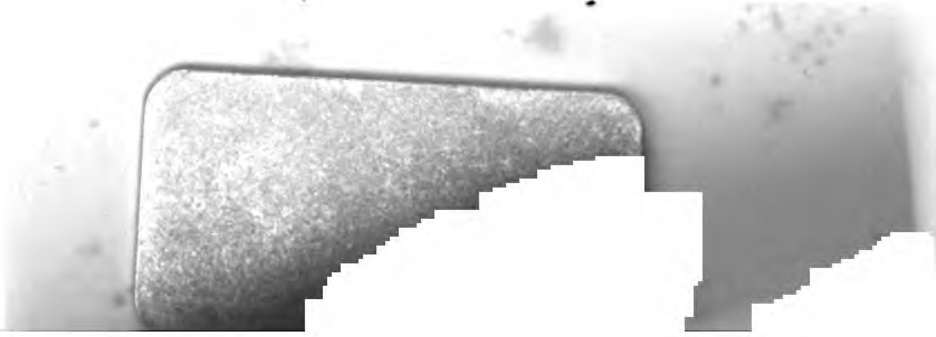

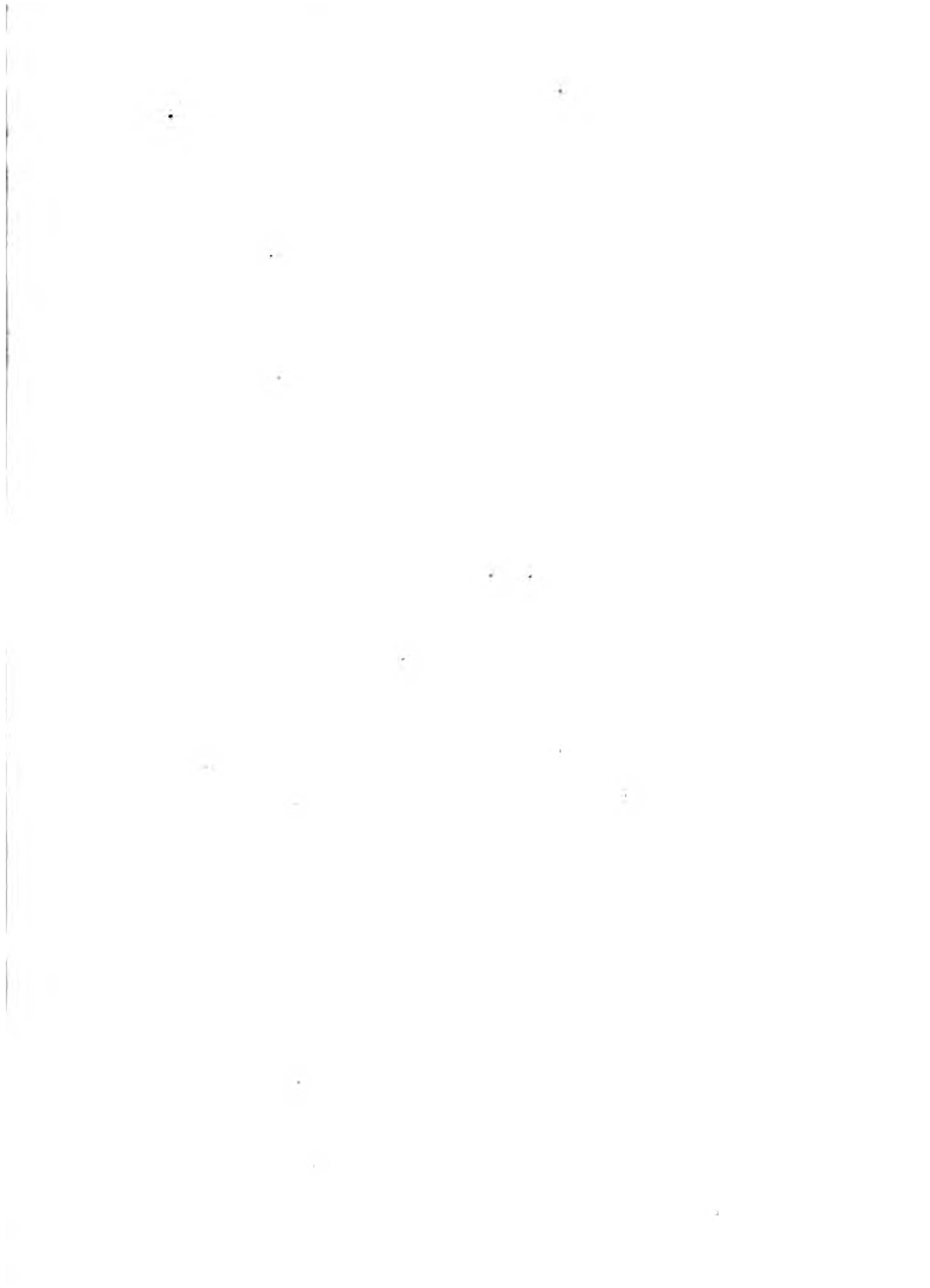

THE
BRITISH ESSAYISTS;

WITH

PREFACES,

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL,

BY

A. CHALMERS, F.S.A.

VOL. XXXIII.

LONDON:

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OBSERVER.

—Multorum providus urbes,
Et mores hominum inspexit.—

HOR. EPIST. i. 2. 19.

No. 52——102.

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THE

OBSERVER.

NUMBER LII.

— *Singula lætus*
Exquiritque auditque virûm monumenta priorum.
VIRG. ÆN 8, 311.

Of all our dealers in second-hand wares, few bring their goods to so bad a market, as those humble wits who retail other people's worn-out jokes. A man's good sayings are so personally his own, and depend so much upon manner and circumstances, that they make a poor figure in other people's mouths, and suffer even more by printing than they do by repeating. It is also a very difficult thing to pen a witticism; for by the time we have adjusted all the descriptive arrangements of this man said, and t'other man replied, we have miserably blunted the edge of the repartee. These difficulties, however, have been happily overcome by Mr. Joseph Miller and other facetious compilers, whose works are in general circulation, and may be heard of in most clubs and companies where gentlemen meet, who love to say a good thing without the trouble of inventing it. We are also in a fair train of knowing every thing that a late celebrated author said, as well as wrote, without an exception even of his most secret ejaculations. We may judge how valuable these diaries will be to posterity, when we reflect how much we should now be edified, had any of the ancients given us as minute a *collectanea* of their illustrious contemporaries.

We have, it is true, a few of Cicero's table-jokes: but how delightful would it be to know what he said, when nobody heard him! How piously he reproached himself when he laid in bed too late in a morning, or eat too heartily at Hortensius's or Cæsar's table. We are told, indeed, that Cato the Censor loved his jest, but we should have been doubly glad to have partaken of it: what a pity it is that nobody thought it worth their while to record some pleasanter specimen than Macrobius has given us of his retort upon Q. Albidius, a glutton and a spendthrift, when his house was on fire—'What he could not eat, he has burnt,' said Cato; where the point of the jest lies in the allusion to a particular kind of sacrifice, and the good humour of it with himself. It was better said by P. Syrus the actor, when he saw one Mucius, a malevolent fellow, in a very melancholy mood—'Either some ill fortune has befallen Mucius, or some good has happened to one of his acquaintance.'

A man's fame shall be recorded to posterity by the trifling merit of a jest, when the great things he has done would else have been buried in oblivion: Who would now have known that L. Mallius was once the best painter in Rome, if it was not for his repartee to Servilius Geminus? 'You paint better than you model,' says Geminus, pointing to Mallius's children, who were crooked and ill favoured. —'Like enough,' replied the artist; 'I paint in the daylight, but I model, as you call it, in the dark.'

Cicero, it is well known, was a great joker, and some of his good sayings have reached us; it does not appear as if his wit had been of the malicious sort, and yet Pompey, whose temper could not stand a jest, was so galled by him, that he is reported to have said with great bitterness—'Oh!

that Cicero would go over to my enemies, for then he would be afraid of me.'—If Cicero forgave this sarcasm, I should call him not only a better-tempered, but a braver man than Pompey.

But of all the ancient wits Augustus seems to have had the most point, and he was as remarkable for taking a jest, as for giving it. A country fellow came to Rome, who was so like the Emperor, that all the city ran after him; Augustus heard of it, and ordering the man into his presence—' Harkye, friend!' says he, ' when was your mother in Rome?' —' Never, an please you!' replied the countryman, ' but my father has been here many a time and oft.' The anecdote of the old soldier is still more to his credit: he solicited the Emperor to defend him in a suit; Augustus sent his own advocate into court: the soldier was dissatisfied, and said to the Emperor—' I did not fight for you by proxy at Actium.'—Augustus felt the reproof, and condescended to his request in person. When Pacuvius Taurus greedily solicited a largess from the Emperor, and to urge him to the greater liberality, added, that all the world would have it, that he had made him a very bountiful donation—' But you know better,' said Augustus, ' than to believe the world,' —and dismissed the sycophant without his errand. I shall mention one more case, where, by a very courtly evasion, he parried the solicitation of his captain of the guard, who had been cashiered, and was petitioning the Emperor to allow him his pay; telling him that he did not ask that indulgence for the sake of the money which might accrue to him, but that he might have it to say he had resigned his commission, and not been cashiered—' If that be all your reason,' says the Emperor, ' tell the world that you have received it, and I will not deny that I have paid it.'

Vatinius, who was noted to a proverb as a common slanderer, and particularly obnoxious for his scurrility against Cicero, was pelted by the populace in the amphitheatre, whilst he was giving them the Gladiators: he complained to the Ædiles of the insult, and got an edict forbidding the people to cast any thing into the area but apples. An arch fellow brought a furious large fir-apple to the famous lawyer Cascellius, and demanded his opinion upon the edict.—'I am of opinion,' says Cascellius, 'that your fir-apple is literally and legally an apple, with this proviso, however, that you intend to throw it at Vatinius's head.'

As there is some danger in making too free with *old jokes*, I shall hold my hand for the present; but if these should succeed in being acceptable to my readers, I shall not be afraid of meeting Mr. Joseph Miller and his modern witticisms with my ancients. In that case I shall not despair of being able to lay before the public a veritable Roman newspaper, compounded of events in the days of Julius Cæsar: by what happy chance I traced this valuable relic, and with what pains I possessed myself of it, may be matter of future explanation: I have the satisfaction however to premise to the reader, that it is written with great freedom, and as well sprinkled with private anecdotes as any of the present day, whose agreeable familiarity is so charming to every body but the parties concerned: it has also a good dash of the dramatic; and as some fastidious people have been inclined to treat our intelligencers and reviewers with a degree of neglect bordering upon contempt, I shall have pleasure in showing that they have classical authority for all their quirks and conceits, and that they are all written in the true quaint spirit of criticism: it is to be lamented that the Roman theatre furnishes no ladies to match the

heroines of our stage; but I can produce some encomiums upon Laberius, Roscius, and the famous Publius Syrus, which would not be unapplicable to some of our present capital actors: I am sorry to be obliged to confess, that they were not in the habit of speaking epilogues in those days; but I have a substitute in a prologue written and spoken by Decimus Laberius, which I am tempted to throw out as a lure to my newspaper; but I must first explain upon what occasion it was composed.

This Laberius was a Roman knight of good family, and a man withal of high spirit and pretensions, but unfortunately he had a talent for the drama: he read his own plays better than any man then living could act them, for neither Garrick nor Henderson were yet born. P. Clodius, the fine gentleman and rake of the age, had the indecorum to press Laberius to come forward on the public stage, and take the principal character in one of his own plays: Laberius was indignant, and Clodius proceeded to menaces:—'Do your worst,' says the Roman knight, 'you can but send me to Dyracchium and back again'—proudly intimating that he would suffer the like banishment with Cicero, rather than consent to his demand; for acting was not then the amusement of people of fashion, and private theatres were not thought of. Julius Cæsar was no less captivated with Laberius's talents than Clodius had been, and being a man not apt to be discouraged by common difficulties, took up the same solicitation, and assailed our Roman knight, who was now sixty years of age, and felt his powers in their decline: conscious of this decline no less than of his own dignity, he resisted the degrading request; he interceded, he implored of Cæsar to excuse him: it was to no purpose, Cæsar had made it his point, and his point he would carry: the

word of Cæsar was law, and Laberius, driven out of all his defences, was obliged to submit and comply. Cæsar makes a grand spectacle for all Rome; bills are given out for a play of Laberius, and the principal part is announced to be performed by the author himself; the theatre is thronged with spectators; all Rome is present, and Decimus Laberius presents himself on the stage, and addresses the audience in the following prologue:—

PROLOGUE BY DECIMUS LABERIUS.

'O strong Necessity! of whose swift course
So many feel, so few escape the force,
Whither, ah! whither, in thy prone career,
Hast thou decreed this dying frame to bear?
Me in my better days nor foe, nor friend,
Nor threat, nor bribe, nor vanity, cou'd bend;
Now lur'd by flattery in my weaker age,
I sink my knighthood and ascend the stage.
Yet muse not therefore—How shall man gainsay
Him, whom the Deities themselves obey?
Sixty long years I've liv'd without disgrace
A Roman knight; let dignity give place!
I'm Cæsar's actor now, and compass more
In one short hour, than all my life before.
'O Fortune! fickle source of good and ill,
If here to place me 'twas thy sovereign will,
Why, when I'd youth and faculties to please
So great a master and such guests as these,
Why not compel me then, malicious power!
To the hard task of this degrading hour?
Where now, in what profound abyss of shame,
Dost thou conspire with Fate to sink my name?
Whence are my hopes? What voice can age supply
To charm the ear; what grace to please the eye?
Where is the action, energy, and art,
The look, that guides its passion to the heart?
Age creeps like ivy o'er my wither'd trunk,
Its bloom all blasted, and its vigour shrunk:
A tomb, where nothing but a name remains
To tell the world whose ashes it contains.'

The original is so superiorly beautiful, that to prevent a bathos I shall insert it after the translation.

Necessitas, cujus cursus transversi impetum
Voluerunt multi effugere, pauci potuerunt,
Quo me detrusit pœne extremis sensibus?
Quem nulla ambitio, nulla unquam largitio,
Nullus timor, vis nulla, nulla auctoritas
Movere potuit in juventa de statu;
Ecce in senecta ut facile labefecit loco
Viri excellentis mente clemente edita
Submissa placidè blandiloquens oratio!
Etenim ipsi Dii negare cui nihil potuerunt,
Hominem me denegare quis posset pati?
Ergo bis tricenis annis actis sine nota
Eques Romanus lare egressus meo
Domum revertas minus: Nimirum hoc die
Uno plus vixi mihi quam vivendum fuit.
Fortuna, immoderata in bono æque atque in malo,
Si tibi erat libitum literarum laudibus
Floris cacumen nostræ famæ frangere,
Cur cum vigebam membris præviridantibus,
Satisfacere populo et tali cum poteram viro,
Non flexibilem me concurvasti ut carperes?
Nunc me quo dejicis? quid ad scenam affero?
Decorem formæ, an dignitatem corporis,
Animi virtutem, an vocis jucundæ sonum?
Ut hedera serpens vires arboreas necat,
Ita me vetustas amplexa annorum enecat:
Sepulchri similis nihil nisi nomen retines.

The play which this pathetic prologue was attached to was a comedy, in which Laberius took the character of a slave, and in the course of the plot, as usual, was beaten by his master; in this condition, having marked his habit with counterfeited stripes, he runs upon the stage, and cries out amain—*Porro, Quirites! libertatem perdimus*—'In good faith, countrymen, there is an end of freedom.' The indignant spectators sent up a shout; it was, in the language of our present playhouse bills, 'a burst of applause; a

most violent burst of applause from a most crowded and brilliant house, overflowing in all parts.' Laberius, not yet content with this atonement to the manes of his knighthood, subjoins the following pointed allusion: *Necesse est multos timeat, quem multi timent*—' The man whom many fear, must needs fear many.' All eyes were now turned upon Cæsar, and the degraded Laberius enjoyed a full revenge.

We may naturally suppose this conduct lost him the favour of Cæsar, who immediately took up Publius Syrus, a Syrian slave, who had been manumitted for his ingenious talents, and was acting in the country theatres with much applause: Cæsar fetched him out of his obscurity, as we bring up an actress from Bath or York, and pitted him against Laberius. It was the triumph of youth and vigour over age and decay, and Cæsar, with malicious civility, said to Laberius, *Favente tibi me victus es, Laberi, a Syro*—' You are surpassed by Syrus in spite of my support.' As Laberius was going out of the theatre, he was met by Syrus, who was inconsiderate enough to let an expression escape him, which was very disrespectful to his veteran competitor: Laberius felt the unbecoming insult, and turning to Syrus, gave him this extemporary answer—

' To stand the first is not the lot of all;
'Tis now your turn to mount, and mine to fall:
'Tis slippery ground; beware you keep your feet;
For public favour is a public cheat.'

Non possunt primi esse omnes omni in tempore;
Summum ad gradum cum claritatis veneris,
Consistes ægre; et quam descendas, decides:
Cecidi ego: Cadet qui sequitur. Laus est publica.

I need not remind the learned reader in what credit the sayings of this Publius Syrus have been justly held by all the *literati* from Seneca to Scaliger, who turned them into Greek; and it is for the honour of the fraternity of the stage, that both he and Sophron, whose moral sentences were found under Plato's pillow when he died, were actors by profession.

I shall now only add, that my newspaper contains a very interesting description of two young actors, Hylas and Pylades, who became great favourites with Augustus, when he was emperor, and made their first appearance at the time this journal was written. If the reader shall find any allusion to two very promising young performers, now living, whose initials correspond with the above, I can promise him that our contemporaries will not suffer by the comparison. I may venture to say, in the words of Dr. Young—

The Roman wou'd not blush at the mistake.

NUMBER LIII.

There is no period of ancient history would afford a more useful study to a young prince, than an accurate delineation of the whole life of Tiberius. This ought to be done with great care and ability, for it is a character extremely difficult to develope, and one that by a continued chain of incidents furnishes a lesson in every link of its connexion, highly interesting to all pupils, but most to those who are on the road to empire. To trace the conduct of

Tiberius from his first appearance in history to his death, is as if we should begin with the last acts of Augustus, and read his story backwards to its commencement in the civil wars; each narration would then begin with honour and conclude with infamy. If Augustus had never attained to empire, he would have had a most disgraceful page in history; on the other hand, had Tiberius died with Germanicus, he would have merited a very glorious one: it should seem, therefore, that he was by nature a better man than his predecessor. The cautious timid character of Augustus kept him under constant awe of those he governed, and he was diligent to secure to himself the opinions of mankind; but there are rents and fissures enough in the veil, which adulation has thrown over him, through which to spy out the impurities and meannesses of his natural disposition. Tiberius seems on his part also to have had a jealous holding and respect towards Germanicus, which had an influence over the early part of his reign; but it was a self-restraint founded in emulation, not in fear. It is hinted that Augustus had in mind to restore the commonwealth, and give back her liberties to Rome; and these may very possibly have been his meditations; but they never arose in his mind till he found his life in the last stage of decay, when, having no heir of his own body, he would willingly have had the empire cease with him, and left posterity to draw the conclusion, that no successor could be found fit to take it after him; this I can readily believe he would have done in his last moments if he could, and even before his last moments if he dared; but the shock, which such a resolution might possibly have occasioned, alarmed his fears, and he was too tenacious of power to quit it upon any other motives than those of absolute conviction that he could hold it no longer. This is

so much in character, that I think it very probable he might have tried it upon Tiberius in his long death-bed conversation with him at Nola—*Revocatum ex itinere Tiberium diu secreto sermone detinuit, neque post ulli majori negotio animum accommodavit. (Sueton. Aug. 98, ad fin.)* This passage is very curious, and some important conjectures may fairly be grounded upon it. Suetonius says that the conference was *long* and also that it was *private*; and he adds, that Augustus, after his conversation with his successor, never turned his thoughts to any important business, or, in other words, any matter of state whatever. The *secrecy* of this conference very much favours my conjecture, that he made an attempt to dissuade Tiberius from holding on the empire, and the *length* of time it took up corroborates the probability of that conjecture; and I further incline to think it likely that it might make serious impressions on Tiberius's mind, as to the measure proposed; for I can never believe that the repugnance with which Tiberius took the charge of the government upon him, was wholly feigned, though historians agree in giving it that turn; his long and voluntary exile in the Island of Rhodes, where he seemed for a time to have renounced all desire of succeeding to the empire, might be a reason with Augustus for making this experiment upon a man of his cold and sequestered habits. At all events I think it highly natural to suppose, that Augustus would not have closetted him in this manner, if it were only for the purpose of giving him lessons and instructions in the arts of government; for in that case his vanity, which made him act a part for applause even in his expiring moments, would have opened his doors to his family and attendants, that they might have been present to record his sayings; and we should have had as many fine

maxims in his dying speech, as Socrates uttered in his prison, or Seneca in his bath. Add to this, that he certainly bore no good-will to Tiberius, who was not a successor to his mind, nor could he wish to elevate the Claudian family to the throne: it is not likely, however, that he altogether succeeded with Tiberius, or brought him to make any absolute promise of abdication; for in that case he would not have failed to have taken credit with the people about him, for having been the means of restoring the liberties of his country, and he would have made as great a parade of patriotism, as would have become a Cato or a Solon; but the author above quoted, says he took no further account of public business, and, therefore, we may conclude the conference, if it took that turn, did not come to any satisfactory conclusion on the point.

Tiberius on his accession found the empire in a critical situation, for besides the movements which Clemens on one part and Scribonius Libo on another were making, the Pannonian and German armies were in absolute revolt. This was no time for making any change in the constitution of the imperial power, had he been so disposed; as he was a man of deep measures, he held himself on the reserve with the senate, and suffered them to solicit his acceptance of the sovereign power upon their knees. He wished to have assessors in the government; he would take his share, and whatever department in the state they would recommend to his charge, he would readily undertake. Had he persisted in refusing the empire, or had he attempted to throw the constitution back to its first principles of freedom, the mutinous legions would have forced the sovereignty upon Germanicus; but by this suggestion of a partition he artfully sounded the temper of the senate, where there were some leading men of very doubtful characters, whom Augustus had marked

out in his last illness; from two of these, Asinius Gallus and L. Aruntius, Tiberius's proposals drew an answer, in which they demanded of him to declare what particular department of the state he would choose to have committed to him. This was opening enough for one of his penetration, and he drew his conclusions upon the spot, evading for the time the snare that was laid for him.

The servile and excessive adulation of the senate soon convinced him, that the Roman spirit had suffered a total change under the reign of Augustus, and that the state might indeed be thrown into convulsions by any attempt at a change in favour of freedom, but that slavery and submission under a despotic master was their determined choice, and if the alternative was to lie between himself and any other, there was little room for hesitation. Who more fit than the adopted heir of Augustus, and a descendant of the Claudian house, which ranked so high in the Patrician nobility, and so superior in pretensions of ancestry and merit to the Julian and Octavian gentry, from whom his predecessors were ignobly descended?

When the German and Pannonian mutinies were appeased, there seems to have been a period of repose, when he might have new modelled the constitution, had he been so disposed; but this I take to be appearance only, for those mutinies had been quelled by Germanicus and Drusus, and both these princes were in the adoption; and the latter of a very turbulent and ambitious spirit.

For the space of two complete years, Tiberius never stirred out of the doors of his palace, devoting his whole time to the affairs of government. In this period he certainly did many excellent things; and though his manners were not calculated for popularity, yet his reputation through the empire

was universal; he regulated all domestic matters with consummate prudence, and on some occasions with a liberal and courteous spirit. In the distant provinces, where wars and disturbances were more frequent, public measures were more indebted for their success to the good policy of his instructions, than to the courage and activity of his generals, though Germanicus was of the number.

The death of that most amiable and excellent prince, which was imputed to the machinations of Cneius Piso, involved Tiberius in some degree in the same suspicion; but as Tacitus, in his account of the event, gives admission to an idle story of sorceries and incantations, practised by Piso for compassing the death of Germanicus, and states no circumstance that can give any reasonable ground for belief, that he actually poisoned him, I am not inclined to give credit to the transaction, even in respect to Piso's being guilty of the murder, much less with regard to Tiberius. Tacitus, indeed, hints at secret orders supposed by some to have been given by the Emperor to Piso; but this, which at best is mere matter of report, does not go to the affair of the poisoning, but only to some private intimations, in which the Empress was chief mover, for mortifying the pride of Agrippina. It is not to be supposed, when Piso openly returned to Rome, and stood a public trial, that these orders, had any such existed, could have been so totally suppressed, that neither the guilty person should avail himself of them, nor any one member of so great and numerous a family produce them in vindication of him when yet living, or of his memory after death; and this in no period of time, not even when the Claudian family were superseded in the Empire, and anecdotes were industriously collected to blacken the character of Tiberius.

The death of Drusus followed that of Germanicus, and the same groundless suspicions were levelled at the Emperor; but these are rejected by Tacitus with contempt, and the words he uses, which are very strong, are a proper answer to both imputations— *Neque quisquam scriptor tam infensus extitit, ut Tiberio objectaret, cum omnia alia conquirerent, intenderentque.*

It would have been most happy for the memory of Tiberius had his life been terminated at this fatal period; henceforward he seems to have been surrendered to desperation and disgust; he retired to the Campania, and devolved the government upon his minister Sejanus; there were times in which some marks of his former spirit appeared, but they were short and transient emanations: the basest of mankind had possession of his soul, and whether he was dragged by Sejanus and his agents, or that his brain was affected by a revulsion of that scrophulous humour, which broke out with such violence in his face and body, it seems highly natural to conjecture, that he was never in his sound mind during his secession in the Island of Capreæ. A number of circumstances might be adduced in support of this conjecture; it is sufficient to instance his extraordinary letter to the senate; can words be found more expressive of a distracted and desperate state of mind than the following? *Quid scribam vobis, Patres Conscripti, aut quomodo scribam, aut quid omnino non scribam hoc tempore, Dii me deæque pejus perdant, quam perire me quotidie sentio, si scio.*

I beg leave now to repeat what I advanced in the outset of this paper, and which alone led me to the subject of it, that a detail comprising all the great and interesting events within the life of Tiberius, with reasonings and remarks judiciously interspersed as these occurrences arise in the course of the

narration, would compound such a body of useful precepts and instructions, as would apply to every species of example, which a prince should be taught either to imitate or avoid; and these lessons would carry the greater force and recommendation with them, and have an advantage over all fabulous morals, by being incorporated with a real history of the most interesting sort.

NUMBER LIV.

HOWEVER disposed we may be to extricate the bloody act of the regicides, yet we must admit the errors and misconduct of Charles's unhappy reign to be such as cannot be palliated ; in our pity for his fate we must not forget the history of his failings, nor, whilst we are sympathising in the pathos of the tragedy, overlook its moral.

Four successive parliaments, improvidently dissolved, were sufficient warnings for the fifth to fall upon expedients for securing to themselves a more permanent duration, by laying some restraints upon a prerogative so wantonly exerted.

Let us call to mind the inauspicious commencement of this monarch's reign: before the ceremony of his coronation had taken place, he espoused a sister of France, and set a catholic princess on the throne of a protestant kingdom, scarce cool from the ferment of religious jealousies, recently emancipated from the yoke of Rome, and of course intolerant through terror, if not by principle. The most obnoxious man in the kingdom was Montague, author of the proscribed tract, entitled *Appello Cæsarem*, and him Charles enrolled in his list of royal chaplains: by throwing himself incontinently into the hands of Buckingham, he showed his people

they were to expect a reign of favouritism, and the choice of the minister marked the character of the monarch: he levied musters for the Palatinate of twelve thousand men, exacted contributions for coat and conduct-money, declared martial law in the kingdom, and furnished his brother of France with a squadron of ships for the unpopular reduction of Rochelle, and the mariners refused the service. These measures stirred the parliament then sitting, to move for a redress of grievances, before they provided for his debts, and their remonstrances provoked him upon the instant to dissolve them.

Every one of these proceedings took place before his coronation, and form the melancholy prelude to his misguided government.

A second parliament was called together, and to intimidate them from resuming their redress of grievances, and divert their attempts from the person of his favourite, he haughtily informs them, that he cannot suffer an enquiry even on the meanest of his servants. What was to be expected from such a menacing declaration? They, disdaining *illam osculari, quâ sunt oppressi, manum*, proceed to impeach Buckingham; the king commits the managers of that process to the Tower, and resorting to his prerogative, dissolves his second parliament as suddenly, and more angrily, than his first.

A third parliament meets, and in the interim new grievances of a more awakening sort had supplied them with an ample field for complaint and remonstrance; in the intermission of their sittings, he had exacted a loan, which they interpreted a tax without parliament, and of course a flagrant violation of the constitution: this he enforced with so high a hand, that several gentlemen of name in their counties had been committed to close imprisonment for refusing payment; ship money also at this time began to be

questioned as an intolerable grievance, and being one of the resources for enabling the crown to govern without a parliament, it was considered by many as a violation of their rights, an inequitable and oppressive tax, which ought to be resisted, and accordingly it was resisted: this parliament, therefore, after a short and inefficient sitting, shared the sudden fate of its predecessors.

The same precipitancy, greater blindness, a more confirmed habit of obstinacy, and a heightened degree of aggravation marked this period of intermission from parliaments, for now the leading members of the late house were sent to close imprisonment in the Tower, and informations were lodged against them in the Star-Chamber.

The troubles in Scotland made it necessary for the king once more to have resort to a parliament; they met for the fourth time on the thirteenth of April 1640, and the fifth day of the following month sent them back to their constituents to tell those grievances in the ears of the people, which their sovereign disdained to listen to——Ill-counselled sovereign! but will that word apologize for conduct so intemperate? It cannot: A mind, so flexible towards evil council, can possess no requisites for government. What hope now remained for moderate measures, when the people's representatives should again assemble? In this fatal moment the fuel was prepared and the match lighted, to give life to the flames of civil war; already Scotland had set those sparks into a blaze; the king, unable to extinguish the conflagration by his own power and resources, for the fifth and last time convenes his parliament: but it was now too late for any confidence or mutual harmony to subsist between the crown and commons; on the third of November following their last dissolution, the new elected

members take possession of their seats, and the house soon resounds with resolutions for the impeachment of the minister Strafford, and the primate Laud. The humble monarch confirms the fatal bill of attainder, and sends Strafford to the scaffold; he ratifies the act for securing parliament against future dissolution, and subscribes to his own death-warrant with the same pen.

The proceedings of this famous parliament are of a mixt nature; in many we discern the true spirit of patriotism, and not a few seem dictated by revenge and violence: the Courts of High Commission and Star-Chamber are abolished, and posterity applauds their deliverers; the city-crosses are pulled down, the bishops sent to the Tower, and their whole order menaced with expulsion from parliament, and here we discover the first dawnings of fanatic phrensy. An incurable breach is made in the constitution: its branches are dissevered, and the axe of rebellion is laid to the root of the tree. The royal standard is set up; the father of his people becomes the general of a party, and the land is floated with the blood of its late peaceable inhabitants. Great characters start forth in the concussion, great virtues and great vices. Equal courage and superior conduct at length prevail for the leaders of the people; a fanatic champion carries all before him; the sovereign surrenders himself weakly; capitulates feebly, negociates deceitfully, and dies heroically.

And this is the reign, this is the exit of a king! Let kings ponder it, for it is a lesson, humbling, perhaps, to the pride of station, but pointedly addressed to their instruction.

If there is a trust in life, which calls upon the conscience of a man who undertakes it more strongly than any other, it is that of the education of an heir-

apparent to a crown: the training such a pupil is a task, indeed; how to open his mind to a proper knowledge of mankind, without letting in that knowledge which inclines to evil; how to hold off flattery, and yet admit familiarity; how to give the lights of information, and shut out the false colours of seduction, demands a judgement for distinguishing and an authority for controuling, which few governors in that delicate situation ever possess, or can long retain. To educate a prince, born to reign over an enlightened people, upon the narrow scale of secret and sequestered tuition, would be an abuse of common sense; to let him loose upon the world is no less hazardous in the other extreme, and each would probably devote him to an inglorious destiny. That he should know the leading characters in the country he is to govern, be familiar with its history, its constitution, manners, laws, and liberties, and correctly comprehend the duties and distinctions of his own hereditary office, are points that no one will dispute. That he should travel through his kingdom I can hardly doubt, but whether those excursions should reach into other states, politically connected with, or opposed to, his own, is more than I will presume to lay down as a general rule, being aware that it must depend upon personal circumstances: splendour he may be indulged in, but excess in that, as in every thing else, must be avoided, for the mischiefs cannot be numbered which it will entail upon him: excess in expense will subject him to obligations of a degrading sort; excess in courtesy will lay him open to the forward and assuming, raise mountains of expectation about him, and all of them undermined by disappointment, ready charged for explosion, when the hand of presumption shall set fire to the train: excess in pleasure will lower him in character, destroy

health, respect, and that becoming dignity of mind, that conscious rectitude, which is to direct and support him, when he becomes the dispenser of justice to his subjects, the protector and defender of their religion, the model for their imitation, and the sovereign arbiter of life and death in the execution of every legal condemnation. To court popularity is both derogatory and dangerous, nor should he who is destined to rule over the whole, condescend to put himself in the league of a party. To be a protector of learning, and a patron of the arts, is worthy of a prince, but let him beware how he sinks himself into a pedant or a virtuoso. It is a mean talent, which excels in trifles; the fine arts are more likely to flourish under a prince, whose ignorance of them is qualified by general and impartial good-will towards their professors, than by one, who is himself a dabbler; for such will always have their favourites, and favouritism never fails to irritate the minds of men of genius concerned in the same studies, and turns the spirit of emulation into the gall of acrimony.

Above all things let it be his inviolable maxim to distinguish strongly and pointedly in his attentions between men of virtuous morals and men of vicious. There is nothing so glorious and at the same time nothing so easy; if his countenance is turned to men of principle and character, if he bestows his smile upon the worthy only, he need be at little pains to frown upon the profligate, all such vermin will crawl out of his path, and shrink away from his presence. Glittering talents will be no passport for dissolute morals, and ambition will then be retained in no other cause, but that of virtue; men will not choose crooked passages and bye-alleys to preferment, when the broad highway of honesty is laid open and straight before them. A prince,

though he gives a good example in his own person, what does he profit the world, if he draws it back again by the bad example of those whom he employs and favours? Better might it be for a nation, to see a libertine on its throne, surrounded by virtuous counsellors, than to contemplate a virtuous sovereign, delegating his authority to unprincipled and licentious servants.

The king who declares his resolution of countenancing the virtuous only amongst his subjects, speaks the language of an honest man: if he makes good his declaration, he performs the functions of one, and earns the blessings of a righteous king; a life of glory in this world, and an immortality of happiness in the world to come.

NUMBER LV.

— *Non erat his locus.* HOR. ARS POET. 19.

THERE is a certain delicacy in some men's nature, which, though not absolutely to be termed a moral attribute, is nevertheless so grateful to society at large, and so recommendatory of those who possess it, that even the best and worthiest characters cannot be truly pleasing without it. I know not how to describe it better than by saying it consists in a happy discernment of 'times and seasons.'

Though this engaging talent cannot positively be called a virtue, yet it seems to be the result of many virtuous and refined endowments of the mind, which produces it; for when we see any man so tenderly considerate of our feelings, as to put aside his own

for our accommodation and repose, and to consult opportunities with a respectful attention to our ease and leisure, it is natural to us to think favourably of such a disposition, and although much of his discernment may be the effect of a good judgment and proper knowledge of the world, yet there must be a great proportion of sensibility, candour, diffidence, and natural modesty, in the composition of a faculty so conciliating and so graceful. A man may have many good qualities, and yet, if he is unacquainted with the world, he will rarely be found to understand those apt and happy moments of which I am now speaking; for it is a knowledge not to be gained without a nice and accurate observation of mankind, and even when that observation has given it, men, who are wanting in the natural good qualities above described, may indeed avail themselves of such occasions to serve a purpose of their own; but, without a good heart, no man will apply his experience to general practice.

But as it is not upon theories that I wish to employ these papers, I shall now devote the remainder of my attention to such rules and observations as occur to me upon the subject of *the times and seasons.*

Men, who in the fashionable phrase *live out of the world,* have a certain awkwardness about them, which is for ever putting them out of their place in society, whenever they are occasionally drawn into it. If it is their studies which have sequestered them from the world, they contract an air of pedantry, which can hardly be endured in any mixed company, without exposing the object of it to ridicule; for the very essence of this contracted habit consists in an utter ignorance *of times and seasons.* Most of that class of men who are occupied in the education of youth, and not a few of the young men themselves, who are educated by them, are of this de-

scription: we meet with many of Jack Lizard's cast in the Guardian, who will learnedly maintain *there is no heat in fire.* There is a disputatious precision in these people, which lets nothing pass in free conversation, that is not mathematically true; they will confute a jest by syllogism, canvass a merry tale by cross examination and dates, work every common calculation by X, *the unknown quantity,* and in the festive sallies of imagination, convict the witty speaker of false grammar, and nonsuit all the merriment of the table.

The man of form and ceremony, who has shaped his manners to the model of what is commonly called *The Old Court,* is another grand defaulter against *times and seasons:* his entrances and exits are to be performed with a stated regularity; he measures his devoirs with an exactitude that bespeaks him a correct interpreter of *The Red Book;* pays his compliments with a minuteness, that leaves no one of your family unnamed, enquires after the health of your child who is dead, and desires to be kindly remembered to your wife, from whom you are divorced. Nature formed him in straight lines, habit has stiffened him into an unrelenting rigidity, and no familiarity can bend him out of the upright. The uneducated squire of rustic manners forms a contrast to this character, but he is altogether as great an intruder upon *times and seasons,* and his total want of form operates to the annoyance of society as effectually as the other's excess. There cannot be in human nature a more terrible thing than vulgar familiarity; a low-bred fellow, who affects to put himself at his ease amongst his superiors, and be pleasant company to them, is a nuisance to society; there is nothing so ill understood by the world in general as familiarity; if it was not for the terror which men have of the very troublesome consequences of condescen-

sion to their inferiors, there would not be a hundredth part of that pride and holding-back amongst the higher ranks, of which the low are so apt to complain. How few men do we meet with, who when the heart is open and the channel free, know how to keep their course within the buoys and marks, that true good-manners have set up for all men to steer by! Jokes out of season, unpleasant truths touched upon incautiously, *plump questions*, as they are called, put without any preface or refinement, manual caresses compounded of hugs and slaps and squeezes, more resembling the gambols of a bear than the actions of a gentleman, are sure to follow upon the overflowing ebullitions of a vulgar familiarity broke loose from all restraints. It is a painful necessity men of sensibility are under, when they find themselves compelled to draw back from the eager advances of an honest heart, only because the shock of its good-humour is too violent to be endured; it is very wounding to a social nature to check festivity in any degree, but there is nothing sinks the spirit so effectually as boisterous mirth, nobody so apt to overact his character as a jolly fellow, and stunned with the vociferation of his own tongue to forget that every other man is silent and suffering: in short it is a very difficult thing to be properly happy and well pleased with the company we are in, and none but men of good education, great discernment, and nice feelings, know how to be familiar. These rural gentry are great dealers in long stories of their own uninteresting achievements; they require of you to attend to the narrative of their paltry squabbles and bickerings with their neighbours; they are extremely eloquent upon the laws against poachers, upon turnpike roads and new enclosures, and all these topics they will thrust in by the neck and shoulders to the exclusion of all others.

Plain speaking, if we consider it simply as a mark of truth and honesty, is doubtless a very meritorious quality, but experience teaches that it is too frequently under bad managenment, and obtruded on society out of *time and season* in such a manner as to be highly inconvenient and offensive. People are not always in a fit humour to be told of their faults, and these plain speaking friends sometimes perform their office so clumsily, that we are inclined to suspect they are more interested to bring us to present shame than future reformation. It is a common observation with them, when things turn out amiss, to put us in mind how they dissuaded us from such and such an undertaking, that they foresaw what would happen, and that the event is neither more nor less than they expected and predicted. These retorts, cast in our teeth in the very moment of vexation, are what few tempers, when galled with disappointment, can patiently put up with; they may possibly be the pure result of zeal and sincerity, but they are so void of contrivance, and there is so little delicacy in the timing of them, that it is a very rare case, indeed, when they happen to be well understood and kindly taken. The same want of sensibility towards human infirmities, that will not spare us in the moments of vexation, will make no allowances for the mind's debility in the hours of grief and sorrow. If a friend of this sort surprises us in the weakness of the soul, when death perhaps has robbed us of some beloved object, it is not to contribute a tear, but to read us a lecture, that he comes; when the heart is agonized, the temper is irritable, and as a moralizer of this sort is almost sure to find his admonitions take the contrary effect from what he intended, he is apt to mistake an occasional impatience in us for a natural one, and leaves us with the impression that we are men who are ill-prepared

against the common vicissitudes of life, and endowed with a very small share of fortitude and resignation; this early misconception of our character, in the course of time leads him to another, for he no sooner finds us recovered to a proper temper of mind, than he calls to mind our former impatience, and, comparing it with our present tranquillity, concludes upon appearances, that we are men of light and trivial natures, subject, indeed, to fits and starts of passion, but incapable of retention, and as he has then a fine subject for displaying his powers of plain speaking, he reminds us of our former inattention to his good advice, and takes credit for having told us over and over again, that we ought not to give way to violent sorrow, and that we could not change the course of things by our complaining of them. Thus, for want of calculating *times and seasons*, he begins to think despisingly of us, and we, in spite of all his sincerity, grow tired of him, and dread his company.

Before I quit this subject, I must also have a word with the valetudinarians, and I wish from my heart I could cure them of their *complaints*,—that species I mean which comes under my notice as an *Observer*, without intruding upon the more important province of the physician. Now, as this island of ours is most happily supplied with a large and learned body of professors under every medical description and character, whether operative or deliberative, and all these stand ready at the call, and devoted to the service of the sick or maimed, whether it be on foot, on horseback, or on wheels, to resort to them in their distresses, it cannot be for want of help that the valetudinarian states his case to all companies so promiscuously. Let the whole family of death be arrayed on one side, and the whole army of physic, regulars and irregulars, be drawn out on

the other, and I will venture to say, that for every possible disease in the ranks of a besieger, there shall be a champion in the garrison ready to turn out and give him battle: let all who are upon the sick list in the community be laid out between the camps, and let the respective combatants fight it out over the bodies, but let the forces of life and health have no share in the fray: why should their peace be disturbed, or their society contaminated by the infectious communication? It is as much out of *time and place* for a man to be giving the diary of his disease in company, who are met for social purposes, as it is for a doctor to be talking politics or scandal in a sick man's chamber; yet so it is, that each party are for ever out of character; the chatterer disgusts his patient by an inattention to his complaints, and the valetudinarian disgusts his company by the enumeration of them, and both are equally out of season.

Every man's observation may furnish him with instances not here enumerated, but if what I have said shall seem to merit more consideration than I have been able to give it in the compass of this paper, my readers may improve upon the hint, and society cannot fail to profit by their reflections.

NUMBER LVI.

———῏Ω τρισάθλιοι
῞Απαντες οἱ φυσῶντες ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς μέγα,
Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἴσασιν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν.
MENANDER. *Gubernatoribus.*

" O wretched mortals! by false pride betray'd,
Ye know not of what nature man is made."

THOUGH I think our nation can never be accused of want of charity, yet I have observed, with much concern, a poor unhappy set of men amongst us, whose case is not commiserated as it ought to be; —and as I would gladly contribute any thing in my power towards their relief, the best proof I can give them of my good-will, is by endeavouring to convince them of a certain truth, which all the world except themselves has discovered long ago, viz. 'That a proud man is the most contemptible being in nature.' Now if these proud men, to whom I address myself, and for whose miserable situation I have such compassion, shall once find a friend to convince them, that they are truly 'the most contemptible beings in nature,' it can never be supposed they will persist to entertain a companion in their bosoms, who affords them so little pleasure, and yet involves them in so much disgrace. I must consider them, therefore, as mistaken, rather than obstinate, and treat them accordingly; for how can I suppose there would be such an absurdity in the world as a proud man, if the poor creature was not behindhand with the rest of mankind, in a discovery that concerns himself so materially? I admit, indeed, that pride is a very foolish thing, but I contend that wise

men are sometimes surprised into very foolish things, and, if a little friendly hint can rescue them, it would be an ill-natured action to withhold the information: 'If you are proud, you are a fool,' says an old Greek author, called Sotades—Ἂν ἀλαζονῇς, τοῦτ' ἀνοίας ἐστὶ φρύαγμα—but I hope a little plain English without the help of Sotades, will serve to open the eyes of a plain Englishman, and prevent him from strutting about the world merely to make sport for his neighbours; for I declare in truth, that so far from being annoyed and made splenetic, as some folks are, when I fall into company with a proud fellow creature, I feel no other impulse than of pity, with now and then a small propensity to titter, for it would be downright rudeness to laugh in a man's face on such an occasion; and it hurts me to see an honest gentleman, who may have many more natural good qualities than he himself is aware of, run about from house to house only to make sport for the scoffers, and take a world of pains, and put on an air of gravity and importance, for no better purpose than to provoke ridicule and contempt—'Why is earth and ashes proud?' says the Son of Sirach; 'Pride was not made for men.'

As I am determined to put these poor men upon their guard in all points, I shall remind them of another error they are in, which sadly aggravates their misfortunes, and which arises from a circumstance of a mere local nature, viz. 'That England is the worst country a proud man can exhibit himself in.'—I do really wish they would well consider the land they live in: if they do not know, they ought to be told, that we are free people; that freedom tends to make us independent of one another, fearless in our persons, warm in our resentments, bold of tongue, and vindictive against insult; England is the place upon earth, where a proud stomach finds

the least to feed upon; indeed, it is the only stomach that can here complain of its entertainment: if the proud man thinks it will be sufficient to pay his fine of affability to his neighbours once in seven years, upon a parliamentary canvass, he is cruelly mistaken; the common people in this country have such a share of intuition, understand their own strength so well, and scrutinize into the weaknesses of their superiors so acutely, that they are neither to be deceived nor intimidated; and, on that account, as the proud man's character is compounded of the impostor and bully, they are the very worst people he can deal with. A man may strut in Spain, vapour in France, or kick and cuff the vulgar as he likes in Russia; he may sit erect in his palanquin in India, without dropping his eyes upon the earth he moves over; but if he carries his head in the air here, and expects the crowd to make way for him, he will soon run foul of somebody that will make him repent of his stateliness. Pride then, it seems, not only exposes a man to contempt, but puts him in danger; it is also a very expensive frolic, if he keeps it up as it should be kept, for what signifies his being proud, if there is not somebody always present to exercise his pride upon? He must, therefore, of necessity, have a set of humble cousins and toad-eaters about him; and as such cattle cannot be had for nothing in this country, he must pay them according to the value of their services; common trash may be had at a common price, but clever fellows know their own consequence, and will stand out upon terms. If Nebuchadnezzar had not had 'all people, nations, and languages' at his command, he might have called till he was hoarse, before any one would have come to worship his 'image in the plain of Dura;' let the proud man take notice withal, that Nebuchadnezzar's *image* was made of *gold*,

and if he expects to be worshipped by all people after this fashion, and casts himself in the same mould, he must also cast himself in the same metal. Now, if I am right in my assertion, that sycophants bear a higher price in England than elsewhere, and, if scarcity makes things dear, I trust they do, let the proud man consider if it be worth his while to pay dear for bad company, when he may have good-fellowship at any easy rate. Here then is another instance of his bad policy, and sure it is a sorrowful thing to be poor and proud.

That I may thoroughly do my duty to an order of men, to whose service I dedicate this short essay, I must not omit to mention, that it behoves a proud man, in all places, and on all occasions, to preserve an air of gloominess and melancholy, and never to suffer so vulgar an expression as mirth or laughter to disarrange the decorum of his features: other men will be apt to make merry with his humour, but he must never be made merry by theirs. In this respect he is truly to be pitied, for if once he grows sociable, he is undone. On the contrary, he must for ever remain in the very predicament of the proud man described in the fragment of Euripides's Ixion—Φίλοις ἄμικτος καὶ πάσῃ πόλει—*Urbi atque amicis pariter insociabilis.* He must have no friend, for that would be to admit an equal; he must take no advice, for that would be to acknowledge a superior. Such society as he can find in his own thoughts, and such wisdom as he was sent into the world with, such he must go on with: as wit is not absolutely annexed to pedigree in this country, and arts and sciences sometimes condescend to throw their beams upon the low-born and the humble, it is not possible for the proud man to descend amongst them for information and society; if truth does not hang within his reach, he will never dive into a well

to fetch it up: his errors, like some arguments, move *in a circle:* for his pride begets ignorance, and his ignorance begets pride; and thus in the end he has more reasons for being *melancholy* than Master Stephen had, not only because it is *gentleman-like*, but because he can't help it, and don't know how to be merry.

I might enumerate many more properties of this contemptible character, but these are enough, and a proud man is so dull a fellow at best, that I shall gladly take my leave of him; I confess, also, that I am not able to treat the subject in any other than a vague and desultory manner, for I know not how to define it myself, and at the same time am not reconciled to any other definition of pride, which I have met in Mr. Locke's essay or elsewhere. It is called a passion, and yet it has not the essentials of a passion; for I can bring to mind nothing under that description, which has not reference either to God, to our fellow-creatures, or to ourselves. The sensual passions, for instance, of whatever sort, have their end in selfish gratification; the generous attributes, such as valour, friendship, public spirit, munificence, and contempt of danger, have respect to our fellow-creatures; they look for their account in an honourable fame, in the enjoyment of present praise, and in the anticipation of that which posterity shall bestow; whilst the less ostentatious and purer virtues of self-denial, resignation, humility, piety, forbearance, and many others, are addressed to God alone, they offer no gratification to self, they seek no applause from man. But in which of these three general classes shall we discover the passion of pride? I have indeed sometimes seen it under the cloak of religion, but nothing can be more opposite to the practice of it. It is in vain to enquire for it amongst the generous and social attri-

butes, for its place is no where to be found in society; and I am equally at a loss to think, how that can be called a selfish gratification, which brings nothing home to a man's heart but mortification, contempt, abhorrence, secret discontent and public ridicule. It is composed of contraries, and founded in absurdity; for, at the same time that it cannot subsist without the world's respect, it is so constituted as never to obtain it. Anger is proverbially termed a short madness, but pride, methinks, is a perpetual one; if I had been inclined to use a softer word, I would have called it folly; I do confess I have often seen it in that more venial character, and, therefore, not to decide upon the point too hastily, I shall leave the proud man to make his choice between folly and madness, and take out his commission from which party he sees fit.

Good Heaven! How pleasant, how complacent to itself and others, is an humble disposition! To a soul so tempered how delightfully life passes in brotherly love and simplicity of manners! Every eye bestows the cheering look of approbation upon the humble man; every brow frowns contempt upon the proud. Let me, therefore, advise every gentleman, when he finds himself inclined to take up the character of pride, to consider well whether he can be quite proud enough for all purposes of life: whether his pride reaches to that pitch as to meet universal contempt with indifference; whether it will bear him out against mortification, when he finds himself excluded from society, and understands that he is ridiculed by every body in it; whether it is convenient to him always to walk with a stiff back and a stern countenance; and, lastly, whether he is perfectly sure, that he has that strength and self-support in his own human nature, as may defy the power and set at nought the fa-

vour of God, *who resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.*

There is yet another little easy process, which I would recommend to him as a kind of probationary rehearsal, before he performs in public: I am persuaded it will not be amiss, if he first runs over a few of his airs and graces by himself, in his own closet: let him examine himself from head to foot in his glass, and, if he finds himself no handsomer, no stronger, no taller, than all the rest of his fellow-creatures, he may venture, without risk, to conclude that he like them is a man, and nothing more. Having settled this point, and taken place in the human creation, he may next proceed to consider what that place ought to be: for this purpose, he may consult his pedigree and his rent-roll, and if, upon a careful perusal of these documents, he shall find, as most likely he will, that he is not decidedly the noblest and the richest man in the world, perhaps he will see no good cause, why he should strut over the face of it, as if it was his own: I would then have him go back to his glass, and set his features in order for the very proudest and most arrogant look he can put on; let him knit his brow, stretch his nostrils, and bite his lips, with all the dignity he can summon; and after this, when he has reversed the experiment, by softening them into a mild complacent look, with as much benignity as he can find in his heart to bestow upon them, let him ask himself honestly and fairly, which character best becomes him, and whether he does not look more like a man with some humanity, than without it; I would, in the next place, have him call his understanding to a short audit, and, upon casting up the sum total of his wit, learning, talents, and accomplishments, compute the balance between others and himself, and, if it shall turn out that

his stock of all these is not the prodigious thing it ought to be, and even greater than all other men's, he will do well to husband it with a little frugal humility. The last thing he must do, and if he does nothing else I should hope it would be sufficient, is to take down his Bible from the shelf, and look out for the parable of the Pharisee and Publican; it is a short story, and soon read, but the moral is so much to his purpose, that he may depend upon it, if that does not correct his pride, his pride is incorrigible, and all the *Observers* in the world will be but waste paper in his service.

NUMBER LVII.

Μακάριος ὅστις οὐσίαν καὶ νοῦν ἔχει·
Χρῆται γὰρ οὗτος εἰς ἃ δεῖ ταύτῃ καλῶς·
Οὕτω μαθεῖν δεῖ πάντα καὶ πλοῦτον φέρειν.
Ἀσχημοσύνης γὰρ γίνετ' ἐνίοις αἴτιος.

MENANDER, E FAMULO MATRIS IDÆÆ.

Abundance is a blessing to the wise;
The use of riches in discretion lies:
Learn this, ye men of wealth—a heavy purse
In a fool's pocket is a heavy curse.

THERE are so many striking advantages in the possession of wealth, that the inheritance of a great estate devolving upon a man in the vigour of mind and body, appears to the eye of speculation as a lot of singular felicity.

There are some countries where no subject can properly be said to be independent; but in a constitution so happily tempered as ours, that blessing seems peculiarly annexed to affluence. The English landed gentleman, who can set his foot upon his own soil, and say to all the world—*This is my*

freehold; the law defends my right: Touch it who dare! —is surely as independent as any man within the rules of society can be, so long as he encumbers himself by no exceedings of expense beyond the compass of his income. If a great estate therefore gives a man independence, it gives him that, which all, who do not possess it, seem to sigh for.

When I consider the numberless indulgences, which are the concomitants of a great fortune, and the facility it affords to the gratification of every generous passion, I am mortified to find how few, who are possessed of these advantages, avail themselves of their situation to any worthy purposes. That happy temper, which can preserve a medium between dissipation and avarice, is not often to be found, and where I meet one man, who can laudably acquit himself under the test of prosperity, I could instance numbers, who deport themselves with honour under the visitations of adversity. Man must be in a certain degree the artificer of his own happiness; the tools and materials may be put into his hands by the bounty of Providence, but the workmanship must be his own.

I lately took a journey into a distant county, upon a visit to a gentleman of fortune, whom I shall call *Attalus.* I had never seen him since his accession to a very considerable estate; and as I have met with few acquaintance in life of more pleasant qualities, or a more social temper than Attalus, before this great property unexpectedly devolved upon him, I flattered myself that Fortune had in this instance bestowed her favours upon one who deserved them; and that I should find it in Attalus's society the pleasing gratification of seeing all those maxims, which I had hitherto revolved in my mind as matter of speculation only, now brought forth into

actual practice; for amongst all my observations upon human affairs, few have given me greater and more frequent disappointment, than the almost general abuse of riches. Those rules of liberal economy, which would make wealth a blessing to its owner and to all he were connected with, seem so obvious to me, who have no other interest in the subject than what meditation affords, that I am apt to wonder how men can make such false estimates of the true enjoyments of life, and wander out of the way of happiness, to which the heart and understanding seem to point the road too plainly to admit of a mistake.

With these sanguine expectations I pursued my journey towards the magnificent seat of Attalus, and in my approach it was with pleasure I remarked the beauty of the country about it; I recollected how much he used to be devoted to rural exercises, and I found him situated in the very spot most favourable to his beloved amusements; the soil was clean, the hills easy, and the downs were checkered with thick copses, that seemed the finest nurseries in nature for a sportman's game. When I entered upon his ornamented demesne, nothing could be more enchanting than the scenery; the ground was finely shaped into hill and vale; the horizon every where bold and romantic, and the hand of art had evidently improved the workmanship of nature with consummate taste; upon the broken declivity stately groves of beech were happily disposed; the lawn was of the finest verdure gently sloping from the house; a rapid river of the purest transparency ran through it, and fell over a rocky channel into a noble lake within view of the mansion; behind this upon the northern and eastern flanks I could discern the tops of very stately trees, that sheltered a

spacious enclosure of pleasure-ground and gardens, with all the delicious accompaniments of hot-houses and conservatories.

It was a scene to seize the imagination with rapture; a poet's language would have run spontaneously into metre at the sight of it: 'What a subject,' said I within myself, 'is here present for those ingenious bards, who have the happy talent of describing Nature in her fairest forms! Oh! that I could plant the delightful author of *The Task* in this very spot! perhaps whilst his eye—*in a fine phrensy rolling*—glanced over this enchanting prospect, he might burst forth into the following, or something like the following rhapsody—'

Blest above men, if he perceives and feels
The blessings he is heir to. He! to whom
His provident forefathers have bequeathed
In this fair district of their native isle
A free inheritance, compact and clear.
How sweet the vivyfying dawn to him,
Who with a fond paternal eye can trace
Beloved scenes, where rivers groves, and lawns
Rise at the touch of his Orphean hand,
And Nature, like a docile child, repays
Her kind disposer's care! Master and friend
Of all that blooms or breathes within the verge
Of this wide-stretcht horizon, he surveys
His upland pastures white with fleecy flocks,
Rich meadows dappled o'er with grazing herds,
And vallies waving thick with golden grain.
Where can the world display a fairer scene?
And what has Nature for the sons of men
Better provided than this happy isle?
Mark! how she's girded by her watery zone,
Whilst all the neighb'ring continent is trench'd
And furrow'd with the ghastly seams of war:
Barriers and forts and arm'd battalions stand
On the fierce confines of each rival state,
Jealous to guard, or eager to invade;
Between their hostile camps a field of blood,
Behind them desolation void and dear,

Where at the summons of the surly drum
The rising and the setting sun reflects
Nought but the gleam of arms, now here, now there
Flashing amain, as the bright phalanx moves:
Wasteful and wide the blank in Nature's map,
And far, far distant where the scene begins
Of human habitation, thinly group'd
Over the meagre earth; for there no youth,
No sturdy peasant, who with limbs and strength
Might fill the gaps of battle, dares approach;
Old age instead, with weak and trembling hand,
Feebly solicits the indignant soil
For a precarious meal, poor at the best.
  Oh, Albion! oh, blest isle, on whose white cliffs
Peace builds her halcyon nest, thou, who, embrac'd
By the uxorious ocean, sit'st secure,
Smiling and gay and crown'd with every wreath,
That Art can fashion or rich Commerce waft
To deck thee like a bride; compare these scenes
With pity not with scorn, and let thy heart,
Not wanton with prosperity, but warm
With grateful adoration, send up praise
To the great Giver—thence thy blessings come.
  The soft luxurious nations will complain
Of thy rude wintry clime, and chide the winds
That ruffle their fine forms; trembling they view
The boisterous barrier that defends thy coast,
Nor dare to pass it till their pilot bird,
The winter-sleeping swallow, points the way;
But envy not their suns, and sigh not thou
For the clear azure of their cloudless skies;
The same strong blast, that beds the knotted oak
Firm in his clay-bound cradle, nerves the arm
Of the stout hind, who fells him to the ground.
These are the manly offspring of our isle;
Their's are the pure delights of rural life,
Freedom their birth-right and their dwelling peace;
The vine, that mantles o'er their cottage roof,
Gives them a shade no tyrant dares to spoil.
  Mark! how the sturdy peasant breasts the storm,
The white snow sleeting o'er his brawny chest;
He heeds it not, but carols as he goes
Some jocund measure or love-ditty, soon
In sprightlier key and happier accent sung
To the kind wench at home, whose ruddy cheeks

Shall thaw the icy winter on his lips,
And melt his frozen features into joy.
But who, that ever heard the hunters shout,
When the shrill fox-hound doubles on the scent,
Which of you, sons and fathers of the chase,
Which of your hardy, bold, adventurous band
Will pine and murmur for Italian skies?
Hark! from the covert-side your game is view'd!
Music, which none but British dryads hear,
Shouts, which no foreign echoes can repeat,
Ring through the hollow wood and sweep the vale.
Now, now, ye joyous sportsmen, ye, whose hearts
Are unison'd to the ecstatic cry
Of the full pack, now give your steeds the rein!
Your's is the day—mine was, and is no more:
Yet, ever as I hear you in the wind,
Though chill'd and hovering o'er my winter hearth,
Forth, like some Greenwich veteran, if chance
The conqu'ring name of *Rodney* meets his ear,
Forth I must come to share the gladd'ning sound,
To show my scars and boast of former feats.
 They say our clime's inconstant, changeful—True!
It gives the lie to all astrology,
Makes the diviner mad, and almost mocks
Philosophy itself; Cameleon-like
Our sky puts on all colours, blushing now,
Now louring like a froward pettish child;
This hour a zephyr, and the next a storm,
Angry and pleas'd by fits—Yet take our clime,
Take it for all in all, and day by day,
Through all the varying seasons of the year,
For the mind's vigour and the body's strength,
Where is its rival?—Beauty is its own:
Not the voluptuous region of the Nile,
Not aromatic India's spicy breath,
Nor evening breeze from Tagus, Rhone, or Loire
Can tinge the maiden cheek with bloom so fresh.
Here too, if exercise and temperance call,
Health shall obey their summons; every fount,
Each rilling stream conveys it to our lips;
In every zephyr we inhale her breath;
The shepherd tracks her in the morning dew,
As o'er the grassy down or to the heath
Streaming with fragrance he conducts his flock.
But oh! defend me from the baneful east,

Screen me ye groves! ye interposing hills,
Rise up and cover me! Agues and rheums,
All Holland's marshes strike me in the gale;
Like Egypt's blight his breath is all alive:
His very dew is poison, honey-sweet,
Teeming with putrefaction; in his fog
The locust and the caterpillar swarm,
And vegetable nature falls before them:
Open, all quarters else, and blow upon me,
But bar that gate, O regent of the winds!
It gives the food that melancholy doats on,
The quick'ner that provokes the slanderer's spleen,
Makes green the eye of Jealousy, and feeds
The swelling gorge of Envy till it bursts:
'Tis now the poet's unpropitious hour;
The student trims his midnight lamp in vain,
And beauty fades upon the painter's eye:
Hang up thy pallet, *Romney!* and convene
The gay companions of thy social board;
Apelles' self would throw his pencil by,
And swear the skies conspir'd against his art.
  But what must Europe's softer climes endure,
Thy coast, Calabria! or the neighbouring isle,
Of ancient Ceres once the fruitful seat?
Where is the bloom of Enna's flowery field,
Mellifluous Hybla, and the golden vale
Of rich Panormus, when the fell *Siroc*,
Hot from the furnace of the Libyan sands,
Breathes all its plagues upon them? Hapless isle,
Why must I call to mind thy past renown?
Is it this desolating blast alone,
That strips thy verdure? Is it in the gulph
Of yawning earthquakes that thy glory sinks?
Or hath the flood that thund'ring Ætna pours
From her convuls'd and flaming entrails whelm'd
In one wide ruin every noble spark
Of pristine virtue, genius, wisdom, wit?
Ah no! the elements are not in fault;
Nature is still the same: 'Tis not the blast
From Afric's burning sands, it is the breath
Of Spain's despotic master lays thee low;
'Tis not alone the quaking earth that reels
Under thy tottering cities, 'tis the fall
Of freedom, 'tis the pit which slavery digs,
That buries every virtue; 'tis the flood

Of superstition, the insatiate fires
Of persecuting zealots that devour thee;
These are the Titans who disturb thy peace,
This is thy grave, O Sicily! the hell
Deeper than that, which heathen poets feign'd
Under thy burning mountain, that engulphs
Each grace and every muse, arts, arms, and all
That elegance inspires or fame records.
  Return, ye victims of caprice and spleen,
Ye summer friends, daughters more fitly call'd
Than sons of Albion, to your native shores
Return, self-exiles as you are, and face
This only tyrant which our isle endures,
This hoary-headed terror of the year,
Stern Winter—What, tho' in his icy chains
Imprison'd for a time e'en Father Thames
Checks his imperial current and beholds
His wealthy navigation in arrest,
Yet soon, like Perseus on his winged steed
Forth from the horns of the celestial Ram,
Spring, his deliverer, comes—down, down at once
The frighted monster dives into the earth,
Or bursts asunder with a hideous crash,
As thro' his stubborn ribs th' all-conquering sun
Drives his refulgent spear: the ransomed floods,
As at a signal, rise and clap their hands;
The mountains shout for joy; the laughing hours
Dance o'er the eastern hills, and in the lap
Of marriageable earth their odours fling,
Wreaths of each vernal flowret, whilst the choir
Of feather'd songsters make the groves resound
With Nature's hymenæals—all is joy.
  Hail, bounteous Spring! primæval season, hail!
Nature's glad herald! who to all the tribes
That link creation's scale, from lordly man
To the small insect, that eludes his sight,
Proclaims that universal law of life,
The first great blessing of the new born world,
'Increase and multiply!'—No sooner heard
By sultry climes, than straight the rebel sun
Mounts his right throne, and o'er the withering earth
Scatters his bold Titanian fires around,
And cancels Heaven's high edict; Nature feels
Quick growth and quick decay; the verdant scene
Glitters awhile and vanishes at once.

Not such the tints that Albion's landscape wears,
Her mantle dipt in never-fading green,
Keeps fresh its vernal honours thro' the year;
Soft dew-drops nurse her rose's maiden bloom,
And genial showers refresh her vivid lawn.
Thro' other lands indignant of delay
Spring travels homeward with a stranger's haste;
Here he reposes, dwells upon the scene
Enamour'd, native here prolongs his stay,
And when his fiery successor at length
Warns him from hence, with ling'ring step, and slow,
And many a stream of falling tears he parts,
Like one, whom surly creditors arrest
In a fond consort's arms, and force him thence.
But now, my Muse, to humbler themes descend!
'Tis not for me to paint the various gifts
Which freedom, science, art, or fav'ring Heav'n
Shower on my native isle; quench'd are the fires
Which young ambition kindled in my breast;
Morning and noon of life's short day are past,
And what remains for me ere night comes on,
But one still hour perchance of glimmering eve
For sober contemplation? Come, my Muse,
Come then! and as from some high mountain's top
The careful shepherd counts his straggling flock,
So will we take one patient last survey
Of this unquiet, babbling, anxious world;
We'll scan it with a calm but curious eye;
Silence and solitude are all our own;
Their's is the tumult, their's the throng; my soul
Is fitted to the task—for, oh fair truth!
Yet I am thine, on thy perennial base
I will inscribe my monumental verse;
And tho' my heart with kindred ardour beats
To every brave compatriot, yet no ties,
Tho' dignified with friendship's specious name,
Shall shackle my free mind, nor any space
Less than the world's wide compass bound my love.
No more; for now the hospitable gates
Of wealthy Attalus invite their guest;
I paus'd and look'd, and yielding to the wish
That Fortune had bequeath'd me such a lot,
A momentary sigh surpris'd my heart:
Flocks, herds, and fields of golden grain, of these
I envied not the owner; but I saw

The curling smoke from cottages ascend,
And heard the merry din of childish sports;
I saw the peasant stooping to his plough
And whistling time away; I met a form
Fair as a fabled nymph; Nature had spread
Her toilet, Health her handmaid dealt the bloom,
Simplicity attir'd her; by the copse
Skirting the horn-beam row, where violets bud
And the first primrose opens to the spring,
With her fond lover arm in arm she walk'd,
Not with the stealthy step and harlot leer
Of guilty assignation, nor unnerv'd
By midnight feast or revel, but in prime
Of youth and health and beauty's genuine glow:
I mark'd the conscious look of honest truth,
That greets the passenger with eye direct,
Nor fears nor meditates surprise; my heart
Yearn'd at the sight, and as they pass'd I cried—
'Why was it not my fortune to have said
'Go, and be happy?'—On a rising slope
Full to the south the stately mansion stands,
Where dwells the master of this rich domain;
Plain and of chaste proportion the device,
Not libell'd and bedawb'd with tawdry frize
Or lac'd pilaster, patch'd with refuse scraps,
Like that fraternal pile on Thames's bank,
Which draws its title not its taste from Greece.
Happy! if there in rural peace he dwells,
Untortur'd by ambition, and enjoys
An eye for nature and a heart for man,

NUMBER LVIII.

Οὐκ ἔσαμαι πλουτεῖν οὔτ' εὔχομαι, ἀλλά μοι εἴη
Ζῆν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀλίγων μηδὲν ἔχοντι κακόν.

THEOGNIS.

'I ask not wealth, let me enjoy
A humble lot without annoy!'

UPON my arrival at the house I was shown into a small room in the base story, which the owner of this fine place usually occupied, and in which he now received me: here I had been but a very few minutes before he proposed to show me the house, and for that purpose conducted me up stairs to the grand apartment, and from thence made the entire tour, without excepting any one of the bed-chambers, offices, or even closets in the house. I cannot say my friend Attalus consulted times and seasons in choosing so early a moment after my arrival for parading me about in this manner; some of the apartments were certainly very splendid; a great deal of rich furniture and many fine pictures solicited my notice, but the fatigue of so ill-timed a perambulation disabled me from expressing that degree of admiration, which seemed to be expected on this occasion, and which on any other I should have been forward to bestow: I was sorry for this, because I believe he enjoyed little other pleasure in the possession of his house, besides this of showing it; but it happened to my host, as it does too frequently to the owners of fine places, that he missed

the tribute of flattery by too great eagerness in exacting it.

It appeared to me that Attalus was no longer the gay lively man he was formerly; there was a gloom upon his countenance and an inquietude in his manner, which seemed to lay him under a constraint that he could not naturally get rid of: time hung heavy on our hands till the hour of dinner, and it was not without regret I perceived he had arranged his family meals upon the fashionable system of London hours, and at the distance of two hundred miles from the capital had by choice adopted those very habits, which nothing but the general custom of late assemblies and long sittings in parliament can excuse upon the plea of necessity: it was now the midst of summer, which made the absurdity of such a disposition of our time more glaring, for whilst the best hours of the afternoon were devoted to the table, all exercise and enjoyment out of doors were either to be given up, or taken only in the meridian heat of the day. I discovered a further bad consequence of these habits upon society and good fellowship, for such of the neighbouring gentry, who had not copied his example, were deterred from making him any visits, not presuming to disturb him at unsuitable hours, and yet not able, without a total disarrangement of their own comforts, to make their time conform to his. Attalus himself, I must acknowledge, both saw and confessed the bad system he was upon; he found himself grown unpopular amongst his country neighbours on this very score, and was piqued by their neglect of him: 'it was a villainous custom,' he observed, 'and destructive both of health and pleasure: but all people of fashion dined at five, and what could he do? he must live as other great families lived; if, indeed, he was a mere private gen-

tleman, he might do as he liked best.' If it be so, thought I, this man's great fortune is an incumbrance to him: if it robs him of health and pleasure, what does it give him, nay, what can it give him, in compensation for the loss of such blessings? if fashion takes away from Attalus the liberty of doing what he best likes, and is best for him, I must have been mistaken in supposing independence was the result of affluence: I suspect there are not all the advantages in his condition which I supposed there were—I will examine this more narrowly.

The next morning, after a late breakfast, the consequence I had foreseen ensued, for we were advanced into the hottest hours of the day, when Attalus, being impatient to show me the beauties of his park and grounds, gave orders for the equipages and horses to be made ready, and we were to set out upon the survey in a burning sun. When the train was in waiting at the door, we sallied forth, but here a discussion began, in which so many things required a new arrangement, that a long stop was put to our march, whilst the scrutinizing eye of Attalus was employed in a minute examination of every thing appertaining to the cavalry and carriages: the horses were wrong harnessed, they were to be changed from the off-side to the near-side, saddles were to be altered, and both groom and coachman were heartily recommended to repeated damnation for their stupidity and inattention.—'Never any man was so plagued with rascally servants as I am,' cried Attalus; 'they are the curse and vexation of my life; I wish I could live without them; no man can be happy, who has to do with them.'—Is it so? said I within myself, then I have the advantage over you in that respect, for I have but one man and one horse, and both are always ready at a moment's warning.

I mounted a phaëton with Attalus, and we set forward in a broiling day: my conductor immediately began to vent his angry humour upon the wrong object, and plied his thong at such a furious rate upon his unoffending horses, that the high mettled animals so resented the unjust correction, that after struggling and kicking under the lash for some time, one of them reared across the pole of the chaise, and snapped it: this produced a storm of passion more violent than the first, and though it was evident the servant had put the horses on their proper sides at first, the fault was charged upon him with vehement imprecations, and this produced a second halt longer and more disagreeable than our setting out had been: our purpose, however, was not to be defeated, and we must positively proceed: Attalus was not in a humour to submit with patience to disappointments, so that having ordered two of his servants to dismount, we took their horses and set off upon our tour; the beauties of nature were before us, but that serenity of mind, which should ever accompany the contemplation of those beauties, was wanting; Attalus was one of Fortune's spoilt children, and his temper, grown irritable by indulgence and humoursome by prosperity, had lost its relish for simplicity, and was wholly given up to a silly passion for ostentation and parade; he immediately began to harangue upon the many evil qualities of servants, a topic at the best unedifying and commonly most disgusting to the hearers; he bewailed his own ill-fortune in that respect very bitterly, and so much of the way passed off before this philippic was concluded, that I began to think I had been carried out for no better purpose than to hear a declamation in the open air: I brought him at last to a stop, by observing, he had a paradise about him, and that it was a pity his vexations did

not suffer him to enjoy it—Upon this hint he seemed to recollect himself, and proceeded to expatiate upon his own improvements, pointing out to me what he had done, and what he had more in mind to do, if his overseer had obeyed his instructions, and proper people had been found to execute his designs.

I took notice of a group of neat cottages, which had a very picturesque and pleasing appearance, for they were deliciously situated, and had all the air, as I observed, of happy habitations—'No matter for that,' replied Attalus, 'down they must all come, for they are cruelly in my eye, and I purpose to throw all that hill into wilderness with plantations of pine, where you see the rock and broken ground, which will be a bold and striking contrast to the ornamented grounds about it—I am surprised,' added he, 'you can see any beauty in those paltry huts.'—Before I could make reply, an old peasant had approached us, and humbly inquired of Attalus, when he was to be dislodged from his cottage—'I have ordered the workmen to take it down next week,' said he, 'the season is favourable for your removal, and you must seek out elsewhere.' The decree was heard without an effort to reply; a sigh was all the plea the poor man offered, and with that sigh he sent a look to Heaven that in its passage rent my heart: I determined to be gone next morning.

We proceeded in our circuit till we were crossed by a high enclosure, which awkwardly enough separated a pasture of about three acres, in which was a brick-kiln too conspicuously placed not to annoy the sight, and at that very moment too furiously employed in the act of duty, not to be excessively offensive to the smell; we found ourselves involved in columns of thick smoke, which were not of the most grateful odour in the world; I confess I was not a little surprised at the location of this flaming

nuisance, and as we were making our way through the smothering cloud, remarked to Attalus that ornament must give place to use.—'I brought you hither,' says he, 'purposely to show you how I am treated by a surly obstinate fellow in my neighbourhood, who has not another foot of land in the world, but this cursed patch of ground, and which the rascal keeps on purpose to spite me, though I have bidden three times the value of it: indeed, it is indispensably necessary to me, as you may well believe by the annoyance it produces in his hands: I have tried all means to get it from him, rough and smooth, and if a prosecution would have laid against it, I would have driven him out of it by the expenses of a suit; but all to no purpose; I am so tormented by the fellow's obstinacy, and my comforts are so sacrificed by the nuisance, that I have no longer any enjoyment in my place; nay, I have stopped most of my works, and discharged my labourers; for what signifies carrying on improvements, when I can no longer live in my house with that cursed brick-kiln for ever in my eye, and with little intermission, in my nostrils also?'

A new theme of discontent was now started, which the unhappy Attalus pursued with heavy complaints as we travelled down a stream of smoke, which seemed as if maliciously to pursue us, determined not to quit its execrator, till he left off his execrations; at last they both ceased in the same moment and parted by consent. As soon as Attalus desisted from his invectives, I took up my reflections, and if a wish could have purchased his possessions, encumbered with the vexations of their owner, I would not have taken them at the price. Down sunk the vision of prosperity; swifter than the shifting of a play-house scene vanished all the enchanting prospect; a naked lodge in a warren

with content had been more enviable in my eye than his palace haunted with disgust; I saw Attalus, the veriest darling of Fortune, sickening and surfeited with prosperity; peevish with his servants, unsociable to his neighbours, a slave to fashions, which he obeyed and disapproved, unfeeling to the poor, tired with the splendour of a magnificent house and possessing an extensive territory, yet sighing after a small nook of land, the want of which poisoned all his comforts.—And what then are riches? said I within myself. The disturbers of human happiness; the corrupters of human nature. I remember this Attalus in his youth; I knew him intimately at school and college; he was of a joyous, social temper; placid, accommodating, full of resource; always in good humour with himself and the world, and he had a heart as liberal and compassionate as it was sincere and open; this great estate was then out of sight; it must be this estate then, which has wrought the unhappy change in his manners and disposition; and if riches operate thus upon a nature like his, where is the wonder if we meet so many wretches who derive their wants from their abundance.

How beautiful is the maxim of *Menander!*—Ψχὴν ἔειν δεῖ πλουσιάν—enrich your mind! 'Riches,' says the same elegant and moral dramatist, 'are no better than an actor's wardrobe,' the paltry tinsel, that enables him to glitter for a few minutes in a counterfeited character—

> To fret and strut his hour upon the stage,
> And then be heard no more.

In another place he says, 'they transform a man into a different kind of being from what he was originally'—

Εἰς ἕτερον ἦθος, οὐκ ἐν ᾧ τὸ πρόσθεν ἦν.

and then concludes with that Attic simplicity, so neatly turned and elegantly expressed as to distance all translation.

Κρεῖττον γάρ ἐστω, ἃ σκόπη τὶς κατὰ λόγον,
Μὴ πολλ' ἀηδῶς, ὀλίγα δ' ἡδέως ἔχειν.

Better to choose, if you would choose the best,
A cheerful poverty, than wealth unblest.

NUMBER LIX.

Omnes eòdem cogimur; omnium
Versatur urnâ, serius, ocyus
Sors exitura.

HORAT. CARM. 2, 3, 25.

All to the same last home are bound;
Time's never-weary wheel runs round;
And life at longest or at shortest date
Snaps like a thread betwixt the shears of Fate.

I REMEMBER to have been told of a certain humourist, who set up a very singular doctrine upon the subject of death, asserting that he had discovered it to be not a necessary and inevitable event, but an act of choice and volition; he maintained that he had certain powers and resources within himself sufficient to support him in his resolution of holding out against the summons of death, till he became weary of life; and he pledged himself to his friends, that he would in his own person give experimental proof of his hypothesis.

What particular address death made use of, when this ingenious gentleman was prevailed upon to step out of the world, I cannot take upon myself to

say, but certain it is, that in some weak moment he was over persuaded to lay his head calmly on the pillow and surrender up his breath.

Though an event, so contrary to the promise he had given, must have been a staggering circumstance to many, who were interested in the success of his experiment, yet I see good reason to suspect that his hypothesis is not totally discredited, and that he has yet some surviving disciples, who are acting such a part in this world as nobody would act but upon a strong presumption, that they shall not be compelled to go out of it, and enter upon another.

Mortality, it must be owned, hath means of providing for the event of death, though none have yet been discovered of preventing it. Religion and virtue are the great physicians of the soul; patience and resignation are the nursing-mothers of the human heart in sickness and in sorrow; conscience can smooth the pillow under an aching head, and Christian hope administers a cordial even in our last moments, that lulls the agonies of death. But where is the need of these, had this discovery been established? Why call in physicians, and resort to cordials, if we can hold danger at a distance without their help? I am to presume, therefore, that every human being, who makes his own will his master, and goes all lengths in gratifying his guilty passions without restraint, must rely upon his own will for keeping him out of all danger of future trouble, or he would never commit himself so confidentially and entirely to a master, which can give him no security in return for his blind obedience and devotion. All persons of this description I accordingly set down in the lump, as converts to the doctrine of the learned gentleman who advanced the

interesting discovery above-mentioned, but who unluckily missed some step in the proof, that was to have established it.

To what lengths of credulity they may really go, is hard to say, but some such hopes as these must buoy them up, because I cannot think that any man would be wilfully wicked, fraudulent, perfidious, avaricious, cruel, or whatever else is detestable in the eye of God, if he saw death, his messenger, at the door; and I am even unwilling to believe, that he would be wantonly guilty, was he only convinced, that when death shall come to the door, he must be obliged to admit him: for if this be so, and if admission may not be denied, then hath death a kind of visitorial power over us, which makes him not a guest to be invited at our pleasure, but a lord and master of the house, to enter it as his own; and, which is worst of all, without giving notice to us to provide for his entertainment. What man is such a fool in common life, as to take up his abode in a tenement, of which he is sure to be dispossessed, and yet neglect to prepare himself against a surprise, which he is subject to every moment of the day and night? We are not apt to overlook our own interests and safety in wordly concerns, and, therefore, when the soul is given up to sin, I must suspect some error in the brain.

What shall I say to persuade the inconsiderate that they exist upon the precarious sufferance of every moment that passes over them in succession? How shall I warn a giddy fool not to play his antick tricks, and caper on the very utmost edge of a precipice? Who will guide the reeling drunkard in his path, and teach him to avoid the grave-stones of his fellow-sots, set up by death as marks and signals to apprise him of his danger? If the voice of na-

ture, deposing to the evidence of life's deceitful tenure from the beginning of things to the moment present, will neither gain audience nor belief, what can the moralist expect?

Which of all those headlong voluptuaries, who seem in such haste to get to the end of life, is possessed of the art of prolonging it at pleasure? To whom has the secret been imparted? Either they are deceived by a vain hope of evading death, or there is something in a life of dissipation not worth preserving. I am astonished at the stupidity of any man, who can deny himself the gratification of conscious integrity. The proud man must be a consummate blockhead, to take such wearisome pains for a little extorted flattery, of the most servile sort, and overlook the ready means of gaining general respect upon the noblest terms. Is it not an abuse of language, and an insult to common sense, for a silly fellow to announce himself to the world as a man of pleasure, when there is not an action in his life but leaves a sting behind it, to belie the character he professes? Can one fellow-creature find amusement in tormenting another? Is it possible there can be a recreation in malice, when it slanders the innocent; in fraud, when it cheats the unsuspecting? in perfidy, when it betrays a benefactor? If any being, who does me wrong, will justify himself against the wrong, by confessing that he takes delight in injury, I will own to one instance of human depravity, which, till that shall happen, I will persist to hope is not in existence. The fact is, that all men have that respect for justice, that they attempt to shelter their very worst actions under its defence; and even those contemptible pilferers of reputation, who would be as much unknown by their names, as they are by the concealment of them, qualify, I am persuaded, the

dirty deed they are about by some convenient phantom of offence in the character they assault; even their hands cannot be raised to strike without prefacing the blow by saying to themselves—This man deserves to die. Foolish wretches, what computation must they make of life, who devote so great a portion of it to miseries and reproaches of their own creating!

Let a rational creature for once talk common sense to himself, and, if no better words than the following occur to his thoughts, let him make use of them: he is heartily welcome to the loan.

'I know there is a period in approach, when I must encounter an enemy to my life, whose power is irresistible. This is a very serious thing for me to reflect upon, and, knowing it to be a truth infallible, I am out of hope, that I can so far forget the terms of my existence, as totally to expel it from my thoughts. If I could foresee the precise hour, when this enemy will come, I would provide against it as well as I am able, and fortify my mind to receive him with such complacency as I could muster. But of this hour I have, alas! no foresight; it may be this moment, or the next, or years may intervene before it comes to pass: it behoves me, then, to be upon my guard. He may approach in terrors, that agonize me to think of; he may seize my soul in the commission of some dreadful act, and transport it to a place whose horrors have no termination: I will not then commit that dreadful act, because I will not expose myself to that dreadful punishment: it is in my own choice to refrain from it, and I am not such a desperate fool to make choice of misery: if I act with this precaution, will he still appear in the shape of terror? Certainly he will not; nor can he in justice transport me to a place of punishment, when I have committed no-

thing to deserve it. Whither then will he convey me? To the mansions of everlasting happiness. Where are my fears? What is now become of his terrors? He is my passport, my conductor, my friend: I will welcome him with embraces: I will smile upon him with gratitude, and accompany him with exultation.'

NUMBER LX.

I WOULD wish no man to deceive himself with opinions, which he has not thoroughly reflected upon in his solitary hours. Till he has communed with his own heart in his chamber, it will be dangerous to commit himself to its impulses amidst the distractions of society. In solitude he will hear another voice than he has been used to hear in the colloquial scenes of life; for conscience, though mute as the ancient chorus in the bustle of the drama, will be found a powerful speaker in soliloquy. If I could believe that any man in these times had seriously and deliberately reasoned himself into an absolute contempt of things sacred, I should expect that such a being should uniformly act up to his principles in all situations, and, having thrown aside all the restraints of religion, should discharge from his mind all those fears, apprehensions, and solicitudes, that have any connection with the dread of a futurity. But, without knowing what passes in the private thoughts of men, who profess these daring notions, I cannot help observing, that, if noisy clamour be a mark of cowardice, they also

have the symptoms strongly upon them of belying their own conscience. They are bold in the crowd, and loudest in the revels of the feast; there they can echo the insult, dash the ridicule in the very face of Heaven, and stun their consciences in the roar of the carousal.

Let me picture to myself a man of this description, surprised into unexpected solitude after the revels of an evening, where he has been the wit of the company, at the expense of decency and religion; here his triumphs are over; the plaudits of his comrades no longer encourage him; the lights of the feast are extinguished, and he is surrendered to darkness and reflection. Place him in the midst of a desert heath, a lonesome traveller in some dark tempestuous night, and let the elements subscribe their terrors to encounter this redoubted champion—

> Who durst defy the Omnipotent.

If consistency be the test of a man's sincerity, he ought now to hold the same language of defiance, and with undaunted spirit cry out to the elements—'Do your worst, ye blind tools of chance! Since there can be neither intelligence nor direction in your rage, I set you at nought. You may, indeed, subject me to some bodily inconvenience, but you can raise no terrors in my mind, for I have said you have no master. There is no hand to point the lightning, and the stroke of its flash is directed to no aim. If it smites the oak, it perishes; if it penetrates my breast, it annihilates my existence, and there is no soul within me to resume it. What have I to fear? The worst you threaten is a momentary extinction, without pain or struggle; and as I only wait on earth till I am weary of life, the most you can do is to forestall me in the natural

rights of suicide. I have lived in this world as the only world I have to live in, and have done all things therein as a man who acts without account to an hereafter. The moral offices, as they are called, I have sometimes regarded as a system of worldly wisdom, and, where they have not crossed my purposes, or thwarted my pleasures, I have occasionally thought fit to comply with them. My proper pride, in some instances, and self interest in others, have dissuaded me from the open violation of a trust, for it is inconvenient to be detected; and though I acknowledge no remonstrances from within, upon the score of infamy, I do not like the clamours of the crowd. As for those mercenary inducements, which a pretended revelation holds forth as lures for patience under wrongs, and tame resignation to misfortune, I regard them as derogatory to my nature; they sink the very character of virtue by meanly tendering a reversionary happiness, as the bribe for practising it: the doctrine, therefore, of a future life, in which the obedient are to expect rewards, and the disobedient are threatened with punishments, confutes itself by its own internal weakness, and is a system so sordid in its principle, that it can only be calculated to dupe us into mental slavery, and frighten us out of that generous privilege, which is our universal birthright, the privilege of dismissing ourselves out of existence, when we are tired with its conditions.'

Had I fabricated this language for infidelity, with the purpose of stamping greater detestation upon its audacity, I had rather bear the blame of having overcharged the character, than to be able, as I now am, to point out a recent publication, which openly avows this shameless doctrine. But as I do not wish to help any anonymous blasphemer into notice, let the toleration of the times be his shelter,

and their contempt his answer! In the mean time I will take leave to oppose to it a short passage from a tract, lately translated into English, entitled 'Philosophical and Critical Enquiries concerning Christianity,' by Mr. Bonnet, of Geneva; a work well deserving an attentive perusal:—

'Here I invite that reader, who can elevate his mind to the contemplation of the ways of Providence, to meditate with me on the admirable methods of divine wisdom in the establishment of Christianity; a religion, the universality of which was to comprehend all ages, all places, nations, ranks, and situations in life; a religion, which made no distinction between the crowned head and that of the lowest subject; formed to disengage the heart from terrestrial things, to ennoble, to refine, to sublime the thoughts and affections of man; to render him conscious of the dignity of his nature, the importance of his end, to carry his hopes even to eternity, and thus associate him with superior intelligences; a religion, which gave every thing to the spirit and nothing to the flesh; which called its disciples to the greatest sacrifices, because men, who are taught to fear God alone, can undergo the severest trials; a religion, in short, to conclude my weak conceptions on so sublime a subject, which was the perfection or completion of natural law, the science of the truly wise, the refuge of the humble, the consolation of the wretched; so majestic in its simplicity, so sublime in its doctrine, so great in its object, so astonishing in its effects. I have endeavoured, says this excellent author in his conclusion, to explore the inmost recesses of my heart, and having discovered no secret motive there which should induce me to reject a religion so well calculated to supply the defects of my reason, to comfort me under affliction, and to advance

the perfection of my nature, I receive this religion as the greatest blessing Heaven in its goodness could confer upon mankind; and I should still receive it with gratitude, were I to consider it only as the very best and most perfect system of practical philosophy.'—BONNET.

That man, hurried away by the impetuosity of his passions, is capable of strange and monstrous irregularities, I am not to learn; even vanity, and the mean ambition of being eccentric, may draw out very wild expressions from him in his unguarded hours; but that any creature should be deliberately blasphemous, and reason himself, if I may so express it, into irrationality, surpasses my conception, and is a species of desperation for which I have no name.

If the voice of universal nature, the experience of all ages, the light of reason, and the immediate evidence of my senses, cannot awaken me to a dependence upon my God, a reverence for his religion, and an humble opinion of myself, what a lost creature am I!

Where can we meet a more touching description of God's omnipresence and providence than in the 139th Psalm? And how can I better conclude this paper, than by the following humble attempt at a translation of that most beautiful address to the Creator of mankind.

PSALM CXXXIX.

1 O Lord, who by thy mighty power,
Hast search'd me out in every part,
Thou know'st each thought at every hour,
Or e'er it rises to my heart.

2 In whatsoever path I stray,
Where'er I make my bed at night,
No maze can so conceal my way,
But I stand open to thy sight.

3 Nor can my tongue pronounce a word,
How secretly soe'er 'twere said,
But in thine ear it shall be heard,
And by thy judgement shall be weigh'd.

4 In every particle I see
The fashion of thy plastic hand:
5 Knowledge too excellent for me,
Me, wretched man, to understand.

6 Whither, ah! whither then can I
From thine all present spirit go?
7 To Heav'n? 'tis there thou'rt thron'd on high,
To Hell? 'tis there thou rul'st below.

8 Lend me, O Morning, lend me wings!
On the first beam of op'ning day
To the last wave, that ocean flings
On the world's shore, I'll flit away.

9 Ah fool! if there I meant to hide,
For thou, my God, shalt reach me there,
Ev'n there thy hand shall be my guide,
Thy right hand hold me in its care.

10 Again, if calling out for night,
I bid it shroud me from thine eyes,
Thy presence makes a burst of light,
And darkness to the centre hies.

11 Nay, darkness cannot intervene
Betwixt the universe and Thee;
Light or no light, there's nought I ween,
God self-illumin'd cannot see.

12 Thine is each atom of my frame;
Thy fingers strung my inmost reins,
E'en in the womb, or e'er I came
To life, and caus'd a mother's pains.

13 Oh! what a fearful work is man!
A wonder of creative art!
My God, how marvellous thy plan!
'Tis character'd upon my heart.

14 My very bones, tho' deep conceal'd
And buried in this living clay,

Are to thy searching sight reveal'd
As clear as in the face of day.

15 That eye, which thro' creation darts,
My substance, yet imperfect, scann'd,
And in thy books my embryo parts
Were written and their uses plann'd.

16 Ere Time to shape and fashion drew
These ductile members one by one,
Into man's image ere they grew,
Thy great prospective work was done.

17 O God! how gracious, how divine,
How dear thy counsels to my soul!
Myriads to myriads could I join,
They'd fail to number up the whole.

18 I might as well go tell the sand,
And count it over grain by grain:
No; in thy presence let me stand,
And walking with my God remain.

19 Wilt thou not, Lord, avenge the good?
Shall not blasphemers be destroy'd?
Depart from me, ye men of blood,
Hence murderers, and my sight avoid!

20 Loud are their hostile voices heard
To take thy sacred name in vain:
21 Am I not griev'd? Doth not each word
Wring my afflicted heart with pain?

Doth not my zealous soul return
Hatred for hatred to thy foes?
22 Yea, Lord! I feel my bosom burn,
As tho' against my peace they rose.

23 Try me, dread Power! and search my heart;
Lay all its movements in thy view;
Explore it to its inmost part,
Nor spare it, if 'tis found untrue.

24 If devious from thy paths I stray,
And wickedness be found with me,
Oh! lead me back the better way
To everlasting life and Thee.

NUMBER LXI.

The deistical writers, who would fain persuade us that the world was in possession of as pure a system of morality before the introduction of Christianity as since, affect to make a great display of the virtues of many eminent heathens, particularly of the philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and some others.

When they set up these characters as examples of perfection, which human nature with the aids of revelation either has not attained to, or not exceeded, they put us upon an invidious task, which no man would voluntarily engage in, and challenge us to discuss a question, which, if thoroughly agitated, cannot fail to strip the illustrious dead of more than half the honours which the voice of ages has agreed to give them.

It is, therefore, to be wished, that they had held the argument to its general terms, and shown us where that system of ethics is to be found, which they are prepared to bring into comparison with the moral doctrines of Christ. This I take to be the fair ground whereon the controversy should have been decided, and here it would infallibly have been brought to issue; but they know their weapons better than to trust them in so close a conflict.

The maxims of some heathen philosophers, and the moral writings of Plato, Cicero, and Seneca, contain many noble truths, worthy to be held in veneration by posterity; and if the deist can from these produce a system of morality as pure and perfect as that which claims its origin from divine re-

velation, he will prove that God gave to man a faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong with such correctness, that his own immediate revelation added no lights to those, which the powers of reason had already discovered. Let us grant, therefore, for a moment, that Christ's religion revealed to the world no new truths in morality, nor removed any old errors, and what triumph accrues to the deist by the admission? The most he gains is to bring reason to a level with revelation, as to its moral doctrines; in so doing he dignifies man's nature, and shows how excellent a faculty God gave his creatures in their original formation, to guide their judgements and control their actions; but will this diminish the importance of revealed religion? Certainly not, unless he can prove one or both of the following positions; viz.

First, That the moral tenets of Christianity either fall short of, or run counter to, the moral tenets of natural religion; or,

Secondly, That Christ's mission was nugatory and superfluous, because the world was already in possession of as good a system of morality as he imparted to mankind.

As to the first, I believe it has never been attempted by any heathen or deistical advocate to convict the Gospel system of false morality, or to allege that it is short and defective in any one particular duty, when compared with that system which the world was possest of without its aid. No man, I believe, has controverted its truths, though many have disputed its discoveries. No man has been hardy enough to say of any of its doctrines—*This we ought not to practise;* though many have been vain enough to cry out—*All this we knew before.*—Let us leave this position, therefore, for the present, and pass to the next, viz. Whether Christ's mis-

sion was nugatory and superfluous, because the world already knew as much morality as he taught them.

This will at once be answered, if the Gospel assertion be established, that life and immortality were brought to light. We need not adduce any other of the mysteries of revelation; we may safely rest the question here, and say with the apostle to the Gentile world—*Behold! I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed: in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* Mark to how short an issue the argument is now brought! Either the apostle is not warranted in calling this a *mystery*, or the deist is not warranted in calling Christ's mission nugatory and superfluous.

It now rests with the deist to produce, from the writings and opinions of mankind antecedent to Christianity, such a revelation of things to come, as can fully anticipate the Gospel revelation, or else to admit with the apostle that a *mystery was shown;* and if the importance of this *mystery* be admitted, as it surely must, the importance of Christ's mission can no longer be disputed; and though revelation shall have added nothing to the heathen system of morality, still it does not follow that it was superfluous and nugatory.

Let the deist resort to the heathen Elysium and the realms of Pluto, in search of evidences, to set in competition with the Christian revelation of a future state; let him call in Socrates, Plato, and as many more as he can collect in his cause; it is but lost labour to follow the various tracks of reason through the pathless ocean of conjecture, always wandering, though with different degrees of deviation. What does it avail, though Seneca had taught as good

morality as Christ himself preached from the Mount? How does it affect revealed religion, though Tully's Offices were found superior to Saint Paul's Epistles? Let the deist indulge himself in declaiming on the virtues of the heathen heroes and philosophers; let him ransack the annals of the Christian world, and present us with legions of crusaders drenched in human blood, furious fanatics rushing on each other's throats, for the distinction of a word, massacring whole nations, and laying nature waste for a metaphysical quibble, it touches not religion; let him array a host of persecuting Inquisitors, with all their torturing engines, the picture, indeed, is terrible, but who will say it is the picture of Christianity.

When we consider the ages which have elapsed since the introduction of Christianity, and the events attending its propagation, how wonderful is the history we contemplate! we see a mighty light spreading over all mankind, from one spark kindled in an obscure corner of the earth. An humble persecuted teacher preaches a religion of peace, of forgiveness of injuries, of submission to temporal authorities, of meekness, piety, brotherly love, and universal benevolence; he is tried, condemned, and executed, for his doctrines; he rises from the tomb, and, breaking down the doors of death, sets open to all mankind the evidence of a life to come, and at the same time points out the sure path to everlasting happiness in that future state. A few unlettered disciples, his adherents and survivors, take up his doctrines, and, going forth amongst the provinces of the Roman empire, then in its zenith, preach a religion to the Gentiles, directly striking at the foundation of the most splendid fabric Superstition ever reared on earth! These Gentiles are not a rude and barbarous race, but men of illuminated minds, acute philoso-

phers, eloquent orators, powerful reasoners, eminent in arts and sciences, and armed with sovereign power. What an undertaking for the teachers of Christianity! What a conflict for a religion, holding forth no temporal allurements! On the contrary, promising nothing but mortification in this world, and referring all hope of a reward for present sufferings, to the unseen glories of a life to come.

The next scene which this review presents to us, shows the followers of Christianity suffering under persecution by the heathen, whom their numbers had alarmed, and who began to tremble for their gods: in the revolution of ages the church becomes triumphant, and, made wanton by prosperity, degenerates from its primitive simplicity, and running into idle controversies and metaphysical schisms, persecutes its seceding brethren with unremitting fury; whilst the Popes, thundering out anathemas and hurling torches from their throne, seem the vicegerents of the furies, rather than of the author of a religion of peace: the present time affords a different view; the temper of the church grown milder, though its zeal less fervent; men of different communions begin to draw nearer to each other; as refinement of manners becomes more general, toleration spreads; we are no longer slaves to the laws of religion, but converts to the reason of it; and being allowed to examine the evidence and foundation of the faith that is in us, we discover that Christianity is a religion of charity, toleration, reason, and peace, enjoining us to 'have compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing; knowing that we are thereunto called, that we should inherit a blessing.'

NUMBER LXII.

DARK and erroneous as the minds of men in general were before the appearance of Christ, no friend to revelation ever meant to say, that all the gross and glaring absurdities of the heathen system, as vulgarly professed, were universally adopted, and that no thinking man amongst them entertained better conceptions of God's nature and attributes, juster notions of his superintendance and providence, purer maxims of morality, and more elevated expectations of a future state, than are to be found in the extravagant accounts of their established theology. No thinking man could seriously subscribe his belief to such fabulous and chimerical legends; and, indeed, it appears that opinions were permitted to pass without censure, very irreconcileable to the popular faith, and great latitude given to speculation in their reasonings upon natural religion; and what can be more gratifying to philanthropy than to trace these efforts of right reason, which redound to the honour of man's nature, and exhibit to our view the human understanding, unassisted by the lights of revelation, and supported only by its natural powers, emerging from the darkness of idolatry, and breaking forth into the following description of the Supreme Being, which is faithfully translated from the fragment of an ancient Greek tragic poet:—

'Let not mortal corruption mix with your idea of God, nor think of him as of a corporeal being, such as thyself; he is inscrutable to man, now ap-

pearing like fire, implacable in his anger; now in thick darkness, now in the flood of waters; now he puts on the terrors of a ravening beast, of the thunder, the winds, the lightning, of conflagrations, of clouds: him the seas obey, the savage rocks, the springs of fresh water, and the rivers that flow along their winding channels; the earth herself stands in awe of him; the high tops of the mountains, the wide expanse of the cærulean ocean tremble at the frown of their Lord and Ruler.'

This is a strain in the sublime style of the Psalmist, and similar ideas of the Supreme Being may be collected from the remains of various Heathen writers.

Antiphanes, the Socratic philosopher, says, 'That God is the resemblance of nothing upon earth, so that no conception can be derived from any effigy or likeness of the Author of the Universe.'

Xenophon observes, 'That a Being, who controuls and governs all things, must needs be great and powerful, but being by his nature invisible, no man can discern what form or shape he is of.'

Thales, being asked to define the Deity, replied that 'He was without beginning and without end.' Being further interrogated, 'If the actions of men could escape the intelligence of God?' he answered, 'No, nor even their thoughts.'

Philemon, the comic poet, introduces the following question and answer in a dialogue: 'Tell me, I beseech you, what is your conception of God?'—'As of a Being, who, seeing all things, is himself unseen.'

Menander says, that 'God, the lord and father of all things, is alone worthy of our humble adoration, being at once the maker and the giver of all blessings.'

Melanippides, a writer also of comedy, introduces

this solemn invocation to the Supreme Being, 'Hear me, O Father, whom the whole world regards with wonder, and adores! to whom the immortal soul of man is precious.'

Euripides, in a strain of great sublimity, exclaims, 'Thee I invoke, the self-created Being, who framed all nature in thy ethereal mould, whom light and darkness, and the whole multitude of the starry train encircle in eternal chorus.'

Sophocles also, in a fragment of one of his tragedies, asserts the unity of the Supreme Being; 'Of a truth there is one, and only one God, the maker of heaven and earth, the sea and all which it contains.'

These selections, to which, however, many others might be added, will serve to show what enlightened ideas were entertained by some of the nature of God. I will next adduce a few passages to show what just conceptions some had formed of God's providence and justice, of the distribution of good and evil in this life, and of the expectation of a future retribution in the life to come.

Ariston, the dramatic poet, hath bequeathed us the following part of a dialogue—

'Take heart; be patient! God will not fail to help the good, and especially those, who are as excellent as yourself; where would be the encouragement to persist in righteousness, unless those, who do well, are eminently to be rewarded for their well-doing?

'I would it were as you say! but I too often see men who square their actions to the rules of rectitude, oppressed with misfortunes; whilst they, who have nothing at heart but their own selfish interest and advantage, enjoy prosperity unknown to us.

'For the present moment it may be so, but we must look beyond the present moment, and await the issue, when this earth shall be dissolved: for to

think that chance governs the affairs of this life, is a notion as false as it is evil, and is the plea which vicious men set up for vicious morals: but be thou sure that the good works of the righteous shall meet a reward, and the iniquities of the unrighteous a punishment; for nothing can come to pass in this world, but by the will and permission of God.'

Epicharmus, the oldest of the comic poets, says, in one of the few fragments which remain of his writings, 'If your life hath been holy, you need have no dread of death, for the spirit of the blest shall exist for ever in heaven.'

Euripides has the following passage: 'If any mortal flatters himself that the sin which he commits, can escape the notice of an avenging Deity, he indulges a vain hope, deceiving himself in a false presumption of impunity, because the divine justice suspends for a time the punishment of his evil actions; but hearken to me ye who say there is no God, and by that wicked infidelity enhance your crimes. There is, there is a God! let the evil doer then account the present hour only as gain, for he is doomed to everlasting punishment in the life to come.'

The Sibylline verses hold the same language, but these I have taken notice of in a former paper.

I reserve myself for one more extract, which I shall recommend to the reader, as the finest, which can be instanced from any Heathen writer, exhibiting the most elevated conceptions of the being and superintendance of one, supreme, all-seeing, ineffable God, and of the existence of a future state of rewards and punishments, by the just distribution of which to the good and evil, all the seeming irregularities of moral justice in this life shall hereafter be set straight; and this, if I mistake not, is the summary of all that natural religion can at-

tain to. The following is a close translation of this famous fragment:—

'Thinkest thou, O Niceratus, that those departed spirits, who are satiated with the luxuries of life, shall escape as if from an oblivious God? the eye of justice is wakeful and all-seeing; and we may truly pronounce that there are two several roads conducting us to the grave; one proper to the just, the other to the unjust; for if just and unjust fare alike, and the grave shall cover both to all eternity —Hence! get thee hence at once! destroy, lay waste, defraud, confound at pleasure! but deceive not thyself; there is a judgement after death, which God, the Lord of all things, will exact, whose tremendous name is not to be uttered by my lips, and he it is who limits the appointed date of the transgressor.'

It is curious to discover sentiments of this venerable sort in the fragment of a Greek comedy, yet certain it is that it has either *Philemon* or *Diphilus* for its author, both writers of the New Comedy and contemporaries. Justin, Clemens, and Eusebius have all quoted it, the former from *Philemon*, both the latter from *Diphilus:* Grotius and Le Clere follow the authority of Justin, and insert it in their collection of *Philemon's* fragments: Hertelius, upon the joint authorities of Clemens and Eusebius gives it to *Diphilus*, and publishes it as such in his valuable and rare remains of the Greek comic writers. I conceive there are now no *data*, upon which criticism can decide for either of these two claimants, and the honour must accordingly remain suspended between them.

Sentences of this sort are certainly very precious reliques, and their preservation is owing to a happy custom, which the Greeks had of marking the margins of their books, opposite to any passage

which particularly struck them, and this mark was generally the letter χ, the initial of χρηστὸν, [useful] and the collection afterwards made of these distinguished passages they called χρηστομάθειαν.

It would be a curious and amusing collation of moral and religious sentences, extracted from Heathen writers, with corresponding texts selected from the Holy Scriptures: Grotius hath done something towards it in his preface to the *Collectanea* of Stobæus; but the quotations already given will suffice to show, in a general point of view, what had been the advances of human reason, before God enlightened the world by his special revelation.

NUMBER LXIII.

If the deist, who contends for the all-sufficiency of natural religion, shall think that in these passages, which I have quoted in the preceding number, he has discovered fresh resources on the part of human reason as opposed to divine revelation, he will find himself involved in a very false conclusion. Though it were in my power to have collected every moral and religious sentence, which has fallen from the pens of the Heathen writers antecedent to Christianity, and although it should thereby appear that the morality of the gospel had been the morality of right reason in all ages of the world, he would still remain as much unfurnished as ever for establishing his favourite position, that the Scriptures reveal nothing more than man's understanding had discovered without their aid. We may therefore console ourselves without scruple, in discovering that the

Heathen world was not immersed in total darkness, and the candid mind, however interested for Christianity, may be gratified with the reflection that the human understanding was not so wholly enslaved, but that in certain instances it could surmount the prejudices of system, and, casting off the shackles of idolatry, argue up to that supreme of all things, which the historian Tacitus emphatically defines, *summum illud et æternum neque mutabile neque interiturum.*

Now when the mind is settled in the proof of One Supreme Being, there are two several modes of reasoning, by which natural religion may deduce the probability of a future state: one of these results from an examination of the human soul, the other from reflecting on the unequal distribution of happiness in the present life.

Every man who is capable of examining his own faculties, must discern a certain power within him, which is neither coeval with, nor dependent upon his body and its members; I mean that power of reflection, which we universally agree to seat in the soul: it is not coeval with the body, because we were not in the use and exercise of it, when we were infants; it is not dependent on it, because it is not subject to the changes which the body undergoes in its passage from the womb to the grave; for instance, it is not destroyed, or even impaired, by amputation of the limbs or members, it does not evaporate by the continual flux and exhalation of the corporeal humours, is not disturbed by motion of the limbs, nor deprived of its powers by their inaction; it is not necessarily involved in the sickness and infirmity of the body, for whilst that is decaying and dissolving away by an incurable disease, the intellectual faculties shall in many cases remain perfect and unimpaired: why, then, should

it be supposed the soul of a man is to die with his body, and accompany it into the oblivious grave, when it did not make its entrance with it into life, nor partook of its decay, its fluctuations, changes, and casualties?

If these obvious reflections upon the nature and properties of the soul, lead to the persuasion of a future state, the same train of reasoning will naturally discover that the condition of the soul in that future state must be determined by the merits or demerits of its antecedent life. It has never been the notion of Heathen or of Deist, that both the good and the evil shall enter upon equal and undistinguished felicity or punishment; no reasoning man could ever conceive that the soul of Nero and the soul of Antoninus in a future state partook of the same common lot; and thus it follows upon the evidence of reason, that the soul of man shall be rewarded or punished hereafter, according to his good or evil conduct here; and this consequence is the more obvious, because it does not appear in the moral government of the world, that any such just and regular distribution of rewards and punishments obtains on this side the grave; a circumstance no otherwise to be reconciled to our suitable conceptions of Divine justice, than by referring things to the final decision of a judgement to come.

Though all these discoveries are open to reason, let no man conclude that what the reason of a few discovered, were either communicated to, or acknowledged by all. No, the world was dark and grossly ignorant, some, indeed, have argued well and clearly; others confusedly, and the bulk of mankind not at all; the being of a God, and the unity of that Supreme Being, struck conviction to the hearts of those, who employed their reason coolly and dispassionately in such sublime inquiries; but where

was the multitude meanwhile? Bewildered with a mob of deities, whom their own fables had endowed with human attributes, passions, and infirmities; whom their own superstition had deified and enrolled amongst the immortals, till the sacred history of Olympus became no less impure than the journals of a brothel. Many there were, no doubt, who saw the monstrous absurdity of such a system, yet not every one who discerned error could discover truth; the immortality of the soul, a doctrine so harmonious to man's nature, was decried by system and opposed by subtilty; the question of a future state was hung up in doubt, or bandied between conflicting disputants through all the quirks and evasions of sophistry and logic. Philosophy, so called, was split into a variety of sects, and the hypothesis of each enthusiastic founder became the standing creed of his school, from which it was an inviolable point of honour never to desert. In this confusion of systems men chose for themselves, not according to conviction, but by the impulse of passion, or from motives of convenience; the voluptuary was interested to dismiss the gods to their repose, that his might not be interrupted by them; and all who wished to have their range of sensuality in this world, without fear or control, readily enlisted under the banners of Epicurus, till his followers outnumbered all the rest; this was the court-creed under the worst of the Roman emperors, and the whole body of the nation, with few exceptions, adopted it; for what could be more natural, than for the desperate to bury conscience in the grave of atheism, or rush into annihilation by the point of the poniard, when they were weary of existence, and discarded by fortune? With some it was the standard principle of their sect to doubt, with others to argue, every thing; and when we recollect that

Cicero himself was of the *New Academy*, we have a clue to unravel all the seeming contradictions of his moral and metaphysical sentiments, amidst the confusion of which we are never to expect his real opinion, but within the pale of his own particular school, and that school professed controversy upon every point. I will instance one passage which would have done honour to his sentiments, had he spoke his own language as well as that of the Platonists, whom he is here personating—*Nec vero Deus, qui intelligitur a nobis, alio modo intelligi potest, quam mens soluta quædam et libera, segregata ab omni concretione mortali, omnia sentiens et movens.* Whilst the purest truths were thrown out only as themes for sophistry to cavil at, the mass of mankind resembled a chaos, in which if some few sparks of light glimmered, they only served to cast the general horror into darker shades.

It must not, however, be forgotten, that there was a peculiar people then upon earth, who professed to worship that one Supreme Being, of whose nature and attributes certain individuals only amongst the Gentile nations entertained suitable conceptions.

Whilst all the known world were idolaters by establishment, the Jews alone were Unitarians upon system. Their history was most wonderful, for it undertook to give a relation of things, whereof no human records could possibly be taken, and all who received it for truth, must receive it as the relation of God himself, for how else should men obtain a knowledge of the Creator's thoughts and operations in the first formation of all things? Accordingly we find their inspired historian, after he has brought down his narration to the journal of his own time, holding conferences with God himself, and receiving, through his immediate communication, certain laws and commandments, which he

was to deliver to the people, and according to which they were to live and be governed. In this manner Moses appears as the commissioned legislator of a Theocracy, impowered to work miracles in confirmation of his vicegerent authority, and to denounce the most tremendous punishments upon the nation, so highly favoured, if in any future time they should disobey and fall off from these sacred statutes and ordinances.

A people under such a government, set apart and distinguished from all other nations by means so supernatural, form a very interesting object for our contemplation, and their history abounds in events no less extraordinary and miraculous than the revelation itself of those laws, upon which their constitution was first established: their tedious captivities, their wonderful deliverances, the administration of their priests and prophets, their triumphs and successes, whilst adhering to God's worship, and their deplorable condition, when they corrupted his service with the impurities of the idolatrous nations, whom they drove from their possessions, form a most surprising chain of incidents, to which the annals of no other people upon earth can be said to bear resemblance.

Had it suited the all-wise purposes of God, when he revealed himself to this peculiar people, to have made them the instruments for disseminating the knowledge of his true religion and worship over the Gentile world, their office and administration had been glorious, indeed; but this part was either not allotted to them, or justly forfeited by their degenerate and abandoned conduct: disobedient and rebellious against God's ordinances, they were so far from propagating these imparted lights to the neighbouring nations, that they themselves sunk into their darkness, and whilst all the land was overrun with

idols, few were the knees which bowed to the living, true, and only God.

Moses, their inspired lawgiver, judge, and prophet, is generally said to have delivered to them no doctrine of a future state: I am aware there is a learned author now living, one of their nation, *David Levi* by name, who controverts this assertion; it is fit, therefore, I should leave it in reference to his future proofs, when he shall see proper to produce them; in the mean time I may fairly state it upon this alternative, that if Moses did not impart the doctrine above-mentioned, it was wholly reserved for future special revelation; if he did impart it, there must have been an obstinate want of faith in great part of the Jewish nation, who knowingly professed a contrary doctrine, or else there must have been some obscurity in Moses's account, if they innocently misunderstood it. The Sadducees were a great portion of the Jewish community, and if they were instructed by their lawgiver to believe and expect a future state, it is high matter of offence in them to have disobeyed their teacher; on the other hand, if they were not instructed to this effect by Moses, yet having been taught the knowledge of one all-righteous God, it becomes just matter of surprise, how they came to overlook a consequence so evident.

NUMBER LXIV.

FROM the review we have taken of the state of mankind in respect to their religious opinions at the Christian æra, it appears that the Gentile world was systematically devoted to idolatry, whilst the remnant of the Jewish tribes professed the worship of the true God; but at the same time there did not exist on earth any other temple dedicated to God's service, save that at Jerusalem. The nation so highly favoured by him, and so enlightened by his immediate revelations, was in the lowest state of political and religious declension; ten out of their twelve tribes had been carried away into captivity, from which there has to this hour been no redemption, and the remaining two were brought under the Roman yoke, and divided into sects, one of which opposed the opinion of the other, and maintained that there was to be no resurrection of the dead; the controversy was momentous, for the eternal welfare of mankind was the object of discussion, and who was to decide upon it? the worshippers of the true God had one place only upon earth, wherein to call upon his name; the groves and altars of the idols occupied all the rest: who was to restore his worship? who was to redeem mankind from almost total ignorance and corruption? Where was *the light* that was *to lighten the Gentiles?* reason could do no more; it could only argue for the pro-

bability of a future state of rewards and punishments, but demonstration was required; an evidence, that might remove all doubts, and this was not in the power of man to furnish: some Being therefore must appear, of more than human talents, to instruct mankind; of more than human authority, to reform them: the world was lost, unless it should please God to interpose, for the work was above human hands, and nothing but the power which created the world, could save the world.

Let any man cast his ideas back to this period, and ask his reason if it was not natural to suppose that the Almighty Being, to whom this general ruin and disorder must be visible, would in mercy to his creatures send some help amongst them; unless it had been his purpose to abandon them to destruction, we may presume to say he surely would: is it then with man to prescribe in what particular mode and form that redemption should come? Certainly it is not with man, but with God only; he, who grants the vouchsafement will direct the means: be these what they may, they must be preternatural and miraculous, because we have agreed that it is beyond the reach of man by any natural powers of his own to accomplish; a special inspiration then is requisite, some revelation, it should seem, we know not what, we know not how, nor where, nor whence, except that it must come from God himself: what if he sends a Being upon earth to tell us his immediate will, to teach us how to please him, and to convince us of the reality of a future state? that Being then must come down from him, he must have powers miraculous, he must have qualities divine and perfect, he must return on earth from the grave, and personally show us that he has survived it, and is corporeally living after death: will this be evidence demonstrative? who can with-

stand it? he must be of all men most obstinately bent upon his own destruction, who should attempt to hold out against it; he must prefer darkness to light, falsehood to truth, misery to happiness, hell to heaven, who would not thankfully embrace so great salvation.

Let us now apply what has been said to the appearance of that person, whom the Christian Church believes to have been the true Messias of God, and let us examine the evidences upon which we assert the divinity of his mission, and the completion of its purposes.

In what form, and after what manner, was he sent amongst us? was it by natural or preternatural means? if his first appearance is ushered in by a miracle, will it not be an evidence in favour of God's special revelation. If he is presented to the world in some mode superior to, and differing from the ordinary course of nature, such an introduction must attract to his person and character a more than ordinary attention: if a miraculous and mysterious Being appears upon earth, so compounded of divine and human nature, as to surpass our comprehension of his immediate essence, and at the same time so levelled to our earthly ideas as to be visibly born of a human mother, not impregnated after the manner of the flesh, but by the immediate Spirit of God, in other words, the son of a pure virgin, shall we make the mysterious incarnation of such a preternatural being, a reason for our disbelief in that revelation, which, without a miracle, we had not given credit to? We are told that the birth of Christ was in this wise; the fact rests upon the authority of the evangelists who describe it; the Unitarians, who profess Christianity with this exception, may dispute the testimony of the sacred writers in this particular, and the Jews may deny their account *in toto*;

but still if Christ himself performed miracles, which the Jews do not deny, and if he rose from the dead after his crucifixion, which the Unitarians admit, I do not see how either should be staggered by the miracle of his birth: for of the Jews I may demand, whether it were not a thing as credible for God to have wrought a miracle at the birth of Moses for instance, as that he should afterwards empower that prophet to perform, not one only, but many miracles? To the Unitarians I would candidly submit, if it be not as easy to believe the incarnation of Christ as his resurrection, the authorities for each being the same? Let the authorities, therefore, be the test.

I am well aware that the silence of two of the evangelists is stated by the Unitarians amongst other objections against the account, and the non-accordance of the genealogies given by Saint Matthew and Saint Luke is urged against the Christian Church by the author of *Lingua Sacra*, in a pamphlet lately published, in the following words:—'The Evangelist, Saint Matthew, in the first chapter of his gospel, gives us the genealogy of Christ, and Luke in the third chapter of his gospel does the same; but with such difference, that an unprejudiced person would hardly think they belonged to one and the same person; for the latter not only differs from the former in almost the whole genealogy from Joseph to David, but has also added a few more generations, and likewise made Jesus to descend from Nathan, the son of David, instead of Solomon.'—(Levi's Letter to Dr. Priestley, p. 81.)

The learned Jew is founded in his observation upon the non-accordance of these pedigrees, but not in applying that to Christ, which relates only to Joseph Saint Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph, whom he denominates 'the husband of

Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ,' chap. i. v. 16. Saint Luke, with equal precision, says, that 'Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph.' Now, when it is thus clear that both these genealogies apply to Joseph, and both these evangelists expressly assert that Jesus was born of an immaculate virgin, I do not think it a fair statement to call it the genealogy of Christ, for the purpose of discrediting the veracity of these evangelists in points of faith or doctrine, merely because they differ in a family catalogue of the generations of Joseph, one of which is carried up to Adam, and the other brought down from Abraham. The gospel historians, as I understand them, profess severally to render a true account of Christ's mission, comprising only a short period of his life; within the compass of this period they are to record the doctrines he preached, the miracles he performed, and the circumstances of his death, passion, and resurrection: to this undertaking they are fairly committed; this they are to execute as faithful reporters, and if their reports shall be found in any essential matter contradictory to each other or themselves, let the learned author late mentioned, or any other opponent to Christianity point it out, and candour must admit the charge; but in the matter of a pedigree, which appertains to Joseph, which our Church universally omits in its service, which comprises no article of doctrine, and which being purely matter of family record, was copied probably from one roll by Matthew, and from another by Luke, I cannot in truth and sincerity see how the sacred historians are impeached by the non-agreement of their accounts. We call them the *inspired* writers, and when any such trivial contradiction as the above can be fixed upon them by the enemies of

our faith, the word is retorted upon us with triumph; but what has inspiration to do with the genealogy of Joseph, *the supposed*, not the real, father of Jesus? And, indeed, what more is required for the simple narration of any facts than a faithful memory, and sincere adherence to truth?

Let this suffice for what relates to the birth of Christ, and the different ways in which men argue upon that mysterious event: if his coming was foretold, and if his person and character fully answer to those predictions, no man will deny the force of such an evidence: if we are simply told that 'a virgin did conceive and bear a son,' it is a circumstance so much out of the ordinary course of nature to happen, that it requires great faith in the veracity of the relater to believe it; but if we are possessed of an authentic record of high antecedent antiquity, wherein we find it expressly predicted, that such a circumstance shall happen, and that a 'virgin shall conceive and bear a son,' it is such a confirmation of the fact, that wonderful as it is, we can no longer doubt the truth of the historians who attest it. Now it is not one, but many prophets, who concur in foretelling the coming of the Messias; his person, his office, his humility and sufferings, his ignominious death and the glorious benefits resulting from his atonement, are not merely glanced at with enigmatic obscurity, but pointedly and precisely announced. Had such evidences met for the verification of any historical event unconnected with religion, I suppose there is no man, who could compare the one with the other, but would admit its full concordance and completion; and is it not a strange perverseness of mind, if we are obstinate in doubting it, only because we are so deeply interested to believe it?

I have said there was but one temple upon earth,

where the only true and living God was worshipped, the temple at Jerusalem: the Jews had derived and continued this worship from the time of Abraham, and to him the promises were made, that 'in his seed all the nations of the world should be blessed.' Where, then, are we naturally to look for the Messias but from the stock of Abraham, from the descendants of that family, in which alone were preserved the knowledge and worship of the only true God. If, therefore, the religion, which Christ founded, does in fact hold forth that blessing to all the nations of the world, then was that promise fulfilled in the person of Christ, 'who took upon him the seed of Abraham.'

NUMBER LXV.

We are next to inquire if the character and commission of the Messias were marked by such performances, as might be well expected from a person, whose introduction into the world was of so extraordinary a nature.

We are told by one of the sacred historians, that 'the Jews came round about him and said unto him, how long dost thou make us to doubt ? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly: Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.'

In this passage Christ himself appeals to his works done in the name of God, to witness against all cavils for his being the true Messias. The same question was put to him by the disciples of the Bap-

tist, 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?' The same appeal is made to his works in the reply he gives to these inquirers.

It follows next in order that we should ask what these works were, and it so happens, that the person who performed them, has himself enumerated them in the following words: 'The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached unto them.' These are works, it must be acknowledged, of a most benevolent sort; they are not indeed so splendid as the miraculous act of dividing the Red Sea for the people of Israel to march through it, and again commanding it to close upon their pursuers in the rear, and swallow up the army of Pharaoh; they are not of so tremendous a character as those afflicting plagues with which Moses punished the Egyptians: but would these, or such as these, have been characteristic of a Mediator? Christ came to save and not to destroy the world, and the works above described are no less merciful in their nature, than miraculous.

When the Jews, therefore, tauntingly assert the superior magnificence of the miracles wrought by Moses, which we admit to have been in all respects suitable to the commission which Moses was encharged with, they should with equal candour admit, that the less splendid, but more salutary, miracles of Christ, were no less suited to the merciful commission, which he came amongst us to perform. There is, indeed, more horrible grandeur in the spectacle of a vast army swallowed up by the sea, miraculously divided into a wall on each side of those who passed through it; but who will say that God's power is not as wonderfully and conspicuously displayed in restoring dead Lazarus

to life, as in drowning Pharaoh and his host? Surely it is as great a miracle to give life to the dead, as it is to put the living to death.

The miracles of Christ were performed without ostentation and display, yet they were of such general notoriety, that the Jews themselves did not, and do not even now, deny their being wrought by him, but ascribed them to the aid and agency of the devil: a miserable subterfuge, indeed! But this is not all; a contemporary writer of that nation, David Levi, in his letter to Dr. Priestley, asserts, that there was not only 'no such necessity' for the miracles of Jesus as for those of Moses, but that they were scarcely just or rational, and, consequently, cannot be offered as proofs of his divine mission, in comparison with that of Moses,' pp. 67, 68.

In support of this assertion, the learned controversialist observes, 'that as to the miracles of Moses, there was the greatest necessity for them; for instance, the plagues he brought upon the Egyptians were necessary for the redemption of the Jewish nation; as was the dividing of the Red Sea, and the drowning the Egyptians for their further deliverance from them; the manna from heaven and the water from the rock were necessary for their subsistence in the wilderness; the same of all the rest.'

This we may admit in its full force: but as the miracles which Christ wrought were altogether as *necessary* for the proof of his divine mission, as these of Moses for the proof of his; a man must be very partial to his own nation, who will assert, that the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity in Egypt, was a more important object than the redemption of lost mankind. We will not doubt but it was *necessary* the Egyptian host should be drowned, because it seemed good to God so to punish their obduracy, and extricate the Jewish tribes; but it

is no less *necessary*, that mankind should believe in Christ, if they are to be saved through his means, and for the confirmation of that *necessary* faith, these miracles were performed: the author of the objection, who himself asserts that Moses delivered the important doctrine of a future state, will not deny that the belief of a future state is a *necessary* belief; and if it be so, it must follow that Christ's resurrection and appearance upon earth after his crucifixion, a miracle, I presume, as great and striking as any wrought by the hand of Moses, was as pertinent to that general end, as the wonders in the land of Egypt and at the Red Sea were to the particular purpose of rescuing the Jews out of their captivity.

If we grant that Moses, as this objector intimates, did impart the doctrine of a future state, Christ did more by exemplifying it in his own person, and against such evidence we might presume even a Sadducee would not hold out. Now, as so large a portion of the Jewish nation were still in the avowed disbelief of that doctrine, which our opponent believes was taught them by their great prophet and lawgiver himself, surely he must of course allow, that the resurrection of Christ was to them at least, and to all who like them did not credit the doctrine of a life to come, a *necessary* miracle.

Where such a teacher as Moses had failed to persuade, what less than a miracle could conquer their infidelity? Unless, indeed, our author shall join issue with Abraham in his reply to Dives, as recorded in the words of Christ, and maintain with him, that as they would not believe the word of Moses, 'neither would they be persuaded, though one actually rose from the dead.'

And now I will more closely animadvert upon the bold assertion of David Levi, the Jew, whose

hostile opinions we tolerate, that the miracles of Christ, the Saviour of the world, whose religion we profess, were ' scarcely just or rational.'

Our faith is at issue, our established church falls to the ground, our very sovereign becomes no longer the *defender of our faith*, but rather the defender of our folly, if this contemner of Christ, this alien, who assaults our religion, whilst he is living under the protection of our laws, shall with one stroke of an audacious pen, undermine the strong foundation of our belief.

Let us hear how this modern caviller confutes those miracles, which his forefathers saw and did not dare to deny.

He takes two out of the number, and if there is any merit in the selection, he is beholden to his correspondent for it: these are, first, ' the driving the devils out of the man possessed, and sending them into the herd of swine;' Matt. viii. 28. Secondly, ' the curse pronounced upon the barren fig-tree;' Mark, xi. 13.

Upon the first of these he has the following stricture—' This I think was not strictly just, for as according to your (Dr. Priestley's) opinion, he was but a man and a prophet, I would willingly be informed what right he had to destroy another man's property in the manner he did, by sending the devils into them, and so causing them to run violently into the sea and perish?'

This miracle is recorded also by Saint Mark, v. 1. and again by Saint Luke, viii. 26. What Saint Matthew calls the country of the Gergesenes, the other two Evangelists call the country of the Gadarenes, and St. Luke adds that it is over-against Galilee; this country, as I conceive, was within the boundaries of the half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side of Jordan, and is by Strabo, lib. 16. called

Gadarida. Now Moses, both in Leviticus, xi. and Deuteronomy, xiv. prohibits swine, as one of the unclean beasts: 'Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.' Isaiah also states it as a particular sin and abomination in the Jews, whom he calleth a 'rebellious people, a people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; which remain among the graves and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh.' lxv. 2, 3, 4. And again, 'They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves in the gardens, behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, &c. shall be consumed together, saith the Lord.' lxvi. 17. Eleazar the scribe, 'when constrained to open his mouth and eat swine's flesh, chose rather to die gloriously, than to live stained with such an abomination.' 2 Macc. vi. 18, 19. The seven brethren also, who were compelled to the like abomination, declared, 'they were ready to die rather than to transgress the laws of their fathers.' This being the law of Moses with respect to this proscribed animal, and such being the corruptions of the people in violating that law, I am at a loss to discover the *injustice* of the miracle; seeing what abominations these creatures had occasioned amongst the Jews, so as to draw down the denunciations of the prophet Isaiah, repeatedly urged in the passages above quoted; and it is with particular surprise I meet the charge from one, who is himself a Jew, and who, I must presume, would die the death of Eleazar rather than be defiled with such abominable food. It would be hard, indeed, if Christ, whom he arraigns for abolishing the Mosaical dispensation in one part of his argument, should in another be accused of wrong and injury for conforming to it: but any wretched shift shall be resorted to for matter of railing against Christ, and rather than not feed his

spleen at all, he will feed it upon swine's flesh: let the learned Jew first prove to me that a hog was not an abomination to his countrymen, and it will then be time enough to debate upon the *injustice* of destroying them; meanwhile I shall not be disposed to allow of any damages for the swine in question at the suit and prosecution of a Jew.

His second attack is pointed against the miracle of the fig-tree, which was blasted at the word of Christ.

Though Saint Matthew, as well as Saint Mark, records this miracle, yet, for reasons sufficiently obvious, he refers to the latter, who says, 'that when Christ came to it he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.' His argument upon this passage is as follows: 'Hence it is manifest, that he required the tree to produce fruit out of season, and which would have been contrary to the intent of its Creator; and, therefore, he, as a dutiful son, curses the innocent and guiltless tree for doing that, which his father had commanded it to do, viz. to bear fruit in its proper season:' In this paragraph our Jew has quickened his argument with some facetious irony, and he follows it with an air of exultation as well as insult. 'If, after this, Christians should still persist in the miracle, according to the letter of the story, much good may it do them; but I am sure it will never be the means of converting the unbelieving Jews to the Christian faith.'

I close with him in opinion that this miracle will not be the means of converting his unbelieving brethren to Christianity; for how can I hope, that what their fathers saw and yet believed not, should at this distant period gain belief from their posterity? I also join with him in saying, and I suspect I say it with somewhat more sincerity, *much good may it do* to all those Christians, who persist

in their belief of it! A descendant of those who murdered Christ, may act in character, when he insults his miracles and ridicules his person, but a believer in Christ will be an imitator of his patience.

It is now time to dismiss the irony and apply to the argument. This simply turns upon St. Mark's interjectional observation, not noticed by St. Matthew in his account, viz. 'that the time of figs was not yet.' He says, that Jesus being hungry saw a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, and came if haply he might find any thing thereon. By this it appears that the tree was in leaf, and Jesus approached it with the expectation of finding something thereon; but when he found nothing but leaves, he said unto it, 'No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever!' And his disciples heard it: these came again the next morning, and passing by the fig-tree saw it dried up from the roots; which when Peter remarked as a completion of the miracle, Jesus said to them all, 'Have faith in God!'

In these important words we have the moral of the act. The tree, which this reviler takes upon himself to say, was *commanded* by God *to bear fruit in its proper season,* was on the contrary commanded by God to bear fruit no more, but serve a nobler purpose by witnessing to the miraculous power of Christ: and now if *an innocent and guiltless tree* was blasted out of season by the word of Christ, for the purpose of inspiring the beholders with *Faith in God,* the benefit conferred upon human nature may well atone for the injury done to vegetable nature; though I am free to acknowledge to its pathetic advocate, that, as a Jew, he has undertaken a more cleanly cause, than when he before stood forth in defence of the hogs: as well may he bewail *the innocent and guiltless trees* and grain of Egypt, which were smitten by the hail, when Moses called

it down upon the land, if such be his tender feelings toward the productions of the earth, as this single fig-tree: till he can convince us that the deliverance of the Jews from their Egyptian bondage was a more important object than the redemption of the world, he will find it hard to make a reasoning man allow, that this single fig-tree, even though it had no right to bear fruit, hath a stronger appeal to justice against the miracle of Christ, *than every herb of the field that was smitten*, every guiltless and innocent *tree of the field that was broken* by the stretching forth of the rod of Moses.

Thus then stands the account between Christ and his accuser; the Jewish nation lost a tree, and mankind gained—a Saviour!

NUMBER LXVI.

If it were necessary to enter into a more literal defence of the miracle of the blasted fig-tree, I see no absolute reason to conclude with the caviller, that Christ required the tree to produce fruit out of season and act against its nature; for *if the time of figs* be the gathering or harvest of figs, it was more reasonable to expect fruit from this tree before the time of plucking, than after it; and as this fruit was no small article in the produce and traffic of Judea, we may well conclude *the time of figs*, mentioned by Saint Mark, was like the vintage in the wine countries; and I apprehend it would not be an unreasonable expectation to find a cluster of grapes on a vine, before the time of vintage was come. This construction of the words will seem

the more reasonable, when we remark that Saint Matthew, who records the miracle, takes no account of this circumstance, and that Saint Mark, who states it, states also that Christ in his hunger applied to the tree, 'if haply he might find any thing thereon,' which implies expectation.

But our Jew hath suggested a better method of performing the miracle, by commanding fruit from a withered tree instead of blasting a living one; which, says he, 'if Jesus had done, it would have been such an instance of his power, as to have rendered the proof of the miracle indisputable.'

Here let him stand to his confession, and I take him at his word. I agree with him in owning that the miracle, as he states it, would have been indisputable, had Christ given life and fruit to a withered tree; and I demand of him to agree with me, that the miracle was indisputable, when the same Christ gave breath and life to dead Lazarus.

But, alas! I can hardly expect that the raising a dead tree to life would have been thus successful, though even infidelity asserts it, when the miracle of restoring a dead man to life hath not silenced his cavils, but left him to quibble about hogs and figs, and even in the face of his own confession to arraign the Saviour of the world, as 'unjust and irrational' through the channel of a Christian press: neither am I bound to admit, that his correction of the miracle would in any respect have amended it; for as an instance of Christ's miraculous power, I can see no greater energy in the act of enlivening a dead tree, than in destroying a living one by the single word of his command.

I must yet ask patience of the reader, whilst I attend upon this objector to another cavil started against this miracle of the fig-tree in the account of

which he says there is a contradiction of dates between Saint Matthew and Saint Mark, for that in the former it appears 'Christ first cast the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and on the morrow cursed the fig-tree; whereas, according to Saint Mark, it was transacted before the driving them out of the temple, and such a manifest contradiction must greatly affect the credibility of the history.'

Whether or not a day's disagreement in the dates would so 'greatly affect the credibility of the history,' we are not called upon to argue, because it will be found that no such contradiction exists.

Saint Mark agrees with Saint Matthew in saying that 'Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple,' and on the morrow cursed the fig-tree; he then adds, that he returned to Jerusalem, and drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple: again, the next morning, he and his disciples passed by the fig-tree, and saw it dried up by the roots. This is told in detail.

Saint Matthew agrees with Saint Mark in saying Jesus went into the temple the day before he destroyed the fig-tree, but he does not break the narrative into detail, as Saint Mark does; for as he relates the whole miracle of the fig-tree at once, comprising the events of two days in one account, so doth he give the whole of what passed in the temple at once also.

Both Evangelists agree in making Christ's entrance into the temple antecedent to his miracle; but Saint Matthew with more brevity puts the whole of each incident into one account; Saint Mark more circumstantially details every particular. And this is the mighty contradiction, which David Levi hath discovered in the sacred historians, upon which he exultingly pronounces, that 'he is

confident there are a number of others as glaring as this; but which he has not, at present, either time or inclination to point out.'

These menaces I shall expect he will make good, for when his time serves to point them out, I dare believe his inclination will not stand in the way.

In the mean time, let it be remembered, that David Levi stands pledged as the author of an unsupported charge against the veracity of the Evangelists, and let every faithful Christian, to whom those holy records are dear, but most of all the proper guardians of our Church, be prepared to meet their opponent and his charge.

But our caviller hath not yet done with the Evangelists, for he asserts that 'they are not only contradictory to each other, but are inconsistent with themselves; for what can be more so than Matthew, i. 18. with Matthew, xiii. 55?

Now mark the contradiction! 'The birth of Jesus was on this wise; when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost,' chap. i. 18. The other text is found in chap. xiii. 55. 'Is not this the carpenter's son, is not his mother Mary? and his brethren James and Joses and Simon and Judas?'

Need any child be told, that in the first text Saint Matthew speaks, and in the second the cavilling Jews? who then can wonder if they disagree? As well we might expect agreement between truth and falsehood, between the Evangelist and David Levi, as between two passages of such opposite characters. Is this the man, who is to confute the Holy Scriptures? Weak champion of an unworthy cause!

What he means by an inconsistency between Luke, i. 34, 35, and Luke, xiv. 22, I cannot understand, and conclude there must be an error of the

press, of which I think no author can have less reason to complain than David Levi.

These two unprosperous attacks being the whole of what he attempts upon the inconsistency of the sacred historians with themselves, I shall no longer detain my readers, than whilst I notice one more cavil, which this author points against the divine mission of Christ, as compared with that of Moses, viz. 'That God speaking with Moses face to face in the presence of six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, as mentioned in Exod. xix. 9, was such an essential proof of the divine mission of Moses, as is wanting on the part of Jesus;' and therefore he concludes, that taking the miracles of Moses and this colloquy with the Supreme Being together, the evidences for him are much stronger than for Christ.

A man who does not instantly discern the futility of this argument, must forget all the several incidents in the history of Christ, where the voice of God audibly testifies to his divine mission; for instance, Matth. iii. 16, 17. 'And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo! the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo! a voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' The same is repeated by Mark, i. 10, 11.; again by Luke, iii. 21, 22.; again by John, i. 32, 33, 34.

If these supernatural signs and declarations do not evince the superiority of Christ's mission above that of Moses; if Christ to whom angels ministered, when the devil in despair departed from him, Christ, who was transfigured before his disciples, 'and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, and behold! there appeared

unto them Moses and Elias talking with him; *Christ, at whose death* the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints, which slept, arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many'; in conclusion, if Christ, whose resurrection was declared by angels, seen and acknowledged by many witnesses, and whose ascension into heaven crowned and completed the irrefragable evidences of his divine mission; if Christ, whose prophecies of his own death and resurrection, of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the subsequent dispersion of the Jews, have been and are now so fully verified, cannot, as our caviller asserts, meet the comparison with Moses, then is the Redeemer of lost mankind a less sublime and important character than the legislator of the Jews.

I have now attempted, in the first place, to discover how far the world was illuminated by right reason before the revelation of Christ took place; for had men's belief been such, and their practice also such as Christianity teaches, the world had not stood in need of a Redeemer.

The result of this inquiry was, that certain persons have expressed themselves well and justly upon the subject of God and religion, in times antecedent to the Christian æra, and in countries where idolatry was the established worship.

That the nation of the Jews was a peculiar nation, and preserved the worship of the true and only God, revealed in very early time to their fathers, but that this worship, from various circumstances and events, in which they themselves were highly criminal, had not been propagated beyond the limits of a small tract, and that the temple of

Jerusalem was the only church in the world, where God was worshipped, when Christ came upon earth.

That from the almost universal diffusion of idolatry, from the unworthy ideas men had of God and religion, and the few faint notions entertained amongst them of a future state of rewards and punishments, the world was in such deplorable error, and in such universal need of an instructor and redeemer, that the coming of Christ was most seasonable and necessary to salvation.

That there were a number of concurrent prophecies of an authentic character in actual existence, which promised this salvation to the world. and depicted the person of the Messias, who was to perform this mediatorial office in so striking a manner, that it cannot be doubted but that all those characteristics meet and are fulfilled in the person of Christ.

That his birth, doctrines, miracles, prophecies, death and passion, with other evidences, are so satisfactory for the confirmation of our belief in his divine mission, that our faith as Christians is grounded upon irrefragable proofs.

Lastly, that the vague opinions of our own dissenting brethren, and the futile cavils of a recent publication by a distinguished writer of the Jewish nation, are such weak and impotent assaults upon our religion, as only serve to confirm us in it the more.

If I have effected this to the satisfaction of the serious reader, I shall be most happy; and as for those who seek nothing better than amusement in these volumes, I will apply myself without delay to the easier task of furnishing them with other matter more suited to their taste than the foregoing.

NUMBER LXVII.

Musa dedit fidibus Divos, puerosque Deorum,
Et pugilem victorem, et equum certamine primum,
Et Juvenum curas, et libera vina referre.
HOR. ARS POET. 83.

In times of very remote antiquity, when men were not so slavish of their wit as they have since been, Poetry could not furnish employment for more than *Three Muses;* but as business grew upon their hands and departments multiplied, it became necessary to enlarge the commission, and a board was constituted consisting of *nine* in number, who had their several presidencies allotted to them, and every branch of the art poetic thenceforth had its peculiar patroness and superintendant.

As to the specific time when these three senior goddesses called in their six new assessors, it is matter of conjecture only; but if the poet Hesiod was, as we are told, the first who had the honour of announcing their names and characters to the world, we may reasonably suppose this was done upon the immediate opening of their new commission, as they would hardly enter upon their offices without apprising all those, whom it might concern, of their accession.

Before this period, the three eldest sisters condescended to be *maids of all work;* and if the work became more than they could turn their hands to, they have nobody but themselves and their fellow deities to complain of; for had they been content to have let the world go on in its natural course, mere mortal

poets would not probably have overburthened either it or them; but when Apollo himself, who being their president, should have had more consideration for their case, begot the poet Linus in one of his terrestrial frolics, and endowed him with hereditary genius, he took a certain method to make work for the Muses: accordingly, we find the chaste Calliope herself, the eldest of the sisterhood, and who should have set a better example to the family, could not hold out against this heavenly bastard, but in an unguarded moment yielded her virgin honours to Linus, and produced the poet Orpheus: such an instance of celestial incontinence could not fail to shake the morals of the most demure; and even the cold goddess Luna caught the flame, and smuggled a bantling into the world, whom, maliciously enough, she named Musæus, with a sly design, no doubt, of laying her child at the door of the Parnassian nunnery.

Three such high-blooded bards as Linus, Orpheus, and Musæus, so fathered and so mothered, were enough to people all Greece with poets and musicians; and, in truth, they were not idle in their generation, but, like true patriarchs, spread their families over all the shores of Ionia and the islands of the Archipelago: it is not, therefore, to be wondered at, if the three sister Muses, who had enough to do to nurse their own children and descendants, were disposed to call in other helpmates to the task, and, whilst Greece was in its glory, it may well be supposed that all the nine sisters were fully employed in bestowing upon every votary a portion of their attention, and answering every call made upon them for aid and inspiration: much gratitude is due to them from their favoured poets, and much hath been paid, for even to the present hour they are invoked and worshipped

by the sons of verse, whilst all the other deities of Olympus have either abdicated their thrones, or been dismissed from them with contempt; even Milton himself, in his sacred epic, invokes the *heavenly muse*, who inspired Moses *on the top of Horeb or of Sinai;* by which he ascribes great antiquity, as well as dignity, to the character he addresses.

The powers ascribed to Orpheus were, under the veil of fable, emblems of his influence over savage minds, and of his wisdom and eloquence in reclaiming them from that barbarous state: upon these impressions civilization and society took place: the patriarch, who founded a family, or tribe, the legislator, who established a state, the priest, prophet, judge, or king, are characters, which, if traced to their first sources, will be found to branch from that of poet: the first prayers, the first laws, and the earliest prophecies were metrical; prose hath a later origin, and before the art of writing was in existence, poetry had reached a very high degree of excellence, and some of its noblest productions were no otherwise preserved than by tradition. As to the sacred quality of their first poetry, the Greeks are agreed, and, to give their early bards the better title to inspiration, they feign them to be descended from the Gods; Orpheus must have profitted by his mother's partiality, and Linus may well be supposed to have had some interest with his father Apollo. But to dwell no longer on these fabulous legends of the Greeks, we may refer to the books of Moses for the earliest and most authentic examples of sacred poetry: every thing that was the immediate effusion of the prophetic spirit seems to have been chaunted forth in dithyrambic measure; the valedictory blessings of the patriarchs, when dying, the songs of triumph and thanksgiving after victory are metrical, and high as the antiquity of

the sacred poem of Job undoubtedly is, such nevertheless is its character and construction, as to carry strong internal marks of its being written in an advanced state of the art.

The poet, therefore, whether Hebrew or Greek, was in the earliest ages a sacred character, and his talent a divine gift, a celestial inspiration: men regarded him as the ambassador of Heaven, and the interpreter of its will. It is perfectly in nature, and no less agreeable to God's providence, to suppose that even in the darkest times some minds of a more enlightened sort should break forth, and be engaged in the contemplation of the universe and its Author: from meditating upon the works of the Creator, the transition to the act of praise and adoration follows as it were of course; these are operations of the mind, which naturally inspire it with a certain portion of rapture and enthusiasm, rushing upon the lips in warm and glowing language, and disdaining to be expressed in ordinary and vulgar phrase; the thoughts become inflated, the breast labours with a passionate desire to say something worthy of the ear of Heaven, something in a more elevated tone and cadence, something more harmonious and musical; this can only be effected by measured periods, by some chaunt, that can be repeated in the strain again and again, grateful at once to the ear, and impressive on the memory; and what is this but poetry? Poetry then is the language of prayer, an address becoming of the Deity; it may be remembered; it may be repeated in the ears of the people called together for the purposes of worship; this is a form that may be fixt upon their minds, and in this they may be taught to join.

The next step in the progress of poetry from the praise of God is to the praise of men: illustrious

characters, heroic actions are singled out for celebration: the inventors of useful arts, the reformers of savage countries, the benefactors of mankind, are extolled in verse, they are raised to the skies, and the poet, having praised them as the first of men whilst on earth, deifies them after death, and, conscious that they merit immortality, boldly bestows it, and assigns to them a rank and office in Heaven appropriate to the character they maintained in life; hence it is that the merits of a Bacchus, a Hercules, and numbers more, are amplified by the poet, till they become the attributes of their divinity, altars are raised, and victims immolated to their worship. These are the fanciful effects of poetry in its second stage: religion overheated turns it into enthusiasm; enthusiasm forces the imagination into all the visionary regions of fable, and idolatry takes possession of the whole Gentile world. The Egyptians, a mysterious dogmatizing race, begin the work with symbol and hieroglyphic; the Greeks, a vain ingenious people, invent a set of tales and fables for what they do not understand, embellish them with all the glittering ornaments of poetry, and spread the captivating delusion over all the world.

In the succeeding period we review the poet in full possession of this brilliant machinery, and with all Olympus at his command: surrounded by Apollo and the Muses, he commences every poem with an address to them for protection; he has a deity at his call for every operation of nature; if he would roll the thunder, Jupiter shakes Mount Ida to dignify his description; Neptune attends him in his car, if he would allay the ocean; if he would let loose the winds to raise it, Æolus unbars his cave; the spear of Mars, and the ægis of Minerva, arm him for the battle; the arrows of Apollo scatter pestilence through the air; Mercury flies upon the

messages of Jupiter; Juno raves with jealousy, and Venus leads the Loves and Graces in her train. In this class, we contemplate Homer and his inferior brethren of the epic order; it is their province to form the warrior, instruct the politician, animate the patriot; they delineate the characters and manners; they charm us with their descriptions, surprise us with their incidents, interest us with their dialogue; they engage every passion in its turn, melt us to pity, rouse us to glory, strike us with terror, fire us with indignation; in a word, they prepare us for the drama, and the drama for us.

A new poet now comes upon the stage; he stands in person before us: he no longer appears as a blind and wandering bard, chaunting his rhapsodies to a throng of villagers collected in a group about him, but erects a splendid theatre, gathers together a whole city as his audience, prepares a striking spectacle, provides a chorus of actors, brings music, dance, and dress, to his aid, realizes the thunder, bursts open the tombs of the dead, calls forth their apparitions, descends to the very regions of the damned, and drags the Furies from their flames to present themselves personally to the terrified spectators: such are the powers of the drama; here the poet reigns and triumphs in his highest glory.

The fifth denomination gives us the lyric poet chaunting his ode at the public games and festivals, crowned with olive, and encompassed by all the wits and nobles of his age and country: here we contemplate Stesichorus, Alcæus, Pindar, Callistratus; sublime, abrupt, impetuous, they strike us with the shock of their electric genius; they dart from earth to heaven; there is no following them in their flights; we stand gazing with surprise, their boldness awes us, their brevity confounds us; their sudden transitions and ellipses escape our apprehen-

sion; we are charmed we know not why, we are pleased with being puzzled, and applaud, although we cannot comprehend. In the lighter lyric we meet Anacreon, Sappho, and the votaries of Bacchus and Venus; in the grave, didactic, solemn class we have the venerable names of a Solon, a Tyrtæus, and those, who may be styled the demagogues in poetry: is liberty to be asserted, licentiousness to be repressed? Is the spirit of a nation to be roused? it is the poet not the orator must give the soul its energy and spring. Is Salamis to be recovered? it is the elegy of Solon must sound the march to its attack. Are the Lacedemonians to be awakened from their lethargy? It is Tyrtæus, who must sing the war-song and revive their languid courage.

Poetry next appears in its pastoral character; it affects the garb of shepherds and the language of the rustic: it represents to our view the rural landscape and the peaceful cottage? It records the labours, the amusements, the loves of the village nymphs and swains, and exhibits nature in its simplest state: it is no longer the harp or the lyre, but the pipe of the poet, which now invites our attention; Theocritus, leaning on his crook in his russet mantle and *clouted brogues*, appears more perfectly in character than the courtly Maro, who seems more the shepherd of the theatre than of the field. I have yet one other class in reserve for the epigrammatist, but I will shut up my list without him, not being willing that poetry, which commences with a prayer, should conclude with a pun.

NUMBER LXVIII.

TASTE may be considered either as sensitive or mental; and under each of these denominations is sometimes spoken of as natural, sometimes as acquired; I propose to treat of it in its intellectual construction only, and in this sense Mr. Addison defines it to be that faculty of the soul, which discerns the beauties of an author with pleasure, and the imperfections with dislike.

This definition may very properly apply to the faculty which we exercise in judging and deciding upon the works of others; but how does it apply to the faculty exercised by those who produced those works? How does it serve to develope the taste of an author, the taste of a painter or a statuary? And yet we may speak of a work of taste with the same propriety as we do of a man of taste. It should seem, therefore, as if this definition went only to that denomination of taste, which we properly call an acquired taste: the productions of which generally end in imitation, whilst those of natural taste bear the stamp of originality: another characteristic of natural taste will be simplicity: for how can Nature give more than she possesses, and what is nature but simplicity? Now when the mind of any man is endued with a fine natural taste, and all means of profiting by other men's ideas are out of the question, that taste will operate by disposing him to select the fairest subjects out of what he sees either for art or imagination to work upon. Still his production will be marked with simplicity; but, as it is the province of taste to separate de-

formity or vulgarity from what is merely simple, so according to the nature of his mind who possesses it, beauty or simplicity will be the result of the operation. If his taste inclines him to what is fair and elegant in nature, he will produce beauty; if to what is lofty, bold, and tremendous, he will strike out sublimity.

Agreeably to this, we may observe in all literary and enlightened nations, their earliest authors and artists are the most simple. First, adventurers represent what they see or conceive with simplicity, because their impulse is unbiassed by emulation, having nothing in their sight either to imitate, avoid, or excel: on the other hand, their successors are sensible that one man's description of nature must be like another's, and in their zeal to keep clear of imitation, and to outstrip a predecessor, they begin to compound, refine, and even to distort. I will refer to the Venus de Medicis and the Laocoön for an illustration of this. I do not concern myself about the dates or sculptors of these figures; but in the former we see beautiful simplicity, the fairest form in nature, selected by a fine taste, and imitated without affectation or distortion, and as it should seem without even an effort of art. In the Laocoön we have a complicated plot; we unravel a maze of ingenious contrivance, where the artist has compounded and distorted Nature in the ambition of surpassing her.

Virgil possessed a fine taste according to Mr. Addison's definition, which I before observed applies only to an *acquired taste*. He had the 'faculty of discerning the beauties of an author with pleasure, and the imperfections with dislike.' He had also the faculty of *imitating* what he *discerned;* so that I cannot verify what I have advanced by any stronger instance than his. I should think there

does not exist a poet, who has gone such lengths in imitation as Virgil; for to pass over his pastoral and bucolic poems, which are evidently drawn from Theocritus and Hesiod, with the assistance of Aratus in every thing that relates to the scientific part of the signs and seasons, it is supposed that his whole narrative of the destruction of Troy, with the incident of the wooden horse and the episode of Sinon, are an almost literal translation of Pisander the epic poet, who, in his turn perhaps, might copy his account from the Ilias Minor; but this last is a mere suggestion. As for the Æneid, it does little else but reverse the order of Homer's epic, making Æneas's voyage precede his wars in Italy, whereas the voyage of Ulysses is subsequent to the operations of the Iliad. As Apollo is made hostile to the Greeks, and the cause of his offence is introduced by Homer in the opening of the Iliad, so Juno in the Æneid stands in his place with every circumstance of imitation. It would be an endless task to trace the various instances throughout the Æneid, where scarce a single incident can be found which is not copied from Homer. Neither is there greater originality in the executive parts of the poem, than in the constructive; with this difference only, that he has copied passages from various authors, Roman as well as Greek, though from Homer the most. Amongst the Greeks, the dramatic poets Æschylus, Sophocles, and principally Euripides, have had the greatest share of his attention; Aristophanes, Menander, and other comic authors, Callimachus and some of the lyric writers, also may be traced in his imitations. A vast collection of passages from Ennius chiefly, from Lucretius, Furius, Lucilius, Pacuvius, Suevius, Nævius, Varius, Catullus, Accius, and others of his own nation, has been made by

Macrobius in his Saturnalia, where Virgil has done little else but put their sentiments into more elegant verse; so that, in strictness of speaking, we may say of the Æneid, 'that it is a miscellaneous compilation of poetical passages, composing all together an epic poem, formed upon the model of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey: abounding in beautiful versification, and justly to be admired for the fine *acquired taste* of its author, but devoid of originality either of construction or execution.' Besides its general inferiority, as being a copy from Homer, it particularly falls off from its original in the conception and preservation of character: it does not reach the sublimity and majesty of its model, but it has in a great degree adopted the simplicity, and entirely avoided the rusticity of Homer.

Lucan and Claudian, in later ages, were perhaps as good versifiers as Virgil, but far inferior to him in that fine acquired taste, in which he excelled. They are ingenious, but not simple; and execute better than they contrive. A passage from Claudian, which I shall beg the reader's leave to compare with one from Virgil, where he personifies the evil passions and plagues of mankind, and posts them at the entrance of hell, to which Æneas is descending, will exemplify what I have said; for, at the same time that it will bear a dispute, whether Claudian's description is not even superior to Virgil's in poetical merit, yet the judicious manner of introducing it in one case, and the evident want of judgement in the other, will help to show that the reason why we prefer Virgil to Claudian, is more on account of his superiority of taste than of talents.

Claudian's description stands in the very front of his poem on Rufinus; Virgil's is woven into his fable, and will be found in the sixth book of his Æneid, as follows:—

Vestibulum ante ipsum, primisque in faucibus Orci,
Luctus, et ultrices posuēre cubilia Curæ;
Pallentesque habitant Morbi, tristisque Senectus,
Et Metus, et malesuada Fames, et turpis Egestas,
Terribiles visu formæ; Lethumque, Laborque;
Tum consanguineus Lethi, Sopor, et mala mentis
Gaudia, mortiferumque adverso in limine Bellum,
Ferreique Eumenidum thalami, et Discordia demens
Vipereum crinem vittis innexa cruentis.

VIRGIL.

Just in the gates and in the jaws of Hell
Revengeful Cares and sullen Sorrows dwell,
And pale Diseases, and repining Age;
Want, Fear, and Famine's unresisted rage;
Here Toils, and Death, and Death's half-brother, Sleep,
Forms terrible to view, their sentry keep:
With anxious Pleasures of a guilty mind,
Deep Frauds before, and open Force behind:
The Furies' iron beds, and Strife that shakes
Her hissing tresses, and unfolds her snakes.

DRYDEN.

Protinus infernas ad limina tetra sorores,
Concilium deforme, vocat; glomerantur in unum
Innumeræ pestes Erebi, quascunque sinistro
Nox genuit fœtu: Nutrix Discordia belli;
Imperiosa Fames; leto vicina Senectus;
Impatiensque sui Morbus; Livorque secundis
Anxius, et scisso mœrens velamine Luctus,
Et Timor, et cæco præceps Audacia vultu;
Et luxus populator opum, quem semper adhærens
Infelix humili gressu comitatur Egestas;
Fœdaque Avaritiæ complexæ pectora matris
Insomnes longo veniunt examine Curæ.

CLAUDIAN.

The infernal council, at Alecto's call
Conven'd, assemble in the Stygian hall;
Myriads of ghastly plagues, that shun the light,
Daughters of Erebus and gloomy Night:
Strife war-compelling; Famine's wasting rage;
And Death just hovering o'er decrepit Age;
Envy, Prosperity's repining foe,
Restless Disease, and self-dishevell'd Woe,
Rashness, and Fear, and Poverty, that steals
Close as his shadow at the Spendthrift's heels;
And Cares, that clinging to the Miser's breast,
Forbid his sordid soul to taste of rest.

The productions of the human genius will borrow their complexion from the times in which they originate. Ben Jonson says, 'that the players often mentioned it as an honour to Shakspeare, that in his writing, whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, adds he, Would he had blotted out a thousand! which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted; and to justify mine own candour, for I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any. He was, indeed, honest, and of an open free nature; had an excellent fantasy, brave notions and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility, that sometime it was necessary he should be stopped; *Sufflaminandus erat*, as Augustus said of Haterius: his wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so too!'

I think there can be no doubt but this kind of indignant negligence with which Shakspeare wrote, was greatly owing to the slight consideration he had for his audience. Jonson treated them with the dictatorial haughtiness of a pedant; Shakspeare with the carelessness of a gentleman who wrote at his ease, and gave them the first flowings of his fancy without any dread of their correction. These were times in which the poet indulged his genius without restraint; he stood alone and super-eminent, and wanted no artificial scaffold to raise him above the heads of his contemporaries; he was natural, lofty, careless, and daringly incorrect. Place the same man in other times, amongst a people polished almost into general equality, and he shall begin to hesitate and retract his sallies: for in this respect poetical are like military excursions, and i

makes a wide difference in the movements of a skilful general, whether he is to sally into a country defended by well disciplined troops, or only by an irregular mob of unarmed barbarians. Shakspeare might vault his Pegasus without a rein; mountains might rise and seas roll in vain before him; Nature herself could neither stop nor circumscribe his career. The modern man of verse mounts with the precaution of a riding-master, and prances round his little circle full-bitted and caparisoned in all the formality of a review. Whilst he is thus pacing and piaffering with every body's eyes upon him, his friends are calling out every now and then—' Seat yourself firm in the saddle! Hold your body straight! Keep your spurs from his sides for fear he sets a kicking! Have a care he does not stumble: there lies a stone, here runs a ditch; keep your whip still, and depend upon your bit, if you have not a mind to break your neck!'—On the other quarter his enemies are bawling out—' How like a tailor that fellow sits on horseback! Look at his feet, look at his arms! Set the curs upon him; tie a cracker to his horse's tail, and make sport for the spectators!'—All this while, perhaps, the poor devil could have performed passably well, if it were not for the mobbing and hallooing about him: whereas Shakspeare mounts without fear, and starting in the jockey phrase at *score*, cries out, ' Stand clear, ye sons of earth! or by the beams of my father Apollo, I'll ride over you, and trample you into dust!'

NUMBER LXIX.

Nil intentatum nostri liquere poëtæ :
Nec minimum meruere decus, vestigia Græca
Ausi deserere, et celebrare domestica facta.
HOR. ARS POET. 285.

THERE are two very striking characters delineated by our great dramatic poet, which I am desirous of bringing together under one review, and these are Macbeth and Richard the Third.

The parts which these two persons sustain in their respective dramas, have a remarkable coincidence: both are actuated by the same guilty ambition in the opening of the story: both murder their lawful sovereign in the course of it: and both are defeated and slain in battle at the conclusion of it: yet these two characters, under circumstances so similar, are as strongly distinguished in every passage of their dramatic life by the art of the poet, as any two men ever were by the hand of nature.

Let us contemplate them in the three following periods; viz. The premeditation of their crime; the perpetration of it; and the catastrophe of their death.

Duncan, the reigning King of Scotland, has two sons: Edward the Fourth of England has also two sons; but these kings and their respective heirs do not affect the usurpers Macbeth and Richard in the same degree, for the latter is a prince of the blood royal, brother to the king, and next in consanguinity to the throne after the death of his elder brother the Duke of Clarence: Macbeth, on the contrary, is not in the succession—

And to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief.

His views, therefore, being further removed and more out of hope, a greater weight of circumstances should be thrown together to tempt and encourage him to an undertaking so much beyond *the prospect of his belief.* The art of the poet furnishes these circumstances, and the engine, which his invention employs, is of a preternatural and prodigious sort. He introduces in the very opening of his scene a troop of sibyls or witches, who salute Macbeth with their divinations, and in the three solemn prophetic gratulations hail him Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor, and King hereafter!

> By Sinel's death I know I'm Thane of Glamis;
> But how of Cawdor?

One part of the propheey therefore is true; the remaining promises become more deserving of belief. This is one step in the ladder of his ambition, and mark how artfully the poet has laid it in his way. No time is lost; the wonderful machinery is not suffered to stand still, for behold a verification of the second prediction, and a courtier thus addresses him from the king—

> And for an earnest of a greater honour,
> He bade me from him call thee Thane of Cawdor.

The magic now works to his heart, and he cannot wait the departure of the royal messenger before his admiration vents itself aside—

> Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor!
> The greatest is behind.

A second time he turns aside, and unable to repress the emotions, which this second confirmation of the predictions has excited, repeats the same secret observation—

> Two truths are told
> As happy prologues to the swelling act
> Of the imperial theme.

A soliloquy then ensues, in which the poet judiciously opens enough of his character to show the spectator that these preternatural agents are not superfluously set to work upon a disposition prone to evil, but one that will have to combat many compunctious struggles, before it can be brought to yield even to oracular influence. This alone would demonstrate, if we needed demonstration, that Shakspeare, without resorting to the ancients, had the judgment of ages as it were instinctively. From this instant we are apprised that Macbeth meditates an attack upon our pity as well as upon our horror, when he puts the following question to his conscience—

> Why do I yield to that suggestion,
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
> Against the use of nature?

Now let us turn to Richard, in whose cruel heart no such remorse finds place: he needs no tempter. There is here no *dignus vindice nodus*, nor, indeed, any *knot* at all, for he is already practised in murder; ambition is his ruling passion, and a crown is in view, and he tells you at his very first entrance on the scene—

> I am determined to be a villain.

We are now presented with a character full formed and complete for all the savage purposes of the drama.

> *Impiger iracundus inexorabilis, acer.* HOR. ARS POET. 121.

The barriers of conscience are broken down, and the soul, hardened against shame, avows its own depravity.—

> Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
> To set my brother Clarence and the king
> In deadly hate the one against the other.

He observes no gradations in guilt, expresses no hesitation, practises no refinements, but plunges into blood with the familiarity of long custom, and gives orders to his assassins to despatch his brother Clarence with all the unfeeling tranquillity of a Nero or Caligula. Richard, having no longer any scruples to manage with his own conscience, is exactly in the predicament, which the dramatic poet Diphilus has described with such beautiful simplicity of expression—

> Ὅστις γὰρ αὐτὸς αὑτὸν οὐκ αἰσχύνεται
> Συνειδόθ' αὑτῷ φαῦλα διαπεπραγμένῳ,
> Πῶς τόν γε μηδὲν εἰδότ' αἰσχυνθήσεται.

The wretch who knows his own vile deeds, and yet fears not himself, how should he fear another, who knows them not.

It is manifest, therefore, that there is an essential difference in the developement of these characters, and that in favour of Macbeth: in his soul cruelty seems to dawn; it breaks out with faint glimmerings, like a winter morning, and gathers strength by slow degrees: in Richard it flames forth at once, mounting like the sun between the tropics, and enters boldly on its career without a herald. As the character of Macbeth has a moral advantage in this distinction, so has the drama of that name a much more interesting and affecting cast: the struggles of a soul, naturally virtuous, whilst it holds the guilty impulse of ambition at bay, affords the noblest theme for the drama, and puts the creative fancy of our poet upon a resource, in which he has been rivalled only by the great father of tragedy Æschylus in the prophetic effusions of Cassandra,

the incantations of the Persian Magi for raising the ghost of Darius, and the imaginary terrific forms of his furies; with all which our countryman probably had no acquaintance, or at most a very obscure one.

When I see the names of these two great luminaries of the dramatic sphere, so distant in time but so nearly allied in genius, casually brought in contact by the nature of my subject, I cannot help pausing for a while in this place to indulge so interesting a contemplation, in which I find my mind balanced between two objects, that seem to have equal claims upon me for my admiration. Æschylus is justly styled the father of tragedy, but this is not to be interpreted as if he was the inventor of it. Shakspeare with equal justice claims the same title, and his originality is qualified with the same exception. The Greek tragedy was not more rude and undigested when Æschylus brought it into shape, than the English tragedy was when Shakspeare began to write: if therefore it be granted that he had no aids from the Greek theatre, and I think this is not likely to be disputed, so far these great masters are upon equal ground. Æschylus was a warrior of high repute, of a lofty generous spirit, and deep, as it should seem, in the erudition of his times. In all these particulars he has great advantage over our countryman, who was humbly born, of the most menial occupation, and, as it is generally thought, unlearned. Æschylus had the whole epic of Homer in his hands, the Iliad, Odyssey, and that prolific source of dramatic fable, the Ilias Minor: he had also a great fabulous creation to resort to amongst his own divinities, characters ready defined, and an audience, whose superstition was prepared for every thing he could offer; he

had therefore a firmer and broader stage, if I may be allowed the expression, under his feet, than Shakspeare had. His fables in general are Homeric, and yet it does not follow that we can pronounce for Shakspeare that he is more original in his plots, for I understand that late researches have traced him in all or nearly all. Both poets added so much machinery and invention of their own in the conduct of their fables, that whatever might have been the source, still their streams had little or no taste of the spring they flowed from. In point of character we have better grounds to decide, and yet it is but justice to observe, that it is not fair to bring a mangled poet in comparison with one who is entire. In his divine personages, Æschylus has the field of Heaven, and indeed of Hell also, to himself; in his heroic and military characters he has never been excelled; he had too good a model within his own bosom to fail of making those delineations natural. In his imaginary beings also he will be found a respectable, though not an equal rival of our poet; but in the variety of character, in all the nicer touches of nature, in all the extravagances of caprice and humour, from the boldest feature down to the minutest foible, Shakspeare stands alone: such persons as he delineates never came into the contemplation of Æschylus as a poet; his tragedy has no dealing with them; the simplicity of the Greek fable, and the great portion of the drama filled up by the chorus, allow of little variety of character; and the most which can be said of Æschylus in this particular is, that he never offends against nature or propriety, whether his cast is in the terrible or pathetic, the elevated or the simple. His versification, with the intermixture of lyric composition, is more various than that of Shakspeare; both are

lofty and sublime in the extreme, abundantly metaphorical, and sometimes extravagant:—

— *Nubes et inania captat.*

This may be said of each poet in his turn; in each the critic, if he is in search for defects, will readily enough discover—

In scenam missus magno cum pondere versus.
HOR. ARS POET. 260.

Both were subject to be hurried on by an uncontrollable impulse, nor could nature alone suffice for either: Æschylus had an apt creation of imaginary beings at command—

He could call spirits from the vasty deep,

and they *would come*—Shakspeare, having no such creation in resource, boldly made one of his own; if Æschylus therefore was invincible, he owed it to his armour, and that, like the armour of Æneas, was the work of the gods: but the unassisted invention of Shakspeare seized all and more than superstition supplied to Æschylus.

NUMBER LXX.

—— *Ille profectò*
Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.
HOR. ARS POET. 316.

WE are now to attend Macbeth to the perpetration of the murder, which puts him in possession of the crown of Scotland: and this introduces a new personage on the scene, his accomplice and wife: she thus developes her own character—

Come, all you spirits,
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe topful

> Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood,
> Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
> That no compunctious visitings of nature
> Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
> Th' effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts,
> And take my milk for gall, you murth'ring ministers,
> Wherever in your sightless substances
> You wait on nature's mischief: come, thick night,
> And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell!

Terrible invocation! Tragedy can speak no stronger language, nor could any genius less than Shakspeare's support a character of so lofty a pitch, so sublimely terrible at the very opening.

The part which Lady Macbeth fills in the drama has a relative as well as positive importance, and serves to place the repugnance of Macbeth in the strongest point of view; she is, in fact, the auxiliary of the witches, and the natural influence, which so high and predominant a spirit asserts over the tamer qualities of her husband, makes those witches but secondary agents for bringing about the main action of the drama. This is well worth a remark; for if they, which are only artificial and fantastic instruments, had been made the sole or even principal movers of the great incident of the murder, Nature would have been excluded from her share in the drama, and Macbeth would have become the mere machine of an uncontrollable necessity, and his character, being robbed of its free agency, would have left no moral behind: I must take leave, therefore, to anticipate a remark, which I shall hereafter repeat, that when Lady Macbeth is urging her lord to the murder, not a word is dropt by either of the witches or their predictions. It is in these instances of his conduct that Shakspeare is so wonderful a study for the dramatic poet. But I proceed—

Lady Macbeth, in her first scene, from which I have already extracted a passage, prepares for an

attempt upon the conscience of her husband, whose nature she thus describes—

> Yet do I fear thy nature;
> It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness
> To catch the nearest way.

He arrives before she quits the scene, and she receives him with consummate address—

> Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
> Greater than both by the All-hail hereafter!

These are the very gratulations of the witches; she welcomes him with confirmed predictions, with the tempting salutations of ambition, not with the softening caresses of a wife—

> *Macb.* Duncan comes here to-night.
> *Lady.* And when goes hence?
> *Macb.* To-morrow, as he purposes.
> *Lady.* Oh never
> Shall sun that morrow see!

The rapidity of her passion hurries her into immediate explanation, and he, consistently with the character she had described, evades her precipitate solicitations with a short indecisive answer—

> We will speak further—

His reflections upon this interview, and the dreadful subject of it, are soon after given in soliloquy, in which the poet has mixt the most touching strokes of compunction with his meditations: he reasons against the villany of the act, and honour jointly with nature assails him with an argument of double force—

> He's here in double trust;
> First as I am his kinsman and his subject,
> Strong both against the deed; then as his host
> Who shou'd against the murtherer shut the door,
> Not bear the knife himself.

This appeal to nature, hospitality, and allegiance, was not without its impression; he again meets his lady, and immediately declares—

> We will proceed no further in this business.

This draws a retort upon him, in which his tergiversation and cowardice are satirized with so keen an edge, and interrogatory reproaches are pressed so fast upon him, that, catching hold in his retreat of one small but precious fragment in the wreck of innocence and honour, he demands a truce from her attack, and with the spirit of a combatant who has not yet yielded up his weapons, cries out—

> Pr'ythee, peace;

The words are no expletives; they do not fill up a sentence, but they form one: they stand in a most important pass; they defend the breach her ambition has made in his heart; a breach in the very citadel of humanity; they mark the last dignified struggle of virtue, and they have a double reflecting power, which in the first place shows that nothing but the voice of authority could stem the torrent of her invective, and in the next place announces that something, worthy of the solemn audience he had demanded, was on the point to follow—and worthy it is to be a standard sentiment of moral truth, expressed with proverbial simplicity, sinking into every heart that hears it—

> I dare do all that may become a man,
> Who dares do more is none.

How must every feeling spectator lament that a man should fall from virtue with such an appeal upon his lips!

Οὐκ ἔστίν οὐδεὶς δειλὸς, ὁ δεδοικὼς νόμον.

PHILONIDES.

'A man is not a coward because he fears to be unjust,' is the sentiment of an old dramatic poet.

Macbeth's principle is honour; cruelty is natural to his wife; ambition is common to both; one passion favourable to her purpose has taken place in his heart; another still hangs about it, which being adverse to her plot, is first to be expelled, before she can instil her cruelty into his nature. The sentiment above quoted had been firmly delivered, and was ushered in with an apostrophe suitable to its importance; she feels its weight; she perceives it is not to be turned aside with contempt, or laughed down by ridicule, as she had already done where weaker scruples had stood in the way; but, taking sophistry in aid, by a ready turn of argument she gives him credit for his sentiment, erects a more glittering, though fallacious, logic upon it, and by admitting his objection cunningly confutes it—

> What beast was't then
> That made you break this enterprize to me?
> When you durst do it, then you were a man,
> And to be more than what you were, you wou'd
> Be so much more than man.

Having thus parried his objection by a sophistry calculated to blind his reason and inflame his ambition, she breaks forth into such a vaunting display of hardened intrepidity, as presents one of the most terrific pictures that was ever imagined—

> I have given suck, and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;
> I wou'd, whilst it was smiling in my face,
> Have pluckt my nipple from its boneless gums,
> And dasht its brains out, had I but so sworn
> As you have done to this.

This is a note of horror, screwed to a pitch that bursts the very sinews of Nature; she no longer com-

bats with a human weapon, but seizing the flash of the lightning extinguishes her opponent with the stroke ; here the controversy must end, for he must either adopt her spirit, or take her life: he sinks under the attack, and offering nothing in delay of execution but a feeble hesitation, founded in fear— 'If we should fail'—he concludes with an assumed ferocity, caught from her and not springing from himself—

> I am settled, and bend up
> Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.

The strong and sublime strokes of a master impressed upon this scene make it a model of dramatic composition, and I must in this place remind the reader of the observation I have before hinted at, that no reference whatever is had to the auguries of the witches: it would be injustice to suppose that this was other than a purposed omission by the poet; a weaker genius would have resorted back to these instruments; Shakspeare had used and laid them aside for a time ; he had a stronger engine at work, and he could proudly exclaim—

> We defy auguries !—

Nature was sufficient for that work, and to show the mastery he had over nature, he took his human agent from the weaker sex.

This having passed in the first act, the murder is perpetrated in the succeeding one. The introductory soliloquy of Macbeth, the chimera of the dagger, and the signal on the bell, are awful preludes to the deed. In this dreadful interim Lady Macbeth, the great superintending spirit, enters to support the dreadful work. It is done ; and he returns appalled with sounds ; he surveys his bloody hands with horror ; he starts from her proposal of going back to

besmear the guards of Duncan's chamber, and she snatches the reeking daggers from his trembling hands to finish the imperfect work—

> Infirm of purpose,
> Give me the daggers!

She returns on the scene, the deed which he revolted from is performed, and with the same unshaken ferocity she vauntingly displays her bloody trophies, and exclaims—

> My hands are of your colour, but I shame
> To wear a heart so white.

Fancied noises, the throbbings of his own quailing heart, had shaken the constancy of Macbeth; real sounds, the certain signals of approaching visiters, to whom the situation of Duncan must be revealed, do not intimidate her; she is prepared for all trials, and coolly tells him—

> I hear a knocking
> At the south entry: Retire we to our chamber;
> A little water clears us of this deed.
> How easy is it then!

The several incidents thrown together in this scene of the murder of Duncan, are of so striking a sort as to need no elucidation: they are better felt than described, and my attempts point at passages of more obscurity, where the touches are thrown into shade, and the art of the author lies more out of sight.

Lady Macbeth being now retired from the scene, we may in this interval, as we did in the conclusion of the former paper, permit the genius of Æschylus to introduce a rival murderess on the stage.

Clytemnestra has received her husband Agamemnon, on his retutn from the capture of Troy, with studied rather than cordial congratulations. He op-

poses the pompous ceremonies she had devised for the display of his entry, with a magnanimous contempt of such adulation—

> Sooth me not with strains
> Of adulation, as a girl; nor raise
> As to some proud barbaric king, that loves
> Loud acclamations echoed from the mouths
> Of prostrate worshippers, a clamorous welcome:
> Spread not the streets with tapestry; 'tis invidious;
> These are the honours we shou'd pay the gods;
> For mortal men to tread on ornaments
> Of rich embroidery—no; I dare not do it:
> Respect me as a man, not as a god.
>
> POTTER'S ÆSCHYLUS.

These are heroic sentiments, but, in conclusion, the persuasions of the wife overcome the modest scruples of the hero, and he enters his palace in the pomp of triumph; when soon his dying groans are echoed from the interior scene, and the adultress comes forth besprinkled with the blood of her husband to avow the murder—

> I struck him twice, and twice
> He groan'd; then died: a third time as he lay
> I gor'd him with a wound; a grateful present
> To the stern god, that in the realms below
> Reigns o'er the dead: there let him take his seat,
> He lay, and spouting from his wounds a stream
> Of blood, bedew'd me with these crimson drops.
> I glory in them, like the genial earth,
> When the warm showers of heav'n descend, and wake
> The flowrets to unfold their vermeil leaves.
> Come then, ye reverend senators of Argos,
> Joy with me, if your hearts be turn'd to joy,
> And such I wish them. POTTER.

NUMBER LXXI.

Ille per extentum funem mihi posse videtur
Ire poëta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
Ut magus; et modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.
HOR. EPI. 2, 210.

RICHARD perpetrates several murders, but as the poet has not marked them with any distinguishing circumstances, they need not be enumerated on this occasion. Some of these he commits in his passage to power, others after he has seated himself on the throne. Ferociousness and hypocrisy are the prevailing features of his character, and as he has no one honourable or humane principle to combat, there is no opening for the poet to develope those secret workings of conscience, which he has so naturally done in the case of Macbeth.

The murder of Clarence, those of the queen's kinsmen, and of the young princes in the Tower, are all perpetrated in the same style of hardened cruelty. He takes the ordinary method of hiring ruffians to perform his bloody commissions, and there is nothing which particularly marks the scenes, wherein he imparts his purposes and instructions to them; a very little management serves even for Tirrel, who is not a professional murderer, but is reported to be—

—a discontented gentleman,
Whose humble means match not his haughty spirit.

With such a spirit Richard does not hold it necessary to use much circumlocution, and seems more in dread of delay than disappointment or discovery—

R. Is thy name Tirrel?
T. James Tirrel, and your most obedient subject.
R. Art thou, indeed?
T. Prove me, my gracious lord.
R. Dar'st thou resolve to kill a friend of mine?
T. Please you, I had rather kill two enemies.
R. Why then thou hast it; two deep enemies,
Foes to my rest and my sweet sleep's disturbers,
Are they that I would have thee deal upon:
Tirrel, I mean those bastards in the Tower.

If the reader calls to mind by what circumspect and slow degrees King John opens himself to Hubert under a similar situation with this of Richard, he will be convinced that Shakspeare considered preservation of character too important to sacrifice on any occasion to the vanity of fine writing; for the scene he has given to John, a timorous and wary prince, would ill suit the character of Richard. A close observance of nature is the first excellence of a dramatic poet, and the peculiar property of him we are reviewing.

In these two stages of our comparison, Macbeth appears with far more dramatic effect than Richard, whose first scenes present us with little else than traits of perfidiousness, one striking incident of successful hypocrisy practised on the Lady Anne, and an open unreserved display of rémorseless cruelty. Impatient of any pause or interruption in his measures, a dangerous friend and a determined foe:—

Effera torquebant avidæ præcordia curæ,
Effugeret ne quis gladios;—
Crescebat scelerata sitis; prædæque recentis
Incestus flagrabat amor, nullusque petendi
Cogendive pudor: crebris perjuria nectit
Blanditiis; sociat perituro fœdere dextras:
Si semel e tantis poscenti quisque negâsset,
Effera prætumido quatiebat corda furore.

CLAUDIAN IN RUF. LIB. I.

The sole rémorse his greedy heart can feel
Is if one life escapes his murdering steel:
That, which should quench, inflames his craving thirst,
The second draught still deepens on the first;
Shameless by force or fraud to work his way,
And no less prompt to flatter than betray:
This hour makes friendships which he breaks the next,
And every breach supplies a vile pretext
Basely to cancel all concessions past,
If in a thousand you deny the last.

Macbeth has now touched the goal of his ambition—

Thou hast it now; King, Cawdor, Glamis, all
The wayward sisters promis'd—

The auguries of the witches, to which no reference had been made in the heat of the main action, are now called to mind with many circumstances of galling aggravation, not only as to the prophecy, which gave the crown to the posterity of Banquo, but also of his own safety from the gallant and noble nature of that general—

Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that, which wou'd be fear'd.

Assassins are provided to murder Banquo and his son, but this is not decided upon without much previous meditation, and he seems prompted to the act more by desperation and dread, than by any settled resolution or natural cruelty. He convenes the assassins, and in a conference of some length works round to his point, by insinuations calculated to persuade them to dispatch Banquo for injuries done to them, rather than from motives which respect himself; in which scene we discover a remarkable preservation of character in Macbeth, who, by this artifice, strives to blind his own conscience, and throw the guilt upon theirs: in this, as in the former ac-

tion, there is nothing kingly in his cruelty; in one he acted under the controlling spirit of his wife, here he plays the sycophant with hired assassins, and confesses himself under awe of the superior genius of Banquo—

> ——Under him
> My genius is rebuk'd, as it is said
> Antony's was by Cæsar.

There is not a circumstance ever so minute in the conduct of this character, which does not point out to a diligent observer, how closely the poet has adhered to nature in every part of his delineation: accordingly we observe a peculiarity in the language of Macbeth, which is highly characteristic; I mean the figurative turn of his expressions, whenever his imagination strikes upon any gloomy subject—

> Oh! full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!

And in this state of self-torment every object of solemnity, though ever so familiar, becomes an object of terror; night, for instance, is not mentioned by him without an accompaniment of every melancholy attribute, which a frighted fancy can annex—

> Ere the bat hath flown
> His cloister'd flight, ere to black Hecate's summons
> The shard-born beetle with his drowsy hums
> Hath rung *Night's* yawning peal, there shall be done
> A deed of dreadful note.

It is the darkness of his soul that makes the night so dreadful, the *scorpions in his mind* convoke these images—but he has not yet done with it—

> Come, sealing *Night!*
> Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day;
> And with thy bloody and invisible hand
> Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond,
> Which keeps me pale. Light thickens, and the crow
> Makes wing to the rooky wood.
> Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
> Whilst *Night's* black agents to their prey do rouse.

The critic of language will observe that here is a redundancy and crowd of metaphors, but the critic of nature will acknowledge that it is the very truth of character, and join me in the remark which points it out.

In a tragedy so replete with murder, and in the display of a character so tortured by *the scorpions of the mind*, as this of Macbeth, it is naturally to be expected, that a genius like Shakspeare's, will call in the dead for their share in the horror of the scene. This he has done in two several ways; first, by the apparition of Banquo, which is invisible to all but Macbeth; secondly, by the spells and incantations of the witches, who raise spirits, which, in certain enigmatical predictions, shadow out his fate; and these are followed by a train of unborn revelations, drawn by the power of magic from the womb of futurity before their time.

It appears that Lady Macbeth was not a party in the assassination of Banquo, and the ghost, though twice visible to the murderer, is not seen by her. This is another incident highly worthy a particular remark; for by keeping her free from any participation in the horror of the sight, the poet is enabled to make a scene aside, between Macbeth and her, which contains some of the finest speakings in the play. The ghost in Hamlet, and the ghost of Darius in Æschylus, are introduced by preparation and prelude, this of Banquo is an object of surprise as well as terror, and there is scarce an incident to be named of more striking and dramatic effect: it is one amongst various proofs, that must convince every man who looks critically into Shakspeare, that he was as great a master in art as in nature: how it strikes me in this point of view, I shall take the liberty of explaining more at length.

The murder of Duncan is the main incident of

this tragedy; that of Banquo is subordinate: Duncan's blood was not only the first so shed by Macbeth, but the dignity of the person murdered, and the aggravating circumstances attending it, constitute a crime of the very first magnitude: for these reasons it might be expected, that the spectre most likely to haunt his imagination, would be that of Duncan; and the rather, because his terror and compunction were so much more strongly excited by this first murder, perpetrated with his own hands, than by the subsequent one of Banquo, palliated by evasion, and committed to others. But when we recollect that Lady Macbeth was not only his accomplice, but in fact the first mover in the murder of the king, we see good reason why Duncan's ghost could not be called up, unless she, who so deeply partook of the guilt, had also shared in the horror of the appearance; and as visitations of a peculiar sort were reserved for her in a later period of the drama, it was a point of consummate art and judgement to exclude her from the affair of Banquo's murder, and make the more susceptible conscience of Macbeth figure this apparition in his mind's eye, without any other witness to the vision.

I persuade myself these will appear very natural reasons, why the poet did not raise the ghost of the king in preference, though it is reasonable to think it would have been a much more noble incident in his hands, than this of Banquo. It now remains to examine, whether this is more fully justified by the peculiar situation reserved for Lady Macbeth, to which I have before adverted.

The intrepidity of her character is so marked, that we may well suppose no waking terrors could shake it, and in this light it must be acknowledged a very natural expedient to make her vent the agonies of her conscience in sleep. Dreams have been a

dramatic expedient ever since there has been a drama; Æschylus recites the dream of Clytemnestra immediately before her son Orestes kills her; she fancies she has given birth to a dragon—

> This new-born dragon, like an infant child,
> Laid in the cradle seem'd in want of food;
> And in her dream she held it to her breast;
> The milk he drew was mixed with clotted blood.
>
> POTTER.

This which is done by Æschylus, has been done by hundreds after him; but to introduce upon the scene the very person, walking in sleep, and giving vent to the horrid fancies that haunt her dream, in broken speeches expressive of her guilt, uttered before witnesses, and accompanied with that natural and expressive action of washing the blood from her defiled hands, was reserved for the original and bold genius of Shakspeare only. It is an incident so full of tragic horror, so daring, and, at the same time, so truly characteristic, that it stands out as a prominent feature in the most sublime drama in the world, and fully compensates for any sacrifices the poet might have made in the previous arrangement of his incidents.

NUMBER LXXII.

> *Servetur ad imum*
> *Qualis ab incœpto processerit, et sibi constet.*
>
> HOR. ARS POET. 126.

MACBETH now approaches towards his catastrophe: the heir of the crown is in arms, and he must defend valiantly what he has usurped villanously. His natural valour does not suffice for this trial; he

resorts to the witches; he conjures them to give answer to what he shall ask, and he again runs into all those pleonasms of speech, which I before remarked: the predictions he extorts from the apparitions are so couched as to seem favourable to him, at the same time that they correspond with events, which afterwards prove fatal. The management of this incident has so close a resemblance to what the Poet Claudian has done in the instance of Rufinus's vision, the night before his massacre, that I am tempted to insert the passage—

Ecce, videt diras alludere protinus umbras,
Quas dedit ipse neci; quarum, quæ clarior, una
Visa loqui—' Proh! surge toro; quid plurima volvis
Anxius? hæc requiem rebus, finemque labori
Allatura dies: omni jam plebe redibis
Altior, et læti manibus portabere vulgi.'—
Has canit ambages. Occulto fallitur ille
Omine, nec capitis fixi præsagia sentit.

CLAUD. IN RUF. 2, 328.

A ghastly vision in the dead of night
Of mangled, murdered ghosts appal his sight;
When hark! a voice from forth the shadowy train
Cries out—' Awake! what thoughts perplex thy brain?
Awake, arise! behold the day appears,
That ends thy labours, and dispels thy fears;
To loftier heights thy tow'ring head shall rise,
And the glad crowd shall lift thee to the skies'—
Thus spake the voice: he triumphs, nor beneath
Th' ambiguous omen sees the doom of death.

Confiding in his auguries Macbeth now prepares for battle: by the first of these he is assured—

That none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

By the second prediction he is told—

Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until
Great Birnam-wood to Dunsinane's high hill
Shall come against him.

These he calls *sweet boadments!* and concludes—

To sleep in spite of thunder.

This play is so replete with excellences, that it would exceed all bounds, if I were to notice every one; I pass over, therefore, that incomparable scene between Macbeth, the Physician, and Seyton, in which the agitations of his mind are so wonderfully expressed, and, without pausing for the death of Lady Macbeth, I conduct the reader to that crisis, when the messenger has announced the ominous approach of Birnam-wood—A burst of fury, an exclamation, seconded by a blow, is the first natural explosion of a soul so stung with *scorpions* as Macbeth's: the sudden gust is no sooner discharged, than Nature speaks her own language, and the still voice of conscience, like reason in the midst of madness, murmurs forth these mournful words—

I pall in resolution, and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth.

With what an exquisite feeling has this darling son of Nature here thrown in this touching, this pathetic sentence, amidst the very whirl and eddy of conflicting passions! Here is a study for dramatic poets; this is a string for an actor's skill to touch; this will discourse sweet music to the human heart, with which it is finely unisoned when struck with the hand of a master.

The next step brings us to the last scene of Macbeth's dramatic existence. Flushed with the blood of Siward he is encountered by Macduff, who crosses him like his evil genius—Macbeth cries out—

Of all men else I have avoided thee.

To the last moment of character the faithful poet

supports him; he breaks off from single combat, and, in the tremendous pause, so beautifully contrived to hang suspense and terror on the moral scene of his exit, the tyrant driven to bay, and panting with the heat and struggle of the fight, vauntingly exclaims—

Macb. As easy may'st thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests,
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.
Macd. Despair thy charm!
And let the angel, whom thou still hast served,
Tell thee Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.
Macb. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so!
For it hath cow'd my better part of man.

There sinks the spirit of Macbeth—

Behold! where stands
Th' usurper's cursed head!

How completely does this coincide with the passage already quoted!

Occulto fallitur ille
Omine, nec CAPITIS FIXI *præsagia sentit.*

Let us now approach the tent of Richard. It is matter of admiration to observe how many incidents the poet has collected in a small compass, to set the military character of his chief personage in a brilliant point of view. A succession of scouts and messengers report a variety of intelligence, all which, though generally of the most alarming nature, he meets not only with his natural gallantry, but sometimes with pleasantry, and a certain archness and repartee, which is peculiar to him throughout the drama.

It is not only a curious, but delightful task to

examine by what subtle and almost imperceptible touches Shakspeare contrives to set such marks upon his characters, as give them the most living likenesses that can be conceived. In this, above all other poets that ever existed, he is a study and a model of perfection: the great distinguishing passions every poet may describe; but Shakspeare gives you their humours, their minutest foibles, those little starts and caprices, which nothing but the most intimate familiarity brings to light; other authors write characters like historians; he like the bosom friend of the person he describes. The following extracts will furnish an example of what I have been saying.

Ratcliff informs Richard that a fleet is discovered on the western coast, supposed to be the party of Richmond—

K. R. Some light-foot friend post to the Duke of Norfolk;
Ratcliff, thyself; or Catesby—Where is he?
Cates. Here, my good lord.
K. Rich. Catesby, fly to the Duke.
Cates. I will, my lord, with all convenient haste.
K. Rich. Ratcliff, come hither; post to Salisbury;
When thou com'st thither—*Dull, unmindful villain!*
(To Catesby.
Why stays't thou here, and go'st not to the Duke?
Cates. First, mighty liege, tell me your highness's pleasure,
What from your grace I should deliver to him.
K. Rich. Oh, true, good Catesby!

I am persuaded I need not point out to the reader's sensibility, the fine turn in this expression, *Good Catesby!* How can we be surprised if such a poet makes us in love even with his villains?—Ratcliff proceeds—

Rat. What may it please you shall I do at Salisbury?
K. Rich. Why, what would'st thou do there before I go?
Rat. Your highness told me I should post before.
K. Rich. My mind is chang'd.

These fine touches can escape no man, who has an eye for nature. Lord Stanley reports to Richard—

Stanl. Richmond is on the seas.
K. Rich. There let him sink, and be the seas on him!
White liver'd runagate, what doth he there?

This reply is pointed with irony and invective: there are two causes in nature and character for this; first, Richard was before informed of the news; his passion was not taken by surprise, and he was enough at ease to make a play upon Stanley's word—*on the seas*—and retort—*be the seas on him!*—Secondly, Stanley was a suspected subject, Richard was, therefore, interested to show a contempt of his competitor before a man of such doubtful allegiance. In the spirit of this impression he urges Stanley to give an explicit answer to the question—*What doth he there?* Stanley endeavours to evade by answering that he *knows not but by guess:* the evasion only strengthens Richard's suspicions, and he again pushes him to disclose what he only guesses—*Well, as you guess*—Stanley replies—

He makes for England, here to claim the crown.
K. Rich. Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?
Is the king dead? the empire unpossess'd?
What heir of York is there alive but we?
And who is England's king but great York's heir?
Then tell me what makes he upon the sea?

What a cluster of characteristic excellences are here before us? All these interrogatories are *ad hominem;* they fit no man but Stanley, they can be uttered by no man but Richard, and they can flow from the conceptions of no poet but the poet of nature.

Stanley's whole scene ought to be investigated, for it is full of beauties, but I confess myself exhausted with the task, and language does not suffice

to furnish fresh terms of admiration, which a closer scrutiny would call forth.

Other messengers succeed Lord Stanley, Richard's fiery impatience does not wait the telling, but taking the outset of the account to be ominous, he strikes the courier, who, proceeding with his report, concludes with the good tidings of Buckingham's dispersion—Richard instantly retracts and says—

> Oh! I cry thee mercy.
> There is my purse to cure that blow of thine.

This is another trait of the same cast with that of *Good Catesby*.

Battles are of the growth of modern tragedy; I am not learned enough in the old stage to know if Shakspeare is the inventor of this bold and bustling innovation; but I am sure he is unrivalled in his execution of it, and this of Bosworth-field is a master-piece. I shall be less particular in my present description of it, because I may probably bring it under general review with other scenes of the like sort.

It will be sufficient to observe, that in the catastrophe of Richard nothing can be more glowing than the scene, nothing more brilliant than the conduct of the chief character: he exhibits the character of a perfect general, in whom, however, ardent courage seems the ruling feature; he performs every part of his office with minute attention, he inquires if certain alterations are made in his armour, and even orders what particular horse he intends to charge with: he is gay with his chief officers, and even gracious to some he confides in: his gallantry is of so dazzling a quality, that we begin to feel the pride of Englishmen, and, overlooking his crimes, glory in our courageous king. Richmond is one of those civil, conscientious gentle-

men, who are not very apt to captivate a spectator, and Richard, loaded as he is with enormities, rises in the comparison, and I suspect carries the good wishes of many of his audience into action, and dies with their regret.

As soon as he retires to his tent the poet begins to put in motion his great moral machinery of the ghosts. Trifles are not made for Shakspeare; difficulties, that would have plunged the spirit of any other poet, and turned his scenery into inevitable ridicule, are nothing in his way; he brings forward a long string of ghosts, and puts a speech into each of their mouths without any fear of consequences. Richard starts from his couch, and before he has shaken off the terrors of his dream, cries out—

> Give me another horse!—bind up my wounds!—
> Have mercy, Jesu!—Soft, I did but dream!—
> O coward conscience—&c.

But I may conclude my subject; every reader can go on with the soliloquy, and no words of mine can be wanted to excite their admiration.

NUMBER LXXIII.

When it had entered into the mind of Shakspeare, to form an historical play upon certain events in the reign of Henry the Fourth of England, the character of the Prince of Wales recommended itself to his fancy, as likely to supply him with a fund of dramatic incidents; for what could invention have more happily suggested than this character, which history presented ready to his hands? a riotous dis-

orderly young libertine, in whose nature lay hidden those seeds of heroism and ambition, which were to burst forth at once to the astonishment of the world, and to achieve the conquest of France. This prince, whose character was destined to exhibit a revolution of so brilliant a sort, was not only in himself a very tempting hero for the dramatic poet, who delights in incidents of novelty and surprise, but also offered to his imagination a train of attendant characters, in the persons of his wild comrades and associates, which would be of themselves a drama. Here was a field for invention wide enough even for the genius of Shakspeare to range in. All the humours, passions, and extravagances of human life might be brought into the composition, and when he had grouped and personified them to his taste and liking, he had a leader ready to place at the head of the train, and the truth of history to give life and interest to his drama.

With these materials ready for creation the great artist sat down to his work; the canvas was spread before him, ample and capacious as the expanse of his own fancy; Nature put her pencil into his hand, and he began to sketch. His first concern was to give a chief or captain to this gang of rioters; this would naturally be the first outline he drew. To fill up the drawing of this personage he conceived a voluptuary, in whose figure and character there should be an assemblage of comic qualities: in his person he should be bloated and blown up to the size of a Silenus, lazy, luxurious, in sensuality a satyr, in intemperance a bacchanalian. As he was to stand in the post of a ringleader amongst thieves and cut-purses, he made him a notorious liar, a swaggering coward, vain-glorious, arbitrary, knavish, crafty, voracious of plunder, lavish of his gains, without credit, honour, or honesty, and in debt to

every body about him. As he was to be the chief seducer and misleader of the heir-apparent of the crown, it was incumbent on the poet to qualify him for that part in such a manner as should give probability and even a plea to the temptation; this was only to be done by the strongest touches and the highest colourings of a master; by hitting off a humour of so happy, so facetious, and so alluring a cast, as should tempt even royalty to forget itself, and virtue to turn reveller in his company. His lies, his vanity, and his cowardice, too gross to deceive, were to be so ingenious as to give delight; his cunning evasions, his witty resources, his mock solemnity, his vapouring self consequence, were to furnish a continual feast of laughter to his royal companion; he was not only to be witty himself but the cause of wit in other people; a whetstone for raillery; a buffoon, whose very person was a jest. Compounded of these humours, Shakspeare produced the character of Sir John Falstaff: a character, which neither ancient nor modern comedy has ever equalled, which was so much the favourite of its author as to be introduced in three several plays, and which is likely to be the idol of the English stage, as long as it shall speak the language of Shakspeare.

This character almost singly supports the whole comic plot of the first part of Henry the Fourth; the poet has, indeed, thrown in some auxiliary humours in the persons of Gadshill, Peto, Bardolph, and Hostess Quickly; the two first serve for little else except to fill up the action, but Bardolph as a butt to Falstaff's raillery, and the hostess in her wrangling scene with him, when his pockets had been emptied as he was asleep in the tavern, give occasion to scenes of infinite pleasantry. Poins is contrasted from the rest of the gang, and as he is

made the companion of the prince, is very properly represented as a man of better qualities and morals than Falstaff's more immediate hangers-on and dependants.

The humour of Falstaff opens into full display upon his very first introduction with the prince; the incident of the robbery on the highway, the scene in Eastcheap in consequence of that ridiculous encounter, and the whole of his conduct during the action with Percy, are so exquisitely pleasant, that upon the renovation of his dramatic life in the second part of Henry the Fourth, I question if the humour does not in part evaporate by continuation; at least I am persuaded that it flattens a little in the outset, and though his wit may not flow less copiously, yet it comes with more labour and is farther fetched. The poet seems to have been sensible how difficult it was to preserve the vein as rich as at first, and has, therefore, strengthened his comic plot in the second play with several new recruits, who may take a share with Falstaff, to whom he no longer entrusts the whole burthen of the humour. In the front of these auxiliaries stands Pistol, a character so new, whimsical, and extravagant, that if it were not for a commentator now living, whose very extraordinary researches, amongst our old authors, have supplied us with passages to illuminate the strange rhapsodies which Shakspeare has put into his mouth, I should for one have thought Ancient Pistol as wild and imaginary a being as Caliban; but I now perceive, by the help of these discoveries, that the character is made up in great part of absurd and fustian passages from many plays, in which Shakspeare *was versed*, *and*, *perhaps*, had been a performer. Pistol's dialogue is a tissue of old tags of bombast, like the Middle Comedy of the Greeks,

which dealt in parody. I abate of my astonishment at the invention and originality of the poet, but it does not lesson my respect for his ingenuity. Shakspeare founded his bully in parody, Jonson copied his from nature, and the palm seems due to Bobadil, upon a comparison with Pistol; Congreve copied a very happy likeness from Jonson, and, by the fairest and most laudable imitation, produced his Noll Bluff, one of the pleasantest humourists on the comic stage.

Shallow and Silence are two very strong auxiliaries to this second part of Falstaff's humours, and though they do not absolutely belong to his family, they are nevertheless near of kin, and derivatives from his stock. Surely two pleasanter fellows never trode the stage: they not only contrast and play upon each other, but Silence sober and Silence tipsy make the most comical reverse in nature; never was drunkenness so well introduced, or so happily employed in any drama. The dialogue between Shallow and Falstaff, and the description given by the latter of Shallow's youthful frolicks, are as true nature and as true comedy as man's invention ever produced. The recruits are also in the literal sense the recruits of the drama. These personages have the further merit of throwing Falstaff's character into a new cast, and giving it the seasonable relief of variety.

Dame Quickly also, in this second part, resumes her rôle with great comic spirit, but with some variation of character, for the purpose of introducing a new member into the troop, in the person of Doll Tearsheet, the common trull of the times. Though this part is very strongly coloured, and though the scene with her and Falstaff is of a loose as well as ludicrous nature, yet if we compare Shakspeare's conduct of this incident with that of the dramatic

writers of his time, and even since his time, we must confess he has managed it with more than common care, and exhibited his comic hero in a very ridiculous light, without any of those gross indecences which the poets of his age indulged themselves in without restraint.

The humour of the Prince of Wales is not so free and unconstrained as in the first part; though he still demeans himself in the course of his revels, yet it is with frequent marks of repugnance and self-consideration, as becomes the conqueror of Percy, and we see his character approaching fast towards a thorough reformation; but though we are thus prepared for the change that is to happen, when this young hero throws off the reveller and assumes the king, yet we are not fortified against the weakness of pity, when the disappointment and banishment of Falstaff takes place, and the poet executes justice upon his inimitable delinquent, with all the rigour of an unrelenting moralist. The reader or spectator, who has accompanied Falstaff through his dramatic story, is in debt to him for so many pleasant moments, that all his failings, which should have raised contempt, have only provoked laughter, and he begins to think they are not natural to his character, but assumed for his amusement. With these impressions we see him delivered over to mortification and disgrace, and bewail his punishment with a sensibility, that is only due to the sufferings of the virtuous.

As it is impossible to ascertain the limits of Shakspeare's genius, I will not presume to say he could not have supported his humour, had he chosen to have prolonged his existence through the succeeding drama of Henry the Fifth; we may conclude, that no ready expedient presented itself to his fancy, and he was not apt to spend much pains

in searching for such: he therefore put him to death, by which he fairly placed him out of the reach of his contemporaries, and got rid of the trouble and difficulty of keeping him up to his original pitch, if he had attempted to carry him through a third drama, after he had removed the Prince of Wales out of his company, and seated him on the throne. I cannot doubt but there were resources in Shakspeare's genius, and a latitude of humour in the character of Falstaff, which might have furnished scenes of admirable comedy by exhibiting him in his disgrace, and both Shallow and Silence would have been accessaries to his pleasantry. Even the field of Agincourt, and the distress of the king's army before the action, had the poet thought proper to have produced Falstaff on the scene, might have been as fruitful in comic incidents as the battle of Shrewsbury: this we can readily believe from the humours of Fluellen and Pistol, which he has woven into his drama; the former of whom is made to remind us of Falstaff, in his dialogue with Captain Gower, when he tells him that—'As Alexander is kill his friend Clytus, being in his ales and his cups, so also Harry Monmouth, being in his right wits and his goot judgements, is turn away the fat Knight with the great-pelly-doublet. He was full of gests and gypes and knaveries, and mocks; I am forget his name.—Sir John Falstaff.—That is he.'—This passage has ever given me a pleasing sensation, as it marks a regret in the poet to part with a favourite character, and is a tender farewell to his memory. It is also with particular propriety that these words are put into the mouth of Fluellen, who stands here as his substitute, and whose humour, as well as that of Nym, may be said to have arisen out of the ashes of Falstaff.

NUMBER LXXIV.

I WAS surprised the other day to find our learned poet Ben Jonson had been poaching in an obscure collection of love-letters, written by the sophist Philostratus in a very rhapsodical style, merely for the purpose of stringing together a parcel of unnatural far-fetched conceits, more calculated to disgust a man of Jonson's classic taste, than to put him upon the humble task of copying them, and then fathering the translation. The little poem he has taken from this despicable sophist is now become a very popular song, and is the ninth in his collection entitled The Forest.

I will take the liberty of inserting Jonson's translation and compare it with the original, stanza by stanza—

I.

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
  And I will pledge with mine,
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
  And I'll not look for wine.

PHILOSTRATUS, LETTER XXIV.

"Ἐμοὶ δὲ μόνοις πρόπινε τοῖς ὄμμασιν—Drink to me with thine eyes only. Εἰ δὲ βούλει τοῖς χείλεσι προσφέρουσα, πλήρου φιλημάτων τὸ ἔκπωμα, καὶ οὕτως δίδου. Or if thou wilt, putting the cup to thy lips, fill it with kisses, and so bestow it upon me.

II.

The thirst that from the soul doth rise,
 Demands a drink divine,
But might I of Jove's nectar sip,
 I would not change for thine.

PHIL. LETTER XXV.

'Ἐγὼ, ἐπειδὰν ἴδω σε, διψῶ, καὶ τὸ ἔκπωμα κατέχων, καὶ τὸ μὲν οὐ προσάγω τοῖς χείλεσι σοῦ δὲ οἶδα πίνων. I, as soon as I behold thee, thirst, and taking hold of the cup, do not, indeed, apply that to my lips for drink, but thee.'

III.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
 Not so much honouring thee,
As giving it a hope that there
 It might not withered be.

PHIL. LETTER XXX.

'Πέπομφά σοι στέφανον ῥόδων, οὐ σὲ τιμῶν, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ, ἀλλ' αὐτοῖς τι χαριζόμενος τοῖς ῥόδοις, ἵνα μὴ μαρανθῇ. I send thee a rosy wreath, not so much honouring thee, though this also is in my thoughts, as bestowing favour upon the roses, that so they might not be withered.'

IV.

But thou thereon didst only breathe,
 And sent'st it back to me,
Since when it grows and smells I swear
 Not of itself, but thee.

PHIL. LETTER XXXI.

'Εἰ δὲ βούλει τὶ φίλῳ χαρίζεσθαι, τὰ λείψανα αὐτῶν ἀντίπεμψον, μηκέτι πνέοντα ῥόδον μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ σοῦ.

If thou wouldst do a kindness to thy lover, send back the relicks of the roses [I gave thee], for they will smell no longer of themselves only, but of thee.'

When the learned poet published his love-song without any acknowledgment to Philostratus, I hope the reason of his omitting it was because he did not choose to call the public curiosity to a perusal of such unseemly and unnatural rhapsodies, as he had condescended to copy from.

Now I am upon the subject of Ben Jonson, I shall take notice of two passages in The Induction on the Stage, prefixed to his play of Bartholomew Fair, in which he gives a sly glance at Shakspeare —' And then a substantial watch to have stolen in upon them, and taken them away with mistaking words, as the fashion is in the stage practice.' It is plain he has Dogberry and Verges in his eye, and no less so in the following, that he points his ridicule against Caliban and the romance of the Tempest—' If there be never a servant-monster in the fair who can help it, *he says*, nor a nest of anticks? He is loth to make nature afraid in his plays, like those that beget tales, Tempests, and such like drolleries, to mix his head with other men's heels.' If any of our commentators upon Shakspeare have anticipated my remark upon these instances of Jonson's propensities to carp at their favourite poet, I have overlooked the annotation, but when I find him recommending to his audience, such a farrago of vulgar ribaldry as Bartholomew Fair, by pretending to exalt it above such exquisite productions as the Tempest, and Much Ado about Nothing, it is an act of warrantable retaliation to expose his vanity.

It is not always, however, that he betakes him-

self to these masked attacks upon that sublime genius, which he professed to admire almost to idolatry; it must be owned he sometimes meets him upon equal ground, and nobly contends with laudable emulation for the chaplet of victory. What I now particularly have in my eye is the Masque of the Queens.

Many ingenious observations have been given to the public upon Shakspeare's Imaginary Beings; his Caliban, Ariel, and all his family of witches, ghosts, and fairies, have been referred to as examples of his creative fancy, and with reason has his superiority been asserted in the fabrication of these preternatural machines; and as to the art with which he has woven them into the fables of his dramas, and the incidents he has produced by their agency, he is in these particulars still more indisputably unrivalled; the language he has given to Caliban, and no less characteristically to his Ariel, is so original, so inimitable, that it is more like magic than invention, and his fairy poetry is as happy as it can be. It were a jest to compare Æschylus's ghost of Darius, or any ghost that ever walked, with the perturbed spirit of Hamlet. Great and merited encomiums have also been passed upon the weird sisters in that wonderful drama, and a decided preference given them over the famous Erichtho of Lucan. Preferable they doubtless are, if we contemplate them in their dramatic characters, and take into our account the grand and awful commission, which they bear in that scene of tragic terror; but of their poetical superiority, simply considered, I have some doubts; let me add to this, that when the learned commentator was instancing Lucan's Erichtho, it is matter of some wonder with me, how he came to overlook Jonson's witches, in the Masque of the Queens.

As he has not, however, prevented me of the honour of bringing these two poetic champions together into the lists, I will avail myself of the occasion, and leave it with the spectators to decide upon the contest. I will only, as their herald, give notice, that the combatants are enchanters, and he that has no taste for necromancy, nor any science in the terms of the art, has no right to give his voice upon the trial of skill.

SHAKSPEARE.

1st Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?
2d ——— Killing swine.
3d ——— A sailor's wife had chesnuts in her lap,
And mouncht, and mouncht, and mouncht ——— Give me, quoth I!
Aroint thee, witch, the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' Tiger;
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And like a cat without a tail,
I'll do—I'll do—I'll do.
2d Witch, I'll give thee a wind.
3d ——— Thou art kind,
1st ——— And I another.
3d ——— I myself have all the other,
And the very points they blow,
All the quarters that they know,
I' th' shipman's card.
I will drain him dry as hay,
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man forbid;
Weary sev'n-nights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine;
Tho' his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest tost.
Look, what I have.
2d ——— Shew me, shew me.
3d ——— Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wreckt as homeward he did come.
1st ——— A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

All. The weird sisters hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about,
Thrice to thine and thrice to mine,
And thrice again to make up nine.
Peace! the charm's wound up.

JONSON.

Dame. Well done, my hags!—
But first relate me what you have sought,
Where you have been, and what you have brought.
1*st Hag.* I have been all day looking after
A raven feeding upon a quarter;
And soon as she turned her beak to the south,
I snatch'd this morsel out of her mouth.
2*d Hag.* I last night lay all alone
O' th' ground to hear the mandrake groan,
And pluckt him up though he grew full low,
And as I had done the cock did crow.
6*th Hag.* I had a dagger; what did I with that?
Kill'd an infant to have his fat;
A piper it got at a church-ale,
I bade him again blow wind in its tail.
7*th Hag.* A murderer yonder was hung in chains,
The sun and the wind had shrunk his veins;
I bit off a sinew, I clipt his hair,
I brought off his rags that danc'd in the air.
8*th Hag.* The scrich-owl's eggs and the feathers black,
The blood of the frog, and the bone in his back,
I have been getting, and made of his skin
A purset to keep Sir Cranion in.
9*th Hag.* And I ha' been plucking (plants among)
Hemlock, henbane, adder's tongue,
Night-shade, moon-wort, libbard's bane,
And twice by the dogs was like to be ta'en.
11*th Hag.* I went to the toad, breeds under the wall,
I charm'd him out, and he came at my call,
I scratcht out the eyes of the owl before,
I tore the bat's wing—What would you have more?
Dame. Yes, I have brought (to help our vows)
Horned poppy, cypress boughs,
The fig-tree wild, that grows on tombs,
And juice that from the larch-tree comes,
The basilisk's blood, and the viper's skin—
And now our orgies let's begin!

SHAKSPEARE'S CHARM.

1st Witch. Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.
2d —— Twice and once the hedge-pig whin'd.
3d —— Harper cries, 'tis time! 'tis time!'
1*st* —— Round about the cauldron go,
In the poison'd entrails throw.
——Toad, that under the cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' th' charmed pot.
All. Double, double, toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble!
2d Witch. Fillet of a fenny snake
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell broth, boil and bubble!
All. Double, double, toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble!
3d Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witch's mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravening salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock, dig'd i' the dark;
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat, and slips of yew
Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch delivered of a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab;
Add thereto a tiger's chawdron
For the ingredients of our cauldron.
All. Double, double, toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble!
1*st Witch.* Cool it with a baboon's blood—
Then the charm is firm and good.

JONSON'S CHARM.

The owl is abroad, the bat and the toad,
  And so is the cat-a-mountain,
The ant and the mole sit both in a hole,
  And frog peeps out of the fountain.
The dogs they do bay, and the timbrels play,
  The spindle is now a-turning,
The moon it is red, and the stars are fled,
  And all the sky is a burning.

2nd Charm.

Deep, oh deep, we lay thee to sleep,
We leave thee drink by, if thou chance to be dry,
Both milk and blood, the dew and the flood.
We breathe in thy bed, at the foot and the head:
We cover thee warm, that thou take no harm,
And when thou dost awake, dame earth shall quake, &c.

3d Charm.

A cloud of pitch, a spur and a switch,
To haste him away, and a whirlwind play
Before and after, with thunder for laughter,
And storms of joy, of the roaring boy,
His head of a drake, his tail of a snake.

4th Charm.

About, about and about!
Till the mists arise and the lights fly out:
The images neither be seen nor felt,
The woollen burn and the waxen melt;
Sprinkle your liquors upon the ground,
And into the air: Around, around!
    Around, around!
    Around, around!
    Till a music sound,
    And the pace be found
    To which we may dance,
    And our charms advance.

I should observe that these quotations from Jonson are selected partially and not given in continua-

tion, as they are to be found in the Masque, which is much too long to be given entire; they are accompanied with a commentary by the author, full of dæmonological learning, which was a very courtly study in the time of James the First, who was an author in that branch of superstitious pedantry.

I am aware there is little to gratify the reader's curiosity in these extracts, and still less to distract his judgement in deciding between them: they are so far curious, however, as they show how strongly the characters of the poets are distinguished even in these fantastic specimens; Jonson dwells upon authorities without fancy, Shakspeare employs fancy and creates authorities.

NUMBER LXXV.

Usus vetusto genere, sed rebus novis.
PROLOG. PHÆD. FAB. LIB. V.

BEN JONSON, in his prologue to the comedy of The Fox, says that he wrote it in the short space of five weeks, his words are—

> To these there needs no lie but this his creature,
> Which was two months since no feature;
> And tho' he dares give them five lives to mend it,
> 'Tis known five weeks fully penn'd it.

This he delivers in his usual vaunting style, spurning at the critics and detractors of his day, who thought to convict him of dulness by testifying in fact to his diligence. The magic movements of Shakspeare's muse had been so noted and applauded for their surprising rapidity, that the public had

contracted a very ridiculous respect for hasty productions in general, and thought there could be no better test of a poet's genius, than the despatch and facility with which he wrote: Jonson, therefore, affects to mark his contempt of the public judgement for applauding hasty writers, in the couplet preceding those above quoted—

> And when his plays come out, think they can flout 'em
> With saying, He was a year about them.

But at the same time that he shows this contempt very justly, he certainly betrays a degree of weakness in boasting of his poetical despatch, and seems to forget that he had noted Shakspeare with something less than friendly censure, for the very quality he is vaunting himself upon.

Several comic poets since his age have seemed to pride themselves on the little time they expended on their productions; some have had the artifice to hook it in as an excuse for their errors, but it is no less evident what share vanity has in all such apologies. Wycherley is an instance amongst these, and Congreve tells of his expedition in writing the *Old Bachelor*, yet the same man afterwards, in his letter to Mr. Dryden, pompously pronounces, that to write one perfect comedy should be the labour of one entire life, produced from a concentration of talents which hardly ever met in any human person.

After all, it will be confessed, that the production of such a drama as *The Fox*, in the space of five weeks, is a very wonderful performance; for it must on all hands be considered as the master-piece of a very capital artist, a work, that bears the stamp of elaborate design, a strong and frequently a sublime vein of poetry, much sterling wit, comic humour, happy character, moral satire, and unrivalled erudition; a work—

Quod non imber edax, non aquilo impotens
Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis
Annorum series et fuga temporum.

In this drama the learned reader will find himself for ever treading upon classic ground; the foot of the poet is so fitted and familiarized to the Grecian sock, that he wears it not with the awkwardness of an imitator, but with all the easy confidence and authoritative air of a privileged Athenian; exclusive of Aristophanes, in whose volume he is perfect, it is plain that even the gleanings and broken fragments of the Greek stage had not escaped him; in the very first speech of Volpone, which opens the comedy, and in which he rapturously addresses himself to his treasure, he is to be traced most decidedly in the fragments of Menander, Sophocles, and Euripides, in Theognis and in Hesiod, not to mention Horace. To follow him through every one would be tedious, and, therefore, I will give a sample of one passage only; Volpone is speaking to his gold—

Thou being the best of things and far transcending
All style of joy in children, parents, friends—
Thy looks when they to Venus did ascribe,
They should have given her twenty thousand Cupids,
Such are thy beauties and our loves.

Let the curious reader compare this with the following fragment of Euripides's Bellerophon, and he will find it almost a translation—

Ὦ χρυσὲ δεξίωμα κάλλιστον βροτοῖς,
Ὡς οὐδὲ μήτηρ ἡδονὰς τοίασδ' ἔχει,
Οὐ παῖδες ἀνθρώποισιν, οὐ φίλος πατὴρ—
Εἰ δὴ Κύπρις τοιοῦτον ὀφθαλμοῖς ὁρᾷ,
Οὐ θαῦμ', ἔρωτας μυρίους αὐτὴν τρέφειν.

Cicero made a selection of passages from the Greek dramatic authors, which he turned into Latin

verse, for the purpose of applying them as occasion should offer, either in his writings or pleadings, and our learned countryman seems on his part to have made the whole circle of Greek and Roman poets his own, and naturalized them to our stage. If any learned man would employ his leisure in following his allusions through this comedy only, I should think it would be no unentertaining task.

The Fox is indubitably the best production of its author, and, in some points of substantial merit, yields to nothing which the English stage can oppose to it: there is a bold and happy spirit in the fable, it is of moral tendency, female chastity and honour are beautifully displayed, and punishment is inflicted on the delinquents of the drama with strict and exemplary justice. The characters of the Heredipetæ, depicted under the titles of birds of prey, Voltore, Corbaccio, and Corvino, are warmly coloured, happily contrasted, and faithfully supported, from the outset to the end. Volpone, who gives his name to the piece, with a fox-like craftiness, deludes and gulls their hopes by the agency of his inimitable Parasite, or, as the Greek and Roman authors expressed it, by his Fly, his Mosca; and in this finished portrait Jonson may throw the gauntlet to the greatest masters of antiquity; the character is of classic origin; it is found with the contemporaries of Aristophanes, though not in any comedy of his now existing; the Middle Dramatists seem to have handled it very frequently, and in the New Comedy it rarely failed to find a place; Plautus has it again and again, but the aggregate merit of all his Parasites will not weigh in the scale against this single Fly of our poet. The incident of his concealing Bonario in the gallery, from whence he breaks in upon the scene to the rescue of Celia and the detection of Volpone, is one of the

happiest contrivances, which could possibly be devised, because, at the same time that it produces the catastrophe, it does not sacrifice Mosca's character in the manner most villains are sacrificed in comedy, by making them commit blunders, which do not correspond with the address their first representation exhibits, and which the audience has a right to expect from them throughout, of which the Double Dealer is, amongst others, a notable instance. But this incident of Bonario's interference does not only not impeach the adroitness of the Parasite, but it furnishes a very brilliant occasion for setting off his ready invention and presence of mind in a new and superior light, and serves to introduce the whole machinery of the trial and condemnation of the innocent persons before the Court of Advocates. In this part of the fable the contrivance is inimitable, and here the poet's art is a study, which every votarist of the dramatic muses ought to pay attention and respect to; had the same address been exerted throughout, the construction would have been a matchless piece of art, but here we are to lament the haste of which he boasts in his prologue, and that rapidity of composition, which he appeals to as a mark of genius, is to be lamented as the probable cause of incorrectness, or at least the best and most candid plea in excuse of it. For who can deny that nature is violated by the absurdity of Volpone's unseasonable insults to the very persons who had witnessed falsely in his defence, and even to the very Advocate, who had so successfully defended him? Is it in character for a man of his deep cunning and long reach of thought to provoke those, on whom his all depended, to retaliate upon him, and this for the poor triumph of a silly jest? Certainly this is a glaring defect, which every body must lament, and which

can escape nobody. The poet himself knew the weak part of his plot, and vainly strives to bolster it up, by making Volpone exclaim against his own folly—

> I am caught in my own noose—

And again—

> To make a snare for mine own neck, and run
> My head into it wilfully with laughter!
> When I had newly 'scap'd, was free and clear,
> Out of mere wantonness! Oh, the dull devil
> Was in this brain of mine, when I devis'd it,
> And Mosca gave it second—
> —These are my fine conceits!
> I must be merry, with a mischief to me!
> What a vile wretch was I, that could not bear
> My fortune soberly! I must have my crotchets,
> And my conundrums!

It is with regret I feel myself compelled to protest against so pleasant an episode, as that which is carried on by Sir Politic Would-be and Peregrine, which, in fact, produces a kind of double plot and catastrophe; this is an imperfection in the fable, which criticism cannot overlook, but Sir Politic is altogether so delightful a fellow, that it is impossible to give a vote for his exclusion; the most that can be done against him, is to lament that he has not more relation to the main business of the fable.

The judgement pronounced upon the criminals in the conclusion of the play, is so just and solemn, that I must think the poet has made a wanton breach of character, and gained but a sorry jest by the bargain, when he violates the dignity of his court of judges, by making one of them so abject in his flattery to the Parasite, upon the idea of matching him with his daughter, when he hears that Volpone has made him his heir; but this is an objec-

tion, that lies within the compass of two short lines, spoken aside from the bench, and may easily be remedied by their omission in representation; it is one only, and that a very slight one, amongst those venial blemishes—

—*quas incuria fudit.*

It does not occur to me that any other remark is left for me to make upon this celebrated drama, that could convey the slightest censure; but very many might be made in the highest strain of commendation, if there was need of any more than general testimony to such acknowledged merit. The Fox is a drama of so peculiar a species, that it cannot be dragged into a comparison with the production of any other modern poet whatsoever; its construction is so dissimilar from any thing of Shakspeare's writing, that it would be going greatly out of our way, and a very gross abuse of criticism, to attempt to settle the relative degrees of merit, where the characters of the writers are so widely opposite. In one we may respect the profundity of learning, in the other we must admire the sublimity of genius: to one we pay the tribute of understanding, to the other we surrender up the possession of our hearts; Shakspeare, with ten thousand spots about him, dazzles us with so bright a lustre, that we either cannot, or will not, see his faults; he gleams and flashes like a meteor, which shoots out of our sight before the eye can measure its proportions, or analyse its properties;—but Jonson stands still to be surveyed, and presents so bold a front, and levels it so fully to our view, as seems to challenge the compass and the rule of the critic, and defy him to find out an error in the scale and composition of his structure.

Putting aside, therefore, any further mention of

Shakspeare, who was a poet out of all rule, and beyond all compass of criticism, one whose excellences are above comparison, and his errors beyond number, I will venture an opinion, that this drama of The Fox, is, critically speaking, the nearest to perfection of any one drama, comic or tragic, which the English stage is at this day in possession of.

NUMBER LXXVI.

In my foregoing paper, when I remarked that Jonson, in his comedy of The Fox, was a close copier of the ancients, it occurred to me to say something upon the celebrated drama of The Sampson Agonistes, which, though less beholden to the Greek poets in its dialogue than the comedy above-mentioned, is in all other particulars as complete an imitation of the ancient tragedy, as the distance of times and the difference of languages will admit of.

It is professedly built according to ancient rule and example, and the author, by taking Aristotle's definition of tragedy for his motto, fairly challenges the critic to examine and compare it by that test. His close adherence to the model of the Greek tragedy is in nothing more conspicuous than in the simplicity of his diction; in this particular he has curbed his fancy with so tight a hand, that, knowing as we do the fertile vein of his genius, we cannot but lament the fidelity of his imitation; for there is a harshness in the metre of his Chorus, which, to a certain degree seems to border upon pedantry and affectation; he premises that the measure is, indeed, of all sorts,

but I must take leave to observe, that in some places it is no measure at all, or such at least as the ear will not patiently endure, nor which any recitation can make harmonious. By casting out of his composition the strophe and antistrophe, those stanzas which the Greeks appropriated to singing, or, in one word, by making his Chorus monostrophic, he has robbed it of that lyric beauty, which he was capable of bestowing in the highest perfection; and why he should stop short in this particular, when he had otherwise gone so far in imitation, is not easy to guess; for surely it would have been quite as natural to suppose those stanzas, had he written any, might be sung, as that all the other parts, as the drama now stands, with a Chorus of such irregular measure, might be recited or given in representation.

Now it is well known to every man conversant in the Greek theatre, how the Chorus, which in fact is the parent of the drama, came in process of improvement to be woven into the fable, and from being at first the whole, grew in time to be only a part: the fable being simple, and the characters few, the striking part of the spectacle rested upon the singing and dancing of the interlude, if I may so call it, and to these the people were too long accustomed and too warmly attached, to allow of any reform for their exclusion; the tragic poet therefore never got rid of his Chorus, though the writers of the Middle Comedy contrived to dismiss theirs, and probably their fable being of a more lively character, their scenes were better able to stand without the support of music and spectacle, than the mournful fable and more languid recitation of the tragedians. That the tragic authors laboured against the Chorus will appear from their efforts to expel Bacchus and his Satyrs from the stage, in which they were long time opposed by the audience, and at last, by certain in-

genious expedients, which were a kind of compromise with the public, effected their point: this in part was brought about by the introduction of a fuller scene and a more active fable, but the Chorus with its accompaniments kept its place, and the poet, who seldom ventured upon introducing more than three speakers on the scene at the same time, qualified the sterility of his business by giving to the Chorus a share of the dialogue, who, at the same time that they furnished the stage with numbers, were not counted amongst the speaking characters according to the rigour of the usage above mentioned. A man must be an enthusiast for antiquity, who can find charms in the dialogue part of a Greek Chorus, and reconcile himself to their unnatural and chilling interruptions of the action and pathos of the scene. I am fully persuaded they came there upon motives of expediency only, and kept their post upon the plea of long possession, and the attractions of spectacle and music; in short, nature was sacrificed to the display of art, and the heart gave up its feelings that the ear and eye might be gratified.

When Milton, therefore, takes the Chorus into his dialogue, excluding from his drama the lyric strophe and antistrophe, he rejects what I conceive to be its only recommendation, and which an elegant contemporary in his imitations of the Greek tragedy is more properly attentive to; at the same time it cannot be denied that Milton's Chorus subscribes more to the dialogues and harmonizes better with the business of the scene, than that of any Greek tragedy we can now refer to.

I would now proceed to a review of the performance itself, if it were not a discussion, which the author of The Rambler has very ably prevented me in; respect, however, to an authority so high in criticism, must not prevent me from observing, that, when he

says—'This is the tragedy, which ignorance has admired and bigotry applauded,' he makes it meritorious in any future critic to attempt at following him over the ground he has trode, for the purpose of discovering what those blemishes are, which he has found out by superior sagacity, and which others have so palpably overlooked, as to merit the disgraceful character of ignorance and bigotry.

The principal, and in effect the only, objection which he states, is, 'that the poem *wants a middle*, since nothing passes between the first act and the last, that either hastens or delays the death of Sampson.' This demands examination: the death of Sampson I need not describe; it is a sudden, momentary event: what can hasten or delay it, but the will of the person, who by an exertion of miraculous strength, was to bury himself under the ruins of a structure, in which his enemies were assembled? To determine that will depend upon the impulse of his own spirit, or it may be upon the inspiration of Heaven: if there are any incidents in the body of the drama, which lead to this determination, and indicate an impulse, either natural or preternatural, such must be called leading incidents, and those leading incidents will constitute a middle, or in more diffusive terms the middle business of the drama. Manoah, in his interview with Sampson, which the author of The Rambler denominates the second act of the tragedy, tells him

> This day the Philistines a popular feast
> Here celebrate in Gaza, and proclaim
> Great pomp and sacrifice and praises loud
> To Dagon, as their god—

Here is information of a meeting of his enemies to celebrate their idolatrous triumphs; an incident of just provocation to the servant of the living God, an opportunity perhaps for vengeance, either human

or divine; if it passes without notice from Sampson, it is not to be styled an incident, if, on the contrary, he remarks upon it, it must be one—but Sampson replies

> Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
> Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
> Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
> And with confusion blank his worshippers.

Who will say the expectation is not here prepared for some catastrophe, we know not what, but awful it must be, for it is Sampson which denounces the downfal of the idol, it is God who inspires the denunciation; the crisis is important, for it is that which shall decide whether God or Dagon is to triumph, it is in the strongest sense of the expression—*dignus vindice nodus*—and, therefore, we may boldly pronounce *Deus intersit!*

That this interposition meets the sense of the author is clear from the remark of Manoah, who is made to say that he receives these words as a prophecy. Prophetic they are, and were meant to be by the poet, who in this use of his sacred prophecy imitates the Heathen oracles, on which several of their dramatic plots are constructed, as might be shown by obvious examples. The interview with Manoah then is conducive to the catastrophe, and the drama is not in this scene devoid of incident.

Dalilah next appears, and if whatever tends to raise our interest in the leading character of the tragedy, cannot rightly be called episodical, the introduction of this person ought not to be accounted such, for who but this person is the cause and origin of all the pathos and distress of the story? The dialogue of this scene is moral, affecting, and sublime; it is also strictly characteristic.

The next scene exhibits the tremendous giant Harapha, and the contrast thereby produced is

amongst the beauties of the poem, and may of itself be termed an important incident: that it leads to the catastrophe I think will not be disputed, and if it is asked in what manner, the Chorus will supply us with an answer—

> He will directly to the Lords I fear,
> And with malicious counsel stir them up
> Some way or other further to afflict thee.

Here is another prediction connected with the plot and verified by its catastrophe, for Sampson is commanded to come to the festival and entertain the revellers with some feats of strength: these commands he resists, but obeys an impulse of his mind by going afterwards, and thereby fulfils the prophetic declaration he had made to his father in the second act. What incident can show more management and address in the poet, than this of Sampson's refusing the summons of the idolaters, and obeying the visitation of God's Spirit.

And now I may confidently appeal to the judicious reader, whether the Sampson Agonistes is so void of incident between the opening and conclusion as fairly to be pronounced *to want a middle.* Simple it is from first to last, simple perhaps to a degree of coldness in some of its parts, but to say that nothing passes between the first act and the last, which hastens or delays the death of Sampson, is not correct, because the very incidents are to be found, which conduce to the catastrophe, and but for which it could not have come to pass.

The author of The Rambler professes to examine the Sampson Agonistes according to the rule laid down by Aristotle for the disposition and perfection of a tragedy, and this rule he informs us is, that it should have a *beginning, a middle, and an end.* And is this the mighty purpose for which the authority of Aristotle is appealed to? If it be thus

the author of the Rambler has read the Poetics, and this be the best rule he can collect from that treatise, I am afraid he will find it too short a measure for the poet he is examining, or the critic he is quoting. Aristotle had said, 'that every whole hath not amplitude enough for the construction of a tragic fable; now by a whole, adds he in the way of illustration, I mean that, which hath beginning, middle, and end.' This and no more is what he says upon beginning, middle, and end; and this, which the author of the Rambler conceives to be a rule for tragedy, turns out to be merely an explanation of the word *whole*, which is only one term amongst many employed by the critic in his professed and complete definition of tragedy. I should add, that Aristotle gives a further explanation of the terms, beginning, middle, and end, which the author of the Rambler hath turned into English, but in so doing, he hath inexcusably turned them out of their original sense as well as language; as any curious critic may be convinced of, who compares them with Aristotle's words in the eighth chapter of the Poetics.

Of the poetic diction of the Sampson Agonistes I have already spoken in general; to particularize passages of striking beauty would draw me into too great length; at the same time, not to pass over so pleasing a part of my undertaking in absolute silence, I will give the following reply of Sampson to the Chorus—

> Wherever fountain or fresh current flow'd
> Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
> With touch etherial of Heaven's fiery rod,
> I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
> Thirst, and refresh'd; nor envy'd them the grape,
> Whose heads the turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

Of the character I may say in few words, that Sampson possesses all the terrific majesty of Prometheus chained, the mysterious distress of Œdipus, and the pitiable wretchedness of Philoctetes. His properties, like those of the first, are something above human; his misfortunes, like those of the second, are derivable from the displeasure of Heaven, and involved in oracles; his condition, like that of the last, is the most abject, which human nature can be reduced to from a state of dignity and splendour.

Of the catastrophe there remains only to remark, that it is of unparalleled majesty and terror.

NUMBER LXXVII.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his Life of Rowe, pronounces of 'The Fair Penitent,' that it is one of the most pleasing tragedies on the stage, where it still keeps its turns of appearing, and probably will long keep them, for that there is scarcely any work of any poet at once so interesting by the fable, and so delightful by the language. The story, he observes, is domestic, and, therefore, easily received by the imagination, and assimilated to common life; the diction is exquisitely harmonious, and soft or sprightly as occasion requires. Few people, I believe, will think this character of The Fair Penitent too lavish on the score of commendation; the high degree of public favour in which this tragedy has long stood, has ever attracted the best audiences to it, and engaged the talents of the best performers in its display. As there is no drama more frequently exhibited, or more generally read, I propose to give it a fair and

impartial examination, jointly with the more unknown and less popular tragedy from which it is derived.

The Fair Penitent is in fable and character so closely copied from The Fatal Dowry, that it is impossible not to take that tragedy along with it; and it is matter of some surprise to me that Rowe should have made no acknowledgement of his imitation either in his dedication or prologue, or any where else that I am apprised of.

This tragedy of The Fatal Dowry was the joint production of Massinger and Nathaniel Field; it takes a wider compass of fable than The Fair Penitent, by which means it presents a very affecting scene at the opening, which discovers young Charalois attended by his friend Romont, waiting with a petition in his hand to be presented to the judges, when they shall meet, praying the release of his dead father's body, which had been seized by his creditors, and detained in their hands for debts he had incurred in the public service, as Field Marshal of the armies of Burgundy. Massinger, to whose share this part of the tragedy devolved, has managed this pathetic introduction with consummate skill and great expression of nature; a noble youth in the last state of worldly distress, reduced to the humiliating yet pious office of soliciting an unfeeling and unfriendly judge to allow him to pay the solemn rites of burial to the remains of an illustrious father, who had fought his country's battles with glory, and had sacrificed life and fortune in defence of an ungrateful state, impresses the spectator's mind with pity and respect, which are felt through every passage of the play: one thing in particular strikes me at the opening of the scene, which is the long silence that the poet has artfully imposed upon his principal character, Charalois, who stands in mute sorrow with

his petition in his hand, whilst his friend Romont' and his advocate Charmi, urge him to present himself to the judges and solicit them in person: the judges now make their entrance, they stop upon the stage; they offer him the fairest opportunity for tendering his petition and soliciting his suit: Charalois remains fixed and speechless; Romont, who is all eagerness in his cause, presses him again and again—

> Now put on your spirits—
> Now, Sir, lose not this offered means: their looks,
> Fix'd on you with a pitying earnestness,
> Invites you to demand their furtherance
> To your good purpose.

The judges point him out to each other; they lament the misfortunes of his noble house; they observe,

> It is young Charalois,
> Son to the Marshal, from whom he inherits
> His fame and virtues only.
> *Romont.* Hah! They name you.
> *Dulroy.* His father died in prison two days since.
> *Rochfort.* Yes, to the shame of this ingrateful state,
> That such a master in the art of war,
> So noble and so highly meriting
> From this forgetful country, should, for want
> Of means to satisfy his creditors
> The sum he took up for the general good,
> Meet with an end so infamous.
> *Romont.* Dare you ever hope for like opportunity?

It is in vain; the opportunity passes off, and Charalois opens not his mouth, nor even silently tenders his petition.

I have, upon a former occasion, both generally and particularly observed upon the effects of dramatic silence; the stage cannot afford a more beautiful and touching instance than this before us: to say it is not inferior to the silence of Hamlet upon his first appearance, would be saying too little in its favour. I have no doubt but Massinger had this

very case in his thoughts, and I honour him no less for the imitating, than I should have done for striking out a silence so naturally and so delicately preserved. What could Charalois have uttered to give him that interest in the hearts of his spectators, which their own conclusions during his affecting silence have already impressed? No sooner are the judges gone, than the ardent Romont again breaks forth—

> This obstinate spleen
> You think becomes your sorrow, and sorts well
> With your black suits.

This is Hamlet himself, his *inky cloak*, and *customary suits of solemn black*. The character of Charalois is thus fixed before he speaks; the poet's art has given the prejudice that is to bear him in our affections through all the succeeding events of the fable; and a striking contrast is established between the undiscerning fiery zeal of Romont and Charalois' fine sensibility and high-born dignity of soul.

A more methodical and regular dramatist would have stopped here, satisfied that the impression already made was fully sufficient for all the purposes of his plot; but Massinger, according to the busy spirit of the stage for which he wrote, is not alarmed by a throng of incidents, and proceeds to open the court and discuss the pleadings on the stage: the advocate Charmi in a set harangue moves the judges for dispensing with the rigour of the law in favour of creditors, and for rescuing the Marshal's corpse out of their clutches; he is brow-beaten and silenced by the presiding judge, old Novall: the plea is then taken up by the impetuous Romont, and urged with so much personal insolence, that he is arrested on the spot, put in charge of the officers of the court, and taken to prison. This is a very striking mode of introducing the set oration of Charalois; a son

recounting the military achievements of a newly-deceased father, and imploring mercy from his creditors and the law towards his unburied remains, now claims the attention of the court, who had been hitherto unmoved by the feeble formality of a hired pleader, and the turbulent passion of an enraged soldier. Charalois' argument takes a middle course between both; the pious fellings of a son, tempered by the modest manners of a gentleman: the creditors, however, are implacable, the judge is hostile, and the law must take its force.

> *Creditor.* 'Tis the city's doctrine:
> We stand bound to maintain it.
> *Charalois.* Be constant in it;
> And since you are as merciless in your natures,
> As base and mercenary in your means
> By which you get your wealth, I will not urge
> The court to take away one scruple from
> The right of their laws, or one good thought
> In you to mend your disposition with.
> I know there is no music in your ears
> So pleasing as the groans of men in prison,
> And that the tears of widows, and the cries
> Of famish'd orphans, are the feasts that take you:
> That to be in your danger, with more care
> Should be avoided than infectious air,
> The loath'd embraces of diseased women,
> A flatterer's poison, or the loss of honour.
> Yet rather than my father's reverend dust
> Shall want a place in that fair monument,
> In which our noble ancestors lie entomb'd,
> Before the court I offer up myself
> A prisoner for it: load me with those irons
> That have worn out his life; in my best strength
> I'll run to the encounter of cold hunger,
> And choose my dwelling where no sun dares enter,
> So he may be releas'd.

There was yet another incident, which the poet's passion for business and spectacle induced him to avail himself of, viz. the funeral of the Marshal;

this he displays on the stage, with a train of captains and soldiers following the body of their general: Charalois and Romont, under custody of their jailors, appear as chief mourners, and a party of creditors are concerned in the group.

After this solemnity is despatched, the poet proceeds to develope the amiable generosity of old Rochfort, who, being touched with the gallant spirit of Romont, and still more penetrated with the filial piety of young Charalois, delivers them both from imprisonment and distress, by discharging the debts of the Marshal, and dismissing the creditors: this also passes before the eyes of the spectators. Before Charalois has given full expression to his gratitude for this extraordinary benefaction, Rochfort follows it with a further act of bounty, which he introduces in the style of a request—

> Call in my daughter—Still I have a suit to you,
> Would you requite me—
> This is my only child.

Beaumelle, Rochfort's daughter, is presented to Charalois; the scene is hurried on with a precipitation almost without example; Charalois asks the lady,

> Fair Beaumelle, can you love me?
> *Beaumelle.* Yes, my lord.
> *Charalois.* You need not question me if I can you:
> You are the fairest virgin in Dijon,
> And Rochfort is your father.

The match is agreed upon as soon as proposed, and Rochfort hastens away to prepare the celebration.

In this cluster of incidents, I must not fail to remark, that the poet introduces young Novall upon the scene, in the very moment when the short dialogue above quoted was passing: this Novall had before been exhibited as a suitor to Beaumelle, and his vain frivolous character had been displayed in a

very ridiculous and contemptible light; he is now again introduced to be a witness of his own disappointment, and his only observation upon it is—*What's this change?*—Upon the exit of the father, however, he addresses himself to the lady, and her reply gives the alarming hint, that makes discovery of the fatal turn which the plot is now about to take; for when Novall, turning aside to Beaumelle, by one word—*Mistress!*—conveys the reproach of inconstancy, she replies,

> Oh, Servant! Virtue, strengthen me!
> Thy presence blows round my affection's vane:
> You will undo me if you speak again. *(Exit.)*

Young Novall is left on the scene with certain followers and dependents, which hang upon his fortune, and of which (Pontalier by name) a man under deep obligations to him, yet of an honest nature, advises him to an honourable renunciation of all further hopes or attempts to avail himself of the affections of Beaumelle—

> Though you have sav'd my life,
> Rescu'd me often from my wants, I must not
> Wink at your follies, that will ruin you.
> You know my blunt way, and my love to truth:
> Forsake the pursuit of this lady's honour,
> Now you do see her made another man's.

This honourable advice is rejected with contempt: Novall, in whose mean bosom there does not seem a trace of virtue, avows a determined perseverance; and the poet having in this hasty manner completed these inauspicious nuptials, closes the second act of his tragedy.

NUMBER LXXVIII.

WE have now expended two entire acts of The Fatal Dowry, in advancing to that period in the fable, at which the tragedy of The Fair Penitent opens. If the author of this tragedy thought it necessary to contract Massinger's plot, and found one upon it of a more regular construction, I know not how he could do this any otherwise, than by taking up the story at the point where we have now left it, and throwing the antecedent matter into narration ; and though these two prefatory acts are full of very affecting incidents, yet the pathos which properly appertains to the plot, and conduces to the catastrophe of the tragedy, does not in strictness take place before the event of the marriage. No critic will say that the pleadings before the judges, the interference of the creditors, the distresses of Charalois, or the funeral of the Marshal, are necessary parts of the drama ; at the same time no reader will deny, and neither could Rowe himself overlook, the effect of these incidents : he could not fail to foresee that he was to sacrifice very much of the interest of his fable, when he was to throw that upon narration, which his original had given in spectacle : and the loss was more enhanced by falling upon the hero of the drama ; for who that compares Charalois, at the end of the second act of Massinger's with Rowe's Altamont at the opening scene of The Fair Penitent, can doubt which character has most interest with the spectators ? We have seen the former in all the most amiable offices which filial piety could per-

form; enduring insults from his inveterate oppressors, and voluntarily surrendering himself to a prison to ransom the dead body of his father from unrelenting creditors. Altamont presents himself before us in his wedding-suit, in the splendour of fortune, and at the summit of happiness: he greets us with a burst of exultation—

> Let this auspicious day be ever sacred,
> No mourning, no misfortunes happen on it;
> Let it be mark'd for triumphs and rejoicings!
> Let happy lovers ever make it holy,
> Choose it to bless their hopes and crown their wishes;
> This happy day, that gives me my Calista!

The rest of the scene is employed by him and Horatio alternately, in recounting the benefits conferred upon them by the generous Sciolto; and the very same incident of the seizure of his father's corpse by the creditors, and his redemption of it, is recited by Horatio—

> When his hard creditors,
> Urg'd and assisted by Lothario's father,
> Foe to thy house, and rival of their greatness,
> By sentence of the cruel law forbade
> His venerable corpse to rest in earth,
> Thou gav'st thyself a ransom for his bones;
> With piety uncommon didst give up
> Thy hopeful youth to slaves, who ne'er knew mercy.

It is not, however, within the reach of this, or any other description, to place Altamont in that interesting and amiable light, as circumstances have already placed Charalois; the happy and exulting bridegroom may be an object of our congratulation, but the virtuous and suffering Charalois engages our pity, love, and admiration. If Rowe would have his audience credit Altamont for that filial piety, which marks the character he copied

from, it was a small oversight to put the following expression into his mouth—

> Oh, great Sciolto! Oh, my more than father!

A closer attention to character would have reminded him that it was possible for Altamont to express his gratitude to Sciolto, without setting him above a father, to whose memory he had paid such devotion.

From this contraction of his plot, by the defalcation of so many pathetic incidents, it became impossible for the author of the Fair Penitent to make his Altamont the hero of his tragedy, and the leading part is taken from him by Horatio, and even by Lothario, throughout the drama. There are several other reasons, which concur to sink Altamont upon the comparison with Charalois, the chief of which arises from the captivating colours in which Rowe has painted his libertine: on the contrary, Massinger gives a contemptible picture of his young Novall; he makes him not only vicious, but ridiculous; in foppery and impertinence he is the counterpart of Shakspeare's Osrick; vain-glorious, purse-proud, and overbeariug amongst his dependants; a spiritless poltroon in his interview with Romont. Lothario, as Johnson observes, ' with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectator's kindness.' His high spirit, brilliant qualities, and fine person, are so described, as to put us in danger of false impressions in his favour, and to set the passions in opposition to the moral of the piece: I suspect that the gallantry of Lothario makes more advocates for Calista than she ought to have. There is another censideration, which operates against Altamont, and it is an indelicacy in his character, which

the poet should have provided against: he marries Calista with the full persuasion of her being averse to the match: in his first meeting with Sciolto he says—

> Oh! could I hope there was one thought of Altamont,
> One kind remembrance in Calista's breast—
> —I found her cold
> As a dead lover's statue on his tomb;
> A rising storm of passion shook her breast,
> Her eyes a piteous shower of tears let fall,
> And then she sigh'd as if her heart were breaking.
> With all the tenderest eloquence of love
> I begg'd to be a sharer in her grief,
> But she, with looks averse, and eyes that froze me,
> Sadly replied, her sorrows were her own,
> Nor in a father's power to dispose of.

I am aware that Sciolto attempts to parry these facts, by an interpretation too gross and unbecoming for a father's character, and only fit for the lips of a Lothario; but yet it is not in nature to suppose that Altamont could mistake such symptoms, and it fixes a meanness upon him, which prevails against his character throughout the play. Nothing of this sort could be discovered by Massinger's bridegroom, for the ceremony was agreed upon and performed at the very first interview of the parties; Beaumelle gave a full and unreserved assent, and though her character suffers on the score of hypocrisy on that account, yet Charalois is saved by it: less hypocrisy appears in Calista, but hers is the deeper guilt, because she was already dishonoured by Lothario, and Beaumelle's coquetry with Novall had not yet reached the length of criminality. Add to this, that Altamont appears in the contemptible light of a suitor, whom Calista had apprized of her aversion, and to whom she had done a deliberate act of dishonour, though his person and character must have been long known to her. The case is far otherwise between Charalois and Beaumelle, who

never met before, and every care is taken by the poet to save his hero from such a deliberate injury as might convey contempt; with this view the marriage is precipitated; nothing is allowed to pass that might open the character of Charalois to Beaumelle: she is hurried into an assignation with Novall immediately upon her marriage; every artifice of seduction is employed by her confidante Bellaperte, and Aymer, the parasite of Novall, to make this meeting criminal; she falls the victim of passion, and when detection brings her to a sense of her guilt, she makes this penitent and pathetic appeal to Charalois —

> Oh my fate!
> That never would consent that I should see
> How worthy thou wert both of love and duty
> Before I lost you: and my misery made
> The glass in which I now behold your virtue—
> With justice, therefore, you may cut me off,
> And from your memory wash the remembrance
> That e'er I was; like to some vicious purpose,
> Which, in your better judgement, you repent of,
> And study to forget—
> — Yet you shall find,
> Tho' I was bold enough to be a strumpet,
> I dare not yet live one: let those fam'd matrons,
> That are canoniz'd worthy of our sex,
> Transcend me in their sanctity of life,
> I yet will equal them in dying nobly,
> Ambitious of no honour after life,
> But that, when I am dead, you will forgive me.

Compare this with the conduct of Calista, and then decidewhich frail fair-one has the better title to the appellation of a *Penitent,* and which drama conveys the better moral by its catastrophe.

There is, indeed, a grossnesss in the older poet, which his more modern imitator has refined; but he has only sweetened the poison, not removed its venom; nay, by how much more palatable he has

made it, so much more pernicious it is become in his tempting sparkling cup, than in the coarse deterring dose of Massinger.

Rowe has no doubt greatly outstepped his original in the striking character of Lothario, who leaves Novall as far behind him as Charalois does Altamont: it is admitted then that Calista has as good a plea as any wanton could wish, to urge for her criminality with Lothario, and the poet has not spared the ear of modesty, in his exaggerated description of the guilty scene; every luxurious image, that his inflamed imagination could crowd into the glowing rhapsody, is there to be found, and the whole is recited in numbers so flowing and harmonious, that they not only arrest the passions, but the memory also, and perhaps have been, and still can be, as generally repeated as any passage in English poetry. Massinger, with less elegance, but not with less regard to decency, suffers the guilty act to pass within the course of his drama; the greater refinement of manners in Rowe's day did not allow of this, and he anticipated the incident; but when he revived the recollection of it by such a studied description, he plainly showed that it was not from moral principle that he omitted it; and if he has presented his heroine to the spectators with more immediate delicacy during the compass of the play, he has at the same time given her greater depravity of mind: her manners may be more refined, but her principle is fouler than Beaumelle's. Calista, who yielded to the gallant gay Lothario, *hot with the Tuscan grape*, might perhaps have disdained a lover who addressed her in the holiday language which Novall uses to Beaumelle—

> Best day to Nature's curiosity!
> Star of Dijon, the lustre of all France!
> Perpetual Spring dwell on thy rosy cheeks,

Whose breath is perfume to our continent;
See Flora trimm'd in her varieties!
No Autumn, nor no Age ever approach
This Heavenly piece, which Nature having wrought,
She lost her needle, and did then despair
Ever to work so lively and so fair.

The letter of Calista, which brings about the discovery by the poor expedient of Lothario's dropping it and Horatio's finding it, has not even the merit of being characteristically wicked, and is, both in its matter and mode, below tragedy. It is *Lothario's cruelty has determined her to yield a perfect obedience to her father, and give her hand to Altamont, in spite of her weakness for the false Lothario.*—If the lady had given her *perfect obedience* its true denomination, she had called it a most dishonourable compliance; and, if we may take Lothario's word, who seems full correct enough in describing facts and particulars, she had not much cause to complain of his being false; for he tells Rossano—

I lik'd her, would have marry'd her,
But that it pleas'd her father to refuse me,
To make this honourable fool her husband.

It appears by this, that Lothario had not been *false* to her in the article of marriage, though he might have been *cruel* to her on the score of passion, which, indeed, is confest on his part, with as much *cold indifference*, as the most barefaced avowal could express.—But to return to the letter: she proceeds to tell him—'that she could almost wish she had that heart, and that honour to bestow with it which he has robbed her of.'—But, lest this half wish should startle him, she adds—'But oh! I fear, could I retrieve them, I should again be undone by the too faithless, yet too lovely Lothario.'—This must be owned as full a reason as she could give, why she should only *almost wish* for her lost

honour, when she would make such an use of it, if she had it again at her disposal. And yet the very next paragraph throws every thing into contradiction, for she tells him—'this is the last weakness of her pen, and to-morrow shall be the last in which she will indulge her eyes.' If she could keep to that resolution, I must think the recovery of her innocence would have been worth a whole wish, and many a wish; unless we are to suppose she was so devoted to guilt, that she could take delight in reflecting upon it: this is a state of depravity which human nature hardly ever attains, and seems peculiar to Calista. She now grows very humble, and concludes in a style well suited to her humility—'Lucilla shall conduct you, if you are kind enough to let me see you; it shall be the last trouble you shall meet with from—The lost Calista.'

It was very ill done of Horatio's curiosity to read this letter, and I must ever regret that he has so unhandsomely exposed a lady's private correspondence to the world.

NUMBER LXXIX.

THOUGH the part which Horatio takes in the business of the drama, is exactly that which falls to the share of Romont in The Fatal Dowry, yet their characters are of a very different cast; for as Rowe had bestowed the fire and impetuosity of Romont upon his Lothario, it was a very judicious opposition to contrast it with the cool deliberate courage of the sententious Horatio, the friend and brother-in-law of Altamont.

When Horatio has read Calista's letter, which Lotharió had dropped, an accident which more frequently happens to gentlemen in comedies than in tragedies, he falls into a very long meditation, and closes it with putting this question to himself:

> What if I give this paper to her father?
> It follows that his justice dooms her dead,
> And breaks his heart with sorrow; hard return
> For all the good his hand has heap'd on us!
> Hold, let me take a moment's thought—

At this moment he is interrupted in his reflections by the presence of Lavinia, whose tender solicitude fills up the remaining part of the dialogue, and concludes the act without any decisive resolution on the part of Horatio; an incident well contrived, and introduced with much dramatic skill and effect: though pressed by his wife to disclose the cause of his uneasiness, he does not impart to her the fatal discovery he has made; this also is well in character. Upon his next entrance he has withdrawn himself from the company, and, being alone, resumes his meditation—

> What, if, while all are here intent on revelling,
> I privately went forth and sought Lothario?
> This letter may be forged; perhaps the wantonness
> Of his vain youth to stain a lady's fame;
> Perhaps his malice to disturb my friend.
> Oh! no, my heart forebodes it must be true.
> Methought e'en now I mark'd the starts of guilt
> That shook her soul, tho' damn'd dissimulation
> Screen'd her dark thoughts, and set to public view
> A specious face of innocence and beauty.

This soliloquy is succeeded by the much-admired and striking scene between him and Lothario; rigid criticism might wish to abridge some of the sententious declamatory speeches of Horatio, and shorten the dialogue to quicken the effect; but the moral

sentiment and harmonious versification are much too charming to be treated as intruders, and the author has also struck upon a natural expedient for prolonging the dialogue, without any violence to probability, by the interposition of Rossano, who acts as a mediator between the hostile parties. This interposition is further necessary to prevent a decisive rencounter, for which the fable is not ripe; neither would it be proper for Horatio to anticipate that revenge, which is reserved for Altamont: the altercation, therefore, closes with a challenge from Lothario—

> West of the town a mile, amongst the rocks,
> Two hours ere noon to-morrow I expect thee;
> Thy single hand to mine.

The place of meeting is not well ascertained, and the time is too long deferred for strict probability; there are, however, certain things in all dramas, which must not be too rigidly insisted upon, and, provided no extraordinary violence is done to reason and common sense, the candid critic ought to let them pass: this I take to be a case in point; and though Horatio's cool courage and ready presence of mind are not just the qualities to reconcile us to such an oversight, yet I see no reason to be severe upon the incident, which is followed by his immediate recollection—

> Two hours ere noon to-morrow! Hah! ere that
> He sees Calista —Oh! unthinking fool!
> What if I urg'd her with the crime and danger?
> If any spark from Heav'n remain unquench'd
> Within her breast, my breath perhaps may wake it.
> Could I but prosper there, I would not doubt
> My combat with that loud vain-glorious boaster.

Whether this be a measure altogether in character with a man of Horatio's good sense and discretion,

I must own is matter of doubt with me. I think he appears fully satisfied of her actual criminality; and in that case it would be more natural for him to lay his measures for intercepting Lothario, and preventing the assignation, than to try his rhetoric in the present crisis upon the agitated mind of Calista. As it has justly occurred to him, that he has been over-reached by Lothario in the postponement of the duel, the measure I suggest would naturally tend to hasten that rencounter. Now, though the business of the drama may require an explanation between Horatio and Calista, whereupon to ground an occasion for his interesting quarrel with Altamont, yet I do not see any necessity to make that a premeditated explanation, nor to sacrifice character by a measure that is inconsistent with the better judgement of Horatio. The poet, however, has decreed it otherwise, and a deliberate interview with Calista and Horatio accordingly takes place. This, although introduced with a solemn invocation on his part, is very clumsily conducted—

> Teach me, some Power! that happy art of speech
> To dress my purpose up in gracious words,
> Such as may softly steal upon her soul,
> And never waken the tempestuous passions.

Who can expect, after this preparation, to hear Horatio thus break his secret to Calista?

> Lothario and Calista!—Thus they join
> Two names, which Heav'n decreed should never meet.
> Hence have the talkers of this populous city
> A shameful tale to tell for public sport,
> Of an unhappy beauty, a false fair-one,
> Who plighted to a noble youth her faith,
> When she had giv'n her honour to a wretch.

This I hold to be totally out of nature; first, because it is a palpable departure from his resolution to use

gracious words; next, because it has a certain tendency to produce rage and not repentance; and, thirdly, because it is founded in exaggeration and falsehood; for how is he warranted to say that the story is the public talk and sport of the city? If it were so, what can his interference avail? why seek this interview?

> Why come to tell her how she might be happy?
> To sooth the secret anguish of her soul?
> To comfort that fair mourner, that forlorn one,
> And teach her steps to know the paths of peace.

No judge of nature will think he takes the means to lead her into the *paths of peace*, by hurrying her to the very brink of desperation. I need not enlarge upon this observation, and shall, therefore, only remark, that the scene breaks up, as might be expected, with the following proof of her penitence, and his success in persuasion—

> Henceforth, thou officious fool,
> Meddle no more, nor dare, e'en on thy life,
> To breathe an accent that may touch my virtue;
> I am myself the guardian of my honour,
> And will not bear so insolent a monitor.

Let us now enquire how Romont, the Horatio of Massinger, conducts this incident, a character from whom less discretion is to be expected than from his philosophical successor. Romont himself discovers Beaumelle and Novall engaged in the most wanton familiarities, and, with a warmth suitable to his zeal, breaks up the amorous conference, by driving Novall off the scene with ineffable contempt: he then applies himself to the lady, and with a very natural and manly spirit says,

> —I respect you
> Not for yourself, but in remembrance of
> Who is your father, and whose wife you now are.

She replies to him with contempt and ridicule; he resumes the same characteristic strain he set out with, and proceeds—

> My intents,
> Madam, deserve not this; nor do I stay
> To be the whetstone of your wit: preserve it
> To spend on such as know how to admire
> Such colour'd stuff. In me there is now speaks to you
> As true a friend and servant to your honour,
> And one that will with as much hazard guard it,
> As ever man did goodness. But then, lady,
> You must endeavour, not alone to be,
> But to appear worthy such love and service.

We have just now heard Horatio reproach Calista with the reports that were circulated against her reputation; let us compare it with what Romont says upon the same subject—

> But yet be careful!
> Detraction's a bold monster, and fears not
> To wound the fame of princes, if it find
> But any blemish in their lives to work on.
> But I'll be plainer with you: had the people
> Been learnt to speak but what even now I saw,
> Their malice out of that would raise an engine
> To overthrow your honour. In my sight,
> With yonder painted fool I frighted from you,
> You us'd familiarity beyond
> A modest entertainment: you embrac'd him
> With too much ardour for a stranger, and
> Met him with kisses neither chaste nor comely:
> But learn you to forget him, as I will
> Your bounties to him; you will find it safer
> Rather to be uncourtly than immodest.

What avails it to attempt drawing a comparison between this conduct and that of Horatio's, where no comparison is to be made? I leave it to the reader, and decline a task at once so unnecessary and ungrateful.

When Romont finds no impression is to be made

upon Beaumelle, he meets her father, and immediately falls into the same reflection that Horatio had struck upon—

> Her father!—Hah!
> How if I break this to him? Sure it cannot
> Meet with an ill construction. His wisdom,
> Made powerful by the authority of a father,
> Will warrant and give privilege to his counsels.
> It shall be so.

If this step needs excuse, the reader will consider that it is a step of prevention. The experiment, however, fails, and he is rebuffed with some asperity by Rochfort; this draws on a scene between him and Charalois, which, as it is too long to transcribe, so it is throughout too excellent to extract any part from it. I can only express my surprise that the author of The Fair Penitent, with this scene before him, could conduct his interview between Altamont and Horatio upon a plan so widely different, and so much inferior: I must suppose he thought it a strong incident to make Altamont give a blow to his friend, else he might have seen an interview carried on with infinitely more spirit, both of language and character, between Charalois and Romont, in circumstances exactly similar, where no such violence was committed, or even meditated. Was it because Pierre had given a blow to Jaffier, that Altamont was to repeat the like indignity to Horatio, for a woman, of whose aversion he had proofs not to be mistaken? Charalois is a character at least as high and irritable as Altamont, and Romont is out of all comparison more rough and plain-spoken than Horatio: Charalois might be deceived into an opinion of Beaumelle's affection for him; Altamont could not deceive himself into such a notion, and the lady had testified her dislike of him in the strongest terms, accompanied with symptoms

which he himself had described as indicating some rooted and concealed affliction. Could any solution be more natural than what Horatio gives? Novall was a rival so contemptible, that Charalois could not, with any degree of probability, consider him as an object of his jealousy; it would have been a degradation of his character, had he yielded to such a suspicion. Lothario, on the contrary, was of all men living the most to be apprehended by a husband, let his confidence or vanity be ever so great. Rowe, in his attempt to *surprise*, has sacrificed nature and the truth of character for stage effect; Massinger, by preserving both nature and character, has conducted his friends through an angry altercation with infinitely more spirit, more pathos, and more dramatic effect, and yet dismissed them with the following animated and affecting speech from Charalois to his friend:

> Thou'rt not my friend;
> Or being so, thou'rt mad. I must not buy
> Thy friendship at this rate. Had I just cause
> Thou know'st I durst pursue such injury
> Thro' fire, air, water, earth, nay were they all
> Shuffled again to chaos; but there's none.
> Thy skill, Romont, consists in camps, not courts.
> Farewell, uncivil man! let's meet no more:
> Here our long web of friendship I untwist.
> Shall I go whine, walk pale, and lock my wife
> For nothing from her birth's free liberty,
> That open'd mine to me? Yes; if I do,
> The name of cuckold then dog me with scorn:
> I am a Frenchman, no Italian born. [*Exit.*

It is plain that Altamont at least was an exception to this remark upon Italian husbands. I shall pursue this comparison no further, nor offer any other remark upon the incident of the blow given by Altamont, except with regard to Horatio's conduct upon receiving it; he draws his sword, and imme-

diately suspends resentment upon the following motive:

> Yet hold! By heav'n, his father's in his face!
> Spite of my wrongs, my heart runs o'er with tenderness,
> And I could rather die myself than hurt him.

We must suppose it was the martial attitude that Altamont had put himself into, which brought the resemblance of his father so strongly to the observation of Horatio, otherwise it was a very unnatural moment to recollect it in, when he had just received the deepest insult one man can give to another: it is, however, worth a remark, that this father of Altamont should act on both sides, and yet miscarry in his mediation; for it is but a few passages before that Altamont says to Horatio,

> Thou wert my father's friend; he lov'd thee well;
> A venerable mark of him
> Hangs round thee, and protects thee from my vengeance.
> I cannot, dare not, lift my sword against thee.

What this *mark* was is left to conjecture; but it is plain it was as seasonable for Horatio's rescue at this moment, as it was for Altamont a few moments after, who had certainly overlooked it when he struck the very friend against whom he could not, dared not, *lift his sword.*

When Lavinia's entrance has parted Altamont and Horatio, her husband complains to her of the ingratitude with which he has been treated, and says—

> He who was all to me, child, brother, friend,
> With barbarous bloody malice sought my life.

These are very extraordinary terms for a man like Horatio to use, and seem to convey a charge very unfit for him to make, and of a very different nature from the hasty insult he had received; in fact it ap-

pears as if the blow had totally reversed his character, for the resolution he takes, in consequence of this personal affront, is just such an one as would be only taken by the man who dared not to resent it—

> From Genoa, from falsehood and inconstancy,
> To some more honest distant clime we'll go;
> Nor will I be beholden to my country
> For aught but thee, the partner of my flight.

That Horatio's heroism did not consist in the ready forgiveness of injuries, is evident from the obstinate sullenness with which he rejects the penitent apologies of Altamont in the further progress of the play; I am at a loss, therefore, to know what colour the poet meant to give his character, by disposing him to quit his country with this insult unatoned for, and the additional stigma upon him of running away from his appointment with Lothario for the next morning *amongst the rocks*. Had he meant to bring him off upon the repugnance he felt of resenting any injury against the son of a father, whose image was so visible *in his face*, that his 'heart ran o'er with fondness in spite of his wrongs, and he could rather die than hurt him;' surely that image would have interceded no less powerfully for him, when, penetrated with remorse, he intercedes for pity and forgiveness, and even faints at his feet with agony at his unrelenting obduracy: it would be unfair to suppose he was more like his father when he had dealt him an insulting blow, than when he was atoning for an injury by the most ample satisfaction and submission.

This is the light in which the conduct of Horatio strikes me; if I am wrong, I owe an atonement to the manes of an elegant poet, which, upon conviction of my error, I will study to pay in the fullest manner I am able.

It now remains only to say a few words upon the catastrophe, in which the author varies from his original, by making Calista destroy herself with a dagger, put into her hand for that purpose by her father: if I am to moralize upon this proceeding of Sciolto, I know full well the incident cannot bear up against it; a Roman father would stand the discussion better than a Christian one; and I also know that the most natural expedient is unluckily a most undramatic one; yet the poet did not totally overlook it, for he makes Sciolto's first thought turn upon a convent, if I rightly understand the following passage—

> Hence from my sight! thy father cannot bear thee:
> Fly with thy infamy to some dark cell,
> Where, on the confines of eternal night,
> Mourning, misfortunes, cares, and anguish dwell;
> Where ugly Shame hides her opprobrious head,
> And Death and Hell detested rule maintain;
> There howl out the remainder of thy life,
> And wish thy name may be no more remember'd.

Whilst I am transcribing these lines, a doubt strikes me that I have misinterpreted them, and yet Calista's answer seems to point to the meaning I had suggested; perhaps, however, they are mere ravings in fine numbers without any determinate idea; whatever they may be, it is clear they do not go to the length of death: he tells Altamont, as soon as she is departed—

> I wo' not kill her;
> Yet by the ruin she has brought upon us,
> The common infamy that brands us both,
> She sha' not 'scape.

He seems in this moment to have formed the resolution, which he afterwards puts into execution; he prompts her to self-murder, and arms her for the act: this may save the spectators a sight too shock-

ing to behold, but does it convey less horror to the heart, than if he had put her to death with his own hand? A father killing his child for incontinence with the man whom he had not permitted to marry her, when he solicited his consent, is an act too monstrous to reflect upon: is that father less a monster, who, deliberately, and after full reflection, puts a dagger into her hand, and bids her commit self-murder? I should humbly conceive the latter act a degree in guilt beyond the former; especially when I hear that father coolly demanding of his victim, if she has reflected upon what may happen after death—

> Hast thou consider'd what may happen after it?
> How thy account may stand, and what to answer?

A parent surely would turn that question upon his own heart, before he precipitated his unprepared child to so awful and uncertain an account: rage and instant revenge may find some plea; sudden passion may transport even a father to lift his hand against his own offspring; but this act of Sciolto has no shelter but in Heathen authority—

> 'Tis justly thought, and worthy of that spirit,
> That dwelt in ancient Latian breasts, when Rome
> Was mistress of the world.

Did ever poetry beguile a man into such an allusion? And to what does that piece of information tend, *that Rome was mistress of the world?* If this is human nature, it would almost tempt one to reply in Sciolto's own words—

> I could curse nature.

But it is no more like nature, than the following sentiments of Calista are like the sentiments of a *Penitent* or a Christian.

That I must die it is my only comfort.
Death is the privilege of human nature,
And life without it were not worth our taking.

And again,

Yet Heav'n, who knows our weak imperfect natures,
How blind with passions, and how prone to evil,
Makes not too strict inquiry for offences,
But is aton'd by penitence and prayer.
Cheap recompence! here 'twould not be receiv'd;
Nothing but blood can make the expiation.

Such is the catastrophe of Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, such is the representation he gives us of human nature, and such the moral of his tragedy.

I shall conclude with an extract or two from the catastrophe of The Fatal Dowry; and first, for the *penitence* of Beaumelle, I shall select only the following speech, addressed to her husband:

I dare not move you
To hear me speak. I know my fault is far
Beyond qualification or excuse;
That 'tis not fit for me to hope, or you
To think of mercy, only I presume
To entreat you would be pleas'd to look upon
My sorrow for it, and believe these tears
Are the true children of my grief, and not
A woman's cunning.

I need not point out the contrast between this and the quotations from Calista. It will require a longer extract to bring the conduct of Rochfort into comparison with that of Sciolto: the reader will observe that Novall's dead body is now on the scene, Charalois, Beaumelle, and Rochfort her father, are present. The charge of adultery is urged by Charalois, and appeal is made to the justice of Rochfort in the case.

Rochfort. What answer makes the prisoner?
Beaumelle. I confess

The fact I'm charg'd with, and yield myself
Most miserably guilty.
Rochfort. Heaven take mercy
Upon your soul then! It must leave your body—
—Since that the politic law provides that servants,
To whose care we commit our goods, shall die
If they abuse our trust; what can you look for,
To whose charge this most hopeful Lord gave up
All he receiv'd from his brave ancestors,
All he could leave to his posterity?
His honour—Wicked woman! in whose safety
All his life's joys and comforts were lock'd up,
Which thy lust, a thief, hath now stolen from him!
And therefore——
Charalois. Stay, just Judge—May not what's lost
By her one fault, for I am charitable,
And charge her not with many, be forgotten
In her fair life hereafter.
Rochfort. Never, Sir?
The wrong that's done to the chaste married bed,
Repentant tears can never expiate:
And be assur'd to pardon such a sin,
Is an offence as great as to commit it.

In consequence of this the husband strikes her dead before her father's eyes: the act, indeed, is horrid; even tragedy shrinks from it, and Nature with a father's voice instantly cries out—*Is she dead then?—and you have kill'd her?*—Charalois avows it, and pleads his sentence for the deed; the revolting, agonized parent breaks forth into one of the most pathetic, natural, and expressive lamentations that the English drama can produce—

—But I pronounc'd it
As a judge only, and a friend to justice,
And, zealous in defence of your wrong'd honour,
Broke all the ties of nature, and cast off
The love and soft affection of a father:
I in your cause put on a scarlet robe
Of red dy'd cruelty; but in return
You have advanc'd for me no flag of mercy;
I look'd on you as a wrong'd husband, but
You clos'd your eyes against me as a father.

Oh, Beaumelle! Oh, my daughter!
Charalois. This is madness.
Rochfort. Keep from me!—Cou'd not one good thought rise up
To tell you that she was my age's cómfort,
Begot by a weak man, and born a woman!
And could not therefore but partake of frailty?
Or wherefore did not thankfulness step forth
To urge my many merits, which I may
Object to you, since you prove ungrateful?
Flinty-hearted Charalois!—
Charalois. Nature does prevail above your virtue.

What conclusions can I draw from these comparative examples, which every reader would not anticipate? Is there a man, who has any feeling for real nature, dramatic character, moral sentiment, tragic pathos, or nervous diction, who can hesitate, even for a moment, where to bestow the palm?

NUMBER LXXX.

I WAS some nights ago much entertained with an excellent representation of Mr. Congreve's comedy of The Double Dealer. When I reflected upon the youth of the author and the merit of the play, I acknowledged the truth of what the late Dr. Samuel Johnson says in his life of this poet, that ' amongst all the efforts of early genius, which literary history records, I doubt whether any one can be produced that more surpasses the common limits of nature than the plays of Congreve.'

The author of this comedy in his dedication informs us, that he ' designed the moral first, and to that moral invented the fable;' *and does not know*

that he has borrowed one hint of it any where.— ' I made the plot,' says he, ' as strong as I could; because it was single; and I made it single because I would avoid confusion, and was resolved to preserve the three unities of the drama.' As it is impossible not to give full credit to this assertion, I must consider the resemblance which many circumstances in The Double Dealer bear to those in a comedy of Beaumont and Fletcher, intitled Cupid's Revenge, as a casual coincidence; and I think the learned biographer above quoted, had good reason to pronounce of Congreve, ' that he is an original writer, who borrowed neither the models of his plot, nor the manner of his dialogue.'

Mellafont, the nephew and heir of Lord Touchwood, being engaged to Cynthia, daughter of Sir Paul Pliant, the traversing this match forms the object of the plot, on which this comedy of The Double Dealer is constructed; the intrigue consists in the various artifices employed by Lady Touchwood and her agents for that purpose.

That the object is, as the author himself states it to be, *singly* this, will appear upon considering, that although the ruin of Mellafont's fortune is for a time effected by these contrivances, that are employed for traversing his marriage, yet it is rather a measure of necessity and self-defence in Lady Touchwood, than of original design; it springs from the artifice of incident, and belongs more properly to the intrigue, than to the object of the plot.

The making or obstructing marriages is the common hinge on which most comic fables are contrived to turn, but in this match of Mellafont's, which the author has taken for the ground-work of his plot, I must observe that it would have been better to have given more interest to an event, which he has made the main object of the play: he has

taken little pains to recommend the parties to his spectators, or to paint their mutual attachment with any warmth of colouring. Who will feel any concern whether Mellafont marries Cynthia or not, if they themselves appear indifferent on the occasion, and upon the eve of their nuptials converse in the following strain?

Mel. You seem thoughtful, Cynthia.

Cyn. I am thinking, tho' marriage makes man and wife one flesh, it leaves them still two fools, and they become more conspicuous by setting off one another.

Mel. That's only when two fools meet, and their follies are opposed.

Cyn. Nay, I have known two wits meet, and by the opposition of their wit, render themselves as ridiculous as fools. 'Tis an odd game we are going to play at; what think you of drawing stakes, and giving over in time?

Mel. No, hang it, that's not endeavouring to win, because it is possible we may lose—&c. &c.

This scene which proceeds throughout in the same strain, seems to confirm Dr. Johnson's remark, that 'Congreve formed a peculiar idea of comic excellence, which he supposed to consist in gay remarks and unexpected answers—*that* his scenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery, or passion; his personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators; every sentence is to ward or strike; the contest of smartness is never intermitted; and his wit is a meteor playing to and fro with alternate coruscations.'

There is but one more interview between Cynthia and Mellafont, which is the opening of the fourth act, and this is of so flat and insipid a sort, as to be with reason omitted in representation; I think, therefore, it may be justly observed, that this match, for the prevention of which artifices of so virulent and diabolical a nature are practised by Lady Touchwood and The Double Dealer, is not pressed

upon the feelings of the spectators in so interesting a manner, as it should and might have been.

Having remarked upon the object of the plot, I shall next consider the intrigue; and for this purpose we must methodically trace the conduct of Lady Touchwood, who is the poet's chief engine, and that of her under-agent Maskwell.

The scene lies in Lord Touchwood's house, but whether in town or country does not appear. Sir Paul Pliant, his lady and daughter, are naturally brought thither, upon the day preceding Cynthia's marriage, to adjust the settlement: Lord and Lady Froth, Careless, and Brisk, are visiters on the occasion; Mellafont and Maskwell are inmates: this disposition is as happy as can be devised. The incident related by Mellafont to Careless, of the attempt upon him made by Lady Touchwood, artfully prepares us to expect every thing that revenge and passion can suggest for frustrating his happiness; and it is judicious to represent Mellafont incredulous as to the criminality of Maskwell's intercourse with Lady Touchwood; for if he had believed it upon Careless's suggestion, it would have made his blindness to the character of Maskwell not only weak, which in fact it is, but unnatural and even guilty.

Maskwell in the first act makes general promises to Lady Touchwood that he will defeat Mellafont's match—'You shall possess and ruin him too.'—The lady presses him to explain particulars; he opens no other resource but that of possessing Lady Pliant with an idea that Mellafont is fond of her—'She must be thoroughly persuaded that Mellafont loves her.'—So shallow a contrivance as this cannot escape the lady's penetration, and she naturally answers—'I don't see what you can propose from so trifling a design; for her first conversing with Mellafont will

convince her of the contrary.' In fact, the author's good sense was well aware how weak this expedient is, and it seems applied to no other purpose than as an incident to help on the underplot, by bringing forward the comic effect of Lady Pliant's character, and that of Sir Paul. Maskwell himself is so fairly gravelled by the observation, that he confesses he 'does not depend upon it;' but he observes that 'it will prepare something else, and gain him leisure to lay a stronger plot; if I gain a little time,' says he, 'I shall not want contrivance.'

In the second act this design upon Lady Pliant is played off, and Maskwell in an interview with Mellafont avows the plot, and says—'to tell you the truth, I encouraged it for your diversion.' He proceeds to say, that in order to gain the confidence of Lady Touchwood, 'he had pretended to have been long secretly in love with Cynthia;' that thereby he had drawn forth 'the secrets of her heart,' and that 'if he accomplish'd her designs, she had engaged to put Cynthia with all her fortune into his power:' he then discloses by soliloquy that his motive for *double dealing* was founded in his passion for Cynthia, and observes, that 'the name of rival cuts all ties asunder, and is a general acquittance.' This proceeding is in nature, and is good comedy.

The third act opens with a scene between Lord and Lady Touchwood, which is admirably conceived and executed with great spirit; I question if there is any thing of the author superior to this dialogue. The design of alarming the jealousy and resentment of Lord Touchwood now appears to have originated with the lady, although Maskwell was privy to it, and 'ready for a cue to come in and confirm all, had there been occasion;' he proposes to her to say that he was 'privy to Mellafont's design, but that he used his utmost endeavours to dis-

suade him from it; and on the credit he thinks to establish by this proof of his honour and honesty, he grounds another plot, which he keeps as his ultimate and most secret resource, that 'of cheating her, Lady Touchwood, *as* well as the rest.' He now reveals to Mellafont a criminal assignation with Lady Touchwood in her chamber at eight, and proposes to him to come and surprise them together, 'and then,' says he, 'it will be hard if you cannot bring her to any conditions.'

This appears to me to be a very dangerous experiment, and scarce within the bounds of nature and probability. If Maskwell, under cover of the proposal, had in view nothing more than the introduction of Mellafont into Lady Touchwood's bedchamber, there to put them together, and then to bring Lord Touchwood secretly upon them in the moment of their interview, his contrivance could not have been better laid for the purpose of confirming the impression, which that lord had received against his nephew; in which Maskwell had nothing more to do than to apprise the lady of his design, and she of course could have managed the interview to the purposes of the plot, and effectually have completed the ruin of Mellafont: this, it should seem, would have answered his object completely, for he would have risen upon the ruin of Mellafont, possessed himself of Lord Touchwood's favour, bound Lady Touchwood to concealment of his villany, and been as able to lay his train for the possession of Cynthia, as by any other mode he could choose for obtaining her; but if he put it to the issue of a surprise upon Lady Touchwood, when she was not prepared for the management of that surprise, what was he to expect from the introduction of Lord Touchwood, but discovery and defeat? Was it not natural to suppose Mellafont would seize the oppor-

tunity of reproaching her with her criminality with Maskwell? It was for that very purpose he brings him hither: he tells him 'it will be hard if he cannot then bring her to any conditions;'—and if this was to pass under the terror of his reproaches, how could Maskwell set Lord Touchwood upon listening to their conversation, and not apprehend for a consequence apparently so unavoidable? He puts every thing to risk by proposing to Mellafont to conceal himself in Lady Touchwood's bed-chamber, whilst she is in the closet; he then meets Lord Touchwood, appoints him to come to the lobby by the bed-chamber, in a quarter of an hour's time; he keeps his assignation with the lady, Mellafont starts from his hiding-place, and Maskwell escapes, but soon returns secretly, introducing Lord Touchwood to listen to the dialogue between his lady and nephew: she accidentally discovers him without his being seen by Mellafont, and turns that accidental discovery against Mellafont. What a combination of improbabilities is here fortuitously thrown together to produce this lucky incident! Could Maskwell reasonably presume upon a chance so beyond expectation? Every thing is made to turn upon the precarious point of a minute: if Lord Touchwood, who was appointed for a quarter of an hour, had anticipated that appointment, if Lady Touchwood, had been less punctual to her assignation, if Mellafont had happened to have dropt one word in his uncle's hearing, charging her with his discovery, as had been agreed, or if either she had happened not to have seen Lord Touchwood, or Mellafont had seen him; in short, if any one thing had turned up, which ought to have come to pass, or otherwise than it was made to come to pass by the greatest violence to probability, Maskwell was inevitably undone: it must be owned he laid a train for his own

destruction, but stage incident rescued him; and this, with the lady's adroitness, effaces the improbability, when it passes in representation, and keeps nature out of sight. Had Mellafont told the plain story to his uncle, after Lady Touchwood had so unexpectedly turned it against him, it would at least have put the plot to risk, and of this the author seems so conscious, that he does not suffer him to attempt a single word in his defence; to save his villain, he is compelled to sacrifice his hero.

It is not sufficient to say that a poet has his characters in his power, and can fashion incidents according to his own discretion; he must do no violence to nature and probability for the purposes of his plot.

Maskwell having in this manner escaped with success, begins next to put in execution his plot for obtaining Cynthia, and this constitutes the intrigue and catastrophe of the fifth act; his plan is as follows—Having imparted to Lord Touchwood his love for Cynthia by the vehicle of a soliloquy, which is to be overheard by his lordship, he proposes to himself to carry off Cynthia to St. Alban's with the chaplain in the coach, there to be married; this she is to be trepanned into by persuading her that the chaplain is Mellafont, and Mellafont is brought to co-operate, by a promise that he shall elope with Cynthia under that disguise, and that the chaplain shall be made to follow on the day after and then marry him to Cynthia; with this view Mellafont is appointed to meet Maskwell in one chamber, and Cynthia in another; the real chaplain is to be passed upon the lady for Mellafont, and Mellafont is to be left in the lurch; this plot upon Cynthia, Maskwell confides to Lord Touchwood, telling him there is no other way to possess himself of her but by surprise.

Though the author undoubtedly meant his villain

should in the end outwit himself, yet he did not mean him to attempt impossibilities, and the absurdities of this contrivance are so many, that I know not which to mention first. How was Maskwell to possess himself of Cynthia by this scheme? By what force or fraud is he to accomplish the object of marrying her? We must conclude he was not quite so desperate as to sacrifice all his hopes from Lord Touchwood by any violence upon her person; there is nothing in his character to warrant the conjecture. It is no less unaccountable how Mellafont could be caught by this project, and induced to equip himself in the chaplain's gown to run off with a lady, who had pledged herself to him never to marry any other man: there was no want of consent on her part; a reconciliation with Lord Touchwood was the only object he had to look to, and how was that to be effected by this elopement with Cynthia?

The jealousy of Lady Touchwood was another rock on which Maskwell was sure to split: it would have been natural for him to have provided against this danger by binding my lord to secrecy, and the lady's pride of family was a ready plea for that purpose; when he was talking to himself for the purpose of being overheard by Lord Touchwood, he had nothing to do but to throw in this observation amongst the rest to bar that point against discovery.

The reader will not suppose I would suggest a plan of operation for *The Double Dealer* to secure him against discovery; I am only for adding probability and common precaution to his projects; I allow that it is in character for him to grow wanton with success; there is a moral in a villain outwitting himself; but the catastrophe would in my opinion have been far more brilliant, if his schemes had broke up with more force of contrivance; laid as they are, they melt away and dissolve by their

own weakness and inconsistency; Lord and Lady Touchwood, Careless and Cynthia, all join in the discovery; every one but Mellafont sees through the plot, and he is blindness itself.

Mr. Congreve, in his dedication above-mentioned, defends himself against the objection to soliloquies; but I conceive he is more open to criticism for the frequent use he makes of listening; Lord Touchwood three times has recourse to this expedient.

Of the characters in this comedy, Lady Touchwood, though of an unfavourable cast, seems to have been the chief care of the poet, and is well preserved throughout; her elevation of tone, nearly approaching to the tragic, affords a strong relief to the lighter sketches of the episodical persons, Sir Paul and Lady Pliant, Lord and Lady Froth, who are highly entertaining, but much more loose than the stage in its present state of reformation would endure: nothing more can be said of Careless and Brisk, than that they are the young men of the theatre, at the time when they were in representation. Of Maskwell enough has been said in these remarks, nor need any thing be added to what has been already observed upon Mellafont and Cynthia. As for the moral of the play, which the author says he designed in the first place, and then applied the fable to it, it should seem to have been his principal object in the formation of the comedy, and yet it is not made to reach several characters of very libertine principles, who are left to reform themselves at leisure; and the plot, though subordinate to the moral, seems to have drawn him off from executing his good intentions so completely as those professions may be understood to engage for.

NUMBER LXXXI.

Citò scribendo non fit ut bene scribatur; bene scribendo fit ut citò.
QUINTIL. LIB. X.

THE celebrated author of the Rambler in his concluding paper says, 'I have laboured to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations: something, perhaps, I have added to the elegance of its construction, and something to the harmony of its cadence.' I hope our language hath gained all the profit, which the labours of this meritorious writer were exerted to produce: in style of a certain description he undoubtedly excels; but though I think there is much in his essays for a reader to admire, I should not recommend them as a model for a disciple to copy.

Simplicity, ease, and perspicuity should be the first objects of a young writer: Addison, and other authors of his class, will furnish him with examples, and assist him in the attainment of these excellences; but, after all the style, in which a man shall write, will not be formed by imitation only; it will be the style of his mind; it will assimilate itself to its mode of thinking, and take its colour from the complexion of its ordinary discourse, and the company he consorts with. As for that distinguishing characteristic, which the ingenious essayist terms very properly *the harmony of its cadence,* that I take to be incommunicable, and immediately dependent upon the ear of him who models it. This *harmony of cadence* is so strong a mark of discrimination between authors of note in the world of letters, that we can depose to a style, whose modula-

tion we are familiar with, almost as confidently as to the hand-writing of a correspondent. But though I think there will be found in the periods of every established writer a certain peculiar tune, whether harmonious or otherwise, which will depend rather upon the natural ear than upon the imitative powers, yet I would not be understood to say that the study of good models can fail to be of use in the first formation of it. When a subject presents itself to the mind, and thoughts arise, which are to be committed to writing, it is then for a man to choose whether he will express himself in simple or in elaborate diction, whether he will compress his matter or dilate it, ornament it with epithets and robe it in metaphor, or whether he will deliver it plainly and naturally in such language as a well-bred person and a scholar would use, who affects no parade of speech, nor aims at any flights of fancy. Let him decide as he will, in all these cases he hath models in plenty to choose from, which may be said to court his imitation.

For instance; if his ambition is to glitter and surprise with the figurative and metaphorical brilliancy of his period, let him tune his ear to some such passages as the following, where Doctor Johnson in the character of critic and biographer is pronouncing upon the poet Congreve. 'His scenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery, or passion: his personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators; every sentence is to ward or strike; the contest of smartness is never intermitted; his wit is a meteor playing to and fro, with alternate coruscations.' If he can learn to embroider with as much splendour, taste and address as this and many other samples, which the same master exhibits, he cannot study in a better school.

On the contrary, if simplicity be his object, and

a certain serenity of style, which seems in unison with the soul, he may open the Spectator, and take from the first paper of Mr. Addison the first paragraph that meets his eye; the following, for instance —'There is nothing that makes its way more directly to the soul than *beauty*, which immediately diffuses a secret satisfaction and complacency through the imagination, and gives a finishing to any thing that is great or uncommon: the very first discovery of it strikes the mind with an inward joy, and spreads a cheerfulness and delight through all its faculties.' Or again, in the same essay: 'We no where meet with a more glorious or pleasing show in nature, than what appears in the heavens at the rising and setting of the sun, which is wholly made up of those different stains of light, that show themselves in clouds of a different situation.' A florid writer would hardly have resisted the opportunities which here court the imagination, to indulge its flights, whereas few writers of any sort would have been tempted, on a topic merely critical, to have employed such figurative and splendid diction, as that of Doctor Johnson: these little samples, therefore, though selected with little or no care, but taken as they came to hand, may serve to exemplify my meaning, and in some degree characterize the different styles of the respective writers.

Now as every student, who is capable of copying either of these styles, or even of comparing them, must discern on which side the greater danger of miscarrying lies, as well as the greater disgrace in case of such miscarriage, prudence will direct him in his outset not to hazard the attempt at a florid diction. If his ear hath not been vitiated by vulgar habitudes, he will only have to guard against mean expressions, while he is studying to be simple and perspicuous; he will put his thoughts

into language naturally as they present themselves, giving them for the present little more than mere grammatical correction; afterwards, upon a closer review, he will polish those parts that seem rude, harmonize them where they are unequal, compress what is too diffusive, raise what is low, and attune the whole to that general cadence which seems most grateful to his ear.

But if our student hath been smitten with the turbulent oratory of the senate, the acrimonious declamation of the bar, or the pompous eloquence of the pulpit, and shall take the lofty speakers in these several orders for his models, rather than such as address the ear in humbler tones, his passions will in that case hurry him into the florid and figurative style, to a sublime and swelling period; and if in this he excels, it must be owned he accomplishes a great and arduous task, and he will gain a liberal share of applause from the world, which in general is apt to be captivated with those high and towering images, that strike and surprise the senses. In this style the Hebrew prophets write, 'whose discourse,' to use the words of the learned Doctor Bentley, 'after the genius of the Eastern nations, is thick set with metaphor and allegory; the same bold comparisons and dithyrambic liberty of style every where occurring—For when '*the Spirit of God came upon them*,' and breathed a new warmth and vigour through all the powers of the body and soul: when, by the influx of divine light, the whole scene of Christ's heavenly kingdom was represented to their view, so that their hearts were ravished with joy, and their imaginations turgid and pregnant with the glorious ideas; then surely, if ever, their style would be strong and lofty, full of allusions to all that is great and magnificent in the kingdoms of this world.' [*Commencement Sermon*,]

—And these flights of imagination, these effusions of rapture and sublimity, will occasionally be found in the pulpit eloquence of some of our most correct and temperate writers; witness that brilliant apostrophe at the conclusion of the ninth discourse of Bishop Sherlock, than whom few or none have written with more didactic brevity and simplicity—'Go,' [says he to the deists] 'go to your natural religion: lay before her Mahomet and his disciples arrayed in armour and in blood, riding in triumph over the spoils of thousands and tens of thousands, who fell by his victorious sword: show her the cities which he set in flames, the countries which he ravaged and destroyed, and the miserable distress of all the inhabitants of the earth. When she has viewed him in this scene, carry her into his retirements; show her the prophet's chamber, his concubines and wives; let her see his adultery, and hear him allege revelation and his divine commission to justify his lust and oppression. When she is tired with this prospect, then show her the blessed Jesus, humble and meek, doing good to all the sons of men, patiently instructing both the ignorant and perverse; let her see him in his most retired privacies; let her follow him to the mount, and hear his devotions and supplications to God; carry her to his table to view his poor fare, and hear his heavenly discourse: let her see him injured, but not provoked; let her attend him to the tribunal, and consider the patience with which he endured the scoffs and reproaches of his enemies: lead her to his cross, and let her view him in the agony of death, and hear his last prayer for his persecutors—*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*'

This is a lofty passage in the high imperative tone of declamation; it is richly coloured, boldly contrasted, and replete with imagery, and is

amongst the strongest of those instances, where the orator addresses himself to the senses and passions of his hearers: but let the disciple tread this path with caution; let him wait the call, and be sure he has an occasion worthy of his efforts before he makes them.

Allegory, personification, and metaphor, will press upon his imagination at certain times, but let him soberly consult his judgement in those moments, and weigh their fitness before he admits them into his style. As for allegory, it is at best but a kind of fairy form; it is hard to naturalize it, and it will rarely fill a graceful part in any manly composition. With respect to personification, as I am speaking of prose only, it is but an exotic ornament, and may be considered rather as the loan of the muses than as the property of prose; let our student, therefore, beware how he borrows the feathers of the jay, lest his unnatural finery should only serve to make him pointed at and despised. Metaphor, on the other hand, is common property, and he may take his share of it, provided he has discretion not to abuse his privilege, and neither surfeits the appetite with repletion, nor confounds the palate with too much variety: let his metaphor be aposite, single and unconfused, and it will serve him as a kind of rhetorical lever, to lift and elevate his style above the pitch of ordinary discourse; let him also so apply this machine, as to make it touch in as many points as possible; otherwise it can never so poise the weight above it, as to keep it firm and steady on its proper centre.

To give an example of the right use and application of this figure, I again apply to a learned author already quoted—' Our first parents having fallen from their native state of innocence, the tincture of evil, like an hereditary disease, infected all their

posterity; and the leaven of sin having once corrupted the whole mass of mankind, all the species ever after would be soured and tainted with it; the vicious ferment perpetually diffusing and propagating itself through all generations.'—[*Bentley, Comm. Sermon.*]

There will be found also in certain writers a profusion of words, ramifying, indeed, from the same root, yet rising into climax by their power and importance, which seems to burst forth from the overflow and impetuosity of the imagination: resembling at first sight what Quintilian characterizes as the '*Abundantia Juvenilis*,' but which, when tempered by the hand of a master, will, upon closer examination, be found to bear the stamp of judgement under the appearance of precipitancy. I need only turn to the famous '*Commencement Sermon!*' before quoted, and my meaning will be fully illustrated—'Let them tell us then what is the chain, the cement, the magnetism, what they will call it, the invisible tie of that union, whereby matter and an incorporeal mind, things that have no similitude or alliance to each other, can so sympathize by a mutual league of motion and sensation. No; they will not pretend to that, for they can frame no conceptions of it: they are sure there is such an union from the operations and effects, but the cause and the manner of it are too subtle and secret to be discovered by the eye of reason: 'tis mystery, 'tis divine magic, 'tis natural miracle.'

NUMBER LXXXII.

Defunctus jam sum, nihil est quod dicat mihi.
TER. EUN. PROL. 15.

In all ages of the world men have been in habits of praising the time past at the expense of the time present. This was done even in the Augustan æra, and in that witty and celebrated period the *laudator temporis acti* must have been either a very splenetic, or a very silly character.

Our present grumblers may, perhaps, be better warranted; but, though there may not be the same injustice in their cavilling complaints, there is more than equal impolicy in them; for if by discouraging their contemporaries they mean to mend them, they take a very certain method of counteracting their own designs; and if they have any other meaning, it must be something worse than impolitic, and they have more to answer for than a mere mistake.

Who but the meanest of mankind would wish to damp the spirit and degrade the genius of the country he belongs to? Is any man lowered by the dignity of his own nation, by the talents of his contemporaries? Who would not prefer to live in an enlightened and a rising age, rather than in a dark and declining one? It is natural to take a pride in the excellence of our free constitution, in the virtues of our sovereign; is it not as natural to sympathize in the prosperity of our arts and sciences, in the reputation of our countrymen? But these splenetic *dampers* are for ever sighing over the decline of wit,

the decline of genius, the decline of literature, when if there is any one thing that has declined rather than another, it is the wretched state of criticism, so far as they have to do with it.

As I was passing from the city the other day, I turned into a coffee-house, and took my seat at a table, next to which some gentlemen had assembled, and were conversing over their coffee. A dispute was carried on between a little prattling volatile fellow and an old gentleman of a sullen, morose aspect, who in a dictatorial tone of voice was declaiming against the times, and treating them and their puisny advocate with more contempt than either one or the other seemed to deserve: still the little fellow, who had abundance of zeal and no want of words, kept battling with might and main for the world as it goes, against the world as it had gone by, and I could perceive he had an interest with the junior part of his hearers, whilst the sullen orator was no less popular amongst the elders of the party: the little fellow, who seemed to think it no good reason why any work should be descried only because the author of it was living, had been descanting upon the merit of a recent publication, and had now shifted his ground from the sciences to the fine arts, where he seemed to have taken a strong post and stood resolutely to it; his opponent, who was not a man to be tickled out of his spleen by a few fine dashes of arts merely elegant, did not relish this kind of skirmishing argument, and tauntingly cried out—' What tell you me of a parcel of gew gaw artists, fit only to pick the pockets of a dissipated trifling age? You talk of your painters and portrait-mongers, what use are they of? Where are the philosophers and the poets, whose countenances might interest posterity to sit to them? Will they paint me a Bacon, a Newton, or a Locke? I defy

them; there are not three heads upon living shoulders in the kingdom, worth the oil that would be wasted upon them. Will they or you find me a Shakspeare, a Milton, a Dryden, a Pope, an Addison? You cannot find a limb, a feature, or even the shadow of the least of them: these were men worthy to be recorded; poets who reached the very topmost summits of Parnassus; our moderns are but pismires crawling at its lowest root.'—This lofty defiance brought our little advocate to a non-plus; the moment was embarrassing; the champion of time past was echoed by his party with a cry of—'No, no; there are no such men as these now living.'—'I believe not,' he replied, 'I believe not: I could give you a score of names more; but these are enough: honest Tom Durfey would be more than a match for any poetaster now breathing!'

In this style he went on crowing and clapping his wings over a beaten cock, for our poor little champion seemed dead upon the pit: he muttered something between his teeth, as if struggling to pronounce some name that stuck in his throat; but either there was in fact no contemporary, whom he thought it safe to oppose to these Goliaths in the lists, or none were present to his mind at this moment.

Alas! thought I, your cause, my beloved contemporaries, is desperate: *Væ Victis!* You are but dust in the scale, while this *Brennus* directs the beam. All that I have admired and applauded in my zeal for those with whom I have lived and still live; all that has hitherto made my heart expand with pride and reverence for the age and nation I belong to, will be immolated to the manes of these departed worthies, whom though I revere, I cannot love and cherish with that sympathy of soul, which I feel towards you, my dear but degenerate contemporaries!

There was a young man, sitting at the elbow of the little crest-fallen fellow, with a round clerical curl, which tokened him to be a son of the church. Having silently awaited the full time for a rally, if any spirit of resurrection had been left in the fallen hero, and none such appearing, he addressed himself to the challenger with an air so modest, but withal so impressive, that it was impossible not to be prejudiced in his favour, before he opened his cause.

'I cannot wonder,' said he, 'if the gentleman who has challenged us to produce a parallel to any one of the great names he has enumerated, finds us unprepared with any living rival to those illustrious characters: their fame, though the age in which they lived did not always appreciate it as it ought, hath yet been rising day by day in the esteem of posterity, till time hath stampt a kind of sacredness upon it, which it would now be a literary impiety to blaspheme. There are some amongst those, whom their advocate hath named, I cannot speak or think of but with a reverence only short of idolatry. Not this nation only but all Europe hath been enlightened by their labours: the great principle of nature, the very law upon which the whole system of the universe moves and gravitates, hath been developed and demonstrated by the penetrating, I had almost said the preternatural, powers of our immortal Newton. The present race of philosophers can only be considered as his disciples; but they are disciples who do honour to their master. If the principle of gravitation be the grand *desideratum* of philosophy, the discovery is with him, the application, inferences, and advantages of that discovery are with those who succeed him; and can we accuse the present age of being idle or unable to avail themselves of the ground he gave them? Let me remind you

that our present solar system is furnished with more planets than Newton knew; that our late observations upon the transit of the planet Venus were decisive for the proof and confirmation of this system: that we have circumnavigated the globe again and again; that we can boast the researches and discoveries of a Captain Cook, who, though he did not invent the compass, employed it as no man ever did, and left a map behind him, compared to which Sir Isaac Newton's was a sheet of nakedness and error: it is with gravitation, therefore, as with a loadstone; their powers have been discovered by our predecessors, but we have put them to their noblest uses.

'The venerable names of Bacon and Locke were, if I mistake not, mentioned in the same class with Newton, and though the learned gentleman could no doubt have made his selection more numerous, I doubt if he could have made it stronger, or more to the purpose of his own assertions.

'I have always regarded Bacon as the father of philosophy in this country, yet it is no breach of candour to observe, that the darkness of the age which he enlightened, affords a favourable contrast to set off the splendour of his talents; but do we who applaud him, read him? Yet if such is our veneration for times long since gone by, why do we not? The fact is, intermediate writers have disseminated his original matter through more pleasing vehicles, and we concur, whether commendably or not, to put his volumes upon the superannuated list, allowing him, however, an unalienable compensation upon our praise, and reserving to ourselves a right of taking him from the shelf, whenever we are disposed to sink the merit of a more recent author by a comparison with him. I will not, therefore, disturb

his venerable dust, but turn without further delay to the author of the Essay upon the Human Understanding.

'This essay, which professes to define every thing, as it arises or passes in the mind, must ultimately be compiled from observations of its author upon himself and within himself: before I compare the merit of this work, therefore, with the merit of any other man's work of our own immediate times, I must compare what it advances as general to mankind, with what I perceive within my particular self; and upon this reference, speaking only for an humble individual, I must own to my shame, that my understanding and the authors do by no means coincide either in definitions or ideas. I may have reason to lament the inaccuracy of the sluggishness of my own senses and perceptions, but I cannot submit to any man's doctrine against their conviction: I will only say that Mr. Locke's metaphysics are not my metaphysics, and, as it would be an ill compliment to any one of our contemporaries to compare him with a writer, who to me is unintelligible, so will I hope it can never be considered as a reflection upon so great a name as Mr. Locke's not to be understood by so insignificant a man as myself.'

'Well, Sir,' cried the sullen gentleman with a sneer, 'I think you have contrived to despatch our philosophers; you have now only a few obscure poets to dismiss in like manner, and you will have a clear field for yourself and your friends.'

NUMBER LXXXIII.

Ingeniis non ille favet, plauditque sepultis,
Nostra sed impugnat, nos nostraque lividus odit.
HOR. EPL. 2, 1, 88.

The sarcastic speech of the old snarler, with which we concluded the last paper, being undeserved on the part of the person to whom it was applied, was very properly disregarded ; and the clergyman proceeded as follows :—

'The poets you have named will never be mentioned by me but with a degree of enthusiasm, which I should rather expect to be accused of carrying to excess, than of erring in the opposite extreme, had you not put me on my guard against partiality, by charging me with it beforehand. I shall, therefore, without further apology or preface, begin with Shakspeare, first named by you, and first in fame as well as time. It would be madness in me to think of bringing any poet now living into competition with Shakspeare; but I hope it will not be thought madness, or any thing resembling to it, to observe to you, that it is not in the nature of things possible for any poet to appear in an age so polished as this of ours, who can be brought into any critical comparison with that extraordinary and eccentric genius.

'For let us consider the two great striking features of his drama, sublimity and character. Now sublimity involves sentiment and expression ; the first of these is in the soul of the poet ; it is that

portion of inspiration, which we personify when we call it The Muse; so far I am free to acknowledge there is no immediate reason to be given, why her visits should be confined to any age, nation, or person; she may fire the heart of the poet on the shores of Ionia three thousand years ago, or on the banks of the Cam or Isis at the present moment; but so far as language is concerned, I may venture to say, that modern diction will never strike modern ears with that awful kind of magic, which antiquity gives to words and phrases no longer in familiar use. In this respect our great dramatic poet hath an advantage over his distant descendants, which he owes to time, and which of course is one more than he is indebted for to his own pre-eminent genius. As for character, which I suggested as one of the two most striking features of Shakspeare's drama, or, in other words, the true and perfect delineation of nature, in this our poet is indeed a master unrivalled; yet who will not allow the happy coincidence of time for this perfection in a writer of the drama? The different orders of men, which Shakspeare saw and copied, are in many instances extinct, and such must have the charms of novelty at least in our eyes. And has the modern dramatist the same rich and various field of character? The level manners of a polished age furnish little choice to an author, who now enters on the task, in which such numbers have gone before him, and so exhausted the materials, that it is justly to be wondered at, when any thing like variety can be struck out. Dramatic characters are portraits drawn from nature, and if all the sitters have a family likeness, the artist must either depart from the truth, or preserve the resemblance; in like manner the poet must either invent characters, of which there is no counterpart in existence,

or expose himself to the danger of an insipid and tiresome repetition: to add to his difficulties it so happens, that the present age, whilst it furnishes less variety to his choice, requires more than ever for its own amusement; the dignity of the stage must of course be prostituted to the unnatural resources of a wild imagination, and its propriety disturbed; music will supply those resources for a time, and accordingly we find the French and English theatres in the dearth of character feeding upon the airy diet of sound; but this, with all the support that spectacle can give, is but a flimsy substitute, whilst the public whose taste in the mean time becomes vitiated—

> — *media inter carmina poscunt*
> *Aut Ursum aut Pugiles* — HOR. EPL. 2, 1, 185.

the latter of which monstrous prostitutions we have lately seen our national stage most shamefully exposed to.

'By comparing the different ages of poetry in our own country with those of Greece, we shall find the effects agree in each; for as the refinement of manners took place, the language of poetry became also more refined, and with greater correctness had less energy and force; the style of the poet, like the characters of the people, takes a brighter polish, which, whilst it smooths away its former asperities and protuberances, weakens the staple of its fabric, and what it gives to the elegance and delicacy of its complexion, takes away from the strength and sturdiness of its constitution. Whoever will compare Æschylus with Euripides, and Aristophanes with Menander, will need no other illustration of this remark.

'Consider only the inequalities of Shakspeare's dramas: examine not only one with another, but

compare even scene with scene in the same play. Did ever the imagination of man run riot into such wild and opposite extremes? Could this be done, or being done, would it be suffered in the present age? How many of these plays, if acted as they were originally written, would now be permitted to pass? Can we have a stronger proof of the barbarous state of those times, in which Titus Andronicus first appeared, than the favour which that horrid spectacle was received with? Yet of this we are assured by Ben Jonson. If this play was Shakspeare's, it was his first production, and some of his best commentators are of opinion, it was actually written by him whilst he resided at Stratford-upon-Avon. Had this production been followed by the three parts of Henry the Sixth, by Love's Labour Lost, the two Gentlemen of Verona, the Comedy of Errors, or some few others, which our stage does not attempt to reform, that critic must have had a very singular degree of intuition, who had discovered in those dramas a genius capable of producing the Macbeth. How would a young author be received in the present time, who was to make his first essay before the public with such a piece as Titus Andronicus? Now if we are warranted in saying there are several of Shakspeare's dramas, which could not live upon our present stage at any rate, and few, if any, that would pass without just censure in many parts, were they represented in their original state, we must acknowledge it is with reason that our living authors, standing in awe of their audiences, dare not aim at those bold and irregular flights of imagination, which carried our bard to such a height of fame; and, therefore, it was that I ventured awhile ago to say, there can be no poet in a polished and critical age like this, who can be brought into any fair comparison with

so bold and eccentric a genius as Shakspeare, of whom we may say with Horace—

> *Tentavit quoque, rem si digne vertere posset,*
> *Et placuit sibi, natura sublimis et acer:*
> *Nam spirat tragicum satis, et feliciter audet:*
> *Sed turpem putat in scriptis metuitque lituram.*
>
> EPL. 2, 1, 164.

When I bring to my recollection the several periods of our English drama since the age of Shakspeare, I could name many dates, when it has been in hands far inferior to the present, and were it my purpose to enter into particulars, I should not scruple to appeal to several dramatic productions within the compass of our own times; but as the task of separating and selecting one from another amongst our own contemporaries can never be a pleasant task, nor one I would willingly engage in, I will content myself with referring to our stock of modern acting plays; many of which having passed the ordeal of critics, who speak the same language with what I have just now heard, and are continually crying down those they live with, may perhaps take their turn with posterity, and be hereafter as partially over-rated upon a comparison with the productions of the age to come, as they are now undervalued when compared with those of the ages past.

'With regard to Milton, if we could not name any one epic poet of our nation since his time, it would be saying no more of us than may be said of the world in general, from the æra of Homer to that of Virgil. Greece had one standard epic poet; Rome had no more; England has her Milton. If Dryden pronounced that 'the force of nature could no further go,' he was at once a good authority and a strong example of the truth of the assertion. If his genius shrunk from the undertaking, can we

wonder that so few have taken it up? Yet we will not forget Leonidas, nor speak slightly of its merit: and as death has removed the worthy author where he cannot hear our praises, the world may now, as in the case of Milton heretofore, be so much the more forward to bestow them. If the Sampson Agonistes is nearer to the simplicity of its Grecian original than either our own Elfrida or Caractacus, those dramas have a tender interest, a pathetic delicacy, which in that are wanting; and though Comus has every charm of language, it has a vein of allegory that impoverishes the mine.

'The variety of Dryden's genius was such as to preclude comparison, were I disposed to attempt it. Of his dramatic productions, he himself declares, 'that he never wrote any thing in that way to please himself but his All for Love.' For ever under arms, he lived in a continual state of poetic warfare with his contemporaries, galling and galled by turns; he subsisted also by expedients, and necessity, which forced his genius into quicker growth than was natural to it, made a rich harvest but slovenly husbandry; it drove him also into a duplicity of character that is painful to reflect upon; it put him ill at ease within himself, and verified the fable of the nightingale, singing with a thorn at its breast.

'Pope's versification gave the last and finishing polish to our English poetry. His lyre, more sweet than Dryden's, was less sonorous; his touch more correct, but not so bold; his strain more musical in its tones, but not so striking in its effect. Review him as a critic, and review him throughout, you will pronounce him the most perfect poet in our language; read him as an enthusiast, and examine him in detail, you cannot refuse him your

approbation, but your rapture you will reserve for Dryden.

'But you will tell me this does not apply to the question in dispute, and that instead of settling precedency between our poets, it is time for me to produce my own. For this I shall beg your excuse; my zeal for my contemporaries shall not hurry them into comparisons, which their own modesty would revolt from; it hath prompted me to intrude upon your patience, whilst I submitted a few mitigating considerations in their behalf; not as an answer to your challenge, but as an effort to soften your contempt. I confess to you I have sometimes flattered myself I have found the strength of Dryden in our late Churchill and the sweetness of Pope in our lamented Goldsmith. Enraptured as I am with the lyre of Timotheus in the feast of Alexander, I contemplate with awful delight Gray's enthusiastic bard—

> On a rock, whose haughty brow
> Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
> Rob'd in the sable garb of woe,
> With haggard eyes the poet stood;
> (Loose his beard and hoary hair
> Stream'd like a meteor to the troubled air)
> And with a master's hand and prophet's fire
> Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.

Let the living muses speak for themselves; I have all the warmth of a friend, but not the presumption of a champion: the poets you now so loudly praise when dead, found the world as loud in defamation when living; you are now paying the debts of your predecessors, and atoning for their injustice; posterity will in like manner atone for yours.

'You mentioned the name of Addison in your list, not altogether as a poet I presume, but rather as the man of morals, the reformer of manners,

and the friend of religion; with affection I subscribe my tribute to his literary fame, to his amiable character. In sweetness and simplicity of style, in purity and perspicuity of sentiment, he is a model to all essayists. At the same time I feel the honest pride of a contemporary in recalling to your memory the name of Samuel Johnson, who, as a moral and religious essayist, as an acute and penetrating critic, as a nervous and elaborate poet, an excellent grammarian, and a general scholar, ranks with the first names in literature.

'Not having named an historian in your list of illustrious men, you have precluded me from adverting to the histories of Hume, Robertson, Lyttelton, Henry, Gibbon, and others, who are a host of writers, which all antiquity cannot equal.'

Here the clergyman concluded: the conversation now grew desultory and uninteresting, and I returned home.

NUMBER LXXXIV.

Est genus hominum, qui esse primos se omnium rerum volunt,
Nec sunt. TER. EUN. 2, 2, 17.

WHAT a delightful thing it is to find one's self in a company, where tempers harmonize, and hearts are open; where wit flows without any checks but what decency and good-nature impose, and humour indulges itself in those harmless freaks and caprices, that raise a laugh by which no man's feelings are offended.

This can only happen to us in a land of freedom; it is in vain to hope for it in those arbitrary countries, where men must lock the doors against spies and informers, and must entrust their lives, whilst they impart their sentiments to each other. In such circumstances, a mind enlightened by education is no longer a blessing: What is the advantage of discernment, and how is a man profited by his capacity of separating truth from error, if he dare not exercise that faculty? It were safer to be the blind dupe of superstition, than the intuitive philosopher, if born within the jurisdiction of an inquisitorial tribunal. Can a man felicitate himself in the glow of genius and the gaiety of wit, when breathing the air of a country, where so dire an in-

strument is in force as a *lettre de cachet?* But experience hath shown us, that if arbitrary monarchs cannot keep their people in ignorance, they cannot retain them in slavery: if men read they will meditate; if they travel they will compare, and their minds must be as dark as the dungeons which imprison their persons, if they do not rise with indignation against such monstrous maxims, as imprisonment at pleasure for undefined offences, self-accusations extorted by torments and secret trials, where the prisoner hath neither voice nor advocate. Let those princes whose government is so administered, 'make darkness their pavilion,' and draw their very mountains down upon them to shut out the light, or expect the period of their despotism. Illuminated minds will not be kept in slavery.

With a nation so free, so highly enlightened, and so eminent in letters as the English, we may well expect to find the social qualities in their best state; and it is but justice to the age we live in, to confess those expectations may be fully gratified. There are some, perhaps, who will not subscribe to this assertion, but probably those very people make the disappointments they complain of. If a man takes no pains to please his company, he is little likely to be pleased by his company. Liberty, though essential to good society, may in some of its effects operate against it; for, as it makes men independent, independence will occasionally be found to make them arrogant, and none such can be good companions: yet, let me say for the contemporaries I am living with, that within the period of my own acquaintance with the world, the reform in its social manners and habits has been gradual and increasing. The feudal haughtiness of our nobility has totally disappeared, and, in place of a proud distant reserve, a pleasing suavity and com-

panionable ease have almost universally obtained amongst the higher orders: the pedantry of office is gone, and even the animosity of party is so far in the wane, that it serves rather to whet our wits than our swords against each other: the agitation of political opinions is no longer a subject fatal to the peace of the table, but takes its turn with other topics, without any breach of good manners or good fellowship.

It were too much to say that there are no general causes still subsisting, which annoy our social comforts, and disgrace our tempers; they are still too many, and it is amongst the duties of an Observer to set a mark upon them, though by so doing I may run into repetition, for I am not conscious of having any thing to say upon the subject which I have not said before; but if a beggar who asks charity, because of his importunity, shall at length be relieved, an author, perhaps, who enforces his advice, shall in the end be listened to.

I must, therefore, again and again insist upon it, that there are two sides to every argument, and that it is the natural and unalienable right of man to be heard in support of his opinion, he having first lent a patient ear to the speaker, who maintains sentiments which oppose that opinion. I do humbly apprehend that an overbearing voice, and noisy volubility of tongue, are proofs of a very underbred fellow, and it is with regret I see society too frequently disturbed in its most delectable enjoyments, by this odious character. I do not see that any man hath a right, by obligation or otherwise, to lay me under a necessity of thinking exactly as he thinks. Though I admit, that 'from the fulness of the heart the tongue speaketh,' I do not admit any superior pretensions it hath to be Sir Oracle from the fulness of the pocket. In the name of freedom,

what claim hath any man to be the tyrant of the table? As well he may avail himself of the greater force of his fists as of his lungs. Doth sense consist in sound, or is truth only to be measured by the noise it makes? Can it be a disgrace to be convinced, or doth any one lose by the exchange, who resigns his own opinion for a better? When I reflect upon the advantages of our public schools, where puerile tempers are corrected by collision; upon the mathematical studies, and scholastic exercises of our universities, I am no less grieved than astonished to discover so few proficients in well mannered controversy, so very few who seem to make truth the object of their investigation, or will spare a few patient moments, from the eternal repetition of their own deafening jargon, to the temperate reply of men, probably better qualified to speak than themselves.

There is another grievance not unfrequent, though inferior to this above-mentioned, which proceeds jointly from the mixed nature of society, and the ebullitions of freedom in this happy country, I mean that roar of mirth, and uncontrolled flow of spirits, which hath more vulgarity in it than ease, more noise than gaiety: the stream of elegant festivity will never overflow its banks; the delicacy of sex, the dignity of rank, and the decorum of certain professions, should never be so overlooked, as to alarm the feelings of any person present, interested for their preservation. When the softer sex entrust themselves to our society, we should never forget the tender respect due to them even in our gayest hours. When the higher orders by descending, and the lower by ascending out of their sphere, meet upon the level of good fellowship, let not our superiors be revolted by a rusticity, however jovial, nor driven back into their fastnesses,

by overstepping the partition line, and making saucy inroads into their proper quarters. Who questions a minister about news or politics? Who talks ribaldry before a bishop? once in seven years is often enough for the levelling familiarity of electioneering manners.

There is another remark which I cannot excuse myself from making, if it were only for the sake of those luckless beings, who being born with duller faculties, or stampt by the hand of Nature with oddities either of humour or of person, seem to be set up in society as butts for the arrows of raillery and ridicule. If the object, thus made the victim of the company, feels the shaft, who but must suffer with him? If he feels it not, we blush for human nature, whose dignity is sacrificed in his person; and as for the profest buffoon, I take him to have as little pretensions to true humour, as a punster has to true wit. There is scope enough for all the eccentricities of character without turning cruelty into sport; let satire take its share, but let vice only shrink before it; let it silence the tongue that wantonly violates truth, or defames reputation; let it batter the insulting towers of pride, but let the air-built castles of vanity, much more the humble roof of the indigent and infirm, never provoke its spleen.

It happened to me not long ago to fall into company with some very respectable persons, chiefly of the mercantile order, where a country gentleman, who was a stranger to most of the party, took upon him to entertain the company with a tedious string of stories, of no sort of importance to any soul present, and all tending to display his own consequence, fortune, and independence. Such conversation was ill-calculated for the company present, the majority of whom had I dare say been the

founders of their own fortunes, and I should doubt if there was any quarter of the globe accessible to commerce, which had not been resorted to by some one or other then sitting at the table. This uninteresting egotist, therefore, was the more unpardonable, as he shut out every topic of curious and amusing information, which could no where meet a happier opportunity for discussion.

He was endured for a considerable time with that patience which is natural to men of good manners, and experience in the world. This encouragement only rendered him more insupportable; when at last an elderly gentleman seized the opportunity of a short pause in his discourse, to address the following reproof to this eternal talker:

'We have listened to you, Sir, a long time with attention, and it does not appear that any body present is disposed to question, either your independence, or the comforts that are annexed to it; we rejoice that you possess them in so full a degree, and we wish every landed gentleman in the kingdom was in the same happy predicament with yourself; but we are traders, Sir, and are beholden to our industry and fair dealing, for what you inherit from your ancestors, and yourself never toiled for. Might it not be altogether as amusing to you to be told of our adventures in foreign climes and countries; of our dangers, difficulties, and escapes; our remarks upon the manners and customs of other nations, as to enclose the whole conversation within the hedge of your own estate, and shut up intelligence, wide as the world itself, within the narrow limits of your parish pound? Believe me, Sir, we are glad to hear you, and we respect your order in the state, but we are willing to hear each other also in our turns; for, let me observe to you, in the style

of the counting-house, that conversation, like trade, abhors a monopoly, and that a man can derive no benefit from society, unless he hears others talk as well as himself.'

NUMBER LXXXV.

I WAS in company the other day with a young gentleman, who had newly succeeded to a considerable estate, and was a good deal struck with the conversation of an elderly person present, who was very deliberately casting up the several demands that the community at large had upon his property.—— 'Are you aware,' says he, 'how small a portion of your revenue will properly remain to yourself, when you have satisfied all the claims which you must pay to society and your country, for living amongst us, and supporting the character of what is called a landed gentleman? Part of your income will be stopt for the maintenance of them who have none, under the denomination of poor-rates; this may be called a fine upon the partiality of fortune, levied by the law of society, which will not trust its poor members to the precarious charity of the rich: another part must go to the debts and necessities of the government, which protects you in war and peace, and is also a fine which you must be content to pay for the honour of being an Englishman, and the advantage of living in a land of liberty and security. The learned professions will also have their share; the church for taking care of your soul, the physi-

cian for looking after your body, and the lawyer must have part of your property for superintending the rest. The merchant, tradesman, and artisan will have their profit upon all the multiplied wants, comforts, and indulgences of civilized life: these are not to be enumerated, for they depend on the humours and habits of men; they have grown up with the refinements and elegances of the age, and they will further increase, as these shall advance: they are the conductors, which, like the blood-vessels in the human frame, circulate your wealth, and every other man's wealth, through every limb and even fibre of the national body: the hand of industry creates that wealth, and to the hand of industry it finally returns, as blood does to the heart.'

If we trace the situation of man from a mere state of nature to the highest state of civilization, we shall find these artificial wants and dependences increase with every stage and degree of his improvements; so that if we consider each nation apart as one great machine, the several parts and springs, which give it motion, naturally become more and more complicated and multifarious, as the uses to which it is applied are more and more diversified. Again, if we compare two nations in an equal state of civilization, we may remark, that where the greater freedom obtains, there the greater variety of artificial wants will obtain also, and of course property will circulate through more channels: this I take to be the case upon a comparison between France and England, arising from the different constitutions of them and us with respect to civil liberty.

The natural wants of men are pretty much the same in most states, but the humours of men will take different directions in different countries, and are governed in a great degree by the laws and constitution of the realm in which they are found:

there are numbers of people in England, who get their living by arts and occupations, which would not be tolerated in a despotic government. Men's manners are simplified in proportion to the restraint and circumscription under which they are kept. The country sports of English gentlemen furnish maintenance and employment to vast numbers of our people, whereas in France, and other arbitrary states, men of the first rank and fortune reside in the capital, and keep no establishments of this sort. What a train of grooms, jockies, and stable-boys follow the heels of our horses and hounds in tight boots and leather breeches! each of which carries the clothes of six men upon his back, cased in one skin of flannel under another, like the coats of an onion. The loco-motive mania of an Englishman circulates his person, and of course his cash, into every quarter of the kingdom: a Frenchman takes a journey only when he cannot help it, an Englishman has no other reason but because he likes it; he moves with every shift of the weather, and follows the changes of the most variable climate in the world; a frosty morning puts him from his hunting, and he is in London before night; a thaw meets him in town, and again he scampers into the country: he has a horse to run at Epsom, another at Salisbury, and a third at York, and he must be on the spot to back every one of them; he has a stud at Newmarket, a mistress in London, a shooting box in Norfolk, and a pack of fox-hounds in the New Forest: for one wheel that real business puts in motion, pleasure, whim, *ennui* turn one hundred: sickness, which confines all the rest of the world, sends him upon his travels; one doctor plunges him into the sea at Brighthelmstone, a second steeps him in warm water at Buxton; and a third sends him to Bath; for the gentlemen of the learned faculty,

whether they help us into life, or help us out of it, make us pay toll at each gate; and if at any time their art keeps us alive, the fine we must pay to their ingenuity makes the renewal in some cases too hard a bargain for a poor man to profit by. In all other countries upon earth a man is contented to be well and pay nothing for being so; but in England even health is an expensive article, as we are for ever contriving how to be a little better, and physicians are too conscientious to take a fee and do nothing for it. If there is any thing like ridicule in this, it is against the patient and not against the physician I would wish to point it; it is in England that the profession is truly dignified, and if it is here accompanied with greater emoluments, it is proportionably practised with superior learning; if life is more valuable in a land of freedom than in a land of slavery, why should it not be paid for according to its value? In despotic states, where men's lives are in fact the property of the prince, all subjects should in justice be cured or killed at his proper charge; but where a man's house is his castle, his health is his own concern.

As to the other learned profession of the law, to its honour be it spoken, there is that charming perplexity about it, that we can ruin one another and ourselves with the greatest certainty and facility. It is so superior to all other sciences, that it can turn demonstration into doubt, truth into contradiction, make improbability put matter of fact out of countenance, and hang up a point for twenty years which common sense would decide in as many minutes. It is the glorious privilege of the freemen of England to make their own laws, and they have made so many that they can neither count them up nor comprehend them. The parliament of England is without comparison the most voluminous author in

the world; and there is such a happy ambiguity in its works, that its students have as much to say on the wrong side of every question as upon the right: in all cases of discussion it is one man's business to puzzle, and another's to explain, and though victory be ever so certain, it is agreed between the parties to make a long battle: there must be an extraordinary faculty of expression in the law, when the only parts clearly understood are those which it has not committed to writing.

I shall say very little in this place upon the sacred profession of divinity; it is to be lamented that the church of England is not provided with a proper competency for all who are engaged in performing its functions; but I cannot close with their opinion who are for stripping its dignities, and equalizing those splendid benefices, which are at once the glory and the support of its establishment. Levellers and reformers will always have the popular cry on their side, and I have good reason to know with what inveteracy a man is persecuted for an opinion which opposes it; and yet it is hard to give credit to the sincerity and disinterestedness of him who courts popularity, and deny it to the man who sacrifices his repose, and stands the brunt of abuse in defence of what he believes to be the truth.

And now having fallen upon the mention of Popularity, I shall take leave to address that divinity with a few lines picked up from an obscure author, which, though below poetry, are not quite prose, and on that account pretty nearly suited to the level of their subject.

O Popularity, thou giddy thing!
What grace or profit dost thou bring?
  Thou art not honesty, thou art not fame;
  I cannot call thee by a worthy name:

To say I hate thee were not true;
Contempt is properly thy due;
I cannot love thee and despise thee too.

Thou art no patriot, but the veriest cheat
That ever traffick'd in deceit;
A state empiric, bellowing loud
Freedom and phrenzy to the mobbing crowd;
And what car'st thou, if thou canst raise
Illuminations and huzzas,
Tho' half the city sunk in one bright blaze?

A patriot! no; for thou dost hold in hate
The very peace and welfare of the state;
When anarchy assaults the sovereign's throne,
Then is the day, the night thine own;
Then is thy triumph, when the foe
Levels some dark insidious blow,
Or strong rebellion lays thy country low.

Thou canst affect humility to hide
Some deep device of monstrous pride;
Conscience and charity pretend
For compassing some private end;
And in a canting conventicle note
Long scripture passages canst quote,
When persecution rankles in thy throat.

Thou hast no sense of nature at thy heart,
No ear for science, and no eye for art,
Yet confidently dost decide at once
This man a wit, and that a dunce;
And, strange to tell! howe'er unjust,
We take thy dictates upon trust,
For if the world will be deceiv'd, it must.

In truth and justice thou hast no delight,
Virtue thou dost not know by sight;
But, as the chymist by his skill
From dross and dregs a spirit can distil,
So from the prisons, or the stews,
Bullies, blasphemers, cheats or Jews
Shall turn to heroes, if they serve thy views.

Thou dost but make a ladder to a mob,
Whereby to clime into some courtly job;

There safe reposing, warm and snug,
Thou answer'st with a patient shrug,
Miscreants, begone! who cares for you,
Ye base-born, brawling, clamorous crew?
You've serv'd my turn, and, vagabonds, adieu!

NUMBER LXXXVI.

BEING now arrived at the conclusion of my third volume*, and having hitherto given my readers very little interruption in my own person, I hope I may be permitted to make one short valedictory address to these departing adventures, in whose success I am naturally so much interested.

I have employed much time and care in rearing up these Essays to what I conceived maturity, and qualifying them, as far as I was able, to shift for themselves, in a world where they are to inherit no popularity from their author, nor to look for any favour but what they can earn for themselves. To any, who shall question them who they are, and whence they come, they may truly answer—*We are all one man's sons*—we are, indeed, *Observers*, but no *Spies*. If this shall not suffice, and they must needs give a further account of themselves, they will have to say, that he who sent them into the world, sent them as an offering of his good-will to mankind; that he trusts they have been so trained as not to hurt the feelings or offend the principles of any man who shall admit them into his company; and that for their errors, which he cannot doubt are many, he hopes they will be found errors of the understanding, not of the heart: they are the first-fruits of his

* This alludes to the original form of publishing these volumes.

leisure and retirement; and as the mind of a man in that situation will naturally bring the past scenes of active life under its examination and review, it will surely be considered as a pardonable zeal for being yet serviceable to mankind, if he gives his experience and observations to the world, when he has no further expectations from it on the score of fame or fortune. These are the real motives for the publication of these Papers, and this the Author's true state of mind: to serve the cause of morality and religion is his first ambition; to point out some useful lessons for amending the education and manners of young people of either sex, and to mark the evil habits and unsocial humours of men, with a view to their reformation, are the general objects of his undertaking. He has formed his mind to be contented with the consciousness of these honest endeavours, and with a very moderate share of success. He has ample reason notwithstanding to be more than satisfied with the reception these Papers have already had in their probationary excursion; and it is not from any disgust, taken up in vain conceit of his own merits, that he has more than once observed upon the frauds and follies of popularity, or that he now repeats his opinion, that it is the worst guide a public man can follow, who wishes not to go out of the track of honesty; for at the same time that he has seen men force their way in the world by effrontery, and heard others applauded for their talents, whose only recommendation has been their ingenuity in wickedness, he can recollect very few indeed who have succeeded, either in fame or fortune, under the disadvantages of modesty and merit.

To such readers as shall have taken up these Essays with a candid disposition to be pleased, he will not scruple to express a hope that they have not been altogether disappointed; for though he has

been unassisted in composing them, he has endeavoured to open a variety of resources, sensible that he had many different palates to provide for. The subject of politics, however, will never be one of these resources; a subject which he has neither the will nor the capacity to meddle with. There is yet another topic, which he has been no less studious to avoid, which is personality; and though he professes to give occasional delineations of living manners, and not to make men in his closet, as some Essayists have done, he does not mean to point at individuals; for as this is a practice which he has ever rigidly abstained from, when he mixed in the world, he should hold himself without the excuse, even of temptation, if he was now to take it up, when he has withdrawn himself from the world.

In the Essays, which he has presumed to call *Literary*, because he cannot strike upon any apposite title of an humbler sort, he has studied to render himself intelligible to readers of all descriptions, and the deep-read scholar will not fastidiously pronounce them shallow, only because he can fathom them with ease; for that would be to wrong both himself and their author, who, if there is any vanity in a pedantic margin of references, certainly resisted that vanity, and as certainly had it as his choice to have loaded his page with as great a parade of authorities, as any of his brother writers upon classical subjects have ostentatiously displayed. But if any learned critic, now or hereafter, shall find occasion to charge these Essays on the score of false authority or actual error, their author will most thankfully meet the investigation; and the fair reviewer shall find that he has either candour to adopt correction, or materials enough in reserve to maintain every warrantable assertion.

The Moralist and the Divine, it is hoped, will

here find nothing to except against; it is not likely such an offence should be committed by one, who has rested all his hope in that Revelation, on which his faith is founded; whom nothing could ever divert from his aim of turning even the gayest subjects to moral purposes, and who reprobates the jest which provokes a laugh at the expense of a blush.

The Essays of a critical sort are no less addressed to the moral objects of composition, than to those which they have more professedly in view: they are not undertaken for the invidious purpose of developing errors, and stripping the laurels of departed poets, but simply for the uses of the living. The specimens already given, and those which are intended to follow in the further prosecution of the work, are proposed as disquisitions of instruction rather than of subtilty; and if they shall be found more particularly to apply to dramatic compositions, it is because their author looks up to the stage, as the great arbiter of more important delights, than those only which concern the taste and talents of the nation; it is because he sees with serious regret the buffoonery and low abuse of humour to which it is sinking, and apprehends for the consequences such an influx of folly may lead to. It will be readily granted there are but two modes of combating this abasement of the drama with any probability of success: one of these modes is, by an exposition of some one or other of the productions in question, which are supposed to contribute to its degradation; the other is, by inviting the attention of the public to an examination of better models, in which the standard works of our early dramatists abound. If the latter mode, therefore, should be adopted in these Essays, and the former altogether omitted, none of their readers will regret the preference that has been given upon such an alternative.

If the ladies of wit and talents do not take offence at some of these Essays, it will be a test of the truth of their pretensions, when they discern that the raillery, pointed only at affectation and false character, has no concern with them. There is nothing in which this nation has more right to pride itself, than the genius of its women; they have only to add a little more attention to their domestic virtues, and their fame will fly over the face of the globe. If I had ever known a good match broken off on the part of the man, because a young lady had too much modesty and discretion, or was too strictly educated in the duties of a good wife, I hope I understand myself too well to obtrude my old-fashioned maxims upon them. They might be as witty as they pleased, if I thought it was for their good; but if a racer, that has too great a share of heels, must lie by because it cannot be matched, so must every young spinster if her wits are too nimble. If I could once discover that men choose their wives, as they do their friends, for their manly achievements and convivial talents, for their being jolly fellows over a bottle, or topping a five-barred gate in a fox-chace, I should then be able to account for the many Amazonian figures I encounter in slouched hats, great coats, and half-boots, and I would not presume to set my face against the fashion; or if my experience of the fair sex could produce a single instance in the sect of Sentimentalists, which could make me doubt of the pernicious influence of a Musidorus and a Lady Thimble, I would not so earnestly have pressed the examples of a Sappho, a Calliope, or a Melissa.

The first Numbers of the present collection, to the amount of forty, have already been published; but being worked off at a country press, I find myself under the painful necessity of discontinuing the

edition. I have availed myself of this opportunity, not only by correcting the imperfections of the first publication, but by rendering this as unexceptionable, in the external at least, as I possibly could. I should have been wanting to the public and myself, if the flattering encouragement I have already received had not prompted me to proceed with the work; and if my alacrity in the further prosecution of it shall meet any check, it must arise only from those causes, which no human diligence can controul.

Vos tamen O nostri ne festinate libelli!
Si post fata venit gloria, nonne propero.

NUMBER LXXXVII.

Jam te premit nox. HOR. CAR. I, 4, 16.

I AM sitting down to begin the task of adding a new volume to these Essays, when the last day of the year 1789 is within a few hours of its conclusion, and I shall bid farewell to this eventful period with a grateful mind for its having passed lightly over my head without any extraordinary perturbation or misfortune on my part suffered, gently leading me towards that destined and not far distant hour, when I, like it, shall be no more.

I have accompanied it through all those changes and successions of seasons, which in our climate are so strongly discriminated; have shared in the pleasures and productions of each, and if any little idle jars or bickerings may occasionally have started up

betwixt us, as will sometimes happen to the best of friends, I willingly consign them to oblivion, and keep in mind only those kind and good offices, which will please on reflection, and serve to endear the memory of the deceased.

All days in twelve months will not be days of sunshine; but I will say this for *my friend in his last moments,* that I cannot put my finger upon one in the same century, that hath given birth to more interesting events, been a warmer advocate for the liberties and rights of mankind in general, or a kinder patron to his country in particular: I could name a day, if there was any need to point out what is so strongly impressed on our hearts, a day of gratulation and thanksgiving which will ever stand forth amongst the whitest in our calendar.

> *Hic dies verè mihi festus atras*
> *Eximet curas: ego nec tumultum,*
> *Nec mori per vim metuam, tenente*
> *Cæsare terras.* HOR. CAR. 3, 14, 13.

> This is indeed a festal day,
> A day that heals my cares and pains,
> Drives death and danger far away,
> And tells me Cæsar lives and reigns.

Though *my friend in his last moments* hath in this and other instances been so considerate of our happiness, I am afraid he is not likely to leave our morals much better than he found them. I cannot say that in the course of my duty as an Observer any very striking instance of amendment hath come under my notice; and though I have all the disposition in life to speak as favourably in my friend's behalf as truth will let me, I am bound to confess he was not apt to think so seriously of his latter end as I could have wished; there was a levity in his conduct, which he took no pains to conceal; he did not seem

to reflect upon the lapse of time, how speedily his *spring*, *summer*, and *autumn* would pass away, and the winter of his days come upon him; like Wolsey he was not aware how soon the *frost, the killing frost, would nip his root;* he was, however, a gay convivial fellow, loved his bottle and his friend, passed his time peaceably amongst us, and certainly merits the good word of every loyal subject in this kingdom.

As for his proceedings in other countries, it is not here the reader must look for an account of them; politics have no place in these volumes; but it cannot be denied that he has made many widows and orphans in Europe, been an active agent for the court of death, and dipped his hands deep in Christian and Mahometan blood. By the friends of freedom he will be celebrated to the latest time. He has begun a business, which, if followed up by his successor with equal zeal, less ferocity, and more discretion, may lead to wonderful revolutions: there are, indeed, some instances of cruelty, which bear hard upon his character; if separately viewed, they admit of no palliation; in a general light allowances may be made for that phrensy, which seizes the mind, when impelled to great and arduous undertakings; when the wound is gangrened the incision must be deep, and if that is to be done by coarse instruments and unskilful hands, who can wonder if the gash more resembles the stab of an assassin, than the operation of a surgeon. An æra is now open, awful, interesting and so involved in mystery, that the acutest speculation cannot penetrate to the issue of it: in short, *my friend in his last moments* hath put a vast machine in motion, and left a task to futurity, that will demand the strongest hands and ablest heads to complete: in the mean time I shall hope that my countrymen, who have all those blessings by inheritance, which less-favoured nations are now

struggling to obtain by force, will so use their liberty, that the rest of the world, who are not so happy, may think it an object worth contending for, and quote our peace and our prosperity as the best proofs existing of its real value.

Whilst my thoughts have been thus employed in reflecting upon the last day of an ever-memorable year, I have composed a few elegiac lines to be thrown into the grave which time is now opening to receive his relicks.

The year's gay verdure, all its charms are gone,
And now comes old December chill and drear,
Dragging a darkling length of evening on,
Whilst all things droop, as Nature's death were near.

Time flies amain with broad expanded wings,
Whence never yet a single feather fell,
But holds his speed, and through the welkin rings
Of all that breathe the inexorable knell.

Oh! for a moment stop—a moment's space
For recollection mercy might concede,
A little pause for man's unthinking race
To ponder on that world, to which they speed.

But 'tis in vain; old Time disdains to rest,
And moment after moment flits along,
Each with a sting to pierce the idler's breast,
And vindicate its predecessor's wrong.

Though the new-dawning year in its advance
With Hope's gay promise may entrap the mind,
Let memory give one retrospective glance
Through the bright period which it leaves behind.

Æra of mercies! my wrapt bosom springs
To meet the transport recollection gives:
Heaven's angel comes with healing on his wings;
He shakes his plumes, my country's father lives.

The joyful tidings o'er the distant round
Of Britain's empire the four winds proclaim,
Her sun-burnt islands swell the exulting sound,
And farthest Ganges echoes George's name.

Period of bliss! can any British muse
Bid thee farewell without a parting tear?
Shall the historian's gratitude refuse
His brightest page to this recorded year?

Thou Freedom's nursing mother shall be styl'd
The glories of its birth are all thine own,
Upon thy breasts hung the Herculean child,
And tyrants trembled at its baby frown.

A sanguine mantle the dread infant wore,
Before it roll'd a stream of human blood:
Smiling it stood, and, pointing to the shore,
Beckon'd the nations from across the flood.

Then at that awful sight, as with a spell,
The everlasting doors of Death gave way,
Prone to the dust Oppression's fortress fell,
And rescu'd captives hail'd the light of day.

Meanwhile Ambition chas'd its fairy prize
With moonstruck madness down the Danube's stream,
The Turkish crescent glittering in its eyes,
And lost an empire to pursue a dream.

The trampled serpent, Superstition, wreath'd
Her fest'ring scales with anguish to and fro,
Torpid she lay, then darting forward sheath'd
Her deadly fangs in the unguarded foe.

Oh Austria! why so prompt to venture forth,
When fate now hurries thee to life's last goal?
Thee too, thou crowned eagle of the north,
Death's dart arrests, though tow'ring to the pole.

Down then, Ambition; drop into the grave;
And by thy follies be this maxim shown—
'Tis not the monarch's glory to enslave
His neighbour's empire, but to bless his own.

Come then, sweet Peace! in Britain fix thy reign,
Bid Plenty smile, and Commerce crowd her coast:
And may this ever blessed year remain
Her king's, her people's, and her muse's boast.

NUMBER LXXXVIII.

NICOLAS PEDROSA, a busy little being, who followed the trades of shaver, surgeon, and man-midwife in the town of Madrid, mounted his mule at the door of his shop in the Plazuela de los Affligidos, and pushed through the gate of San Bernardino, being called to a patient in the neighbouring village of Foncarral, upon a pressing occasion. Every body knows that the ladies in Spain in certain cases do not give long warning to practitioners of a certain description, and nobody knew it better than Nicolas, who was resolved not to lose an inch of his way, nor of his mule's best speed by the way, if cudgelling could beat it out of her. It was plain to Nicolas's conviction, as plain could be, that his road laid straight forward to the little convent in front; the mule was of opinion, that the turning on the left down the hill towards the Prado was the road of all roads most familiar and agreeable to herself, and accordingly began to dispute the point of topography with Nicolas by fixing her fore feet resolutely in the ground, dipping her head at the same time between them, and launching heels and crupper furiously into the air in the way of argument. Little Pedrosa, who was armed at heel with one massy silver spur of stout, though ancient, workmanship, resolutely applied the rusty rowel to the shoulder of his beast, driving it with all the good-will in the world to the very butt, and at the same time adroitly tucking his blue cloth capa under his right arm, and flinging the skirt over the left shoulder *en cavalier*,

began to lay about him with a stout ashen sapling upon the ears, pole, and cheeks of the recreant mule. The fire now flashed from a pair of Andalusian eyes, as black as charcoal and not less inflammable, and taking the segara from his mouth, with which he had vainly hoped to have regaled his nostrils in a sharp winter's evening by the way, raised such a thundering troop of angels, saints, and martyrs, from St. Michael downwards, not forgetting his own namesake Saint Nicolas de Tolentino by the way, that if curses could have made the mule to go, the dispute would have been soon ended, but not a saint could make her stir any other ways than upwards and downwards at a stand. A small troop of mendicant friars were at this moment conducting the host of a dying man.—' Nicolas Pedrosa,' says an old friar, ' be patient with your beast and spare your blasphemies : remember Balaam.'—' Ah father,' replied Pedrosa, ' Balaam cudgelled his beast till she spoke, so will I mine till she roars.'—' Fie, fie, profane fellow,' cries another of the fraternity. ' Go about your work friend,' quoth Nicolas, ' and let me go about mine; I warrant it is the more pressing of the two; your patient is going out of the world, mine is coming into it.'—' Hear him, cries a third, ' hear the vile wretch, how he blasphemes the body of God '—And then the troop past slowly on to the tinkling of the bell.

A man must know nothing of a mule's ears who does not know what a passion they have for the tinkling of a bell, and no sooner had the jingling chords vibrated in the sympathetic organs of Pedrosa's beast, than boulting forward with a sudden spring she ran roaring into the throng of friars, trampling on some and shouldering others at a most profane rate; when Nicolas availing himself of the impetus, and perhaps not able to controul it, broke away and

was out of sight in a moment. 'All the devils in hell blow fire into thy tail, thou beast of Babylon,' muttered Nicolas to himself as he scampered along, never once looking behind him or stopping to apologize for the mischief he had done to the bare feet and shirtless ribs of the holy brotherhood.

Whether Nicolas saved his distance, as likewise, if he did, whether it was a male or female Castilian he ushered into the world, we shall not just now inquire, contented to await his return in the first of the morning next day, when he had no sooner dismounted at his shop and delivered his mule to a sturdy Arragonese wench, than Don Ignacio de Santos Aparicio, alguazil mayor of the supreme and general inquisition, put an order into his hand, signed and sealed by the inquisidor general, for the conveying his body to the Casa, whose formidable door presents itself in the street adjoining to the square in which Nicolas's brazen basin hung forth the emblem of his trade.

The poor little fellow, trembling in every joint, and with a face as yellow as saffron, dropt a knee to the altar, which fronts the entrance, and crossed himself most devoutly; as soon as he had ascended the first flight of stairs, a porter habited in black opened the tremendous barricade, and Nicolas with horror heard the grating of the heavy bolts that shut him in. He was led through passages and vaults and melancholy cells, till he was delivered into the dungeon, where he was finally left to his solitary meditations. Hapless being! what a scene of horror. Nicolas felt all the terrors of his condition, but being an Andalusian, and like his countrymen of a lively imagination, he began to turn over all the resources of his invention for some happy fetch, if any such might occur, for helping him out of the dismal limbo he was in: he was not long to seek for the

cause of his misfortune: his adventure with the barefooted friars was a ready solution of all difficulties of that nature, had there been any; there was, however, another thing, which might have troubled a stouter heart than Nicolas's—He was a Jew.—This of a certain would have been a staggering item in a poor devil's confession, but then it was a secret to all the world but Nicolas, and Nicolas's conscience did not just then urge him to reveal it; he now began to overhaul the inventory of his personals about him, and with some satisfaction counted three little medals of the Blessed Virgin, two Agnus Deis, a Saint Nicolas de Tolentino, and a formidable string of beads all pendant from his neck and within his shirt; in his pockets he had a paper of dried figs, a small bundle of segars, a case of lancets, squirt, and forceps, and two old razors in a leathern envelope; these he had delivered one by one to the alguazil, who first arrested him,—'and let him make the most of them,' said he to himself, 'they can never prove me an Israelite by a case of razors.'—Upon a closer rummage, however, he discovered in a secret pocket a letter, which the alguazil had overlooked, and which his patient Donna Leonora de Casafonda had given him in charge to deliver as directed—'Well, well,' cried he, 'let it pass; there can be no mystery in this harmless scrawl; a letter of advice to some friend or relation, I'll not break the seal; let the fathers read it, if they like, 'twill prove the truth of my deposition, and help out my excuse for the hurry of my errand, and the unfortunate adventure of my damned refractory mule.'—And now no sooner had the recollection of the wayward mule crossed the brain of poor Nicolas Pedrosa, than he began to blast her at a furious rate,—'The scratches and the scab to boot confound thy scurvy

hide,' quoth he, ' thou ass-begotten bastard whom Noah never let into his ark! The vengeance take thee for an uncreated barren beast of promiscuous generation! What devil's crotchet got into thy capricious noddle, that thou shouldst fall in love with that Nazaritish bell, and run bellowing like Lucifer into the midst of those barefooted vermin, who are more malicious and more greedy than the locusts of Egypt? Oh! that I had the art o fSimon Magus to conjure thee into this dungeon in my stead; but I warrant thou art chewing thy barley-straw without any pity for thy wretched master, whom thy jade's tricks have delivered bodily to the tormentors, to be the sport of these uncircumised sons of Dagon.' And now the cell door opened, when a savage figure entered, carrying a huge parcel of clanking fetters, with a collar of iron, which he put round the neck of poor Pedrosa, telling him with a truly diabolic grin, whilst he was rivetting it on, that it was a proper cravat for the throat of a blasphemer.—' Jesu-Maria,' quoth Pedrosa, ' is all this fallen upon me for only cudgelling a restive mule?' ' Aye,' cried the demon, ' and this is only a taste of what is to come,' at the same time slipping his pincers from the screw he was forcing to the head, he caught a piece of flesh in the forceps and wrenched it out of his cheek, laughing at poor Nicolas, whilst he roared aloud with the pain, telling him it was a just reward for the the torture he had put him to awhile ago, when he tugged at a tooth, till he broke it in his jaw. ' Ah, for the love of Heaven,' cried Pedrosa, ' have more pity on me; for the sake of Saint Nicolas de Tolentino, my holy patron, be not so unmerciful to a poor barber-surgeon, and I will shave your worship's beard for nothing as long as I have life. One of the messengers of the auditory now came in, and bade the fellow strike off the prisoner's fet-

ters, for that the holy fathers were in council and demanded him for examination. 'This is something extraordinary,' quoth the tormentor, 'I should not have expected it this twelvemonth to come.' Pedrosa's fetters were struck off; some brandy was applied to staunch the bleeding of his cheeks; his hands and face were washed, and a short jacket of coarse ticking thrown over him, and the messenger with an assistant taking him each under an arm led him into a spacious chamber, where at the head of a long table sate his excellency the inquisidor general, with six of his assessors, three on each side the chair of state: the alguazil mayor, a secretary and two notaries, with other officers of the holy council, were attending in their places.

The prisoner was placed behind a bar at the foot of the table between the messengers who brought him in, and having made his obeisance to the awful presence in the most supplicating manner, he was called upon according to the usual form of questions by one of the junior judges to declare his name, parentage, profession, age, place of abode, and to answer various interrogatories of the like trifling nature: his excellency the inquisidor general now opened his reverend lips, and, in a solemn tone of voice, that penetrated to the heart of the poor trembling prisoner, interrogated him as follows:—

'Nicolas Pedrosa, we have listened to the account you give of yourself, your business, and connections, now tell us for what offence, or offences, you are here standing a prisoner before us: examine your own heart, and speak the truth from your conscience without prevarication or disguise.' 'May it please your excellency,' replied Pedrosa, 'with all due submission to your holiness and this reverend assembly, my most equitable judges, I conceive

I stand here before you for no worse a crime, than that of cudgelling a refractory mule; an animal so restive in its nature, under correction of your holiness be it spoken, that although I were blest with the forbearance of holy Job, for like him too I am married and my patience hath been exercised by a wife, yet could I not forbear to smite my beast for her obstinacy, and the rather because I was summoned in the way of my profession, as I have already made known to your most merciful ears, upon a certain crying occasion, which would not admit of a moment's delay.'

'Recollect yourself, Nicolas,' said his excellency the inquisidor general, 'was there nothing else you did, save smiting your beast?'

'I take Saint Nicolas de Tolentino to witness,' replied he, 'that I know of no other crime, for which I can be responsible at this righteous tribunal, save smiting my unruly beast.'

'Take notice, brethren,' exclaimed the inquisidor, 'this unholy wretch holds trampling over friars to be no crime.'

'Pardon me, holy father,' replied Nicolas, 'I hold it for the worst of crimes, and, therefore, willingly surrender my refractory mule to be dealt with as you see fit, and if you impale her alive, it will not be more than she deserves.'

'Your wits are too nimble, Nicolas,' cried the judge; 'have a care they do not run away with your discretion: recollect the blasphemies you uttered in the hearing of those pious people.'

'I humbly pray your excellency,' answered the prisoner, 'to recollect that anger is a short madness, and I hope allowances will be made by your holy council for words spoke in haste to a rebellious mule: the prophet Balaam was thrown off his guard with a simple ass, and what is an ass compared to a mule: if your excellency had seen the

lovely creature that was screaming in an agony till I came to her relief, and how fine a boy I ushered into the world, which would have been lost but for my assistance, I am sure I should not be condemned for a few hasty words spoke in passion.'

'Sirrah!' cried one of the puisny judges, 'respect the decency of the court.'

'Produce the contents of this fellow's pockets before the court,' said the president; 'lay them on the table.'

'Monster,' resumed the aforesaid puisny judge, taking up the forceps, 'what is the use of this diabolical machine?'

'Please your reverence,' replied Pedrosa, '*aptum est ad extrahendos fœtus.*'—'Unnatural wretch!' again exclaimed the judge, 'you have murdered the mother.'

'The mother of God forbid!' exclaimed Pedrosa, 'I believe I have a proof in my pocket, that will acquit me of that charge; and so saying he tendered the letter we have before made mention of: the secretary took it, and, by command of the court, read as follows:

'Senor Don Manuel de Herrera,

'When this letter, which I send by Nicolas Pedrosa, shall reach your hands, you shall know that I am safely delivered of a lovely boy after a dangerous labour, in consideration of which I pray you to pay to the said Nicolas Pedrosa the sum of twenty gold pistoles, which sum his excellency'—

'Hold!' cried the inquisidor general, starting hastily from his seat, and snatching away the letter, 'there is more in this than meets the eye: break up the court; I must take an examination of this prisoner in private.'

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As soon as the room was cleared the inquisidor-general beckoning to the prisoner to follow him, retired into a private closet, where throwing himself carelessly into an arm chair, he turned a gracious countenance upon the poor affrighted accoucheur, and bidding him sit down upon a low stool by his side thus accosted him:—'Take heart, senor Pedrosa, your imprisonment is not likely to be very tedious, for I have a commission you must execute without loss of time: you have too much consideration for yourself to betray a trust, the violation of which must involve you in inevitable ruin, and can in no degree attaint my character, which is far enough beyond the reach of malice: be attentive, therefore, to my orders; execute them punctually, and keep my secret as you tender your own life: dost thou know the name and condition of the lady, whom thou hast delivered?' Nicolas assured him he did not, and his excellency proceeded as follows: —'Then I tell thee, Nicolas, it is the illustrious Donna Leonora de Casafonda: her husband is the president of Quito, and daily expected with the next arrivals from the South Seas; now, though measures have been taken for detaining him at the port wherever he shall land, till he shall receive further orders, yet you must be sensible Donna Leonora's situation is somewhat delicate: it will be your business to take the speediest measures for her recovery; but as it seems she has had a dangerous and painful labour, this may be a work of more

time than could be wished, unless some medicines more efficacious than common are administered: art thou acquainted with any such, friend Nicolas?' —'So please your excellency,' quoth Nicolas, 'my processes have been tolerably successful; I have bandages and cataplasms with oils and conserves, that I have no cause to complain of: they will restore nature to its proper state in all decent time.'— 'Thou talkest like a fool, friend Nicolas,' interrupting him, said the inquisidor; 'What tellest thou me of thy swathings and swadlings? quick work must be wrought by quick medicines. Hast thou none such in thy botica? I'll answer for it thou hast not; therefore, look you, sirrah, here is a little vial compounded by a famous chymist; see that you mix it in the next apozem you administer to Donna Leonora; it is the most capital sedative in nature; give her the whole of it, and let her husband return when he will, depend upon it he will make no discoveries from her.'—'Humph! quoth Nicolas within himself, 'Well said, inquisidor!' He took the vial with all possible respect, and was not wanting in professions of the most inviolable fidelity and secresy—'No more words, friend Nicolas,' quoth the inquisidor, 'upon that score; I do not believe thee one jot the more for all thy promises; my dependance is upon thy fears and not thy faith; I fancy thou hast seen enough of this place not to be willing to return to it once for all.'—Having so said, he rang a bell, and ordered Nicolas to be forthwith liberated, bidding the messenger return his clothes instantly to him with all that belonged to him, and having slipped a purse into his hand well filled with doubloons, he bade him begone about his business, and not see his face again till he had executed his commands.

Nicolas boulted out of the porch without taking

leave of the altar, and never checked his speed till he found himself fairly housed under shelter of his own beloved brass basin.—'Aha!' quoth Nicolas, 'my lord inquisidor, I see the king is not likely to gain a subject more by your intrigues: a pretty job you have set me about: and so, when I have put the poor lady to rest with your damned sedative, my tongue must be stopt next to prevent its babbling; but I'll show you I was not born in Andalusia for nothing.' Nicolas now opened a secret drawer and took out a few pieces of money, which in fact was his whole stock of cash in the world; he loaded and primed his pistols, and carefully lodged them in the housers of his saddle, he buckled to his side his trusty spada, and hastened to caparison his mule. 'Ah, thou imp of the old one,' quoth he, as he entered the stable, 'art not ashamed to look me in the face? But come, hussy, thou owest me a good turn methinks, stand by me this once, and be friends for ever! thou art in good case, and if thou wilt put thy best foot foremost, like a faithful beast, thou shalt not want for barley by the way.' The bargain was soon struck between Nicolas and his mule, he mounted her in the happy moment, and pointing his course towards the bridge of Toledo, which proudly strides with half a dozen lofty arches over a stream scarce three feet wide, he found himself as completely in a desert in half a mile's riding, as if he had been dropt in the centre of Arabia Petræa. As Nicolas's journey was not a tour of curiosity, he did not amuse himself with a peep at Toledo, or Talavera, or even Merida by the way; for the same reason he took a *circumbendibus* round the frontier town of Badajoz, and crossing a little brook refreshed his mule with the last draught of Spanish water, and instantly congratulated himself upon entering the territory of Portugal. 'Brava!'

quoth he, patting the neck of his mule, ' thou shalt have a supper this night of the best sieve-meat that Estramadura can furnish: we are now in a country where the scattered flock of Israel fold thick and fare well.' He now began to chaunt the song of Solomon, and gently ambled on in the joy of his heart.

When Nicolas at length reached the city of Lisbon, he hugged himself in his good fortune; still he recollected that the inquisition has long arms, and he was yet in a place of no perfect security. Our adventurer had in early life acted as assistant-surgeon in a Spanish frigate bound to Buenos Ayres, and being captured by a British man-of-war, and carried into Jamaica, had very quietly passed some years in that place as journeyman apothecary, in which time he had acquired a tolerable acquaintance with the English language: no sooner then did he discover the British ensign flying on the poop of an English frigate then lying in the Tagus, than he eagerly caught the opportunity of paying a visit to the surgeon, and finding he was in want of a mate, offered himself, and was entered in that capacity for a cruise against the French and Spaniards, with whom Great Britain was then at war. In this secure asylum Nicolas enjoyed the first happy moments he had experienced for a long time past, and being a lively good-humoured little fellow, and one that touched the guitar and sung sequidillas with a tolerable grace, he soon recommended himself to his ship-mates, and grew in favour with every body on board from the captain to the cook's mate.

When they were out upon their cruise hovering on the Spanish coast, it occurred to Nicolas that the inquisidor general of Madrid had told him of the expected arrival of the president of Quito, and having

imparted this to one of the lieutenants, he reported it to the captain, and as the intelligence seemed of importance, he availed himself of it by hauling into the track of the homeward-bound galleons, and great was the joy, when at the break of the morning the man at the mast-head announced a square rigged vessel in view: the ardour of a chace now set all hands at work, and a few hours brought them near enough to discern that she was a Spanish frigate, and seemingly from a long voyage: little Pedrosa, as alert as the rest, stript himself for his work, and repaired to his post in the cock-pit, whilst the thunder of the guns rolled incessantly overhead; three cheers from the whole crew at length announced the moment of victory, and a few more minutes ascertained the good news that the prize was a frigate richly laden from the South Seas, with the governor of Quito and his suite on board.

Pedrosa was now called upon deck, and sent on board the prize as interpreter to the first lieutenant, who was to take possession of her. He found every thing in confusion, a deck covered with the slain, and the whole crew in consternation at an event they were in no degree prepared for, not having received any intimation of a war. He found the officers in general, and the passengers without exception, under the most horrid impressions of the English, and expecting to be plundered, and perhaps butchered without mercy. Don Manual de Casafonda the governor, whose countenance bespoke a constitution far gone in a decline, had thrown himself on a sofa in the last state of despair, and given way to an effusion of tears; when the lieutenant entered the cabin he rose trembling from his couch, and with the most supplicating action presented to him his sword, and with it a casket which he carried in his other hand;

as he tendered these spoils to his conqueror, whether through weakness or of his own will, he made a motion of bending his knee: the generous Briton, shocked at the unmanly overture, caught him suddenly with both hands, and turning to Pedrosa, said aloud—' Convince this gentleman he is fallen into the hands of an honourable enemy.'—' Is it possible!' cried Don Manuel, and lifting up his streaming eyes to the countenance of the British officer, saw humanity, valour, and generous pity sostrongly charactered in his youthful features, that the conviction was irresistible. ' Will he not accept my sword?' cried the Spaniard. ' He desires you to wear it, till he has the honour of presenting you to his captain.'—' Ah then he has a captain,' exclaimed Don Manuel, ' his superior will be of another way of thinking; tell him this casket contains my jewels; they are valuable; let him present them as a lawful prize, which will enrich the captor; his superior will not hesitate to take them from me.'—' If they are your excellency's private property,' replied Pedrosa, ' I am ordered to assure you, that if your ship was loaded with jewels, no British officer, in the service of his king, will take them at your hands; the ship and effects of his Catholic Majesty are the only prize of the captors; the personals of the passengers are inviolate.'—' Generous nation!' exclaimed Don Manuel, ' how greatly have I wronged thee!'—The boats of the British frigate now came alongside, and part of the crew were shifted out of the prize, taking their clothes and trunks along with them, in which they were very cordially assisted by their conquerors. The barge soon after came aboard with an officer in the sternsheets, and the crew in their white shirts and velvet caps, to escort the governor and the ship's captain on board the frigate, which lay with her sails to the

mast awaiting their arrival; the accommodation ladder was slung over the side, and manned for the prisoners, who were received on the gang-way by the second lieutenant, whilst perfect silence and the strictest discipline reigned in the ship, where all were under the decks, and no inquisitive curious eyes were suffered to wound the feelings of the conquered even with a glance; in the door of his cabin stood the captain, who received them with that modest complaisance, which does not revolt the unfortunate by an overstrained politeness; he was a man of high birth and elegant manners, with a heart as benevolent as it was brave: such an address, set off with a person finely formed and perfectly engaging, could not fail to impress the prisoners with the most favourable ideas; and as Don Manuel spoke French fluently, he could converse with the British captain without the help of an interpreter: as he expressed an impatient desire of being admitted to his parole, that he might revisit friends and connections, from which he had been long separated, he was overjoyed to hear that the English ship would carry her prize into Lisbon; and that he would there be set on shore, and permitted to make the best of his way from thence to Madrid; he talked of his wife with all the ardour of the most impassioned lover, and apologized for his tears, by imputing them to the agony of his mind, and the infirmity of his health, under the dread of being longer separated from an object so dear to his heart, and on whom he doated with the fondest affection. The generous captor indulged him in these conversations, and, being a husband himself, knew how to allow for all the tenderness of his sensations. 'Ah, Sir', cried Don Manuel, 'would to Heaven it were in my power to have the honour of presenting my beloved Leonora to you on our landing at Lisbon.—Perhaps,' added he, turn-

ing to Pedrosa, who at that moment entered the cabin, 'this gentleman, whom I take to be a Spaniard, may have heard the name of Donna Leonora de Casafonda; if he has been at Madrid, it is possible he may have seen her; should that be the case, he can testify to her external charms; I alone can witness to the exquisite perfection of her mind.'—'Senor Don Manuel,' replied Pedrosa, 'I have seen Donna Leonora, and your excellency is warranted in all you can say in her praise; she is of incomparable beauty.' These words threw the uxorious Spaniard into raptures; his eyes sparkled with delight; the blood rushed into his emaciated cheeks, and every feature glowed with unutterable joy: he pressed Pedrosa with a variety of rapid inquiries all which he evaded by pleading ignorance, saying that he had only had a casual glance of her, as she passed along the Prado. The embarrassment, however, which accompanied these answers, did not escape the English captain, who shortly after drawing Pedrosa aside into the surgeon's cabin, was by him made acquainted with the melancholy situation of that unfortunate lady, and every particular of the story as before related; nay, the very vial was produced with its contents, as put into the hands of Pedrosa by the inquisidor.

NUMBER XC.

'CAN there be such villainy in man!' cried the British captain, when Pedrosa had concluded his detail: 'Alas! my heart bleeds for this unhappy

husband: assuredly that monster has destroyed Leonora: as for thee, Pedrosa, whilst the British flag flies over thy head, neither Spain nor Portugal, nor inquisitors, nor devils shall annoy thee under its protection; but if thou ever venturest over the side of this ship, and rashly settest one foot upon Catholic soil, when we arrive at Lisbon, thou art a lost man.'—'I were worse than a madman,' replied Nicolas, 'should I attempt it.'—'Keep close in this asylum then, resumed the captain, 'and fear nothing. Had it been our fate to have been captured by the Spaniard, what would have become of thee?'—'In the worst of extremities,' replied Nicolas, 'I should have applied to the inquisidor's vial; but I confess I had no fears of that sort; a ship so commanded and so manned, is in little danger of being carried into a Spanish port.'—'I hope not,' said the captain, 'and I promise thee thou shalt take thy chance in her, so long as she is afloat under my command, and if we live to conduct her to England, thou shalt have thy proper share of prize-money, which, if the galleon breaks up according to her entries, will be something towards enabling thee to shift, and if thou art as diligent in thy duty, as I am persuaded thou wilt be, whilst I live thou shalt never want a seaman's friend.'—At these cheering words, little Nicolas threw himself at the feet of his generous preserver, and with streaming eyes poured out his thanks from a heart animated with joy and gratitude.—The captain raising him by the hand, forbade him, as he prized his friendship, ever to address him in that posture any more: 'Thank me, if you will,' added he, 'but thank me as one man should another; let no knees bend in this ship but to the name of God.—But now,' continued he, 'let us turn our thoughts to the situation of our unhappy Casafonda: we are now

drawing near to Lisbon, where he will look to be liberated on his parole.'—' By no means let him venture into Spain,' said Pedrosa; ' I am well assured there are orders to arrest him in every port or frontier town, where he may present himself.'—' I can well believe it,' replied the captain; ' his piteous case will require further deliberation; in the mean time let nothing transpire on your part, and keep yourself out of his sight as carefully as you can.'—This said, the captain left the cabin, and both parties repaired to their several occupations.

As soon as the frigate and her prize cast anchor in the Tagus, Don Manuel de Casafonda impatiently reminded our captain of his promised parole. The painful moment was now come, when an explanation of some sort became unavoidable. The generous Englishman, with a countenance expressive of the tenderest pity, took the Spaniard's hand in his, and seating him on a couch beside him, ordered the centinel to keep the cabin private, and delivered himself as follows:

' Senor Don Manuel, I must now impart to you an anxiety which I labour under on your account; I have strong reason to suspect you have enemies in your own country, who are upon the watch to arrest you on your landing: when I have told you this, I expect you will repose such trust in my honour, and the sincerity of my regard for you, as not to demand a further explanation of the particulars on which my intelligence is founded.'—' Heaven and earth!' cried the astonished Spaniard, ' who can be those enemies I have to fear, and what can I have done to deserve them?'—' So far I will open myself to you,' answered the captain, ' as to point out the principal to you, the inquisidor general.'—' The best friend I have in Spain,' exclaimed the governor, ' my sworn pro-

tector, the patron of my fortune. He my enemy! impossible.'—'Well, Sir,' replied the captain, 'if my advice does not meet belief, I must so far exert my authority for your sake, as to make this ship your prison till I have waited on our minister at Lisbon, and made the inquiries necessary for your safety; suspend your judgement upon the seeming harshness of this measure till I return to you again;' and at the same time rising from his seat, he gave orders for the barge, and leaving strict injunctions with the first lieutenant not to allow of the governor's quitting the frigate, he put off for the shore, and left the melancholy Spaniard buried in profound and silent meditation.

The emissaries of the inquisition having at last traced Pedrosa to Lisbon, and there gained intelligence of his having entered on board the frigate, our captain had no sooner turned into the porch of the hotel at Buenos-Ayres, than he was accosted by a messenger of state, with a requisition from the prime minister's office for the surrender of one Nicolas Pedrosa, a subject of Spain, and a criminal, who had escaped out of the prison of the inquisition in Madrid, where he stood charged with high crimes and misdemeanors.—As soon as this requisition was explained to our worthy captain, without condescending to a word in reply, he called for pen and ink, and writing a short order to the officer commanding on board, instantly despatched the midshipman, who attended him, to the barge, with directions, to make the best of his way back to the frigate, and deliver it to the lieutenant. Then turning to the messenger, he said to him in a resolute tone—'That Spaniard is now borne on my books, and before you shall take him out of the service of my king, you must sink his ship.'—Not waiting for a reply, he immediately proceeded without stopping

to the house of the British minister at the further end of the city. Here he found Pedrosa's intelligence, with regard to the governor of Quito, expressly verified, for the order had come down even to Lisbon, upon the chance of the Spanish frigate's taking shelter in that port. To this minister he related the horrid tale, which Pedrosa had delivered to him, and with his concurrence it was determined to forward letters into Spain, which Don Manuel should be advised to write to his lady and friends at Madrid, and to wait their answer before any further discoveries were imparted to him respecting the blacker circumstances of the case. In the mean time it was resolved to keep the prisoner safe in his asylum.

The generous captain lost no time in returning to his frigate, where he immediately imparted to Don Manuel the intelligence he had obtained at the British minister's.—'This indeed,' cried the afflicted Spaniard, 'is a stroke I was in no respect prepared for; I had fondly persuaded myself there was not in the whole empire of Spain a more friendly heart than that of the inquisidor's; to my beloved Leonora he had ever shown the tenderness of a paternal affection from her very childhood; by him our hands were joined; his lips pronounced the nuptial benediction, and through his favour I was promoted to my government. Grant, Heaven, no misfortune hath befallen my Leonora; surely she cannot have offended him, and forfeited his favour.'—'As I know him not,' replied the captain, 'I can form no judgement of his motives; but this I know, that if a man's heart is capable of cruelty, the fittest school to learn it in, must be the inquisition.' The proposal was now suggested of sending letters into Spain, and the governor retired to his desk for the purpose of writing them; in the afternoon of

the same day the minister paid a visit to the captain, and receiving a packet from the hands of Don Manuel, promised to get it forwarded by a safe conveyance according to direction.

In due course of time this fatal letter from Leonora, opened all the horrible transaction to the wretched husband :—

'The guilty hand of an expiring wife, under the agonizing operation of a mortal poison, traces these few trembling lines to an injured wretched husband. If thou hast any pity for my parting spirit fly the ruin that awaits thee and avoid this scene of villainy and horror. When I tell thee I have borne a child to the monster, whose poison runs in my veins, thou wilt abhor thy faithless Leonora: had I strength to relate to thee the subtle machinations which betrayed me to disgrace, thou wouldst pity and perhaps forgive me. Oh agony! can I write his name? The inquisidor is my murderer—My pen falls from my hand—Farewell for ever.'

Had a shot passed through the heart of Don Manuel, it could not more effectually have stopt its motions, than the perusal of this fatal writing. He dropped lifeless on the couch, and but for the care and assistance of the captain and Pedrosa, in that posture he had probably expired. Grief like his will not be described by words, for to words it gave no utterance; 'twas suffocating, silent woe.'

Let us drop the curtain over this melancholy pause in our narration, and attend upon the mournful widower now landed upon English ground, and conveyed by his humane and generous preserver to the house of a noble Earl, the father of our amiable captain, and a man by his virtues still more conspicuous than by his rank. Here amidst the gentle solicitudes of a benevolent family, in one of the

most enchanting spots on earth, in a climate most salubrious and restorative to a constitution exhausted by heat, and a heart nearly broken with sorrow, the reviving spirits of the unfortunate Don Manuel gave the first symptoms of a possible recovery. At the period of a few tranquillizing weeks here passed in the bosom of humanity, letters came to hand from the British minister at Lisbon, in answer to a memorial, that I should have stated to have been drawn up by the friendly captain before his departure from that port, with a detail of facts deposed and sworn to by Nicolas Pedrosa, which memorial, with the documents attached to it, was forwarded to the Spanish Court by special express from the Portuguese premier. By these letters it appeared, that the high dignity of the person impeached by this statement of facts, had not been sufficient to screen him from a very serious and complete investigation: in the course of which facts had been so clearly brought home to him by the confession of his several agents, and the testimony of the deceased Leonora's attendants, together with her own written declarations, whilst the poison was in operation, that though no public sentence had been executed upon the criminal, it was generally understood he was either no longer in existence, or in a situation never to be heard of any more, till roused by the awakening trump he shall be summoned to his tremendous last account. As for the unhappy widower, it was fully signified to him from authority, that his return to Spain, whether upon exchange or parole, would be no longer opposed, nor had he any thing to apprehend on the part of government when he should there arrive. The same was signified in fewer words to the exculpated Pedrosa.

Whether Don Manuel de Casafonda will in time

to come avail himself of these overtures time alone can prove. As for little Nicolas, whose prize-money has set him up in a comfortable little shop in Duke's-Place, where he breathes the veins and cleanses the bowels of his Israelitish brethren, in a land of freedom and toleration, his merry heart is at rest, save only when with fire in his eyes, and vengeance on his tongue, he anathematizes the inquisition, and struts into the synagogue every sabbath with as bold a step and as erect a look, as if he was himself High Priest of the Temple, going to perform sacrifice upon the re-assembling of the scattered tribes.

NUMBER XCI.

A GOOD man will live with the world as a wise man lives with his wife: he will not let himself down to be a dupe to its humours, a devotee to its pleasures, or a flatterer of its faults; he will make himself as happy as he can in the connexion for his own sake, reform when he is able, and complain only when he cannot help it. I am sick of that conversation which spends itself in railing at the times we live in; I am apt to think they are not made better by those complaints, and I have often times occasion to know they are made worse by those very people who are loudest to complain of them. If this be really one of the habits of age, it is high time for every man, who grows old, to guard against it; for there is no occasion to invite more peevish companions for the last hours of life than time and decrepitude will bring in their train: let

us look back upon things past with what content we can, salute time present with the best grace we are able, and resign ourselves to futurity with calmness and a patient mind. If we do not wish to be banished from society before death withdraws us from it, do not let us trust to the world's respect only, let us strive also to conciliate its love.

But I do not wish to argue this point with the sect of the Murmurers merely upon the ground of good policy; I should he sorry for the world, if I could give no better reason for keeping well with it than in self-defence: I really think it a world very easy to live with upon passable good terms; I am free to confess it has mended me since I have lived with it, and I am fully of opinion it has mended itself: I do not deny but it has its failings; it still cuts out work for the moralists, and I am in no fear of finding subject matter for three more volumes of essays, before I have exhausted the duty of an Observer. However, though I have presumed upon taking up this character late in life, yet I feel no provocation from what I observe in others, or in myself, to turn Murmurer; I can call the time past under my review, as far back as my experience will go, and comfort myself by the comparison of it with the time present; I can turn to the authors, who have delineated the manners of ages antecedent to my own, without being ashamed of my contemporaries, or entertaining a superior respect for theirs. I cannot look back to any period of our own annals, of which I can conscientiously pronounce according to such judgement as I am possessed of, that the happiness of society was better secured, and more completely provided for, than at the present moment.

This may appear so hardy an assertion, that if the Murmurers take the field against me, I suspect

that I shall find myself, as I frequently have done, in a very decided minority; for let the reader take notice, I know the world too well to think of getting popularity by defending it; if ever I make that my object, I must run counter to my own principles, and abuse many, that all may read me. In the mean time I shall make a show of some of my defences, if it be only to convince the Murmurers, that I shall not capitulate upon the first summons; and I will keep some strong posts masked from their view, that if they repeat their assault, I may still have resources in my reach.

Society is cemented by laws, upheld by religion, endeared by manners, and adorned by arts.

Let us now inquire what is the present state of these great fundamentals of social happiness, and whether any better period can be pointed out, compared to which their present state may be justly pronounced a state of declension.

The constitution of England has undergone many changes. The monarch, the nobles, and the people, have each in their turn for a time destroyed that proper balance, in which its excellence consists. In feudal times, the aristocratic power preponderated, and the kingdom was torn to pieces with civil distractions. From the accession of Henry the Seventh to the breaking out of the great rebellion, the power of the sovereign was all but absolute; the rapacity of that monarch, the brutality of his successor, the persecuting spirit of Mary, and the imperious prerogative of Elizabeth, left scarce a shadow of freedom in the people; and in spite of all the boasted glories of Elizabeth's golden days, I must doubt if any nation can be happy, whose lives and properties were no better secured than those of her subjects actually were. In all this period, the most tranquil moments

are to be found in the peaceful reign of James the First; yet even then the king's *jus divinum* was at its height, and totally overturned the scale and equipoise of the constitution. What followed in Charles's day I need not dwell upon; a revolution ensued; monarchy was shaken to its foundations, and, in the general fermentation and concussion of affairs, the very dregs of the people were thrown up into power, and all was anarchy, slaughter, and oppression. From the Restoration to the Revolution we contemplate a period full of trouble, and, for the most part, stained with the deepest disgrace; a pensioned monarch, an abandoned court, and a licentious people. The abdication, or more properly, the expulsion of a royal bigot, set the constitution upon its bottom, but it left the minds of men in a ferment that could not speedily subside; ancient loyalty and high monarchical principles were not to be silenced at once by the peremptory fiat of an act of parliament; men still harboured them in their hearts, and popery, three times expelled, was still upon the watch, and secretly whetting her weapons for a fourth attempt. Was this a period of social happiness?—The succession of the House of Hanover still left a pretender to the throne; and though the character of the new sovereign had every requisite of temper and judgement for conciliating his government, yet the old leaven was not exhausted, fresh revolutions were attempted, and the nation felt a painful repetition of its former sorrows.

So far, therefore, as the happiness of society depends upon the secure establishment of the constitution, the just administration of the laws, the strict and correct ascertainment of the subjects' rights, and those sacred and inviolable privileges as to person and property, which every man amongst us can

now define, and no man living dares to dispute, so far we must acknowledge that the times we live in are happier times than ever fell to the lot of our ancestors, and if we complain of them, it must be on account of something which has not yet come under our review; we will, therefore, proceed to the next point, and take the present state of religion into our consideration.

Religious feuds are so terrible in their consequences, and the peace of this kingdom has been so often destroyed by the furiousness of zealots and enthusiasts, struggling for church-establishment, and persecuting in their turns the fallen party without mercy, that the tranquillity we now enjoy, greater, as I believe, than in any time past, but certainly as great, is of itself sufficient to put the modern *murmurer*, to silence. To substantiate my assertion, let me refer to the rising spirit of toleration: wherever that blessed spirit prevails, it prevails for the honour of man's nature, for the enlargement of his heart, and for the augmentation of his social happiness. Whilst we were contending for our own rights, self-defence compelled us to keep off the encroachments of others, that were hostile to those rights; but these being firmly established, we are no longer warranted to hang the sword of the law over the head of religion, and oppress our seceding fellow-subjects. Is there any just reason to complain of our established clergy in their collective character? If they do not stun us with controversies, it is because they understand the spirit of their religion better than to engage in them. The publications of the pulpit are still numerous, and if they have dropt their high inflammatory tone it is to the honour of Christianity that they have so done, and taken up a milder, meeker language in its stead. As for the practice of religion, it is not in

my present argument to speak of that; my business is only to appeal to it as an establishment, essential to the support and happiness of society; and when we reflect how often in times past it has been made an engine for subverting that tranquillity and good order in the state, which it now peaceably upholds, I think it will be clear to every candid man, that this cannot be one of the causes of complaint and murmur against the present times.

The *manners* of the age we live in is the next point I am to review; and if I am to bring this into any decent compass, I must reject many things out of the account, that would make for my argument and speak very briefly upon all others.

To compare the manners of one age with those of another, we must begin by calling to remembrance the changes that may have been made in our own time, if we have lived long enough to be witnesses of any, or we must take them upon tradition, or guess at them by the writings of those who describe them: the comic poets are in general good describers of the living manners, and of all dramatic painters in this class Ben Jonson is decidedly the best. In the mirror of the stage we have the reflection of the times through all their changes, from the reign of Elizabeth to that of Anne, with an exception to the days of Oliver, of which interval, if there was no other delineation of the reigning manners than what we find in the annals of Whitelocke, and Clarendon, we should be at no loss to form our judgement of them. I stop at the age of Queen Anne, because it was then that Sir Richard Steele and Mr. Addison began to spread their pallets, and when they had completed The Spectator, nobody will dispute their having given a very finished portrait of the age they lived in. Where they stop, tradition may begin; so that I think an observing

man, with all these aids, and no short experience of his own to help them out, may form a pretty close comparison in his own thoughts upon the subject.

Here I must remind the reader that I am speaking of manners as they respect society. Now we can readily refer to certain times past, when the manners of men in this country were insufferably boisterous and unpolished; we can point to the period, when they were as notoriously reserved, gloomy, dark, and fanatical; we know when profligacy threw off all appearances, and libertinism went naked as it were into all societies; we can tell when pedantry was in general fashion, when duelling was the rage, and the point of honour was to be defined by a chain of logic that would have puzzled Aristotle: we can turn to the time when it was reputable to get drunk, and when the fine gentleman of the comedy entertains his mistress with his feats over the bottle, and recommends himself to her good graces, by swearing, blustering, and beating up the watch. We know there are such words in the language as fop and beau, and some can remember them in daily use; many are yet living, who have had their full-bottomed wigs brought home in a chair, and many an old lady now crowds herself into a corner, who once hooped herself in a circle hardly less than Arthur's round table. Here I may be told that dress is not manners; but I must contend that the manners of a man in a full-bottomed wig must partake something of the stiffness of the barber's buckle; nor do I see how he can walk on foot at his ease, when his wig goes in a chair. How many of us can call to mind the day, when it was a mark of good-breeding to cram a poor surfeited guest to the throat, and the most social hours of life were thrown away in a continual

interchange of solicitations and apologies? What a stroke upon the nerves of a modest man was it then to make his first approaches, and perform his awkward reverences to a solemn circle, all rising on their legs at the awful moment of his enry! And what was his condition at departing, when, after having performed the same tremendous ceremonies, he saw his retreat cut off by a double row of guards in livery, to every one of whom he was to pay a toll for free passage! A man will now find his superiors more accessible, his equals more at their ease, and his inferiors more mannerly than in any time past. The effects of public education, travel, and a general intercourse with mankind, the great influx of foreigners, the variety of public amusements, where all ranks and degrees meet promiscuously, the constant resort to bathing and water-drinking places in the summer, and above all the company of the fair sex, who mix so much more in society than heretofore, have, with many other conspiring causes, altogether produced such an ease and suavity of manners throughout the nation, as have totally changed the face of society, and levelled all those bars and barriers, which made the approaches to what was called good company so troublesome, and obstructed the intercourse between man and man. Here, then, I shall conclude upon this topic, and pass to the arts, which I said were the ornaments of society.

As I am persuaded my argument will not be contested in this quarter, I need spend few words upon so clear a point. If ever this country saw an age of artists, it is the present: Italy, Spain, Flanders, and France have had their turn, but they are now in no capacity to dispute the palm, and England stands without a rival; her painters, sculptors, and engravers are now the only schools, properly so

called, in Europe; Rome will bear witness that the English artists are as superior in talents as they are in numbers to those of all nations besides. I reserve the mention of her architects as a separate class, that I may for once break in upon my general rule, by indulging myself in a prediction, upon which I am willing to stake all my credit with the reader, that when the modest genius of a Harrison shall be brought into fuller display, England will have to boast of a native architect, which the brightest age of Greece would glory to acknowledge.

NUMBER XCII.

TO THE OBSERVER.

Etiam mortuus loquitur.

SIR,

If I am rightly advised, the laws of England have provided no remedy for an injury, which I have received from a certain gentleman, who sets me at defiance, and whom I am not conscious of having offended in the smallest article of life. My case is as follows. Some time ago I went into the South of France for the recovery of my health, which, thank God, I have so far effected, that I should think I was at this very moment enjoying as good a stock of spirits and strength, as I have enjoyed for many years of my life past, if I was not outfaced by the gentleman in question, who swears I am dead, and has proceeded so far as to publish me dead to all the world, with a whole volume of memoirs which I

have no remembrance of, and of sayings which I never said.

I think this is very hard upon me, and if there is no redress for such proceedings, but that a man must be printed dead, whenever any fanciful fellow chooses to write a book of memoirs, I must take the freedom to say this is no country to live in; and let my ingenious biographer take it how he will, I shall still maintain to his face that I am alive, and I do not see why my word in such a case should not go as far as his.

There is yet another thing I will venture to say, that I did never in the whole course of my life utter one half or even one tenth part of the smart repartees and bon-mots he is pleased to impute to me: I don't know what he means by laying such things at my door; I defy any one of my acquaintance to say I was a wit, which I always considered as another name for an ill-tempered fellow. I do acknowledge that I have lived upon terms of acquaintance with my biographer, and have passed some social hours in his company, but I never suspected he was minuting down every foolish thing that escaped my lips in the unguarded moments of convivial gaiety; if I had, I would have avoided him like the pestilence. It is hard upon a man, let me tell you, Sir, very hard indeed, to find his follies upon record, and I could almost wish his words were true, and that I were dead in earnest, rather than alive to read such nonsense, and find myself made the father of it.

Judge of my surprise, when passing along Vigo-lane upon a friendly call, as I intended it, to this very gentleman of whom I complain, I took up a volume from a stall in a whitey-brown paper binding, and opening it at the title page met my own face, staring me out of countenance, full in the

front: I started back with horror; nature never gave me any reason to be fond of my own features; I never survey my face but when I shave myself, and then I am ashamed of it; I trust it is no true type of my heart, for it is a sorry sample of Nature's handy-work, to say no worse of it. What the devil tempted him to stick it there I cannot guess, any more than I can at his publishing a bundle of nonsensical sayings and doings, which I detest and disavow. As for his printing my last will and testament, and disposing of my poor personals at pleasure, I care little about it; if he had taken only my money and spared my life, I would not have complained.

And now what is my redress? I apply myself to you in my distress, as an author whose book is in pretty general circulation, and one, as I perceive, who assaults no man's living fame and character; I desire, therefore, you will take mine into your protection, and if you can think of any thing to deter the world in future from such flippances, you are welcome to make what use you please of this letter; for as I have always strove to do what little service I could to the living, when I was allowed to be one of their number, so now I am voted out of their company, I would gladly be of some use to the dead. Yours whilst I lived,

H. POSTHUMOUS.

P.S. I am sorry I did not leave you something in my will, as I believe you deserve it as well, and want it more than some that are in it. If I live to die a second time, I will be sure to remember you.

As I am not versed in the law of libels, I know not what advice to give in Posthumous's case, whom I would by no means wish to see entangled in further difficulties; though I think he might

fairly say to his biographer with a courtly poet of this century,

> Oh! libel me with all things but thy praise!

The practice which some of our public news-writers are in, of treating their readers with a farrago of puerile anecdotes and scraps of characters, has probably led the way to a very foolish fashion, which is gaining ground amongst us: no sooner does a great man die, than the small wits creep into his coffin, like the swarm of bees in the carcase of Sampson's lion, to make honey from his corpse. It is high time that the good sense of the nation should correct this impertinence.

I have availed myself of Posthumous's permission to publish his letter, and I shall without scruple subjoin to it one of a very different sort, which I have received from a correspondent, whose name I do not mean to expose; it is with some reluctance I introduce it into this work, because it brings a certain person on the stage, whom I have no desire to exhibit oftener than I can help; but as I think it will be a consolation to Posthumous to show him others in the same hazard with himself, I hope my readers will let it pass with this apology.

TO THE OBSERVER.

SIR,

I AM a man, who say a great many good things myself, and hear many good things said by others; for I frequent clubs and coffee-rooms in all parts of the town, attend the pleadings in Westminster Hall, and am remarkably fond of the company of men of genius, and never miss a dinner at the Mansion House upon my Lord Mayor's day.

I am in the habit of committing to paper every thing of this sort, whether it is of my own saying,

or any other person's, when I am convinced I myself should have said it, if he had not: these I call my conscientious witticisms, and give them a leaf in my common-place book to themselves.

I have the pleasure to tell you, that my collection is now become not only considerable in bulk; but, that I may speak humbly of its merit, I will also say, that it is to the full as good, and far more creditable to any gentleman's character, than the books which have been published about a certain great wit lately deceased, whose memory has been so completely dissected by the operators in Stationers' Hall.

Though I have as much respect for posterity as any man can entertain for persons he is not acquainted with, still I cannot understand how a post-obit of this sort can profit me in my life, unless I could make it over to some purchaser upon beneficial conditions. Now, as there are people in the world, who have done many famous actions, without having once uttered a real good thing, as it is called, I should think my collection might be an acceptable purchase to a gentleman of this description, and such an one should have it a bargain, as I would be very glad to give a finishing to his character, which I can best compare to a coat of Adam's plaister on a well-built house.

For my own part, being neither more nor less than a haberdasher of small wares, and having scarcely rambled beyond the boundaries of the bills of mortality, since I was out of my apprenticeship, I have not the presumption to think the anecdotes of my own life important enough for posthumous publication; neither do I suppose my writings, though pretty numerous, as my books will testify, and many great names standing amongst them, which it is probable I shall never cross out, will

be thought so interesting to the public, as to come into competition with the lively memoirs of a Bellamy and a Baddeley, who furnish so many agreeable records of many noble families, and are the solace of more than half the toilets in town and country.

But to come more closely to the chief purport of this letter—It was about a fortnight ago, that I crossed upon you in the Poultry near the shop-door of your worthy bookseller; I could not help giving a glance at your looks, and methought there was a morbid sallowness in your complexion, and a sickly languor in your eye, that indicated speedy dissolution: I watched you for some time, and as you turned into the shop remarked the total want of energy in your step. I know whom I am saying this to, and therefore am not afraid of startling you by my observations, but if you actually perceive those threatening symptoms, which I took notice of, it may probably be your wish to lay in some store for a journey you are soon to take. You have always been a friend and customer to me, and there is nobody I shall more readily serve than yourself: I have long noticed with regret the very little favour you receive from your contemporaries, and shall gladly contribute to your kinder reception from posterity; now I flatter myself, if you adopt my collection, you will at least be celebrated for your sayings, whatever may become of your writings.

As for your private history, if I may guess from certain events, which have been reported to me, you may, with a little allowable embellishment, make up a decent life of it. It was with great pleasure I heard t'other day, that you was stabbed by a monk in Portugal, broke your limbs in Spain, and was poisoned with a sallad at Paris; these, with your adventures at sea, your sufferings at

Bayonne, and the treatment you received from your employers on your return, will be amusing anecdotes, and as it is generally supposed you have not amassed any very great fortune by the plunder of the public, your narrative will be read without raising any envy in the reader, which will be so much in your favour. Still your chief dependance must rest upon the collection I shall supply you with, and when the world comes to understand how many excellent things you said, and how much more wit you had than any of your contemporaries gave you credit for, they will begin to think you had not fair play whilst you was alive, and who knows but they may take it in mind to raise a monument to you by subscription amongst other merry fellows of your day? I am yours,

H. B.

I desire my correspondent will accept this short but serious answer. If I am so near the end of life, as he supposes, it will behove me to wind it up in another manner from what he suggests: I, therefore, shall not treat with my friend the haberdasher for his small wares.

NUMBER XCIII.

'Αληθόμυθον χρὴ εἶναι, οὐ πολύλογον.

DEMOCRATES.

Remember only that your words be true,
No matter then how many or how few.

TO THE OBSERVER.

I HAVE a habit of dealing in the marvellous, which I cannot overcome: some people, who seem to take a pleasure in magnifying the little flaws to be found in all characters, call this by a name which no gen-

tleman ought to use, or likes to hear: the fact is, I have so much tender consideration for Truth in her state of nakedness, that, till I have put her into decent clothing, I cannot think of bringing her into company; and if her appearance is sometimes so much altered by dress, that her best friends cannot find her out, am I to blame for that?

There is a matter-of-fact man of my acquaintance, who haunts me in all places, and is the very torment of my life; he sticks to me as the thresher* does to the whale, and is the perfect night-mare of my imagination: this fellow never lets one of my stories pass without docking it like an attorney's bill before a master in chancery: he cut forty miles out of a journey of one hundred, which but for him I had performed in one day upon the same horse; in which I confess I had stretched a point for the pleasure of out-riding a fat fellow in company, who, by the malicious veracity of my aforesaid Damper, threw me at least ten miles distance behind him.

This provoking animal cut up my success in so many intrigues and adventures, that I was determined to lay my plan out of his reach, in a spot which I had provided for an evil day, and accordingly I led him a dance into Corsica, where I was sure he could not follow me: here I had certainly been, and knew my ground well enough to prance over it at a very handsome rate: I noticed a kind of sly leer in some of the company, which was pointed towards a gentleman present, who was a stranger to me, and so far from joining in the titter, was very politely attentive to what I was relating. I was at this moment warm in the cause of freedom, and had performed such prodigies of valour in its defence, that, before my story was well ended, I had got upon such close terms with General Paoli, that, had my

* A fish of that name.

hearers been but half as credulous as they ought to have been, they might have set us down for sworn friends and inseparables : but here again, as ill luck would have it, my evil genius tapt me on the shoulder, and remarking that I principally addressed myself to the gentleman, whose politeness and attention were so flattering, said to me with a smile, that had the malice of the devil in it—'Give me leave to introduce you to General Paoli here present.'—Death and confusion, what I felt! a stroke of lightning would have been charity compared to this.—My persecutor had not done with me.—'I am afraid you have forgot your old friend and familiar, who no doubt will be overjoyed at recognizing a brother warrior, who has performed such noble services jointly with himself in the glorious struggle for the liberties of his beloved country.—Can I paint the shame I suffered at this moment? It is impossible; I can only say there is a generosity in true valour, which scorns to triumph over the fallen.—'There were so many brave men,' said that gallant person in a tone I shall never lose the impression of, 'of whose services I shall ever preserve a grateful memory, but whose persons have slipt from my recollection, that I have only to entreat your pardon for a forgetfulness, which I desire you to believe is not my fault, but my infirmity :'—if a bottle had been vollied at my head, I could not have been more in need of a surgeon, than I was at this instant: I could never have suspected Truth of playing me such a jade's trick; I always considered her as a good-natured simple creature without gall or bitterness, and was in the habit of treating her accordingly; but this was such a specimen of her malice, that I fled out of her company as hastily as I could.

The very next morning I took my passage in the

stage-coach for my native town in the north of England, heartily out of humour with my trip to Corsica; but even here I could not shake off old habits, so far as to resist the temptation of getting into a post-chaise for the last stage, by which manœuvre I took the credit of having travelled like a gentleman, and became entitled to rail against the post-tax and the expenses of the road.

I was now voted into a club of the chief inhabitants of the place, and as I had no reason to believe the story of my late discomfiture had reached them, I soon recovered my spirits, and with them the amplifying powers of my invention. My stories for a considerable time were swallowed so glibly, and seemed to sit so easy on the stomachs of these natural unsophisticated people, that I was encouraged to increase the dose to such a degree as seemed at length to produce something like a nausea with those I administered it to: especially with a certain precise personage of the sect of Quakers, one Simon Stiff, a wealthy trader, and much respected for his probity and fair dealing. Simon had a way of asking me at the end of a story—*But is it true?*—which sometimes disconcerted me, and considerably lessened the applauses that the rest of the club had been accustomed to bestow upon my narratives.

One evening, when I had been describing an enormous shark, by which I had been attacked in one of my West India voyages, Simon Stiff, lifting up both his hands in an attitude of astonishment, cried out—'Verily, friend Cracker, thou drawest a long bow.' With an angry look I demanded the meaning of that expression.—'I mean,' replied Simon, 'thou speakest the thing which is not.'—'That is as much as to say I tell a lie.'—'Even so, friend, thou hast hit it,' said Simon, without altering his voice, or regarding the tone of rage I had

thrown mine into; the steady serenity of his countenance put me down, and I suffered him to proceed without interruption.—'Thou hast told us many things, friend Cracker, that are perfectly incredible; were I to attempt imposing upon my customers in the way of traffic, as thou dost upon thy company in the way of talk, the world would justly set me down for a dishonest man. Believe me, thou mayest be a very good companion without swerving from the truth, nay, thou canst no otherwise be a good one than by adhering to it; for if thou art in the practice of uttering falsehoods, we shall be in the practice of disbelieving thee, even when thou speakest the truth, and so there will be an end of all confidence in society, and thy word will pass for nothing. I have observed it is thy vanity that betrays thee into falsehood; I should have hoped thou wouldst not have forgotten how thy falsehood betrayed thee into shame, and how we received and welcomed thee into our society, when thy friends in the metropolis had hooted thee out of theirs. Think not thou canst establish a credit with us by the fictions of imagination: plain truths suit men of plain understandings. Had thy shark been as big again as thou wouldst have us believe it was, what wouldst thou have gained by it? Nothing but the merit of having seen a monster; and what is that compared to the risk of being thought a monster-maker? If thou wast snatched from the jaws of the animal by the hand of God, give God the praise: if thine own courage and address contributed to save thee, give him still the praise, who inspired thee with those means of furthering his providence in thy rescue: where is the ground for boasting in all this? Sometimes thou wouldst persuade us thou art a man of consequence, in the favour of princes, and in the secrets of ministers: if we are to believe all

this, thou dost but libel those ministers for letting such a babbler into their councils, and if thou thinkest to gain a consequence with us thereby thou art grievously deceived, friend Cracker, for we do not want to know what thou oughtest not to tell, and we despise the servant who betrayeth his master's trust. As for wonders, what signifieth telling us of them? The time is full of wonders; the revolution of empires, the fall of despotism, and the emancipation of mankind, are objects, whose superior magnitude makes thy shark shrink into an atom. Had the monster gorged thee at a mouthful, how many thousands, nay tens of thousands, have the voracious jaws of death devoured in a succession of campaigns, which have made creation melt? Didst thou escape the monster? what then; how can we have leisure to reflect upon thy single deliverance, when we call to mind the numbers of despairing captives, who have been liberated from the dungeons of tyranny? In a word, friend Cracker, if it is through a love for the marvellous thou makest so free with the sacred name of truth, thou dost but abuse our patience and thine own time in hunting after sharks and monsters of the deep; and if thou hast any other motive for fiction than the above, it must be a motive less innocent than what I have supposed, and in that case we hold thee dangerous to society, and a disgrace to human nature.'

Here he concluded, and though the length and deliberate solemnity of his harangue had given me time enough, yet I had not so availed myself of it as to collect my thoughts, and prepare myself for any kind of defence: how to deal with this formal old fellow I knew not; to cudgel him was a service of more danger than I saw fit to engage in, for he was of athletic limbs and stature; to challenge him

to a gentleman's satisfaction, being a Quaker, would have subjected me to universal ridicule. I rose from my chair, took my hat from the peg, and abruptly quitted the room: next morning I sent to cut my name out of the club, but behold! they had saved me that ceremony over night, and I had once more a new set of acquaintance to go in search of.

In this solitary interim I strove to lighten the burthen of time by starting a correspondence with one of our public prints, and so long as I supplied it with anecdotes from the country, I may say without vanity there was neither fire nor flood, murder, rape, nor robbery, wanting to embellish it. I broke two or three necks at a horse-race without any detriment to the community, and for the amusement of my readers drove over blind beggars, drowned drunken farmers, and tossed women with child by mad bullocks, without adding one item to the bills of mortality; I made matches without number which the register never recorded; I was at the same time a correspondent at Brussels, a resident in Spain, and a traveller at Constantinople, who gave secret information of all proceedings in those several places, and by the mysterious style in which I enveloped my despatches, nobody could fix a falsehood on my intelligence, till I imprudently fought a battle on the banks of the Danube, after the armies were gone into winter quarters, which did the Turk no mischief, and effectually blasted me with the compiler, and him with the public.

I am now out of business, and, if you want any thing in my way to enliven your *Observers*, which give me leave to remark are sometimes rather of the dullest, I shall be proud to serve you, being

Your very humble servant,
at command,
KIT CRACKER.

N. B. I do not want any thing in Kit Cracker's way: but though I decline the offer of his assistance, I willingly avail myself of the moral of his example.

NUMBER XCIV.

Λυποῦντα τὸν πλησίον, οὐ ῥᾴδιον αὐτὸν ἄλυπον εἶναι.

DEMOPHILI SENTENTIA.

He, who another's peace annoys,
By the same act his own destroys.

TO THE OBSERVER.

As I have lived long enough to repent of a fatal propensity, that has led me to commit many offences, not the less irksome to my present feelings for the secresy with which I contrived to execute them, and as these can now be no otherwise atoned for than by a frank confession, I have resolved upon this mode of addressing myself to you. Few people choose to display their own characters to the world in such colours as I shall give to mine, but as I have mangled so many reputations in my time without mercy, I should be the meanest of mankind if I spared my own; and being now about to speak of a person whom no man loves, I may give vent to an acrimony at which no man can take offence. If I have been troublesome to others, I am no less uncomfortable to myself, and amidst vexations without number, the greatest of all is, that there is not one which does not originate with myself.

I entered upon life with many advantages natural and acquired: I am indebted to my parents for a

was not applauded to my wishes: I also wrote occasional essays and paragraphs for the public prints, by way of trying my talents in various kinds of style; by these experiments I acquired a certain facility of imitating other people's manner and disguising my own, and so far my point was gained; but as for the secret satisfaction I had promised myself in hearing my productions applauded, of that I was altogether disappointed; for though I tried both praise and dispraise for the purpose of bringing them into notice, I never had the pleasure to be contradicted by any man in the latter case, or seconded by a living soul in the former: I had circulated a little poem, which cost me some pains, and as I had been flattered with the applause it gained from several of its readers, I put it one evening in my pocket, and went to the house of a certain person, who was much resorted to by men of genius: an opportunity luckily offered for producing my manuscript, which I was prepared to avow as soon as the company present had given sentence in its favour: it was put into the hands of a dramatic author of some celebrity, who read it aloud, and in a manner as I thought that clearly anticipated his disgust; as soon, therefore, as he had finished it, and demanded of me if I knew the author, I had no hesitation to declare that I did not. Then, I presume, rejoined he, it is no offence to say I think it the merest trash I ever read—None in life, I replied, and from that moment held him in everlasting hatred.

Disgusted with the world, I now began to dip my pen in gall, and as soon as I had singled out a proper object for my spleen, I looked round him for his weak side, where I could place a blow to best effect, and wound him undiscovered: the author abovementioned had a full share of my attention: he was an irritable man, and I have seen him

agonized with the pain, which my very shafts had given him, whilst I was foremost to arraign the scurrility of the age, and encourage him to disregard it: the practice I had been in of masking my style facilitated my attacks upon every body, who either moved my envy or provoked my spleen.

The meanest of all passions had now taken entire possession of my heart, and I surrendered myself to it without a struggle: still there was a consciousness about me, that sunk me in my own esteem, and when I met the eye of a man whom I had secretly defamed, I felt abashed; society became painful to me; and I shrunk into retirement, for my self-esteem was lost: though I had gratified my malice, I had destroyed my comfort; I now contemplated myself a solitary being, at the very moment when I had every requisite of fortune, health and endowments, to have recommended me to the world, and to those tender ties and engagements which are natural to man, and constitute his best enjoyments.

The solitude I resorted to, made me every day more morose, and supplied me with reflections that rendered me intolerable to myself, and unfit for society. I had reason to apprehend, in spite of all my caution, that I was now narrowly watched, and that strong suspicions were taken up against me; when I was feasting my jaundiced eye one morning with a certain newspaper, which I was in the habit of employing as the vehicle of my venom, I was startled at discovering myself conspicuously pointed out in an angry column as a cowardly defamer, and menaced with personal chastisement, as soon as ever proofs could be obtained against me: and this threatening denunciation evidently came from the very author, who had unknowingly given me such umbrage when he recited my poem.

The sight of this resentful paragraph was like an arrow to my brain: habituated to skirmish only behind entrenchments, I was ill prepared to turn into the open field, and had never put the question to my heart, how it was provided for the emergency. In early life I had not any reason to suspect my courage, nay, it was rather forward to meet occasions in those days of innocence; but the meanness I had lately sunk into had sapped every manly principle of my nature, and I now discovered to my sorrow, that, in taking up the lurking malice of an assassin, I had lost the gallant spirit of a gentleman.

There was still one alleviation to my terrors: it so chanced that I was not the author of the particular libel which my accuser had imputed to me: and though I had been father of a thousand others, I felt myself supported by truth in almost the only charge against which I could have fairly appealed to it. It seemed to me, therefore, adviseable to lose no time in disculpating myself from the accusation, yet to seek an interview with this irascible man, was a service of some danger: chance threw the opportunity in my way, which I had probably else wanted spirit to invite; I accosted him with all imaginable civility, and made the strongest asseverations of my innocence: whether I did this with a servility that might aggravate his suspicion, or that he had others impressed upon him besides those I was labouring to remove, so it was, that he treated all I said with the most contemptuous incredulity, and elevating his voice to a tone that petrified me with fear, bade me avoid his sight, threatening me both with words and actions in a manner too humiliating to relate.

Alas! can words express my feelings? Is there a being more wretched than myself? to be friendless, an exile from society, and at enmity with my-

self, is a situation deplorable in the extreme: let what I have now written be made public; if I could believe my shame would be turned to others' profit, it might perhaps become less painful to myself; if men want other motives to divert them from defamation, than what their own hearts supply, let them turn to my example, and if they will not be reasoned, let them be frightened out of their propensity.

I am, Sir, &c.

WALTER WORMWOOD.

The case of this correspondent is a melancholy one, and I have admitted his letter, because I do not doubt the present good motives of the writer; but I shall not easily yield a place in these essays to characters so disgusting, and representations so derogatory to human nature. The historians of the day, who profess to give us intelligence of what is passing in the world, ought not to be condemned, if they sometimes make a little free with our foibles and our follies; but downright libels are grown too dangerous, and scurrility is become too dull, to find a market; the pillory is a great reformer. The detail of a court drawing room, though not very edifying, is perfectly inoffensive; a lady cannot greatly complain of the liberty of the press, if it is contented with the humble task of celebrating the workmanship of her mantua maker; as for such inveterate malice, as my correspondent Wormwood describes, I flatter myself it is very rarely to be found: I can only say, that though I have often heard of it in conversation, and read of it in books, I do not meet in human nature originals so strongly featured as their paintings: amongst a small collection of sonnets in manuscript, descriptive of the human passions, which has fallen into my hands, the following

lines upon Envy, as coinciding with my subject, shall conclude this paper.

ENVY.

Oh! never let me see that shape again,
Exile me rather to some savage den,
Far from the social haunts of men!
Horrible phantom, pale it was as death,
Consumption fed upon its meagre cheek,
And ever as the fiend essay'd to speak,
Dreadfully steam'd its pestilential breath.
Fang'd like the wolf it was, and all as gaunt,
And still it prowl'd around us and around,
Rolling its squinting eyes askaunt,
Wherever human happiness was found,
Furious thereat, the self-tormenting sprite
Drew forth an asp, and, terrible to sight,
To its left pap the envenomed reptile prest,
Which gnaw'd and worm'd into its tortured breast.

The desperate suicide with pain
Writh'd to and fro, and yell'd amain;
And then with hollow, dying cadence cries—
It is not of this asp that Envy dies;
'Tis not this reptile's tooth that gives the smart;
'Tis others' happiness that gnaws my heart.

NUMBER XCV.

Facilitas Animi ad partem stultitiæ rapit.

P. SYRUS.

TO THE OBSERVER.

SIR,

THE ancient family of the Saplins, whereof your humble servant is the unworthy representative, has been for many generations distinguished for a cer-

tain pliability of temper, which with some people passes for good humour, and by others is called weakness; but, however, the world may differ in describing it, there seems a general agreement in the manner of making use of it.

Our family estate, though far from contemptible, is considerably reduced from its ancient splendour, not only by an unlucky tumble that my grandfather, Sir Paul, got in the famous Mississippi scheme, but also various losses, bad debts, and incautious securities, which have fallen heavy upon the purses of my predecessors at different times; but as every man must pay for his good character, I dare say they did not repent of their purchase, and for my part it is a reflection that never gives me any disturbance. This aforesaid grandfather of mine, was supposed to have furnished Congreve with the hint for his character of Sir Paul Pliant, at least it hath been so whispered to me very frequently by my aunt Jemima, who was a great collector of family anecdotes; and, to speak the truth, I am not totally without suspicion, that a certain ingenious author, lately deceased, had an eye towards my insignificant self in the dramatic portrait of his *Good-natured Man.*

Though I scorn the notion of setting myself off to the public and you by panegyrics of my own penning, as the manner of some is, yet I may truly say, without boasting, that I had the character at school of being the very best *fag* that ever came into it; and this I believe every gentleman, who was my contemporary at Westminster, will do me the justice to acknowledge: it was a reputation I confess that I did not earn for nothing, for whilst I worked the clothes off my back, and the skin off my bones in scouting upon every body's errands, I was pummeled to a mummy by the boys, *showed up* by the ushers, flayed alive by the masters, and reported for

an incorrigible dunce at my book ; a report which, under correction, I must think had some degree of injustice in it, as it was impossible for me to learn a book I was never allowed to open: in this period of my education I took little food and less sleep, so that whilst I shot up in stature after the manner of my progenitors, who were a tall race of men, I grew as gaunt as a greyhound ; but having abundantly more spirit than strength, and being *voted* by the great boys to be what is called *true game*, I was singled out as a kind of trial-cock, and pitted against every new comer to make proof of his bottom in fair fighting, though I may safely say I never turned out upon a quarrel of my own making in all my life. Notwithstanding all these honours, which I obtained from my colleagues, I will not attempt to disguise from you that I left the school in disgrace, being expelled by the master, when head of my boarding house, for not supporting my authority over the petty boys belonging to it, who, I must confess, were just then not in the most orderly and correct state of discipline.

My father, whose maxim it was never to let trifles vex him, received me with all the good humour in life, and admitted me of the university of Oxford: here I was overjoyed to find, that the affair of the expulsion was so far from having prejudiced my contemporaries against me, that I was resorted to by numbers whose time hung upon their hands, and my rooms became the rendezvous of all the loungers in the college: few or no schemes were set on foot without me, and if a loose guinea or two was wanted for the purpose, every body knew where to have it: I was allowed a horse for my health's sake, which was rather delicate, but I cannot say my health was much the better for him, as I never mounted his back above once or twice, whilst my friends

kept him in exercise morning and evening, as long as he lasted, which, indeed, was only till the hunting season set in, when the currier had his hide, and his flesh went to the kennel. I must own I did not excel in any of my academical exercises, save that of circumambulating the colleges and public buildings with strangers, who came to gaze about them for curiosity's sake: in this branch of learning I gained such general reputation, as to be honoured with the title of *Keeper of the Lions:* neither will I disguise the frequent *jobations* I incurred for neglect of college duties, and particularly for non-attendance at chapel, but in this I should not perhaps have been thought so reprehensible, had it been known that my surplice never failed to be there, though I had rarely the credit of bearing it company.

My mother died of a cold she caught by attending some young ladies on a water-party before I had been a month in the world; and my father never married again, having promised her on her deathbed not to bring a step-dame into his family whilst I survived: I had the misfortune to lose him when I was in my twenty-second year; he got his death at a country canvass for Sir Harry Osier, a very obliging gentleman, and nearly related to our family: I attended my father's corpse to the grave, on which melancholy occasion, such were the lamentations and bewailings of all the servants in the house, that I thought it but a proper return for their affection to his memory, to prove myself as kind a master by continuing them in their several employs: this, however, was not altogether what they meant, as I was soon convinced every one amongst them had a remonstrance to make, and a new demand to prefer: the butler would have better perquisites, the footman wanted to be out of livery, the scullion de-

manded tea-money, and the cook murmured about kitchen stuff.

Though I was now a single being in the world, my friends and neighbours kindly took care I should not be a solitary one! I was young, indeed, and of small experience in the world, but I had plenty of counsellors; some advised me to buy horses they wanted to sell, others to sell horses they wanted to buy: a lady of great taste fell in love with two or three of my best cows for their colour; they were upon her lawn the next day: a gentleman of extraordinary *virtû* discovered a picture or two in my collection that exactly fitted his pannels: an eminent improver, whom every body declared to be the first genius of the age for laying out grounds, had taken measures for transporting my garden a mile out of my sight, and floating my richest meadow grounds with a lake of muddy water: as for my mansion and its appendages, I am persuaded I could never have kept them in their places, had it not been that the several projectors, who all united in pulling them down, could never rightly agree in what particular spot to build them up again: one kind friend complimented me with the first refusal of a mistress, whom, for reasons of economy, he was obliged to part from; and a neighbouring gentlewoman, whose daughter had perhaps stuck on hand a little longer than was convenient, more than hinted to me that miss had every requisite in life to make the married state perfectly happy.

In justice, however, to my own discretion, let me say, that I was not hastily surprised into a serious measure by this latter overture, nor did I ask the young lady's hand in marriage, till I was verily persuaded, by her excessive fondness, that there were no other means to save her life. Now whether it

was the violence of her passion before our marriage that gave some shock to her intellects, or from what other cause it might proceed, I know not; certain, however, it is, that after marriage she became subject to very odd whims and caprices; and though I made it a point of humanity never to thwart her in these humours, yet I was seldom fortunate enough to please her; so that, had I not been sure to demonstration that love for me was the cause and origin of them all, I might have been so deceived by appearances as to have imputed them to aversion. She was in the habit of deciding upon almost every action in her life by the interpretation of her dreams, in which I cannot doubt her great skill, though I could not always comprehend the principles on which she applied it; she never failed as soon as winter set in, to dream of going to London, and our journey as certainly succeeded. I remember upon our arrival there the first year after our marriage, she dreamt of a new coach, and at the same time put the servants in new liveries, the colours and pattern of which were circumstantially revealed to her in sleep: sometimes, dear creature! she dreamt of winning large sums at cards, but I am apt to think those dreams were of the sort, which should have been interpreted by their contraries; she was not a little fond of running after conjurors and deaf and dumb fortune-tellers, who dealt in figures and cast nativities; and when we were in the country my barns and outhouses were haunted with gypsies and vagabonds, who made sad havoc with our pigs and poultry: of ghosts and evil spirits she had such terror, that I was fain to keep a chaplain in my house to exorcise the chambers, and when business called me from home, the good man condescended so far to her fears, as to sleep in a little closet within her call in case she was troubled in the

night; and I must say this for my friend, that if there is any trust to be put in flesh and blood, he was a match for the best spirit that ever walked: she had all the sensibility in life towards omens and prognostics, and though I guarded every motion and action that might give any possible alarm to her, yet my unhappy awkwardnesses were always boding ill luck, and I had the grief of heart to hear her declare in her last moments, that a capital oversight I had been guilty of in handing to her a candle with an enormous winding sheet appending to it, was the immediate occasion of her death and my irreparable misfortune.

My second wife I married in mere charity and compassion, because a young fellow, whom she was engaged to, had played her a base trick by scandalously breaking off the match, when the wedding clothes were bought, the day appointed for the wedding, and myself invited to it. Such transactions ever appeared shocking to me, and, therefere, to make up her loss to her as well as I was able, I put myself to extraordinary charges for providing her with every thing handsome upon our marriage: she was a fine woman, loved show, and was particularly fond of displaying herself in public places, where she had an opportunity of meeting and mortifying the young man who had behaved so ill to her: she took this revenge against him so often, that one day, to my great surprise, I discovered that she had eloped from me and fairly gone off with him. There was something so unhandsome, as I thought, in this proceeding, that I should probably have taken legal measures for redress, as in like cases other husbands have done, had I not been diverted from my purpose by a very civil note from the gentleman himself, wherein he says—' That being a younger son of little or no fortune, he hopes I am too much of

a gentleman to think of resorting to the vexatious measures of the law for revenging myself upon him; and, as a proof of his readiness to make me all the reparation in his power in an honourable way, he begs leave to inform me, that he shall most respectfully attend upon me with either sword or pistols, or with both, whenever I shall be pleased to lay my commands upon him for a meeting, and appoint the hour and place.'

After such atonement on the part of the offender, I could no longer harbour any thoughts of a divorce, especially as my younger brother the parson has heirs to continue the family, and seems to think so entirely with me in the business, that I have determined to drop it altogether, and give the parties no further molestation; for, as my brother very properly observes, it is the part of a Christian to forget and to forgive; and, in truth, I see no reason why I should disturb them in their enjoyments, or return evil for good to an obliging gentleman, who has taken a task of trouble off my hands, and set me at my ease for the rest of my days; in which tranquil and contented state of mind, as becomes a man, whose inheritance is philanthropy, and whose mother's milk hath been the milk of human kindness, I remain in all brotherly charity and good will,

Yours and the world's friend,

SIMON SAPLING.

NUMBER XCVI.

Quis scit an adjiciant hodiernæ crastina summæ
Tempora Dii Superi? HOR. CAR. 4, 7, 17.

TO-MORROW is the day, which procrastination always promises to employ and never overtakes: my correspondent Tom Tortoise, whose letter I shall now lay before the public, seems to have made these promises and broken them as often as most men.

TO THE OBSERVER.

I have been resolving to write to thee every morning for these two months, but something or other has always come athwart my resolution to put it by. In the first place, I should have told thee that aunt Gertrude was taken grievously sick, and had a mighty desire to see thee upon affairs of consequence, but as I was in daily hopes she would mend and be able to write to thee herself, for every body you know understands their own business best, I thought I would wait till she got well enough to tell her own story; but, alas! she dwindled and dwindled away till she died; so, if she had any secrets they are buried with her, and there 's an end of that matter.

Another thing I would fain have written to thee about, was to inquire into the character of a fellow, one John Jenkyns, who had served a friend of thine, Sir Theodore Thimble, as his house-steward, and offered himself to me in the same capacity: but this was only my own affair do you see, so I put it by from day to day, and in the mean time took the

rascal upon his word without a character: but if he ever had one, he would have lost it in my service, for he plundered me without mercy, and at last made off with a pretty round sum of money, which I have never been able to get any wind of, probably because I never took the trouble to make any inquiry.

I now sit down to let you know son Tom is come from Oxford, and a strapping fine fellow he is grown of his age: he has a mighty longing to set out upon his travels to foreign parts which you must know seems to me a very foolish conceit in a young lad, who has only kept his first term and not completed his nineteenth year; so I opposed his whim manfully, which I think you will approve of, for I recollected the opinion you gave upon this subject when last here, and quoted it against him: to do him justice, he fairly offered to be ruled by your advice, and willed me to write to you on the matter; but one thing or other always stood in the way, and in the mean time came Lord Ramble in his way to Dover, and being a great crony of Tom's and very eager for his company, and no letter coming from you, which, indeed, I acquit you of, not having written to you on the subject, away the youngsters went together, and probably before this are upon French ground. Pray tell me what you think of this trip, which appears to me but a wild-goose kind of a chase, and if I live till to-morrow I intend to write Tom a piece of my mind to that purpose, and give him a few wholesome hints, which I had put together for our parting, but had not time just then to communicate to him.

I intend very shortly to brush up your quarters in town, as my solicitor writes me word every thing is at a stand for the want of my appearance: what dilatory doings must we experience, who have to do

with the law! putting off from month to month and year to year. I wonder men of business are not ashamed of themselves: as for me, I should have been up and amongst them long enough ago, if it had not been for one thing or another that hampered me about my journey: horses are for ever falling lame, and farriers are such lazy rascals, that before one can be cured, another cries out; and now I am in daily expectation of my favourite brood-mare dropping a foal, which I am in great hopes will prove a colt, and, therefore, I cannot be absent at the time, for a master's eye you know is every thing in those cases: besides I should be sorry to come up in this dripping season, and as the parson has begun praying for fair weather, I hope it will set in ere long in good earnest, and that it will please God to make it pleasant travelling.

You will be pleased to hear that I mean soon to make a job of draining the marsh in front of my house; every body allows that as soon as there is a channel cut to the river, it will be as dry as a bowling-green, and as fine meadow land as any on my estate: it will also add considerably to the health as well as beauty of our situation, for at present 'tis a grievous eye-sore, and fills us with fogs and foul air at such a rate, that I have had my whole family down with the ague all this spring: here is a fellow ready to undertake the job at a very easy expense, and will complete it in a week, so that it will soon be done when once begun; therefore, you see I need not hurry myself for setting about it, but wait till leisure and opportunity suit.

I am sorry I can send you no better news of your old friend the vicar; he is sadly out of sorts: you must know the incumbent of *Slow-in-the-Wilds* died some time ago, and as the living lies so handy to my own parish I had always intended it for our

friend, and had promised him again and again: when behold! time slipt away unperceived, and in came my lord bishop of the diocese with a parson of his own, ready cut and dried, and claimed it as a lapsed living, when it has been mine and my ancestors any time these five hundred years for aught I know: if these are not nimble doings I know not what are: egad! a man need have all his eyes about him, that has to do with these bishops. If I had been aware of such a trick being played me, I would have hoisted the honest vicar into the pulpit, before the old parson, who is dead and gone, had been nailed in his coffin, for no man loves less to be taken napping, as they call it, than I do; and as for the poor vicar 'tis surprising to see how he takes to heart the disappointment: whereas I tell him he has nothing for it but to outlive the young fellow who has jumped into his shoes, and then let us see if any bishop shall jockey us with the like jade's trick for the future.

I have now only to request you will send me down a new almanack, for the year wears out apace, and I am terribly puzzled for want of knowing how it goes, and I love to be regular. If there is any thing I can do for you in these parts, pray employ me, for I flatter myself you believe no man living would go further, or more readily fly to do you service than yours to command,

THOMAS TORTOISE.

Alas! though the wise men in all ages have been calling out as it were with one voice for us 'to know ourselves,' it is a voice that has not yet reached the ears or understanding of my correspondent Tom Tortoise. Somebody or other hath left us another good maxim, 'never to put off till to-morrow what we can do to-day.'—Whether he was, indeed, a wise

man who first broached this maxim, I'll not take on myself to pronounce, but I am apt to think he would be no fool who observed it.

If all the resolutions, promises, and engagements of To-day, that lie over for To morrow, were to be summed up and posted by items, what a cumbrous load of procrastinations would be transferred in the midnight crisis of a moment! Something, perhaps, like the following might be the outline of the deed, by which To-day might will and devise the foresaid contingencies to its heir and successor.

'Conscious that my existence is drawing to its close, I hereby devise to make over to my natural heir and successor, all my right and title in those many vows, promises and obligations, which have been so liberally made to me by sundry persons in my lifetime, but which still remained unfulfilled on their part, and stand out against them: but at the same time that I am heartily desirous all engagements, fair and lawful in their nature, may be punctually complied with, I do most willingly cancel all such as are of a contrary description; hereby releasing and discharging all manner of persons, who have bound themselves to me under rash and inconsiderate resolutions, from the performance of which evil might ensue to themselves, and wrong or violence be done society.

'In the first place I desire my said heir and successor will call in all those debts of conscience, which have been incurred by, and are due from, certain defaulters, who stand pledged to repentance and atonement, of all which immediate payment ought in justice and discretion to be rigorously exacted from the several parties, forasmuch as every hour, by which they outrun their debt, weakens their security.

'It is my further will and desire, that all those free livers and profest voluptuaries, who have wasted the hours of my existence in riot and debauchery, may be made to pay down their lawful quota of sick stomachs and aching heads, to be levied upon them severally by poll at the discretion of my heir and successor.

'Whereas I am apprized of many dark dealings and malicious designs now in actual execution, to the great annoyance of society and good fellowship, I earnestly recommend the detection of all such evil-minded persons with To-morrow's light, heartily hoping they will meet their due shame, punishment, and disappointment: and I sincerely wish that every honest man, who hath this night gone to rest with a good reputation, may not be deprived of To-morrow's repose by any base efforts, which Slander, who works in the dark, may conjure up to take it from him.

'It is with singular satisfaction I have been made privy to sundry kind and charitable benevolences, that have been privately bestowed upon the indigent and distrest, without any ostentation or parade on the part of the givers, and I do thereupon strictly enjoin and require a fair and impartial account to be taken of the same by my lawful heir and successor, be the amount what it may, that interest for the same may be put into immediate course of payment; whereby the parties so entitled may enjoy, as in justice they ought to do, all those comforts, blessings, and rewards, which talents so employed are calculated to produce.

'All promises made by men of power to their dependants, and all verbal engagements to tradesmen on the score of bills, that lie over for To-morrow, I hereby cancel and acquit; well assured they were not meant by those who made them, nor expected

by any who received them, then to be made good and fulfilled.

'To all gamesters, rakes, and revellers, who shall be found out of bed at my decease, I bequeath rotten constitutions, restless thoughts, and squalid complexions: but to all such regular and industrious people, who rise with the sun and carefully resume their honest occupations, I give the greatest of all human blessings—health of body, peace of mind, and length of days.

'Given under my hand, &c. &c.

'TO-DAY.'

NUMBER XCVII.

TO THE OBSERVER.

SIR,

THERE is an old gentleman of my acquaintance who annoys me exceedingly with his predictions: I have reason to believe he bears me good will in the main, and does not know to what a degree he actually disturbs my peace of mind, I would, therefore, fain put up with his humour if I could; but when he is for ever ringing his knell in my ears, he sometimes provokes me to retort upon him, oftentimes to laugh at him, and never fails to put me out of patience or out of spirits.

I have read your account of the Dampers with great fellow-feeling, and perceive that my old gentleman is very deep in that philosophy; but as I unfortunately have very little philosophy of any sort to

set against it, I find myself frequently at his mercy and without defence.

I do not think this proceeds so much from any radical vice in his nature, as from a foolish vanity to seem wiser than his neighbours, and to put himself off for a man who knows the world: the fact is he is an old bachelor, lives in absolute retirement, and has scarcely stept out of the precincts of his own village three times in his life: yet he is ever telling me of his experience and his observations: if I was to put implicit faith in what he says, common honesty in mankind would be a miracle, and happiness a disappointment; as for hope, that moonshine diet as he calls it, which is so plentifully served up in the fanciful repasts of the poets, and which is too often the only standing dish at their tables, I should never get a taste of it; and yet if ruining a merchant's credit is tantamount to robbing him of his property, I must think the Damper, who blasts my hope, is in fact little better than a thief.

I have a natural prejudice for certain people at first sight, where a countenance impresses me in its favour, for I am apt to fancy that honesty sets a mark upon its owners; there is not a weakness incident to human nature, for which he could hold my understanding in more sovereign contempt: if I was to be advised by him, I should not trust my wife out of my sight, for it is a maxim with him, that no love-matches can be happy; mine was of that sort and I am happy; still I am out of credit with my Damper. I was bound for a relation in public trust some years ago; there I confess his augury sometimes staggered me, and he urged me with proverbs out of holy writ, which I was rather puzzled to parry; my friend, however, has done well in the world, discharged his obligation, and repaid it with grateful returns; still I am out of credit with my

Damper. I invested a small sum in a venture to the East Indies; he descanted upon the risk of the sea; I insured upon the ship, he denounced bankruptcy against the underwriter, the ship came home, and I doubled the capital of my investment; still I am out of credit with my Damper, and he shakes his head at my folly.

I can plainly perceive that his predictions oftentimes are as troublesome to himself as to me; he loses many a fine morning's walk by foreseeing a change of weather; he never goes to church because he has had a suit with the parson; and part of his estate remains untenanted, because a farmer some time ago broke in his debt.

Though I am no philosopher, I am not such a simpleton, as not to know how little we ought to depend upon worldly events in general; yet it appears to me that what a man has already enjoyed, he can no longer be said to depend upon: if, therefore, I have had real pleasure in any innocent and agreeable expectation, disappointment can at worst do no more than remove the meat after I have made my meal.

Though I do not know how to define hope as a metaphysician, I am inclined to speak of it with respect, because I find it has been a good friend to me in my life; it has given me a thousand things, which malice and misfortune would have ravished from me, if I had not fairly worn them out before they could lay their fingers upon them; *spe pascit inani*—says the poet, and contradicts himself in the same breath: for my part, if it was not for the fear of appearing paradoxical, I should say upon experience that hope, though called a shadow, is, together with that other phantom death, the sole reality beneath the sun: the unfaithfulness of friends, from whom I had the claim of gratitude, can never rob me of those

pleasures I enjoyed, when I served them, loved them, and confided in them; and, in spite of all my friend the Damper can say to the contrary, it is not on my own account I am sorry to have thought better of mankind than they deserve.

I am, Sir, &c.

BENEVOLUS.

TO THE OBSERVER.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to belong to a club of gentlemen of public spirit and talents, who make it a rule to meet every Sunday evening, in a house of entertainment behind St. Clement's, for the regulation of literature in this metropolis. Our fraternity consists of two distinct orders. The Dampers and The Puffers; and each of these are again classed into certain inferior subdivisions. We take notice that both these descriptions of persons have in turn been the objects of your feeble raillery; but I must fairly tell you, we neither think worse of ourselves nor any better of you for those attempts. We consider the republic of letters under obligations to us for its very existence, for how could it be a republic, unless its members were kept upon an equality with each other? Now this is the very thing which our institution professes to do.

We have an ingenious member of our society, who has invented a machine for this purpose, which answers to admiration: he calls it—*The Thermometer of Merit:* this machine he has set in a frame, and laid down a very accurate scale of gradations by the side of it: one glance of the eye gives every author's altitude to a minute. The middle degree on this scale, and which answers to *temperate* on a common thermometer, is that standard, or common level of merit, to which all contemporaries in the same free

community ought to be confined; but as there will always be some eccentric beings in nature, who will either start above standard height, or drop below it, it is our duty by the operation of the daily *press* either to screw them down, or to screw them up, as the case requires; and this brings me to explain the uses of the two grand departments of our fraternity: authors above par fall to the province of the Dampers, all below par appertain to the Puffers. The daily press being common to all men, and both the one class and the other having open access thereto, we can work either by *forcers* or *repellers*, as we see fit; and I can safely assure you our process seldom fails in either case, when we apply it timely, and especially to young poets in their *veal bones*, as the saying is: with this view we are always upon terms with the conductors of the said press, who are fully sensible of the benefits of our institution, and live with us in the mutual interchange of friendly offices, like Shakspeare's Zephyrs—

> Stealing and giving odours.—

As we act upon none but principles of general justice, and hold it right that parts should be made subservient to the whole, our scheme of equalization requires, that accordingly as any individual arises on the scale, our depressing powers should counteract and balance his ascending powers: this process, as I said before, belongs to the Damper's office, and is by them termed *pressing* an author, or more literally committing him to the *press*. This is laid on more or less forcibly, according to his degree of ascension; in most cases a few turns squeeze him down to his proper bearing, but this is always done with reasonable allowance for the natural re-action of elastic bodies, so that it is necessary to bring him some degrees below standard, lest he should mount

above it when the *press* is taken off: if by chance his ascending powers run him up to *sultry* or *fever-heat*, the Dampers must proportion their discipline accordingly; in like manner the Puffers have to blow an author up by mere strength of lungs, when he is heavy in ballast, and his sinking powers fall below the *freezing-point*, as sometimes happens even to our best friends. In that case the Puffers have *bursts of applause* and *peals of laughter* in petto, which though they never reach vulgar ears, serve his purpose effectually—But these are secrets, which we never reveal but to the *Initiated*, and I shall conclude by assuring you I am your's as you deserve.

PRO BONO PUBLICO.

NUMBER XCVIII.

A WRITER of miscellaneous essays is open to the correspondence of persons of all descriptions, and though I think fit to admit the following letter into my collection, I hope my readers will not suppose I wish to introduce the writer of it into their company, or even into my own.

TO THE OBSERVER.

SIR,

As we hear a great deal of the affluence of this flourishing country, and the vast quantity of *sleeping cash*, as it is called, locked up in vaults and strong boxes, we conceive it would be a good deed to waken some of it, and put it into use and circulation: we have, therefore, associated ourselves into a

patriotic fraternity of circulators, commonly called pick-pockets: but with sorrow we let you know, that notwithstanding our best endeavours to put forward the purposes of our institution, and the great charges of providing ourselves with instruments and tools of all sorts for the better furtherance of our business, we have yet hooked up little except dirty handkerchiefs, leathern snuff-boxes, empty purses, and Bath-metal watches from the pockets of the public; articles these, let me say, that would hardly be received at the depôt of the patriotic contributers in Paris. Are these the symptoms of a great and wealthy nation? we blush for our country, whilst we are compelled by truth and candour to reply—They are not.

As we have a number of petty articles on hand, which will not pass in our trade, nothing deters us from putting them up to public cant but the tax our unworthy parliament has laid upon auctions. I send you two or three papers, which a brother artist angled out of the pocket of a pennyless gentleman the other night at the playhouse door: the one a letter signed Urania, the other Gorgon: they can be of no use to us, as we have nothing to do with Urania's virtue, nor stand in need of Gorgon to paint scenes, which we can act better than he describes; neither do we want his effigy of a man under the gallows to remind us of what we must all come to.

Yours,

CROOK-FINGERED JACK.

The letter from Urania breathes the full spirit of that amiable ambition, which at present seems generally to inspire our heroines of the stage to accept of none but shining characters, and never to present themselves to the public but as illustrious models of purity and grace. If virtue be thus captivating by

resemblance only, how beautiful must it be in the reality! I cannot, however, help pitying the unknown poet, whose hopes were dashed with the following rebuke:—

SIR,

I have run my eye over your tragedy, and am beyond measure surprised you could think of allotting a part to me, which is so totally unamiable. Sir, I neither can, nor will, appear in any public character, which is at variance with my private one; and, though I have no objection to your scene of self-murder, and flatter myself I could do it justice, yet my mind revolts from spilling any blood but my own.

I confess there are many fine passages and some very striking situations, that would fall to my lot in your drama, but permit me to tell you, Sir, that until you can clear up the legitimacy of the child, you have been pleased therein to lay at my door, and will find a father for it, whom I may not blush to own for a husband, you must never hope for the assistance of your humble servant,

URANIA.

The other letter is addressed to the same unfortunate poet from an artist, who seems to have studied nature in her deformities only.

DEAR DISMAL,

I wait with impatience to hear of the success of your tragedy, and in the mean time have worked off a frontispiece for it, that you, who have a passion for the terrific, will be perfectly charmed with.

I am scandalized when I hear people say that the fine arts are protected in this country; nothing can be further from the truth, as I am one amongst

many to witness. Painting I presume will not be disputed to be one of the fine arts, and I may say without vanity I have some pretensions to rank with the best of my brethren in that profession.

My first studies were carried on in the capital of a certain country where I was born; and being determined to choose a striking subject for my *debût* in the branch of portrait-painting, I persuaded my grandmother to sit to me, and I am bold to say there was great merit in my picture, considering it as a maiden production: particularly in the execution of a hair-mole upon her chin, and a wart under her eye, which I touched to such a nicety, as to make every body start who cast their eyes upon the canvass.

There was a little dwarfish lad in the parish, who, besides the deformity of his person, had a remarkable hair-lip, which exposed to view a broken row of discoloured teeth, and was indeed a very brilliant subject for a painter of effect: I gave a full-length of him, that was executed so to the life, as to turn the stomach of every body who looked upon it.

At this time there came into our town a traveling show-man, who amongst other curiosities of the savage kind brought with him a man-ape, or ourang-outang: and this person having seen and admired my portrait of the little hump-backed dwarf, employed me to take the figure of his celebrated savage for the purpose of displaying it on the outside of his booth. Such an occasion of introducing my art into notice, spurred my genius to extraordinary exertions, and though I must premise that the savage was not the best sitter in the world, yet I flatter myself I acquitted myself to the satisfaction of his keeper, and did justice to the ferocity of my subject. I caught him in one of his most striking attitudes, standing erect with a huge club

in his paw: I put every muscle into play, and threw such a terrific dignity into his features, as would not have disgraced the character of a Nero or Caligula. I was happy to observe the general notice which was taken of my performance by all the country folks who resorted to the show, and I believe my employer had no cause to repent of having set me upon the work.

The figure of this animal with the club in his paw suggested a hint to a publican in the place of treating his ale-house with a new sign, and as he had been in the service of a noble family, who from ancient times have borne the *Bear* and *ragged Staff* for their crest, he gave me a commission to provide him with a sign to that effect: though I spared no pains to get a real bear to sit to me for his portrait, my endeavours proved abortive, and I was forced to resort to such common prints of that animal as I could obtain, and trusted to my imagination for supplying what else might be wanted for the piece: as I worked upon this capital design in the room where my grandmother's portrait was before my eyes, it occurred to me to introduce the same hair-mole into the whiskers of Bruin, which I had so successfully copied from her chin, and certainly the thought was a happy one, for it had a picturesque effect; but in doing this I was naturally enough, though undesignedly, betrayed into giving such a general resemblance to the good dame in the rest of Bruin's features, that when it came to be exhibited on the sign-post all the people cried out upon the likeness, and a malicious rumour ran through the town, that I had painted my grandmother instead of the bear; which lost me the favour of that indulgent relation, though Heaven knows I was as innocent of the intention as the child unborn.

The disgust my grandmother conceived against

her likeness with the ragged staff, gave me incredible uneasiness, and as she was a good customer to the landlord, and much respected in the place, he was induced to return the bear upon my hands. I am now thinking to what use I can turn him, and as it occurs to me, that by throwing a little more authority into his features, and gilding his chain, he might very possibly hit the likeness of some lord mayor of London in his fur gown and gold-chain, and make a respectable figure in some city hall, I am willing to dispose of him to any such at an easy price.

As I have also preserved a sketch of my famous ourang-outang, a thought has struck me, that with a few finishing touches he might easily be converted into a Caliban for the Tempest, and, when that is done, I shall not totally despair of his obtaining a niche in the Shakspeare Gallery.

It has been common with the great masters, Rubens, Vandyke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and others, when they paint a warrior, or other great personage, on horseback, to throw a dwarf, or some such contrasted figure, into the back ground: should any artist be in want of such a thing, I can very readily supply him with my hair-lipped boy; if otherwise, I am not totally without hopes that he may suit some Spanish grandee, when any such shall visit this country upon his travels, or in the character of ambassador from that illustrious court.

Before I conclude I shall beg leave to observe, that I have a complete set of ready-made devils, that would do honour to Saint Antony, or any other person, who may be in want of such accompaniments to set off the self-denying virtues of his character: I have also a fine parcel of murdered innocents, which I meant to have filled up with the story of Herod; but if any gentleman thinks fit to lay the scene in Ghent, and make a modern composition of

it, I am bold to say my pretty babes will not disgrace the pathos of the subject, nor violate the *Costuma.* I took a notable sketch of a man hanging, and seized him just in the dying twitches, before the last stretch gave a stiffness and rigidity unfavourable to the human figure; this I would willingly accommodate to the wishes of any lady, who is desirous of preserving a portrait of her lover, friend, or husband, in that interesting attitude.

These, *cum multis aliis*, are part of my stock on hand, and I hope, upon my arrival at my lodgings in Blood-bowl-alley, to exhibit them with much credit to myself, and to the entire satisfaction of such of my neighbours in that quarter, as may incline to patronize the fine arts, and restore the credit of this drooping country.

Yours,

GORGON.

NUMBER XCIX.

Cuncti adsint, meritæque exspectent præmia palmæ!

VIRG. ÆN. 5, 70.

A CURIOUS Greek fragment has been lately discovered by an ingenious traveller at Constantinople, which is supposed to have been saved out of the famous Alexandrian Library when set on fire by command of the Caliph. There is nothing but conjecture to guide us to the author: some learned men, who have examined it, give it to Pausanias, others to Ælian; some contend for Suidas, others for Libanius; but most agree in ascribing it to some one of

the Greek sophists, so that it is not to be disguised that just doubts are to be entertained of its veracity in point of fact. There may be much ingenuity in these discussions, but we are not to expect conviction; therefore, I shall pass to the subject-matter, and not concern myself with any previous argumentation on a question, that is never likely to be settled.

This fragment says, 'that some time after the death of the great dramatic poet, Æschylus, there was a certain citizen of Athens named Philoteuchus, who, by his industry and fair character in trade, had acquired a plentiful fortune, and came in time to be actually chosen one of the Areopagites; this man in an advanced period of his life engaged in a very splendid undertaking for collecting a series of pictures to be composed from scenes in the tragedies of the great poet abovementioned, and to be executed by the Athenian artists, who were then both numerous and eminent.

'The old Areopagite, with a spirit that would have done honour to Pisistratus or Pericles, constructed a spacious lyceum for the reception of these pictures, which he laid open to the resort both of citizens and strangers, and the success of the work reflected equal credit upon the undertaker and the artists whom he employed.'

The chain of the narration is here broken by a loss of part of the fragment, which, however, is fortunately resumed in that place, where the writer gives some account of the masters, who painted for this collection, and of the scenes they made choice of for their several pictures.

'He tells us that Apelles was then living and in the vigour of his genius, though advanced in years; he describes the scene chosen for his composition minutely, and it appears to have been taken from

that suite of dramas, which we know Æschylus composed from the story of the Atridæ, and of which we have still such valuable remains. He represents Ægisthus, after the murder of Agamemnon by the instigation of Clytemnestra, in the act of consulting certain Sibyls, who by their magical spells and incantations have raised the ghost of Agamemnon which is attended by a train of phantoms, emblematic of eight successive kings of Argos, his immediate descendants: the spectre is made *pointing* to his posterity, and at the same time looking on his murderer with a smile, in which Apelles contrived to give the several expressions of contempt, exultation, and revenge, with such a character of ghastly pain and horror, as to make the beholders shrink. Amongst these Sibyls he introduces the person of Cassandra the prophetess, whom Agamemnon brought captive from the destruction of Troy. The light, he says, proceeds only from a flaming cauldron, in which the Sibyls have been making their libations to the infernal deities or furies, and he speaks of the reflected, ruddy tints, which by this management of the artist were cast upon the figures, as producing a wonderful effect, and giving an amazing horror and magnificence to the group. Upon the whole, he states it as the most capital performance of the master, and that he got such universal honour thereby, that he was afterwards employed to paint for the Persian monarch, and had a commission even from the queen of Scythia, a country then emerging from barbarity.

'Parrhasius, though born in the colony of Miletus on the coast of Asia, was an adopted citizen of Athens, and in great credit there for his celebrated picture on the death of Epaminondas: he contributed to this collection by a very capital composition taken from a tragedy, which was the third in a series of dramas, founded by Æschylus on the

well-known story of Œdipus, all which are lost. The miserable monarch, whose misfortunes had overturned his reason, is here depicted taking shelter under a wretched hovel in the midst of a tremendous storm, where the elements seem conspiring against a helpless being in the last stage of human misery. The painter has thrown a very touching character of insanity into his features, which plainly indicates that his loss of reason has arisen from the tender rather than the inflammatory passions; for there is a majestic sensibility mixed with the wildness of his distraction, which still preserves the traces of the once benevolent monarch. In this desolate scene he has a few forlorn companions in his distress, which form a very peculiar group of personages; for they consist of a venerable old man in a very piteous condition, whose eyes have been torn from their sockets, together with a naked maniac, who is starting from the hovel, where he had housed himself during the tempest: the effect of this figure is described with rapture, for he is drawn in the prime of youth, beautiful and of a most noble air; his naked limbs display the finest proportions of the human figure, and the muscular exertion of the sudden action he is thrown into, furnish ample scope to the anatomical science of the artist. The fable feigns him to be the son of the blind old man above described, and the fragment relates that his phrensy being not real but assumed, Parrhasius availed himself of that circumstance, and touched the character of his madness with so nice and delicate a discrimination from that of Œdipus, that an attentive observer might have discovered it to be counterfeited even without the clue of the story. There are other two attendant characters in the group; one of these is a rough, hardy veteran, who seems to brave the storm with a certain air of contemptuous petulance in his

countenance, that bespeaks a mind superior to fortune, and indignant under the visitation even of the gods themselves. The other is a character, that seems to have been a kind of imaginary creature of the poet, and is a buffoon or jester upon the model of Homer's Thersites, and was employed by Æschylus in his drama upon the old burlesque system of the Satyrs, as an occasional chorus or parody upon the severer and more tragic characters of the piece.

'The next picture in our author's catalogue was by the hand of Timanthes: this modest painter, though residing in the capital of Attica, lived in such retirement from society, and was so absolutely devoted to his art, that even his person was scarce known to his competitors. Envy never drew a word from his lips to the disparagement of a contemporary, and emulation could hardly provoke his diffidence into a contest for fame, which so many bolder rivals were prepared to dispute.

'Æschylus, it is well known, wrote three plays on the fable of Prometheus; the second in this series is the 'Prometheus chained,' which happily survives; the last was 'Prometheus delivered,' and from the opening scene of this drama Timanthes formed his picture. Prometheus is here discovered on the sea-shore upon an island inhabited only by himself and his daughter, a young virgin of exquisite beauty, who is supposed to have seen none other of the human species, but her father, besides certain imaginary beings, whom Prometheus had either created by his stolen fire, or whom he employed in the capacity of familiars for the purposes of his enchantments, for the poet very justifiably supposes him endowed with supernatural powers, and by that vehicle brings to pass all the beautiful and surprising incidents of his drama. One of these aërial spirits had by his command conjured up a most dreadful tempest, in which

a noble ship is represented as sinking in the midst of the breakers on this enchanted shore. The daughter of Prometheus is seen in a supplicating attitude imploring her father to *allay* the storm, and save the sinking mariners from destruction. In the back ground of the picture is a cavern, and at the entrance of it a misshapen savage being, whose evil nature is depicted in the deformity of his person and features, and who was employed by Prometheus in all servile offices, necessary for his accommodation in this solitude. The aërial spirit is in the clouds, which he is driving before him at the *behest* of his great master. In this composition, therefore, although not replete with characters, there is yet such diversity of style and subject, that we have all which the majesty and beauty of real nature can furnish, with beings out of the regions of nature, as strongly contrasted in form and character, as fancy can devise: the scenery also is of the sublimest cast, and whilst all Greece resounded with applauses upon the exhibition of this picture, Timanthes alone was silent, and, startled at the very echo of his own fame, shrunk back again to his retirement.'

As this fragment is now in the hands of an ingenious translator, I forbear for the present to intrude upon his work by any further anticipation of it, conscious withal as I am that the public curiosity will shortly be gratified with a much more full and satisfactory delineation of this interesting narrative, than I am able to give.

NUMBER C.

Magnum iter ad doctas proficisci cogor Athenas.
PROPERT.

I WAS agreeably surprised the other day with an unexpected visit from a country friend, who once made a considerable figure in the fashionable world, and, with an elegant taste for the fine arts, is possest of many valuable paintings and sculptures of his own collecting in Italy: he told me, that after six years absence from town, he had made a journey purposely to regale his curiosity for a few days with the spectacles of this great capital, and desired I would accompany him on his morning's tour to some of the eminent artists, and afterwards conduct him to the theatre, where he had secured himself a seat for the representation of Mr. Southern's tragedy of 'The Fatal Marriage.' Though I had just been honoured with a card from Vanessa, purporting that she would hold 'The Feast of Reason,' that evening at her house, where my company was expected, I did not hesitate to accept the invitation of my country friend, and excuse myself from that of Vanessa, though I must confess my curiosity was somewhat roused by the novelty of the entertainment to which I was bidden. Our day passed so entirely to the satisfaction of my candid companion, that, when we parted at night, he shook me by the hand, and with a smile of complacency, declared, that a day so spent would not disgrace the diary of Pericles.

When I had returned to my apartment, this allusion of my friend to the age of Pericles, with the

recollection of what had passed in the day, threw me into a reverie, in the course of which I fell asleep, whilst my mind with more distinctness than is usual in dreaming, pursued its waking train of thought after the following manner ;—

'I found myself in a stately portico, which being on an eminence, gave me the prospect of a city, inclosing a prodigious circuit, with groves, gardens, and fields, seemingly set apart for martial exercises and sports; the houses were not clustered into streets and alleys like our great trading towns, but were placed apart and separated without any regular order, as if each man had therein consulted his own particular taste and enjoyments. I thought I never saw so delightful a place, nor a people who lived so much at their ease. I felt a freshness and salubrity in the climate, that seemed to clear the brain, and give a spring to the spirits and whole animal frame: the sun was bright and glowing, but the lightness of the atmosphere and a refreshing breeze qualified the heat in the most delicious manner. As I looked about me with wonder and delight, I observed a great many edifices of the purest architecture, that seemed calculated for public purposes; and wherever my eye went, it was encountered by a variety of statues in brass or marble; immediately at the foot of the steps, leading to the portico, in which I stood, I observed a figure in brass of exquisite workmanship, which by its attributes I believed designed to represent the heathen deity Mercurius. In the centre of the city there was an edifice inclosed within walls, which I took to be the citadel: a rapid stream of clear water meandered about the place, and was trained through groves and gardens in the most picturesque and pleasing manner, while the prospect at distance was bounded by the sea.

'As I stood wrapt in contemplation of this new

and brilliant scenery, methought I was accosted by a middle-aged man in a loose garment of fine purple, who wore his hair after the manner of our ladies, braided and coiled round upon the crown of his head with great care and delicacy to a considerable height, and, which I thought remarkable, he had fastened the braids in several places with golden pins, on which were several figures of small grass-hoppers of the same metal; behind him walked a servant-youth, or slave, carrying a light wicker chair for his master to repose in, a custom that seemed to me to argue great effeminacy; and looking about me I found it was pretty universal, many of the bet-termost sort of citizens being seated in the streets, conversing at their ease, though there was certainly nothing in the climate, that made such an indul-gence necessary.

'As I was eyeing this gentleman with a surprise, that I must own had some small tincture of con-tempt in it, he turned himself to me, and in the most complaisant manner imaginable accosted me in my own language, telling me, he perceived I was a stranger in Athens, and if I was curious to see what was remarkable in the place, he was ready to dedi-cate the day to my service. To this courteous ad-dress I returned the best answer I was able, adding, that every thing was new to me, and many things appeared admirable. You will say so, replied he, before the day is past, and yet I cannot show you in the space of a day the hundredth part of what this city contains worth a stranger's observation: of a certain, Arts and Sciences are now carried to their utmost pitch, and no future age I think will suc-ceed, in which the glory of the Athenian common-wealth and the genius of its citizens, shall be found superior to their present lustre.

'The portico, in which you stand, continued the

Athenian, is what we call *Pœcile*, or the *painted Portico;* the brazen statue at the foot of the steps was raised by the nine Archons in honour of Mercurius Agoræus, or the Forensal; and dedicated by them to the tribes: that by its side is the statue of Solon, the other at some distance is the lawgiver Lycurgus. The gate before you, on which you see those warlike trophies, was so adorned in memory of the defeat of Plistarchus, who was brother of the famous Cassander, and commanded his cavalry and auxiliary troops in the action recorded. These paintings behind you, with which the portico is furnished and from which it has its name, are all upon public subjects in commemoration of wise or valiant citizens: the pictures on your right hand are by the celebrated Polygnotus; these on your left by Micon, equal to his rival in art, but not in munificence; for Polygnotus would accept no other reward for his works, than the fame inseparable from such eminent performances; Micon, on the contrary, was paid by the state. There are several others by the hands of our great masters, particularly that incomparable piece, which represents the field of Marathon, a composition by the great Panænus, brother of the statuary Phidias; but this, as well as the others, will demand a more particular description.

'Examine this composition on your right; it is the work of Polygnotus; you see two armies drawn up front to front, and on the point of engaging; these are the Athenians, the adverse troops are the Lacedemonians; the scene is Œnoe; such is the contrivance of the artist, that you are sure victory is to declare for the Athenians, though the battle is not yet commenced.

'In the opposite piece you see the battle of Theseus with the Amazons; a capital composition by Micon; these warlike ladies are fighting on horse-

back; with what wonderful art has the master expressed the character of athletic beauty without deviating into vulgarity and grossness! If you recollect the Lysistrata of Aristophanes you will meet an eulogium on this picture; it is thus the sister arts encourage and support each other.

'Now turn to Polygnotus's side and look at that magnificent piece of art: the painter has chosen for the subject of his composition the council of the Grecian chiefs upon the violence done to Cassandra by Ajax after the capture of Troy; you see the brutal character of the man strongly expressed in the hero of the piece; amongst that group of Trojan captives Cassandra is conspicuous; that figure which represents Laodice is worth your notice, as being a portrait of Elpinice a celebrated courtesan: scrupulous people have taken offence at it, but great painters will indulge themselves in these liberties, and are fond of painting after beautiful nature, of which I could give you innumerable examples.

'Now let us in the last place regale our eyes with this inestimable battle of Marathon by Panænus. What think you of it? Was it not a reward worthy of the heroes, who preserved their country on that glorious day? Which party is most honoured by the work—the master who wrought it, or the valiant personages who are recorded by it? It is a question difficult to decide. You will observe three different groups in this superb composition, describing three different periods of the action: here you see the Athenians and their allies, the Platæans, just commencing the action.—There, further removed in perspective, the barbarians are defeated; the slaughter is raging, and the Medes are plunging desperately into the marshy lake to avoid their pursuers; examine the back ground, and you see the Phœnician gallies; the barbarians are making a bold at-

tack, and the sea is covered with wrecks; all mouths are open in applause of this picture, and it was but the other day, that the great orator Demosthenes referred to it in a solemn harangue upon Neæra, as did Æschines in his pleading against Ctesiphon. All our captains are taken from the life; that general who is encouraging his troops is Miltiades; he is the hero of the piece, and I can assure you the resemblance is in all points exact: this is the portrait of Callimachus the Polemarch: there you see the hero Echetlus, and this is the brave Epizelus; that Athenian, who is valiantly fighting, is Cynægirus himself, who lost both his hands in the action; there goes an extraordinary story with that dog which is by his side, and has seized the dying barbarian by the throat; the faithful creature would not forsake his master; he was killed in the action, and is now deservedly immortalized in company with the illustrious heroes, who are the subject of the piece. Those splendid warriors in the army of the Medes, who are standing in their chariots, and calling to their troops, are the generals Datis and Artaphanes. They are drawn in a proud and swelling style, and seem of a larger size and proportion than our Athenian champions; and the fact is, that this group was inserted by another master; they are by the hand of Micon, and perhaps do not exactly harmonize with the rest; the silly Athenians were piqued at their appearance, and in a fit of jealousy punished Micon by a fine for having painted them too flatteringly; the painter suffered in his pocket, but the people in my opinion were disgraced by the sentence; this circumstance has given occasion for many on the part of Micon to contest the honour of the painting with Panænus, who in justice must be considered as principal author of the work; and in

course of time it may happen, that posterity will be puzzled which master to ascribe it to.

'There are many more pictures well deserving your attentive notice, particularly that by Pamphilus, which represents Alcamenes with Heraclidæ asking aid of the Athenians against Eurystheus: and this inspired old figure by Polygnotus with a lyre in his hand, which is the portrait of no less a person than the great Sophocles;—but come, let us be gone, for we have much besides to see; and I perceive Zeno coming this way with his scholars to hold his lectures in this portico; and I for one must confess I am no friend to the Stoics, or as we call them the Zenonians.'

NUMBER CI.

Ad vetustissimam et sapientissimam et diis carissimam in communem amasiam, hominumque ac Deorum terram, Athenas mittebaris.

LIBANIUS IN ORATIONE.

FROM the painted portico, in which my last was dated, my Athenian conductor took me to the Ptolemaic Gymnasium, in which I observed several statues of Mercury in marble, and others of brass, which he explained to me to be of Ptolemy the founder, Juba, and Chrysippus the philosopher. There was one of Berosus the astrologer with a tongue of pure gold, in commemoration of his divine predictions; on one hand of me stood the Doric temple of Theseus, enriched with some inestimable paintings of Micon, particularly one upon the sub-

ject of the fight of the Lapithæ and Centaurs: on the other hand was the ancient temple of the Dioscuri, in which I was shown many capital pictures by Polygnotus; it is here, says my conductor, we administer to the Athenian youth that solemn oath, which binds them not to desert their ranks in action, but to perish, when necessity so requires, in defence of their country; the form is rather long, says he, but this is the substance of the oath. The Prytaneum, or Court-house, was now in view, where the magistracy of the city assembled for the despatch of public business: here I saw the venerable laws of Solon in a chest of stone, the statues of Pax and Vesta, and, which were more interesting to me, the figures of Miltiades and Themistocles of exquisite workmanship in pure marble; in this place all those citizens, and the posterity of those who have deserved well of the state, receive their public doles or allowance of bread in cakes composed of meal, oil, and water; here also I saw the perpetual fire upon the altar of Vesta, and the celebrated image of the Bona Fortuna of the Athenians. In the adjoining temple of Lucina I was shown the famous statues of that deity clothed in drapery to the feet: my guide now carried me to the great temple of Olympian Jupiter, founded by the tyrant Pisistratus, and perfected by his sons and successors. I observed to my conductor, that I had seen no temple in Athens, except this, with interior columns; he informed me that the great span of the roof made it necessary in this instance, but that it was contrary to their rule of architecture and obtained in no other: he further told me, that the city had expended ten thousand talents in this edifice: the image of the god was cut in ivory and gold; to every column was affixed a brazen statue, representing the colonial cities of the Athenian empire. The display of sta-

tuary exceeded all description or belief, nor was the painter's art wanting in its share of the decoration; for whatever pictures could be disposed, and particularly about the pedestal of the statue of Jupiter, the most capital paintings were to be seen.

'My sight was now so dazzled with the display of brilliant images, and my mind so overpowered with the miracles of art, which had passed in review, that I beseeched my guide to carry me either to some of those groves which were in my eye, where I could meditate on what I had seen, or to spectacles of any other sort according to his choice and discretion, for otherwise I should apprehend, from the variety of objects, I should retain the memory of none. He told me in reply, that this was his intention, observing that the proportion I had seen was very small indeed to what the city contained; there was, however, one more statue, which he could not dispense with himself from showing me, being a model of beauty and perfection; and having so said, methought he took me into a neighbouring garden, and in a grove of cyprus and myrtle presented to my view the most exquisite piece of sculpture I had ever beheld.—This, says he, is the Venus, called Celestial, the workmanship of the immortal Alcamenes.—After I had contemplated this divine original with astonishment and rapture, I was satisfied within myself, that we are mistaken in supposing it has descended to us, and I now acknowledge that our celestial Venus is a copy far inferior to its inimitable prototype. Having examined this statue for some time, I turned to my conductor and said, let us gratify our senses in some other way; I have seen enough of art.

'It is impossible to avoid it, replies he, in this city, and so saying led me into the Lyceum; this Gymnasium, says he, has been lately instituted by

Pericles, and these plantations of plane-trees are of his making; so are these aqueducts; the Lyceum was originally dedicated to Pastoral Apollo, and owes its foundation and beauty in the first instance to the elegant Pisistratus, who from the surprising resemblance of their persons we now call the elder Pericles. The place is delightful, and before you leave it take notice of this statue of Apollo; the artist has described him in the attitude of resting after his daily course; you see he leans against a column; his right arm bent over his head, and in his left he holds his bow; it is a first rate piece of sculpture. Leaving the Lyceum my conductor took me by the way of the Tripods; here he showed me the inimitable satyr in brass, the boasted master-piece of Praxiteles, and the Cupid and Bacchus of Thymilus; we were now close by the theatre, in the portico of which I was shown the statue of Æschylus, and two pedestals for the statues of Sophocles and Euripides, then under the artist's hands, although both those poets were now living: the doors of the theatre were not yet opened, and the temple of Venus being near at hand, methought we entered, and I beheld the beautiful Cupid crowned with roses, painted by Zeuxis; from hence I could see the works that Pericles had been carrying on upon the citadel, but this we did not enter.

'Methought I was now carried into the theatre amidst a prodigious crowd of people; the comedy of the night was intitled *The Clouds*, and the famous Aristophanes was announced to be the author of it. It was expected that Socrates would be personally attacked, and a great party of that philosopher's enemies were assembled to support the poet. I was much surprised, when my companion pointed out to me that great philosopher in person, who had actually taken his seat in the theatre, and was sitting

between Alcibiades and Antipho the son of Pericles; by the side of Alcibiades sat Euripides, and at Antipho's left hand sate Thucydides; I never beheld two more venerable old men than the poet and the historian, nor such comely persons as Alcibiades and Antipho. Socrates was exceedingly like the busts we have of him; his head was bald, his beard bushy, and his stature low; there was something very deterring in his countenance; his person was mean and his habit squalid; his vest was of loose drapery, thrown over his left shoulder after the fashion of a Spanish Capa, and seemed to be of coarse cloth, made of black wool undyed; he had a short staff in his hand of knotted wood with a round head, which he was continually rubbing in the palm of his hand, as he talked with Alcibiades, to whom he principally addressed his discourse. Thucydides had lately returned from exile upon a general amnesty, and I observed a melancholy in his countenance mixed with indignation; Euripides seemed employed in examining the countenances of the spectators, whilst Antipho with great modesty paid a most respectful attention to the venerable philosopher on his right hand. Whilst I was engaged in observing this respectable group, my conductor whispered the following words in my ear.—'This is the second attack from the same hands upon Socrates; that of last year was defeated by Alcibiades; but if this night's comedy succeeds, I predict that our philosopher is undone: and in truth his school is much out of credit; for some of the worst characters of the age have come out of his hands of late.'

'When the players came first on the stage there was so great a murmur in the theatre, that I could scarce hear them; after a short time, however, the silence became pretty general, and the plot of the play, such as it was, began to open. I perceived

that the poet had devised the character of an old clownish father, who being plunged in debt by the extravagances of a flaunting wife and a spendthrift son, who wasted his fortune upon horse-races, was for ever puzzling his brains to strike upon some expedient for cheating his creditors. With this view he goes to the house of Socrates to take counsel of that philosopher, who gives him a great many ridiculous instructions, seemingly not at all to the purpose, and amongst other extravagances assures him that Jupiter has no concern in the government of the world, but that all the functions of Providence are performed by The Clouds, which upon its invocation appear and perform the part of a chorus throughout the play: the philosopher is continually foiled by the rustic wit of the old father, who, after being put in Socrates's truckle-bed, and miserably stung with vermin, has a meeting with his creditors, and endeavours to parry their demands with a parcel of pedantic quibbles, which he has learnt of the philosopher, and which give occasion to scenes of admirable comic humour: my conductor informed me this incident was pointed at Æschines, a favourite disciple of Socrates; a man, says he, plunged in debts and a most notorious defrauder of his creditors. In the end the father brings his son to be instructed by Socrates; the son, after a short lecture, comes forth a perfect atheist, and gives his father a severe cudgelling on the stage, which irreverend act he undertakes to defend upon the principles of the new philosophy he had been learning. This was the substance of the play, in the course of which there were many gross allusions to the unnatural vice of which Socrates was accused, and many personal strokes against Clisthenes, Pericles, Euripides, and others, which told strongly, and were much applauded by the theatre.

'It is not to be supposed, that all this passed without some occasional disgust on the part of the spectators, but it was evident there was a party in the theatre which carried it through, notwithstanding the presence of Socrates and the respectable junto that attended him: for my part I scarce ever took my eyes from him during the representation, and I observed two or three little actions, which seemed to give me some insight into the temper of his mind, during the severest libel that was ever exhibited against any man's person and principles.

'Before Socrates appears on the stage, the old man raps violently at his door, and is reproved by one of his disciples, who comes out and complains of the disturbance; upon his being questioned what the philosopher may be then employed upon, he answers that he is engaged in measuring the leap of a flea, to decide how many of its own lengths it springs at one hop; the disciple also informs him with great solemnity, that Socrates has discovered that the hum of a gnat is not made by the mouth of the animal, but from behind: this raised a laugh at the expense of the naturalists and minute philosophers, and I observed that Socrates himself smiled at the conceit.

'When the school was opened to the stage, and all the scholars were discovered with their heads upon the floor and their posteriors mounted in the air, and turned towards the audience, though the poet pretends to account for it, as if they were searching for natural curiosities on the surface of the ground, the action was evidently intended to convey the grossest allusion, and was so received by the audience: when this scene was produced, I remarked that Socrates shook his head, and turned his eyes off the stage; whilst Euripides, with some indignation, threw the sleeve of his mantle over his face; this was

observed by the spectators, and produced a considerable tumult, in which the theatre seemed pretty fairly divided, so that the actors stood upright, and quitted the posture they were discovered in.

'When Socrates was first produced standing on a basket mounted into the clouds, the person of the actor and the mask he wore, as well as the garment he was dressed in, was the most direct counterpart of the philosopher himself that could be devised. But when the actor, speaking in his character, in direct terms proceeded to deny the divinity of Jupiter, Socrates laid his hand upon his heart, and cast his eyes up with astonishment: in the same moment Alcibiades started from his seat, and in a loud voice cried out—'Athenians! is this fitting?' Upon this a great tumult arose, and very many of the spectators called upon Socrates to speak for himself, and answer to the charge; when the play could not proceed for the noise and clamour of the people, all demanding Socrates to speak for himself, the philosopher unwillingly stept forward and said—'You require of me, O Athenians, to answer to the charge; there is no charge, neither is this a place to discourse in about the gods: let the actor proceed!'—Silence immediately took place, and Socrates's invocation to The Clouds soon ensued; the passage was so beautiful, the machinery of the clouds so finely introduced, and the chorus of voices in the air so exquisitely conceived, that the whole theatre was in raptures, and the poet from that moment had entire possession of their minds, so that the piece was carried triumphantly to its period. In the heat of the applause my Athenian friend whispered me in the ear and said—'Depend upon it, Socrates will hear of this in another place; he is a lost man; and remember I tell you, that if all our philosophers and sophists were driven out of Attica, it would be

happy for Athens.'—At these words I started and awaked from my dream.

NUMBER CII.

Natio comœda est.— JUV. SAT. 3.

If the present taste for private plays spreads as fast as most fashions do in this country, we may expect the rising generation will be, like the Greeks in my motto, one entire nation of actors and actresses. A father of a family may shortly reckon it amongst the blessings of a numerous progeny, that he is provided with a sufficient company for his domestic stage, and may cast a play to his own liking without going abroad for his theatrical amusements. Such a steady troop cannot fail of being under better regulation than a set of strollers, or than any set whatever, who make acting a vocation: where a manager has to deal with none but players of his own begetting, every play bids fair to have a strong cast, and in the phrase of the stage to be well got up. Happy author, who shall see his characters thus grouped into a family-piece, firm as the Theban band of friends, where all is zeal and concord; no bickerings nor jealousies about stage-precedency; no ladies to fall sick of the spleen, and toss up their parts in a huff; no heart-burnings about flounced petticoats and silver trimmings, where the mother of the whole company stands wardrobe-keeper and property-woman, whilst the father takes post at the side scene in the capacity of prompter, with plenipotentiary control over PS's and OP's.

I will no longer speak of the difficulty of writing a comedy or tragedy, because that is now done by so many people without any difficulty at all, that if there ever was any mystery in it, that mystery is thoroughly bottomed and laid open; but the art of acting was till very lately thought so rare and wonderful an excellence, that people began to look upon a perfect actor as a phenomenon in the world, which they were not to expect above once in a century; but now that the trade is laid open, this prodigy is to be met at the turn of every street; the nobility and gentry, to their imortal honour, have broken up the monopoly, and new-made players are now as plentiful as new-made peers.

Nec tamen Antiochus, nec erit mirabilis illic
Aut Stratocles aut cum molli Demetrius Hæmo. JUV. SAT. 3.

Garrick and Powell would be now no wonder,
Nor Barry's silver note, nor Quin's heroic thunder.

Though the public professors of the art are so completely put down by the private practitioners of it, it is but justice to observe in mitigation of their defeat, that they meet the comparison under some disadvantages, which their rivals have not to contend with.

One of these is diffidence, which volunteers cannot be supposed to feel in the degree they do who are pressed into the service: I never yet saw a public actor come upon the stage on the first night of a new play, who did not seem to be nearly, if not quite, in as great a shaking fit as his author; but, as there can be no luxury in a great fright, I cannot believe that people of fashion, who act for their amusement only, would subject themselves to it; they must certainly have a proper confidence in their own abilities, or they would never step out of a drawing-room, where they are sure to figure, upon a stage

where they run the risk of exposing themselves; some gentlemen, perhaps, who have been *mutæ personæ* in the senate, may start at the first sound of their own voices in a theatre, but graceful action, just elocution, perfect knowledge of their author, elegant deportment, and every advantage that refined manners and courtly address can bestow, is exclusively their own. In all scenes of high life they are at home; noble sentiments are natural to them; love-parts they can play by instinct, and as for all the casts of rakes, gamesters, and fine gentlemen, they can fill them to the life. Think only what a violence it must be to the nerves of an humble unpretending actor, to be obliged to play the gallant gay seducer, and be the cuckold-maker of the comedy, when he has no other object at heart but to go quietly home, when the play is over, to his wife and children, and participate with them in the honest earnings of his vocation; can such a man compete with the Lothario of high life?

And now I mention the cares of a family, I strike upon another disadvantage, which the public performer is subject to and the private exempt from: the Andromache of the stage may have an infant Hector at home, whom she more tenderly feels for than the Hector of the scene; he may be sick, he may be supperless: there may be none to nurse him, when his mother is out of sight, and the maternal interest in the divided heart of the actress may preponderate over the heroine's: this is a case not within the chances to happen to any lady-actress, who of course consigns the task of education to other hands, and keeps her own at leisure for more pressing duties.

Public performers have their memories loaded and distracted with a variety of parts, and oftentimes are compelled to such a repetition of the same part, as

cannot fail to quench the spirit of the representation; they must obey the call of duty, be the cast of the character what it may—

> —*Cum Thaïda sustinet, aut cum*
> *Uxorem comœdus agit.* JUV. SAT. 3.

> Subject to all the various casts of life,
> Now the loose harlot, now the virtuous wife.

But, what is worse than all, the veterans of the pubic stage will sometimes be appointed to play the old and ugly, as I can instance in the person of a most admirable actress, whom I have often seen, and never without the tribute of applause, in the casts of Juliet's Nurse, Aunt Deborah, and other venerable damsels in the vale of years, when I am confident there is not a lady of independent rank in England of Mrs. Pitt's age, who would not rather struggle for Miss Jenny or Miss Hoyden, than stoop to be the representative of such old hags.

These, and the subjection public performers are under to the caprice of the spectators, and to the attacks of conceited and misjudging critics, are amongst the many disagreeable circumstances which the most eminent must expect, and the most fortunate cannot escape.

It would be hard, indeed, if performers of distinction, who use the stage only as an elegant and moral resource, should be subject to any of these unpleasant conditions; and yet as a friend to the rising fame of the domestic drama I must observe, that there are some precautions necessary, which its patrons have not yet attended to. There are so many consequences to be guarded against, as well as provisions to be made for an establishment of this sort, that it behoves its conductors to take their first ground with great judgement; and above all things to be very careful that an exhibition so ennobled by

its actors, may be cast into such a style and character, as may keep it clear from any possible comparison with spectacles, which it should not condescend to imitate, and cannot hope to equal. This I believe has not been attempted, perhaps not even reflected upon, and yet, if I may speak from information of specimens which I have not been present at, there are many reforms needful both in its external as well as internal arrangement.

By external I mean spectacle, comprehending theatre, stage, scenery, orchestra, and all things else which fall within the province of the *arbiter deliciarum:* these should be planned upon a model new, original, and peculiar to themselves: so industriously distinguished from our public play-houses, that they should not strike the eye, as now they do, like a copy in miniature, but as the independent sketch of a master who disdains to copy. I can call to mind many noble halls and stately apartments in the great houses and castles of our nobility, which would give an artist ample field for fancy, and which with proper help would be disposed into new and striking shapes for such a scene of action, as should become the dignity of the performers. Halls and saloons, flanked with interior columns, and surrounded by galleries, would, with the aid of proper draperies or scenery in the intercolumniations, take a rich and elegant appearance, and at the same time the music might be so disposed in the gallery, as to produce a most animating effect. A very small elevation of stage should be allowed of, and no contraction by side scenes to huddle the speakers together and embarrass their deportment: no shift of scene whatever, and no curtain to draw up and drop, as if puppets were to play behind it; the area appropriated to the performers, should be so dressed and furnished with all suitable accommodations, as to afford

every possible opportunity to the performers of varying their actions and postures, whether of sitting, walking or standing, as their situations in the scene, or their interest in the dialogue may dictate; so as to familiarize and assimilate their whole conduct and conversation through the progress of the drama, to the manners and habits of well-bred persons in real life.

Prologues and epilogues in the modern style of writing and speaking them I regard as very unbecoming, and I should blush to see any lady of fashion in that silly and unseemly situation: they are the last remaining corruptions of the ancient drama; relicks of servility, and only are retained in our London theatres as vehicles of humiliation at the introduction of a new play, and traps for false wit, extravagant conceits, and female flippancy at the conclusion of it; where authors are petitioners, and players servants to the public, these condescensions must be made, but where poets are not suitors, and performers are benefactors, why should the free Muse wear shackles? for such they are, though the fingers of the brave are employed to put them on the limbs of the fair.

As I am satisfied nothing ought to be admitted from beginning to end, which can provoke comparisons, I revolt with indignation from the idea of a lady of fashion being trammelled in the trickery of the stage, and taught her airs and graces, till she is made the mere *fac-simile* of a mannerist, where the most she can aspire to is to be the copy of a copyist: let none such be consulted in dressing or drilling an honorary noviciate in the forms and fashions of the public stage; it is a course of discipline, which neither person will profit by; a kind of barter, in which both parties will give and receive false airs and false conceits; the fine lady will be disqualified by copy-

ing the actress, and the actress will become ridiculous by aping the fine lady.

As for the choice of the drama, which is so nice and difficult a part of the business, I scarce believe there is one play upon the list, which in all its parts and passages is thoroughly adapted to such a cast as I am speaking of: where it has been in public use I am sure it is not, for there comparisons are unavoidable. Plays professedly wrote for the stage must deal in strong character, and striking contrast: how can a lady stand forward in a part, contrived to produce ridicule or disgust, or which is founded upon broad humour and vulgar buffoonery?

> —*Nempe ipsa videtur,*
> *Non persona loqui.*— JUV. SAT. iii. 95.
>
> 'Tis she herself, and not her mask which speaks.

I doubt if it be altogether seemly for a gentleman to undertake, unless he can reconcile himself to cry out with Laberius—

> *Eques Romanus lare egressus meo*
> *Domum revertam mimus.*
>
> Esquire I sign'd myself at noon,
> At night I countersign'd buffoon.

The drama, therefore, must be purposely written for the occasion; and the writer must not only have local knowledge of every arrangement preparatory for the exhibition, but personal knowledge also of the performers who are to exhibit it. The play itself, in my conception of it, should be part only of the projected entertainment, woven into the device of a grand and splendid *fête*, given in some noble country house or palace: neither should the spectators be totally excused from their subscription to the general *gala*, nor left to dose upon their benches through the progress of five tedious acts, but called

upon at intervals by music, dance, or refreshment, elegantly contrived, to change the sameness of the scene, and relieve the efforts of the more active corps, employed upon the drama.

And now let me say one word to qualify the irony I set out with and acquit myself as a moralist.

There are many and great authorities against this species of entertainment, and certainly the danger is great, where theatrical propensities are too much indulged in young and inexperienced minds. Tertullian says, but he is speaking of a very licentious theatre, *Theatrum sacrarium est Veneris*—'A playhouse is the very sacristy of Venus.' And Juvenal, who wrote in times of the grossest impurity, maintains that no prudent man will take any young lady to wife, who has ever been even within the walls of a theatre—

> —*Cuneis an habent spectacula totis*
> *Quod securus ames, quodque inde excerpere possis?*

> Look round, and say if any man of sense
> Will dare to single out a wife from hence?

Young women of humble rank and small pretensions should be particularly cautious how a vain ambition of being noticed by their superiors betrays them into an attempt at displaying their unprotected persons on a stage, however dignified and respectable. If they have talents, and of course applause, are their understandings and manners proof against applause? If they mistake their talents, and merit no applause, are they sure they will get no contempt for their self-conceit? If they have both acting talents and attractive charms, I tremble for their danger; let the foolish parent, whose itching ears tingled with the plaudits that resounded through the theatre, where virgin modesty deposited its blushes, beware how his aching heart shall throb

with sorrow, when the daughter, *quæ pudica ad theatrum accesserat, inde revertetur impudica.* [*Cyprian ad Donatum.*]

So much by way of caution to the guardians and protectors of innocence; let the offence light where it may, I care not, so it serves the cause for which my heart is pledged.

As for my opinion of private plays in general, though it is a fashion, which hath kings and princes for its nursing fathers, and queens and princesses for its nursing mothers, I think it is a fashion that should be cautiously indulged and narrowly confined to certain ranks, ages, and conditions in the community at large. Grace forbid! that what the author of my motto said scoffingly of the Greeks should be said prophetically of this nation; emulate them in their love of freedom, in their love of science; rival them in the greatest of their actions, but not in the versatility of their mimic talents, till is shall be said of us by some future satirist—

> *Natio comœda est. Rides? majore cachinno*
> *Concutitur: flet, si lachrymas aspexit amici,*
> *Nec dolet. Igniculum brumæ si tempore poscas,*
> *Accipit endromidem: si dixeris, æstuo, sudat.*
> *Non sumus ergo pares; melior, qui semper et omni*
> *Nocte dieque potest alienum sumere vultum.* JUV. SAT. 3.

> Laugh, and your merry echo bursts his sides:
> Weep, and his courteous tears gush out in tides;
> Light a few sticks you cry, 'tis wintry—Lo!
> He's a furr'd Laplander from top to toe;
> Put out the fire, for now 'tis warm—He's more,
> Hot, sultry hot, and sweats at every pore:
> Oh! he 's beyond us; we can make no race
> With one, who night and day maintains his pace,
> And fast as you shift humours still can shift his face.

Before I close this paper I wish to go back to what I said respecting the propriety of new and occasional dramas for private exhibition: too many

men are in the habit of decrying their contemporaries, and this discouraging practice seems more generally levelled at the dramatic province, than any other; but whilst the authors of such tragic dramas as Douglas, Elfrida and Caractacus, of such comic ones as The School for Scandal, The Jealous Wife, The Clandestine Marriage, and The Way to Keep Him, with others in both lines, are yet amongst us, why should we suppose the state of genius so declined as not to furnish poets able to support and to supply their honorary representatives? Numbers there are, no doubt, unnamed and unknown, whom the fiery trial of a public stage deters from breaking their obscurity: let disinterested fame be their prize and there will be no want of competitors.

Latet anguis in herba.

'There is a serpent in the grass,' and that serpent is the emblem of wisdom; the very symbol of wit upon the watch, couching for a while under the cover of obscurity, till the bright rays of the sun shall strike upon it, give it life and motion to erect itself on end and display the dazzling colours of its burnished scales.

Though thou, vile cynic, art the age's shame,
  Hope not to damn all living fame;
  True wit is arm'd in scales so bright,
  It dazzles thy dull owlish sight;
  Thy wolfish fangs no entrance gain,
  They gnaw, they tug, they gnash in vain,
Their hungry malice does but edge their pain.

Avaunt, profane! 'tis consecrated ground:
  Let no unholy foot be found
Where the Arts mingle, where the Muses haunt
And the Nine Sisters hymn their sacred chaunt,
  Where Freedom's nymph-like form appears,
  And high 'midst the harmonious spheres
Science her laurel-crowned head uprears.

Ye moral masters of the human heart!
And you, advance, ye sons of Art!
Let Fame's far-echoing trumpet sound
To summon all her candidates around;
Then bid old Time his roll explore,
And say what age presents a store
In merit greater or in numbers more.

Come forth, and boldly strike the lyre,
Break into song, poetic choir!
Let Tragedy's loud strains in thunder roll:
With Pity's dying cadence melt the soul;
And now provoke a sprightlier lay;
Hark! Comedy begins to play,
She smites the string, and Dulness flits away.

For envious Dulness will essay to fling
Her mud into the Muse's spring,
Whilst critic curs with pricking ears
Bark at each bard as he appears;
Ev'n the fair dramatist, who sips
Her Helicon with modest lips,
Sometimes, alas! in troubled water dips.

But stop not, fair one, faint not in thy task,
Slip on the sock and snatch the mask.
Polish thy clear reflecting glass,
And catch the manners as they pass;
Call home thy playful Sylphs again,
And cheer them with a livelier strain;
Fame weaves no wreath that is not earn'd with pain.

And thou, whose happy talent hit
The richest vein of Congreve's wit,
Ah! fickle rover, false ingrateful loon,
Did the fond easy Muse consent too soon,
That thou should'st quit Thalia's arms
For an old Begum's tawny charms,
And shake us not with laughter, but alarms?

Curst be ambition! Hence with musty laws!
Why pleads the bard but in Apollo's cause?
Why move the Court and humbly apprehend
But as the Muse's advocate and friend?
She taught his faithful scene to show
All that man's varying passions know,
Gay-flashing wit and heart-dissolving woe.

Thou too, thrice happy in a Jealous Wife,
Comic interpreter of nuptial life,
  Know that all candid hearts detest
  Th' unmanly scoffer's cruel jest,
  Who for his jibes no butt could find
  But what cold palsy left behind,
A shaking man with an unshaken mind.

  And ye, who teach man's lordly race,
  That woman's wit will have its place,
  Matrons and maidens who inspire
The scenic flute or sweep the Sapphic lyre,
  Go, warble in the sylvan seat,
  Where the Parnassian sisters meet,
And stamp the rugged soil with female feet.

'Tis ye, who interweave the myrtle bough
With the proud palm that crowns Britannia's brow,
  Who, to the age in which ye live,
Its charms, its graces, and its glories give;
  For me, I seek no higher praise,
  But to crop one small sprig of bays,
And wear it in the sunshine of your days.

END OF VOL. XXXIII.

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

THE

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WITH

PREFACES,

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—Multorum providus urbes,
Et mores hominum inspexit.—

HOR. EPIST. i. 2. 19.

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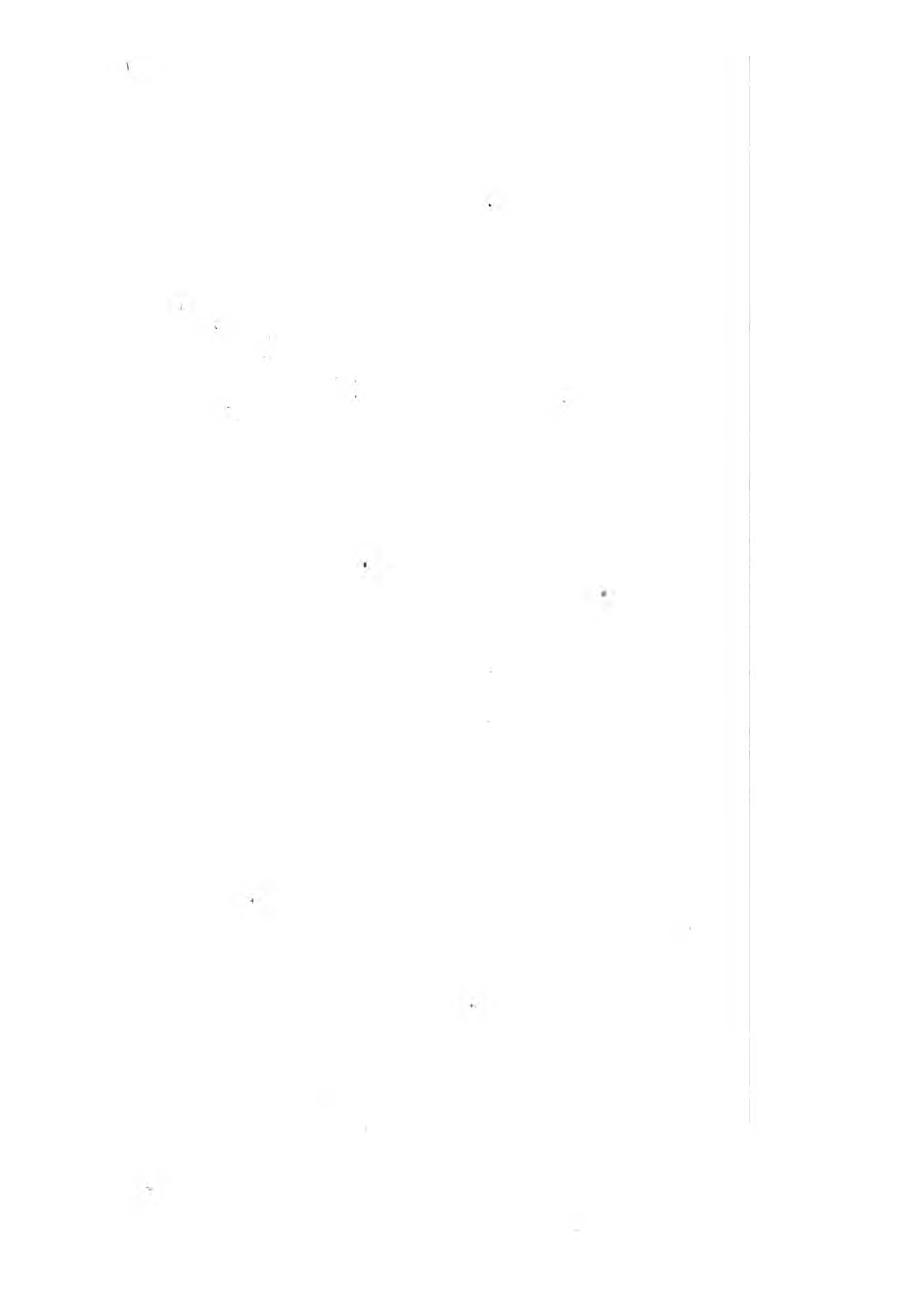

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THE

OBSERVER.

NUMBER CIII.

I DO not know a man in England better received in the circles of the great than Jack Gayless. Though he has no one quality for which he ought to be respected, and some points in his character for which he should be held in detestation; yet his manners are externally so agreeable, and his temper generally so social, that he makes a holiday in every family where he visits. He lives with the nobility upon the easiest footing, and in the great houses where he is in the habits of intimacy, he knows all the domestics by name, and has something to say to every one of them upon his arrival: he has a joke with the butler at the side-board during dinner, and sets the footman a tittering behind his chair, and is so comical and so familiar—he has the best receipt book in England, and recommends himself to the cook by a new sauce, for he is in the secrets of the king's kitchen at Versailles: he has the finest breed of spaniels in Europe, and is never without a puppy at the command of a friend: he knows the theory of hunting from top to bottom, is always in with the hounds, can develope every hit in a check, and was never known to cheer a wrong dog in a cover, when he gives his tongue: if you want an odd horse to match your set, Jack is your man: and for a neat

travelling carriage, there is not an item that he will not superintend, if you are desirous to employ him; he will be at your door with it, when the builder brings it home, to see that nothing is wanting, he is so ready and so obliging: no man canvasses a county or borough like Jack Gayless; he is so pleasant with the freeholders, and has so many songs and such facetious toasts, and such a way with him amongst their wives and daughters, that flesh and blood cannot hold out against him: in short, he is the best leader of a mob, and of course 'the honestest fellow in England.'

A merchant's daughter of great fortune married him for love; he ran away with her from a boarding-school, but her father after a time was reconciled to his son-in-law, and Jack, during the life of the good man, passed his time in a small country-house on Clapham Common, superintending the concerns of about six acres of ground; being very expert however in the gardens and grape-house, and a very sociable fellow over a bottle with the citizen and his friends on a Satuday and Sunday, he became a mighty favourite: all this while he lived upon the best terms with his wife; kept her a neat little palfrey, and regularly took his airing on the common by her side in the most uxorious manner: she was in fact a most excellent creature, of the sweetest temper and mildest manners, so that there seemed no interruption to their happiness, but what arose from her health, which was of a delicate nature. After a few years the citizen died, and Jack, whose conviviality had given him a helping hand out of the world, found himself in possession of a very handsome sum of money upon casting up his affairs at his decease.

Jack Gayless having no further purpose to serve, saw no occasion to consult appearances any longer,

and began to form connexions, in which he did not think it necessary for his wife to have a share. He now set out upon the pursuit of what the world calls pleasure, and soon found himself in the company of those whom the world calls the great. He had the address to recommend himself to his new acquaintance, and used great despatch in getting rid of his old ones; his wife was probably his greatest incumbrance on this occasion; but Jack possessed one art in perfection, which stood him in great stead; he had the civillest way of insulting that could be imagined; and as the feelings of his wife were those of the fondest susceptibility, operating upon a weak and delicate constitution, he succeeded to admiration in tormenting her by neglect, at the same time that he never gave her a harsh expression, and in particular, when any body else was present, behaved himself towards her in so obliging a manner, that all his acquaintance set him down as the best tempered fellow living, and her as a lady, by his report, rather captious and querulential. When he had thus got the world on his side, he detached himself more and more from her society, and became less studious to disguise the insults he put upon her: she declined fast in her health, and certain symptoms began to appear, which convinced Jack that a perseverance in his system would in a short time lay her in the grave, and leave him without any further molestation. Her habit was consumptive, for where is the human frame that can long resist the agony of the heart? in this extremity she requested the assistance of a certain physician, very eminent in these cases: this little gentleman has a way of hitting off the complaints of his patients, which is not always so convenient to those expectant parties, who have made up their minds and reconciled themselves to the call of nature. As

Jack had one object, and the doctor another, they did not entirely agree in their process, and she was sent down by her husband into a distant county for the benefit of the air, in a low situation and a damp house. Jack and the physician had now a scene of altercation, in which it was evident that the least man of the two had the greatest spirit and the largest heart, and Jack certainly put up with some expressions, which could only be passed over by perfect innocence or absolute cowardice: the little doctor, who had no objection to send Jack out of the world, and a very longing desire to keep his lady in it, spoke like a man who had long been in the practice of holding death at defiance; but what Jack lost in argument he made up in address, and after professing his acquiescence in the measures of his antagonist, he silently determined to pursue his own, and the doctor's departure was very soon followed by that of his patient. The dying wife made a feeble stand for a while, but what can a broken heart do against a hardened one?

After Jack had taken such zealous pains to overrule the doctor's advice, it is not to be supposed but he would have accompanied his wife to the place of her destination, if it had only been for the satisfaction of contemplating the effects of his own greater sagacity in her case: and he protested to her, in the kindest manner, that nothing should have robbed him of the pleasure of attending her on the journey, but the most indispensable and unexpected business: he had just then received letters from two friends, which would be attended with the greatest breach of honour, if neglected; and she knew his nicety of principle in those affairs; he would not read them to her, as she was in too weak a condition, he observed, to attend to business, but she might rest assured, he would, if possible, overtake her on the

way, or be with her in a few hours after her arrival; for he should be impatient to be a witness of her recovery, wnich he persuaded himself would soon take place, when she had made experiment of the place he had chosen for her. When he had finished his apology, his wife raised her eyes from the ground, where she had fixed them whilst he was speaking, and with a look of such mild languor, and such dying softness, as would almost have melted marble into pity, mournfully replied—*farewel!* and resigning herself to the support of her maid and a nurse, was lifted into her carriage, and left her husband to pursue his business without reproach.

Jack Gayless now lost no further time in fulfilling the promise he had made to his wife, and immediately began to apply himself to the letters which had so indispensably prevented him from paying her those kind offices, which her situation was in so much need of. These letters I shall now insert, as some of my readers may probably think he wants a justification on this occasion. The first was from a great lady of unblemished reputation, who has a character for public charity and domestic virtues, which even malice has not dared to impeach. Her ladyship was now at her country seat, where she presided at a table of the most splendid hospitality, and regulated a princely establishment with consummate judgment and decorum: in this great family Jack had long been a welcome visitor, and as he had received a thousand kindnesses at her hands, gratitude would dispose him to consider her requests as commands the most pressing. The important contents were as follow, viz.

'DEAR JACK,

'I am sorry your wife's so sick: but methinks you do well to change the scene, and come

amongst us, now home's so dull. You'll be griev'd to hear I have clapp'd Tom Jones in the back sinews: Ned has put a charge to him, but he is so cruelly let down, I am afraid he must be scor'd with a fire-iron, and that with be an eye-sore, to say no worse on't. My lord you know hates writing, so he bids me tell you to bring Moll Ross with you, as he thinks there is a young man here will take her off your hands; and as you have had the best of her, and she is rather under your weight, think you'll be glad to get well out of her. Would you believe it, I was eight hours in the saddle yesterday: we dug a fox in Lady Tabby's park: the old dowager goes on setting traps; all the country round cries out upon it: thank the fates, she had a py'd peacock and a whole brood of Guinea fowls carried off last night: My lord says 'tis a judgment upon her. Don't forget to bring your Highland terrier, as I would fain have a cross with my bitch Cruel.

'Dear Jack, yours,

'* * *.'

As Jack Gayless was not one of those milksops, who let family excuses stand in the way of the more amiable office of obliging his friends, and saw in its just right the ridicule he would naturally expose himself to, if he sheltered himself under so silly a pretence as a wife's sickness, he would infallibly have obeyed her ladyship's commands, and set out with the Highland terrier instead of Mrs. Gayless, if he had not been divided by another very pressing attention, which every man of the world will acknowledge the importance of. There was a certain young lady of easy virtue, who had made a tender impression on his heart as he was innocently taking the air in Hyde-park: he had prevailed so far with

her as to gain her consent to an appointment for that day: not foreseeing, as I should suppose, or perhaps not just at that moment recollecting his wife's journey, and the call there would be upon him on that account. This young lady who was wanting in no other virtue but chastity, had learnt some particulars of Mr. Gayless, which she had not been informed of when she yielded to the assignation, and in consequence had written him the following perplexing billet:—

'SIR,

'I am sorry it is not possible for me to receive the honour of your visit, and the more so as I am afraid my reason for declining it, though insuperable with me, will not appear a sufficient one in your opinion. I have just now been informed that you are a married man; this would have been enough, if I had not heard it with the addition, that your lady is one of the most excellent and most injured women living—if indeed she be yet living, for I learn from the same authority that she is in the last stage of a rapid decline.

'In what light must I regard myself, if I was to supply you with a motive for neglecting that attention, which her situation demands of you? Don't let it surprise you, that a woman who has forfeited her claim to modesty, should yet retain some pretensions to humanity: if you have renounced both the one and the other, I have a double motive for declining your acquaintance.

'I am, &c.

'* * *.'

The style of this letter seemed so extraordinary to Jack, and so unlike what he had been used to receive from correspondents of this lady's de-

scription, that it was not to be wondered at, if it threw him into a profound meditation; not that the rebuke made any other impression on him, than as it seemed to involve a mystery which he could not expound; for it never entered into his head to suppose that the writer was in earnest. In this dilemma he imparted it to a friend, and with his usual gaiety desired his help to unriddle it: his friend pursued it, and with a serious countenance told him he was acquainted with the lady, and gave her perfect credit for the sincerity of the sentiments it contained: she was a romantic girl, he told him, and not worth a further thought; but as he perceived he was chagrined with the affair, he advised him to take post for the country, and attend the summons of his noble correspondent, for that he himself had always found the dissipation of a journey the best remedy in all cases of vexation, like the present. This friendly advice was immediately followed by an order for the journey, and Jack Gayless put himself into his post-chaise, with his terrier by his side, ordering his groom to follow with Moll Ross by easy stages.

Whilst Jack was rapidly posting towards the house of jollity and dissipation, his suffering and forsaken wife by slow stages pursued her last melancholy journey: supported in her coach by her two women, and attended by an old man-servant of her father's, she at last reached the allotted house, where her miseries were to find a period. One indiscretion only, a stolen and precipitate marriage, had marked her life with a blemish, and the husband, who in early youth had betrayed her artless affection into that fatal mistake, was now the chosen instrument of chastisement. She bore her complicated afflictions with the most patient resignation; neither sickness nor sorrow forced a complaint from

her; and Death, by the gentleness of his advances, seemed to lay aside his terrors, and approach her with respect and pity.

Jack was still upon his visit, when he received the news of her death: this event obliged him to break off from a most agreeable party, and take a journey to London; but as the season had happened to set in for a severe frost, and the foxhounds were confined to their kennel, he had the consolation to reflect, that his amusements were not so much interrupted as they might have been. He gave orders for a handsome funeral, and deported himself with such outward propriety on the occasion, that all the world gave him credit for his behaviour, and he continues to be the same popular character amongst his acquaintance, and universally caressed: in short, Jack Gayless, to use the phrase of fashion, is 'the honestest fellow in England,' and—a disgrace to human nature.

NUMBER CIV.

The conduct of a young lady, who is the only daughter of a very worthy father, and some alarming particulars respecting her situation which had come to my knowledge, gave occasion to me for writing my Paper, No. XXVII., in which I endeavour to point out the consequences parents have to apprehend from novels, which, though written upon moral plans, may be apt to take too strong a hold upon young and susceptible minds, especially in

the softer sex, and produce an affected character, where we wish to find a natural one.

As the young person in question is now happily extricated from all danger, and has seen her error, I shall relate her story, not only as it contains some incidents which are amusing, but as it tends to illustrate by example the several instructions, which in my Paper, before mentioned, I endeavour to convey.

Sappho is the only child of Clemens, who is a widower; a passionate fondness for this daughter, tempered with a very small share of observation or knowledge of the world, determined Clemens to an attempt, which has seldom been found to succeed, of rendering Sappho a miracle of accomplishments, by putting her under the instructions of masters in almost every art and science at one and the same time: his house now became an academy of musicians, dancing-masters, language-masters, drawing-masters, geographers, historians, and a variety of inferior artists, male and female; all these studies appeared the more desirable to Clemens, from his own ignorance of them, having devoted his life to business of a very different nature. Sappho made just as much progress in each, as is usual with young ladies so attended; she could do a little of most of them, and talk of all; she could play a concerto by heart, with every grace her master had taught her, note for note, with the precise repetition of a barrel organ; she had stuck the room round with drawings, which Clemens praised to the skies, and which Sappho assured him had been only 'touched up a little' by her master; she could tell the capital of every country, when he questioned her out of the newspaper, and would point out the very spot upon the terrestrial globe, where Paris, Madrid, Naples, and Constantinople, actually were

to be found; she had as much French as puzzled Clemens, and would have served her to buy blond-lace and Paris netting at a French milliner's; nay, she had gone so far as to pen a letter in that language to a young lady of her acquaintance, which her master, who stood over whilst she wrote it, declared to be little inferior in style to Madame Sevigné's: in history, both ancient and modern, her progress was proportionable, for she could run through the twelve Cæsars in a breath, and reckon up all the kings from the conquest upon her fingers, without putting one out of place; this appeared a prodigy to Clemens, and in the warmth of his heart he fairly told her she was one of the world's wonders? Sappho aptly set him right in this mistake, by assuring him that there were but seven wonders in the world, all of which she repeated to him, and only left him more convinced that she herself was deservedly the eighth.

There was a gentleman about fifty years old, a friend of Clemens, who came frequently to his house, and being a man of talents and leisure, was so kind as to take great pains in directing and bringing Sappho forward in her studies: this was a very acceptable service to Clemens, and the visits of Musidorus were always joyfully welcomed both by him and Sappho herself: Musidorus declared himself overpaid by the delight it gave him to contemplate the opening talents of so promising a young lady; and as Sappho was now of years to establish her pretensions to taste and sentiment, Musidorus made such a selection of authors for her reading as were best calculated to accomplish her in those particulars: in settling this important choice, he was careful to put none but writers of delicacy and sensibility into her hands: interesting and affecting tales or novels were the books he chiefly recommended,

which, by exhibiting the fairest patterns of female purity, suffering distress, and even death itself from the attacks of licentious passion in the grosser sex, might inspire her sympathetic heart with pity, and guard it from seduction by displaying profligacy in its most odious colours.

Sappho's propensity to these studies fully answered the intentions of her kind director, and she became more and more attached to works of sentiment and pathos. Musidorus's next solicitude was to form her style, and with this view he took upon himself the trouble of carrying on a kind of probationary correspondence with her; this happy expedient succeeded beyond expectation; for as two people, who saw each other every day could have very little matter to write upon, there was so much the more exercise for invention: and such was the copiousness and fluency of expression which she became mistress of by this ingenious practice, that she could fill four sides of letter paper with what other people express upon the back of a card: Clemens once in the exultation of his heart, put a bundle of these manuscripts into my hands, which he confessed he did not clearly understand, but nevertheless believed them to be the most elegant things in the language; I shall give the reader a sample of two of them, which I drew out of the number, not by choice, but by chance; they were carefully folded, and labelled at the back in Sappho's own hand, as follows: 'Musidorus to Sappho, of the 10th of June:' underneath she had wrote with a pencil these words:

PICTURESQUE!

ELEGANT!

HAPPY ALLUSION TO THE SUN!

KING DAVID NOT TO BE COMPARED TO MUSIDORUS!

Here follows the note, and I cannot doubt but the reader will confess that its contents deserve all that the label expresses.

'*June the* 10*th*, 1785.

'As soon as I arose this morning, I directed my eyes to the east, and demanded of the sun, if he had given you my good-morrow: this was my parting injunction last light, when I took leave of him in the west, and he this moment plays his beams with so particular a lustre, that I am satisfied he has fulfilled my commission, and saluted the eyelids of Sappho: if he is described to 'come forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber,' how much rather may it be said of him when he comes forth out of *yours!* I shall look for him to perform his journey this day with a peculiar glee; I expect he will not suffer a cloud to come near him, and I shall not be surprised if, through his eagerness to repeat his next morning's salutation, he should 'whip his fiery-footed steeds' to the west some hours before their time; unless, indeed, you should walk forth whilst he is descending, and he should delay the wheels of his chariot, to look back upon an object so pleasing. You see, therefore, most amiable Sappho, that unless you fulfil your engagement, and consent to repeat our usual ramble in the cool of the evening, our part of the world is likely to be in darkness before it is expected, and that Nature herself will be put out of course, if Sappho forfeits her promise to Musidorus.'

'SAPPHO IN REPLY TO MUSIDORUS.'

'If Nature holds her course till Sappho forfeits her word to Musidorus, neither the setting nor the rising sun shall vary from his appointed time. But

why does Musidorus ascribe to me so flattering an influence, when, if I have any interest with Apollo, it must be to his good offices only that I owe it? If he bears the messages of Musidorus to me, is it not a mark of his respect to the person who sends him, rather than to her he is sent to? and whom should he so willingly obey, as one whom he so copiously inspires? I shall walk as usual in the cool hour of even-tide, listening 'with greedy ear' to that discourse, which, by the refined and elevated sentiments it inspires, has taught me to look down with silent pity and contempt upon those frivolous beings, who talk the mere language of the senses, not of the soul, and to whose silly prattle I neither condescend to lend an ear, or to subscribe a word. Know, then, that Sappho will reserve her attention for Musidorus, and if Apollo 'shall delay the wheels of his chariot' to wait upon us in our evening ramble, believe me he will not stop for the unworthy purpose of looking back upon Sappho, but for the nobler gratification of listening to Musidorus.'

The evening walk took place as usual, but it was a walk in the dusty purlieus of London, and Sappho sighed for a cottage and the country: Musidorus seconded the sigh, and he had abundance of fine things to say on the occasion: retirement is a charming subject for a sentimental enthusiast; there is not a poet in the language, but will help him out with a description; Musidorus had them all at his fingers' ends, from 'Hesperus that led the starry host,' down to a glow-worm.

The passion took so strong a hold of Sappho's mind, that she actually assailed her father on the subject, and with great energy of persuasion moved him to adopt her ideas; it did not exactly suit Clemens to break up a very lucrative profession,

and set out in search of some solitary cottage, whose romantic situation might suit the spiritualized desires of his daughter, and I am afraid he was for once in his life not quite so respectful to her wishes, as he might have been: Sappho was so unused to contradiction, that she explained herself to Musidorus with some asperity, and it became the subject of much debate between them: not that he held a contrary opinion from hers; but the difficulty which embarrassed both parties was, where to find the happy scene she sighed for, and how to obtain it when it was found. The first part of this difficulty was at last surmounted, and the chosen spot was pointed out by Musidorus, which, according to his description was the very bower of felicity: it was in a northern county, at a distance from the capital, and its situation was most delectable: the next measure was a strong one; for the question to be decided was, if Sappho should abandon her project or her father; she called upon Musidorus for his opinion, and he delivered it as follows:—'If I was not convinced, most amiable Sappho, that a second application to Clemens would be as unsuccessful as the first, I would advise you to the experiment; but as there is no doubt of this, it must be the height of imprudence to put that to a trial, of which there is no hope: it comes, therefore, next to be considered, if you shall give up your plan, or execute it without his privity; in other words, if you shall or shall not do that, which is to make you happy: if it were not consistent with the strictest purity of character, I should answer, no; but when I reflect upon the innocence, the simplicity, the moral beauty of the choice you make, I then regard the duty you owe to yourself as superior to all others, which are

falsely called natural; whereas, if you follow this in preference, you obey Nature herself: if you were of an age too childish to be allowed to know what suits you best, or, if being old enough to be entitled to a choice, you wanted wit to make one, there would be no doubt in the case; nay, I will go so far as to say, that if Clemens was a man of judgment superior to your own, I should be staggered with his opposition; but, if truth may ever be spoken, it may on this occasion, and who is there that does not see the weakness of the father's understanding; who but must acknowledge the pre-eminence of the daughter's? I will speak yet plainer, most incomparable Sappho, it is not fitting that folly should prescribe to wisdom: the question, therefore, is come to an upshot, shall Sappho live a life she despises and detests, to humour a father, whose weakness she pities, but whose judgment she cannot respect?'

'No,' replied Sappho, 'that point is decided; pass on to the next, and speak to me upon the practicability of executing what I am resolved to attempt.'—'The authority of a parent,' resumed Musidorus, 'is such over an unprotected child, that reason will be no defence to you against obstinacy and coercion. In the case of a son, profession gives that defence: new duties are imposed by a man's vocation, which supersede what are called natural ones; but in the instance of a daughter, where shall she fly for protection against the imperious control of a parent, but to the arms —? I tremble to pronounce the word; your own imagination must complete the sentence.'—'Oh! horrible!' cried Sappho, interrupting him, 'I will never marry; I will never so contaminate the spotless lustre of my incorporeal purity: no, Musidorus, no

—*I'll bear my blushing honours still about me.*'—'And fit you should,' cried Musidorus, 'what demon dare defile them? Perish the man that could intrude a sensual thought within the sphere of such repelling virtue!—But marriage is a form; and forms are pure; at least they may be such: there's no pollution in a name; and if a name will shelter you, why should you fear to take it?'—'I perceive,' answered Sappho, 'that I am in a very dangerous dilemma; since the very expedient, which is to protect me from violence of one sort, exposes me to it under another shape too odious to mention.'—'And is there, then,' said Musidorus, sighing, 'is there no human being in your thoughts in whom you can confide? Alas for me! if you believe you have no friend who is not tainted with the impurities of his sex: and what is friendship? what, but the union of souls? and are not souls thus united already married? For my part, I have long regarded our pure and spiritualized connexion in this light, and I cannot foresee how any outward ceremony is to alter that inherent delicacy of sentiment, which is inseparable from my soul's attachment to the soul of Sappho: if we are determined to despise the world, we should also despise the constructions of the world: if retirement is our choice, and the life and habits of Clemens are not to be the life and habits of Sappho, why should Musidorus, who is ready to sacrifice every thing in her defence, not be thought incapable of abusing her confidence, when he offers the protection of his name? If a few words muttered over us by a Scotch blacksmith will put all our troubles to rest, why should we resort to dangers and difficulties, when so easy a remedy is before us? But why should I seek for arguments to allay your apprehensions, when you have in me so natural a security for my perform-

ance of the strictest stipulations?'—' And what is that security?' she eagerly demanded. Musidorus now drew back a few paces, and with the most solemn air and action laying his hand upon his heart, replied, 'My age, Madam!'—' That's true,' cried Sappho; and now the conversation took a new turn, in the course of which they agreed upon their plan of proceeding, settled their rendezvous for the next day, and Musidorus departed to prepare all things necessary for the security of their expedition.

NUMBER CV.

Tange Chloën semel arrogantem.
HOR. CAR. 3, 26, *ult.*

O Cupid, touch this rebel heart!

UPON the day appointed, Sappho, with her father's consent, set out in a hired post-chaise upon a pretended visit to a relation, who lived about twenty miles from town on the northern road: at the inn where she was to change horses, she dismissed her London postilion with a short note to her father, in which she told him she should write to him in two or three days time: here she took post for the next stage upon the great road, where she was met by Musidorus, and from thence thay pressed forward with all possible expedition towards Gretna Green.

The mind of Sappho was visited with some compunctions by the way: but the eloquence of her companion, and the respectful delicacy of his beha-

viour, soon reconciled her conscience to the step she had taken: the reflections which passed in Musidorus's breast were not so easily quieted: the anxiety of his thoughts, and the fatigues of the journey, brought so violent an attack upon him, that when he was within a stage or two of his journey's end, he found himself unable to proceed; the gout had seized upon his stomach, and immediate relief became necessary: the romantic visions with which Sappho hitherto had indulged her imagination, now began to vanish, and a gloomy prospect opened upon her; in place of a comforter and companion by the way to soothe her cares, and fill her mind with soft healing sentiments, she had a wretched object before her eyes, tormented with pain, and at the point of death.

The house in which she had taken shelter was of the meanest sort, but the good people were humane and assiduous, and the village afforded a medical assistant of no contemptible skill in his profession; there was another consolation attended her situation, for in the same inn was quartered a dragoon officer with a small recruiting party: this young cornet was of a good family, of an engaging person and very elegant address: his humanity was exerted not only in consoling Sappho, but in nursing and cheering Musidorus. These charitable offices were performed with such a natural benignity, that Sappho must have been most insensible if she could have overlooked them; her gentle heart, on the contrary, overflowed with gratitude, and in the extremity of her distress she freely confessed to him, that but for his support she must have sunk outright. Though the extremity of Musidorus's danger was now over, yet he was incapable of exertion; and Sappho, who was at leisure to reflect upon her situation, began to waver in her resolution, and to put

some questions to herself, which reason could not readily answer. Her thoughts were so distracted and perplexed, that she saw no resource but to unburthen them, and throw herself upon the honour and discretion of Lionel, for so this young officer was called. This she had frequently in mind to do, and many opportunities offered themselves for it, but still her sensibility of shame prevented it. The constant apprehension of pursuit hung over her, and sometimes she meditated to go back to her father; in one of these moments she had begun to write a letter to Clemens to prepare him for her return, when Lionel entered the room and informed her, that he perceived so visible an amendment in Musidorus, that he expected to congratulate her on his recovery in a very few days—'and then, Madam,' added he, 'my sorrows will begin where yours end; be it so! if you are happy, I must not complain: I presume this gentleman is your father or near relation?'—'Father!' exclaimed Sappho:—She cast her eyes upon the letter she was inditing and burst into tears. Lionel approached, and took her hand in his; she raised her handkerchief to her eyes with the other, and he proceeded—'If my anxious solicitude for an unknown lady, in whose happiness my heart is warmly interested, exposes me to any hazard of your displeasure, stop me before I speak another word; if not, confide in me, and you shall find me ready to devote my life to serve you. The mystery about you, and the road you are upon, were it not for the companion you are with, would tempt me to believe you was upon a generous errand, to reward some worthy man, whom fortune and your parents do not favour; but this poor object above stairs makes that impossible. If, however, there is any favoured lover, waiting in secret agony for that expected moment, when your

release from hence may crown him with the best of human blessings, the hand, which now has hold of yours, shall be devoted to his service: command me where you will; I never yet have forfeited my honour, and cannot wrong your confidence.'— 'You are truly generous,' replied Sappho; 'there is no such man; the hand you hold is yet untainted, and till now has been untouched; release it, therefore, and I will proceed. My innocence has been my error; I have been the dupe of sentiment: I am the only child of a fond father, and never knew the blessing of a mother; when I look back upon my education, I perceive that art has been exhausted, and nature overlooked in it. The unhappy object above stairs has been my sole adviser and director; for my father is immersed in business: from him, and from the duty which I owe him, I confess I have seceded, and my design was to devote myself to retirement. My scheme I now perceive was visionary in the extreme; left to my own reflections, reason shows me both the danger and the folly of it. I have therefore determined upon returning to my father, and am writing to him a letter, which I shall send by express, to relieve him from the agonies my silly conduct has occasioned.'—'What you have now disclosed to me,' said Lionel, 'with a sincerity that does equal honour to yourself and me, demands a like sincerity on my part, and I must therefore confess to you, that Musidorus, believing himself at the point of death, imparted to me not only every thing that has passed, but all the future purposes of this treacherous plot, from which you have so providentially escaped; these I shall not explain to you at present, but you may depend upon it, that this attack upon his life has saved his conscience. I cannot as a man of honour oppose myself to your resolution of returning home immediately; and yet,

when I consider the ridicule you will have to encounter from the world at large, the reflections that will arise in your mind, when there is perhaps no friend at hand to assuage them; but, above all, when I thus contemplate your charms, and recollect that affectation is expelled, and nature reinstated in your heart, I cannot resist the impulse nor the opportunity of appealing to that nature against a separation so fatal to my peace: yes, loveliest of women, I must appeal to nature; I must hope this heart of yours, where such refined sensations have resided, will not be shut from others of a more generous kind. What could the name of Musidorus do, which Lionel's cannot? Why should you not replace an unworthy friend with one of fairer principles: with one of honourable birth, of equal age, and owner of a heart that beats with ardent passion towards you? Had you been made the sacrifice of this chimera, this illusion, what had your father suffered? If I am honoured with your hand in marriage, what can he complain of? My conduct, my connexions, and my hopes in life, will bear the scrutiny: suffer me to say you will have a protector, whose character can face the world, and whose spirit cannot fear it. As for wordly motives, I renounce them; give me yourself and your affections: give me possession of this hand, these eyes, and the soul which looks through them; let your father withhold the rest. Now, loveliest and most beloved, have you the heart to share a soldier's fortune? Have you the noble confidence to take his word? Will you follow, where his honour bids him go, and, whether a joyful victory or a glorious death attends him, will you receive him living, or entomb him dying in your arms?'

Whilst Lionel was uttering these words, his ac-

tion, his emotion, and that honest glow of passion, which nature only can assume, and artifice cannot counterfeit, had so subdued the yielding heart of Sappho, that he must have been dull, indeed, if he could have wanted any stronger confirmation of his success, than what her looks bestowed: never was silence more eloquent: the labour of language and the forms of law had no share in this contract: a sigh of speechless ecstacy drew up the nuptial bond; the operations of love are momentary: tears of affection interchangeably witnessed the deed, and the contracting parties sealed it with an inviolable embrace.

Every moment now had wings to waft them to that happy spot, where the unholy hand of law has not yet plucked up the root of love: Freedom met them on the very extremity of her precincts; Nature held out her hand to welcome them, and the Loves and Graces, though exiled to a desert, danced in her train.

Thus was Sappho, when brought to the very brink of destruction, rescued by the happy intervention of Providence. The next day produced an interview with Clemens, at the house to which they returned after the ceremony in Scotland: the meeting, as might well be expected, was poignant and reproachful; but when Sappho, in place of a superannuated sentimentalist, presented to him a son-in-law, in whose martial form and countenance he beheld youth, honour, manly beauty, and every attractive grace that could justify her choice, his transports became excessive; and their union, being now sanctified by the blessing of a father, and warranted by Love and Nature, has snatched a deluded victim from misery and error, and added one conjugal instance to the scanty records of unfashionable felicity.

Let not my young female readers believe that the extravagance of Sappho's conduct is altogether out of nature, or that they have nothing to apprehend from men of Musidorus's age and character; my observation convinces me to the contrary. *Gravity*, says Lord Shaftesbury, *is the very essence of imposture;* and sentimental gravity, varnished over with the experienced artifice of age and wisdom, is the worst of its species.

NUMBER CVI.

I THINK the ladies will not accuse me of busying myself in impertinent remarks upon their dress and attire, for, indeed, it is not to their persons my services are devoted, but to their minds: if I can add to them any thing ornamental, or take from them any thing unbecoming, I shall gain my wish; the rest I shall leave to their milliners and mantua-makers.

Now if I have any merit with them for not intruding upon their toilets, let them show me so much complaisance, as not to read this paper, whilst they are engaged in those occupations, which I have never before interrupted; for as I intend to talk with them a little metaphysically, I would not wish to divide their attention, nor shall I be contented with less than the whole.

In the first place I must tell them, gentle though they be, that human nature is subject to a variety of passions, some of these are virtuous passions, some, on the contrary, I am afraid are evil; there are however a number of intermediate propensities, most

of which might also be termed passions, which, by the proper influence of reason, may become very useful allies to any one single virtue, when in danger of being overpowered by a host of foes: at the same time they are as capable of being kidnapped by the enemies of reason, and when enlisted in the ranks of the insurgents, seldom fail to turn the fate of the battle, and commit dreadful havock in the peaceful quarters of the invaded virtue. It is apparent then, that all these intermediate propensities are a kind of balancing powers, which seem, indeed, to hold a neutrality in moral affairs, but, holding it with arms in their hands, cannot be supposed to remain impartial spectators of the fray, and therefore must be either with us, or against us.

I shall make myself better understood when I proceed to instance them, and I will begin with that which has been called the universal passion, *The love of Fame.*

I presume no lady will disavow this propensity: I would not wish her to attempt it; let her examine it however; let her first inquire to what point it is likely to carry her, before she commits herself to its conduct; if it is to be her guide to that fame only, which excels in fashionable dissipation, figures in the first circles of the gay world, and is the loadstone to attract every libertine of high life into the sphere of its activity, it is a traitorous guide, and is seducing her to a precipice, that will sooner or later be the grave of her happiness: on the contrary, if it proposes to avoid these dangerous pursuits and recommends a progress through paths less tempting to the eye, perhaps, but terminated by substantial comforts, she may securely follow a propensity, which cannot mislead her, and indulge a passion, which will be the moving spring of all her actions, and but for which her nature would want energy,

and her character be no otherwise distinguished than by avoidance of vice, without the grace and merit of any positive virtue. I can hardly suppose, if it was put to a lady's choice at her outset into life, which kind of fame she would be distinguished for, good or evil, but that she would at once prefer the good; I must believe she would acknowledge more gratification in being signalized as the best wife, the best mother, the most exemplary woman of her time, than in being pointed out in all circles she frequents as the most fashionable rake, the best-dressed voluptuary in the nation: if this be rightly conjectured, why will not every woman, who has her choice to make, direct her ambition to those objects, which will give her most satisfaction when attained? There can be no reason but because it imposes on her some self-denials by the way, which she has not fortitude to surmount; and it is plain she does not love fame well enough to be at much pains in acquiring it; her ambition does not reach at noble objects, her passion for celebrity is no better than that of a buffoon's, who for the vanity of being conspicuous submits to be contemptible.

Friendship is a word which has a very captivating sound, but is by no means of a decided quality; it may be friend or foe, as reason and true judgment shall determine for it. If I were to decry all female friendships in the lump, it might seem a harsh sentence, and yet it will seriously behove every parent to keep strict watch over this propensity in the early movements of the female mind. I am not disposed to expatiate upon its dangers very particularly; they are sufficiently known to people of experience and discretion; but attachments must be stemmed in their beginnings; keep off correspondents from your daughters as you would

keep off the pestilence: romantic misses, sentimental novelists and scribbling pedants overturn each others heads with such eternal rhapsodies about friendship, and refine upon nonsense with such an affectation of enthusiasm, that if it has not been the parent's study to take early precautions against all such growing propensities, it will be in vain to oppose the torrent, when it carries all before it, and overwhelms the passions with its force.

Sensibility is a mighty favourite with the fair sex; it is an amiable friend or a very dangerous foe to virtue: let the female, who professes it, be careful how she makes too full a display of her weakness; for this is so very soft and insinuating a propensity, that it will be found in most female glossaries as a synonimous term for love itself: in fact, it is little else than the *nomme-de-guerre*, which that insidious adventurer takes upon him in all first approaches; the pass-word in all those skirmishing experiments, which young people make upon each other's affections, before they proceed to plainer declarations; it is the whetstone, upon which Love sharpens and prepares his arrows: if any lady makes a certain show of sensibility in company with her admirer, he must be a very dull fellow, if he does not know how to turn the weapon from himself to her. Now sensibility assumes a different character when it is taken into the service of benevolence, or made the centinel of modesty; in one case it gives the spring to pity, in the other the alarm to discretion; but whenever it assails the heart by soft seduction to bestow that pity and relief, which discretion does not warrant, and purity ought not to grant, it should be treated as a renegado and a spy, which, under the mask of charity, would impose upon

credulity for the vilest purposes, and betray the heart by flattering it to its ruin.

Vanity is a passion to which I think I am very complaisant, when I admit it to a place amongst these convertible propensities, for it is as much as I can do to find any occupation for it in the family concerns of virtue; perhaps, if I had not known Vanessa I should not pay it even this small compliment: it can however do some under offices in the household of generosity, of cheerfulness, hospitality, and certain other respectable qualities; it is little else than an officious, civil, silly thing, that runs on errands for its betters, and is content to be paid with a smile for its good-will, by those who have two much good-sense to show it any real respect: when it is harmless, it would be hard to wound it out of wantonness; when it is mischievous, there is merit in chastising it with the whip of ridicule; a lap-dog may be endured, if he is inoffensive and does not annoy the company, but a snappish, barking pett, though in a lady's arms, deserves to have his ears pulled for his impertinence.

Delicacy is a soft name, and fine ladies, who have a proper contempt for the vulgar, are very willing to be thought endowed with senses more refined and exquisite than nature ever meant to give them; their nerves are susceptible in the extreme, and they are of constitutions so irritable, that 'the very winds of Heaven' must not be allowed to 'visit their face too roughly.' I have studied this female favourite with some attention, and I am not yet able to discover any one of its good qualities; I do not perceive the merit of such exquisite fibres, nor have I observed that the slenderest strings are apt to produce the sweetest sounds, when applied to instruments of harmony; I presume the female

heart should be such an harmonious instrument, when touched by the parent, the friend, the husband; but how can these expect a concert of sweet sounds to be excited, from a thing which is liable to be jarred and put out of tune by every breath of air? It may be kept in its case, like an old-fashioned virginal, which nobody knows, or even wishes to know, how to touch: it can never be brought to bear its part in a family concert, but must hang by the wall, or at best be a solo instrument for the remainder of its days.

Bashfulness, when it is attached to modesty, will be regarded with the eye of candour, and cheered with the smile of encouragement; but bashfulness is a hireling, and is sometimes discovered in the livery of pride, oftentimes in the cast-off trappings of affectation; pedantry is very apt to bring it into company, and sly, secret consciousness, will frequently 'blush because it understands.' I do not say I have much to lay to its charge, for it is not apt to be troublesome in polite societies, nor do I commonly meet it even in the youngest of the female sex. There is a great deal of blushing, I confess, in all the circles of fine ladies; but then it is so universal a blush, and withal so permanent, that I am far from imputing it always to bashfulness, when the cheeks of the fair are tinged with roses. However, though it is sometimes an impostor, and for that reason may deserve to be dismissed, I cannot help having a consideration for one, that has in past times been the handmaid of beauty; and, therefore, as merit has taken modesty into her service, I would recommend to ignorance to put bashfulness into full pay and employment.

Politeness is a charming propensity, and I would wish the fine ladies to indulge it, if it were only by way of contrast between themselves and the fine

gentlemen they consort with. I do not think it is altogether becoming for a lady to plant herself in the centre of a circle with her back to the fire, and expect every body to be warmed by the contemplation of her figure or the reflection of her countenance: at the same time I am free to confess it an attitude by which the man of high breeding is conspicuously distinguished, and is charming to behold, when set off with the proper accompaniments of leather breeches, tight boots, and jockey waistcoat. I will not deny, however, but I have seen this practised by ladies, who have acquitted themselves with great spirit on the occasion; but then it cannot be done without certain male accoutrements, and presupposes a slouched hat, half-boots, short waistcoat, and riding dress, not to omit broad metal buttons, with great letters engraved upon them, or the signature of some hunt, with the indispensable appendage of two long dangling watch-chains, which serve to mark the double value people of fashion put upon their time, and also show the encouragement they bestow upon the arts: with these implements the work may be done even by a female artist, but it is an art I wish no young lady to study, and I hope the present professors will take no more pupils, whilst the academies of Humphries and Mendoza are kept open for accomplishments, which I think upon the whole are altogether as becoming. Politeness, as I conceive, consists in putting people at their ease in your company, and being at your ease in theirs; modern practice I am afraid is apt to misplace this process, for I observe every body in fashionable life polite enough to study their own ease, but I do not see much attention paid to that part of the rule, which ought to be first observed: it is well calculated for those who are adepts in it, but if ever such an out-of-the-way thing as a mo-

dest person comes within its reach, the awkward novice is sure to be distressed, and whilst every body about him seems reposing on a bed of down, he alone is picketted upon a seat of thorns: 'till this shall be reformed by the ladies, who profess to understand politeness, I shall turn back to my red-book of forty years ago, to see what relicts of the old court are yet amongst us, and take the mothers for my models in preference to their daughters.

NUMBER CVII.

Alter in obsequium plus æquo pronus, et imi
Derisor lecti, sic nutum divitis horret,
Sic iterat voces, et verba cadentia tollit.

HOR. EPL. 1, 18, 10.

I AM bewildered by the definitions, which metaphysical writers give us of the human passions: I can understand the character of Theophrastus, and am entertained by his sketches; but when your profound thinkers take the subject in hand, they appear to me to dive to the bottom of the deep in search of that which floats upon its surface: if a man in the heat of anger would describe the movements of his mind, he might paint the tempest to the life; but as such descriptions are not to be expected, moral essayists have substituted personification in their place, and by the pleasing introduction of a few natural incidents, form a kind of little drama, in which they make their fictitious hero describe those follies, foibles, and passions, which they who really feel them are not so forward to confess.

When Mr. Locke, in his Essay on the Human Understanding, describes all pity as partaking of contempt, I cannot acknowledge that he is speaking of pity, as I feel it: when I pity a fellow-creature in pain, a woman, for instance, in the throes of childbirth, I cannot submit to own there is any ingredient of so bad a quality as contempt in my pity: but if the metaphysicians tell me that I do not know how to call my feelings by their right name, and that my pity is not pity properly so defined, I will not pretend to dispute with any gentleman whose language I do not understand, and only beg permission to enjoy a sensation, which I call pity, without indulging a propensity which he calls contempt.

The flatterer is a character which the moralists and wits of all times and all nations have ridiculed more severely and more successfully than almost any other; yet it still exists, and a few pages perhaps would not be misapplied, if I was to make room for a civil kind of gentleman of this description, by name Billy Simper, who, having seen his failings in their proper light of ridicule, is willing to expose them to public view, for the amuement, it is hoped, if not for the use and benefit of the reader.

I beg leave, therefore, to introduce Mr. Billy Simper to my candid friends and protectors, and shall leave him to tell his story in his own words.—

I am the youngest son of a younger brother: my father qualified himself for orders in the university of Aberdeen, and by the help of an insinuating address, a soft counter-tenor voice, a civil smile, and a happy flexibility in the vertebræ of his back-bone, recommended himself to the good graces of a right reverend patron, who, after a due course of attendance and dependence, presented him to a comfortable benefice, which enabled him to support a pretty

numerous family of children. The good bishop it seems was passionately fond of the game of chess, and my father, though the better player of the two, knew how to make a timely move so as to throw the victory into his lordship's hands after a hard battle, which was a triumph very grateful to his vanity, and not a little serviceable to my father's purposes.

Under this expert professor I was instructed in all the shifts and movements in the great game of life, and then sent to make my way in the world as well as I was able. My first object was to pay my court to my father's elder brother, the head of our family; an enterprize not less arduous than important. My uncle Antony was a widower, parsimonious, peevish, and recluse; he was rich, however, egregiously self-conceited, and in his own opinion a deep philosopher and metaphysician; by which I would be understood to say that he doubted every thing, disputed every thing, and believed nothing. He had one son, his only child, and him he had lately driven out of doors and disinherited for nonsuiting him in an argument upon the immortality of the soul: here then was an opening no prudent man could miss, who scorned to say his soul was his own, when it stood in the way of his interest: and as I was well tutored beforehand, I no sooner gained admission to the old philosopher, than I so far worked my way into his good graces as to be allowed to take possession of a truckle-bed in a spare garret of the family mansion: envy must have owned, if envy could have looked asquint upon so humble a situation as mine was, that considering what a game I had to play, I managed my cards well; for uncle Antony was an old dog at a dispute, and as that can not well take place, whilst both parties are on the same side, I was forced at times to make battle for

the good of the argument, and seldom failed to find Antony as completely puzzled with the zigzaggeries of his metaphysics, as uncle Toby of more worthy memory was with the horn-works and counter-scraps of his fortifications.

Amongst the various topics, from which Antony's ingenuity drew matter of dispute, some were so truly ridiculous, that if I were sure my reader was as much at leisure to hear, as I am just now to relate them, I should not scruple the recital. One morning having been rather long-winded in describing the circumstances of a dream, that had disturbed his imagination in the night, I thought it not amiss to throw in a remark in the way of consolation upon the falacy of dreams in general. This was enough for him to turn over to the other side, and support the credit of dreams *totis viribus:* I now thought it advisable to trim, and took a middle course between both extremes, by humbly conceiving dreams might be sometimes true and sometimes false: this he contended to be nonsense upon the face of it, and if I would undertake to show they were both true and false, he would engage to prove by sound logic they could be neither one nor the other:—'But why do we begin to talk,' added he 'before we settle what we are are to talk about? What kind of dreams are you speaking of, and how do you distinguish dreams?'—'I see no distinction between them,' I replied; 'Dreams visit our fancies in sleep, and are all, according to Mr. Locke's idea, made up of the waking man's thoughts.'—'Does Mr. Locke say that?' exclaimed my uncle. 'Then Mr. Locke's an impostor for telling you so, and you are a fool for believing him: wiser men than Mr. Locke have settled that matter many centuries before he was born or even *dreamt* of: but perhaps Mr. Locke forgot to tell you how many precise sorts

of dreams there are, and how to denominate and define them? perhaps he forgot that I say.' 'I confessed that I neither knew any thing of the matter myself, nor did I believe the author alluded to had left any clue towards the discovery.

'I thought as much,' retorted my uncle Antony in a tone of triumph, 'and yet this is the man who sets up for an investigator of the human understanding; but I will tell you, Sir, though he could not, that there are neither more nor less than five several sorts of dreams particularly distinguished, and I defy even the seven sleepers themselves to name a sixth. The first of these was by the Greeks denominated *Oneiros*, by the Latins *Somnium*, simply a *Dream*, and you most be asleep to dream it.'—'Granted,' quoth I. 'What is granted?' rejoined the philosopher, 'Not that sleep is in all cases indispensable to the man that dreams.'—'Humph!' quoth I.—My uncle proceeded.

'The second sort of dreams you shall understand was by the aforesaid Greeks called *Orama*, by the Latins *Visio*, or as we may say a *vision*; in this case take notice you may be asleep or you may be awake, or neither, or as it were between both; your eyes may be shut, or they may be open, looking, inwards or outwards or upwards, either with sight or without sight, as it pleases God, but the *vision* you must see, or how else can it rightly be called a vision?'—'True,' replied I, 'there is a sect who are particularly favoured with this kind of visions.' 'Prythee, don't interrupt me,' said my uncle, and again went on.

'The third sort of dreams, to speak according to the Greeks, we shall call *Chrematismos*, according to the Latins we must denominate it *Oraculum*, an *oracle*; now this differs from a *vision*, in as much as it may happen to a man born blind as well as to

Argus himself, for he has nothing for it but to listen, understand and believe, and whatever it tells him shall come true, though in never entered into his head to preconceive one tittle of what is told him: and where is Mr. Locke and his waking thoughts here?'—' He is done for,' I answered, ' there is no disputing against an oracle.'

' The fourth sort,' resumed he, ' is the *Enuption* of the aforesaid Greeks, and answers to the Latin *Insomnium,* which is in fact a dream and no dream, a kind of *reverie,* when a man doses between sleeping and waking, and builds castles, as we say, in the air upon the ramblings of his own fancy.

' The fifth and last sort of dreams is, by Greeks and Latins, mutually styled *Phantasma,* a word adopted into our own language by the greatest poet who ever wrote in it: now this *phantasma* is a visitation peculiar to the first mental absence or slumber, when the man fancies himself yet waking, and in fact can scarce be called asleep; at which time strange images and appearances seem to float before him and terrify his imagination. Here then you have all the several denominations of dreams perfectly distinguished and defined,' quoth the old sophist, and throwing himself back in his chair with an air of triumph, waited for the applause, which I was not backward in bestowing upon this pedantic farrago of dogmatizing dulness.

It will readily be believed that my uncle Antony did not fail to revive his favourite controversy, which had produced such fatal consequence to his discarded son: in fact he held fast with those ancient philosophers, who maintained the eternity of this material world, and as he saw no period when men would not be in existence, no moment in time to come when mortality shall cease, he by consequence argued that there could be no moment in time when

mortality shall commence. There were other points respecting this grand stumbling-block of his philosophy, the human soul, upon which he was equally puzzled, for he sided with Aristotle against Plato in the unintelligible controversy concerning its power of motion: but whilst my uncle Antony was thus unluckily wedded to the wrong side in all cases, where reason ought to have been his guide, in points of mere quibble and sophistry, which reason has nothing to say to, and where a wise man would take neither side, he regularly took both, or hung suspended between them like Socrates in the basket.

Of this sort was the celebrated question—*Ovumne prius fuerit, an gallina*—viz: 'Whether the egg was anterior to the hen, or the hen to the egg?'—This inquiry never failed to interest his passions in a peculiar degree, and he found so much to say on both sides, that he could never well determine which side to be of: at length, however, hoping to bring it to some point, he took up the cause of Egg *versus* Hen, and having composed a learned essay, published it in one of the monthly magazines, as a lure to future controversialists. This essay he had so often avowed in my hearing, and piqued himself so highly upon it, that I must have been dull, indeed, not to have understood how to flatter him upon it: but when he had found month after month slip away, and no body mounting the stage upon his challenge, he felt angry at the contempt with which his labours were passed over, and without imparting to me his purpose, furnished the same magazine with a counter-essay, in which his former argument was handled with an asperity truly controversial, and the hen was triumphantly made to cackle over the new-laid egg, decidedly posterior to herself.

I am inclined to think, that if Antony had any

partiality, it was not to this side; but as the second essay was clearly posterior to the first, whatever the egg may have been to the hen, it had the advantage of being couched in all the spirit of a reply, with an agreeable tinge of the malice of one, so that when at length it came down printed in a fair type, and respectfully posted in the front of the long-wisht-for magazine, his heart beat with joy, and calling out to me in a lofty tone of counterfeited anger, as he run his eye over it—'By the horns of Jupiter Ammon,' quoth he, 'here is a fellow has the confidence to enter the lists against me in the notable question of the egg.'—'Then I hope you will break that egg about his ears,' replied I.—'Hold your tongue, Puppy, and listen,' quoth the sophist, and immediately began to read.

At every pause I was ready with a pooh! or pish! which I hooked in with every mark of contempt I could give it both by accent and action. At the conclusion of the essay my uncle Antony shut the book, and demanded what I thought of the author—'Hang him,' I exclaimed, 'poor Grub-street Garretteer: the fellow is too contemptible for your notice: he can neither write nor reason; he is a mere ignoramus, and does not know the commonest rules of logic; he has no feature of a critic about him, but the malice of one.—'Hold your tongue,' cried Antony, no longer able to contain himself, 'you are a booby; I will maintain it to be as fine an essay as ever was written.'—With these words he snatched up the magazine and departed: I saw no more of him that night, and early next morning was presented by a servant with the following billet:—'The Grub-street Garretteer finds himself no longer fit company for the sagacious Mr. William Simper; therefore desires him, without loss of time, to seek out better society than that

of a 'mere ignoramus, who does not know the common rules of logic:' one rule, however, he makes bold to lay down, which is, Never again to see the face of an impertinent upstart, called William Simper, whilst he remains on this earth.'

A. S.

NUMBER CVIII.

Sunt verba et voces, quibus hunc lenire dolorem
Possis, et magnam morbi deponere partem.

HOR. EPL. 1, 1, 34.

DRIVEN from my uncle Antony's doors by my unlucky mistake between the hen and her egg, my case would have been desperate, but that I had yet one string left to my bow, and this was my aunt, Mrs. Susanna Simper, who lived within a few miles of my uncle, but in such declared hostility, that I promised myself a favourable reception, if I could but flatter her animosity with a sufficient portion of invective; and for this I deemed myself very tolerably qualified, having so much good-will towards the business, and no slight inducements to spur me to it.

My aunt, who was an aged maiden, and a valetudinarian, was at my arrival closeted with her apothecary: upon his departure I was admitted to my audience, in which I acquitted myself with all the address I was master of: my aunt heard my story through, without interrupting me by a single word; at last, fixing her eyes upon me, she said, ''Tis very well, child; you have said enough: your un-

cle's character I perfectly understand; look well to your own, for upon that will depend the terms you and I shall be upon.'—She now took up a phial from the table, and surveying it for some time, said to me—'Here is a nostrum recommended by my apothecary, that promises great things, but perhaps contains none of the wondrous properties it professes to have: the label says it is a carminative, sedative mixture; in other words, it will expel vapours and spasms, and quiet the mind and spirits: do you think it will make good what it promises?'—So whimsical a question put to me at such a moment confounded me not a little, and I only murmured out in reply, that I hoped it would—'Take it then,' said my aunt, 'as you have faith in it; swallow it yourself, and when I see how it operates with you, I may have more confidence in it on my own account.'—I was now in a more awkward dilemma than ever, for she had emptied the dose into a cup, and tendered it to me in so peremptory a manner, that, not knowing how to excuse myself, and being naturally submissive, I silently took the cup with a trembling hand, and swallowed its abominable contents.

'Much good may it do you, child,' cried she, 'you have done more for me than I would for any doctor in the kingdom: don't you find it nauseous to the palate?'—I confest that it was very nauseous. —'And did you think yourself in need of such a medicine?'—'I did not perceive that I was.'—'Then you did not swallow it by your own choice, but my desire?' I had no hesitation in acknowledging that—'Upon my word, child,' she replied, 'you have a very accommodating way with you.' I was now fighting with the cursed drug, and had all the difficulty in life to keep it where it was. My

aunt saw my distress, and smiling at it, demanded if I was not sick: I confest I was rather discomposed in my stomach with the draught.—I don't doubt it,' she replied; 'but as you have so civilly made yourself sick for my sake, cannot you flatter me so far as to be well when I request it? I was just then struggling to keep the nausea down, and though I could not answer, put the best face upon the matter in my power.

A maid-servant came in upon my aunt's ringing her bell.—'Betty,' said she, 'take away these things; this doctor will poison us with his doses.'—'Foh!' cried the wench, 'how it smells!'—'Nay, but only put your lips to the cup,' said the mistress, 'there is enough left for you to taste it—'I taste it! I'll not touch it, I want none of his nasty physic!'—'Well, but though you don't want it,' rejoined the mistress, 'taste it nevertheless, if it be only to flatter my humour.'—'Excuse me, madam,' replied Betty, 'I'll not make myself sick to flatter any body.'—'Humph!' cried my aunt, 'how this wench's want of manners must have shocked you, nephew William! you swallowed the whole dose at a word; she, though my servant, at my repeated command, would not touch it with her lips; but these low-bred creatures have a will of their own!'—There was something in my aunt's manner I did not understand; she puzzled me, and I thought it best to keep myself on the reserve, and wait the further developement of her humour in silence.

We went down to supper: it was elegantly served, and my aunt particularly recommended two or three dishes to me; her hospitality embarrassed me not a little, for my stomach was by no means reconciled; yet I felt myself bound in good manners to eat of her dishes, and commend their

cookery; this I did, though sorely against the grain, and, whilst my stomach rose against its food, I flattered what I nauseated.

A grave, well-looking personage stood at the side-board, with whom my aunt entered into conversation.—'Johnson,' said she, 'I think I must lodge my nephew in your room, which is warm and well aired, and dispose of you in the tapestry chamber, which has not lately been slept in.'—'Madam,' replied Johnson, 'I am ready to give up my bed to Mr. William, at your command; but as to sleeping in the tapestry chamber, you must excuse me.'—'Why?' replied my aunt, 'what is your objection?'—'I am almost ashamed to tell you,' answered Johnson, 'but every body has his humour; perhaps my objection may be none to the young gentleman, but I confess I don't choose to pass the night in a chamber that is under an ill name'—'An ill name for what?' demanded the lady. 'For being haunted,' answered the butler, 'for being visited by noises, and rattling of chains, and apparitions; the gentleman, no doubt, is a scholar, and can account for these things; I am a plain man, and don't like to have my imagination disturbed, nor my rest broken, though it were only by my own fancies. 'What then is to be done?' said my aunt, directing her question to me; 'Johnson don't choose to trust himself in a haunted chamber; I shall have my house brought into discredit by these reports: now, nephew, if you will encounter this ghost, and exercise the chamber by sleeping in it a few nights, I dare say we shall hear no more of it. Are you willing to undertake it?'

I was ashamed to confess my fears, and yet had no stomach to the undertaking; I was also afraid of giving umbrage to my aunt, and impressing her

with an unfavourable opinion of me; I therefore assented, upon the condition of Johnson's taking part of the bed with me: upon which the old lady, turning to her butler, said, 'Well, Johnson, you have no objection to this proposal.'—'Pardon me, Madam,' said he, 'I have such objections to that chamber, that I will not sleep in it for any body living.'—'You see he is obstinate,' said my aunt, 'you must even undertake it alone, or my house will lie under an ill name for ever.' 'Sooner than this shall be the case,' I replied, 'I will sleep in the chamber by myself.' 'You are very polite,' cried my aunt, 'and I admire your spirit: Johnson, light my nephew to his room.' Johnson took up the candle, but absolutely refused to march before me with the light, when we came into the gallery, where, pointing to a door, he told me that was my chamber, and hastily made his retreat down the stairs.

I opened the door with no small degree of terror, and found a chamber comfortably and elegantly furnished, and by no means of that melancholy cast, which I had pictured to myself from Johnson's report of it. My first precaution was to search the closet; I then peeped under the bed, examined the hangings; all was as it should be; nothing seemed to augur a ghost, or, which I take to be worse, the counterfeit of a ghost. I plucked up as good a spirit as I could, said my prayers and turned into bed: with the darkness my terrors returned; I past a sleepless night, though neither ghost nor noise of any sort molested me.

'Why,' said I, within myself, 'could not I be as sincere and peremptory as Johnson? He takes his rest and is at peace, I am sleepless and in terrors: though a servant by condition, in his will he is independent; I, who have not the like call of duty,

have not the same liberty of mind: he refuses what he does not choose to obey; I obey all things, whether I choose them or not: and wherefore do I this? Because I am a flatterer: and why did I swallow a whole nauseous dose to humour my aunt's caprice, which her own chamber-maid, who receives her wages, would not touch with her lips? Because I am a flatterer: and what has this flattery done for me, who am a slave to it? what did I gain by it at my uncle's? I was the echo of his opinions, shifted as they shifted, sided with him against truth, demonstration, reason, and even the evidence of my own senses: abject wretch! I sunk myself in my own esteem first, then lost all shadow of respect with him, and was finally expelled from his doors, whilst I was in the very act of prostituting my own judgement to his gross absurdities: and now again, here I am at my aunt's, devoted to the same mean flattery, that has already so shamefully betrayed me. What has flattery gained for me here? A bitter harvest truly I have had of it; poisoned by an infernal dose, which I had no plea for swallowing; surfeited by dainties I had no appetite to taste, and now condemned to sleepless hours within a haunted chamber, which her own domestic would not consent even to enter; fool that I am to be the dupe of such a vapour as flattery! despicable wretch, not to assert a freedom of will, which is the natural right of every man, and which even servants and hirelings exercise with a spirit I envy, but have not the heart to imitate: I am ashamed of my own meanness: I blush for myself in the comparison, and am determined, if I survive till to-morrow, to assert the dignity of a man, and abide by the consequences.'

In meditations like these night passed away, and the dawn of morning called me from my bed: I rose and refreshed my spirits with a walk through a most

charming plantation: I met a countryman at his work—'Friend,' said I, 'you are early at your labour.'—'Yes,' answered he, ''tis by my labour I live, and whilst I have health and strength to follow it, I have nothing to fear but God alone.' So! thought I, here is a lesson for me; this man is no flatterer; then why do I worship what a clown despises?

I found my aunt ready for breakfast; she questioned me about my night's rest: I answered her with truth that I had enjoyed no rest, but had neither seen nor heard any thing to alarm me, and was persuaded there were no grounds for the report of her chamber being haunted. 'I am as well persuaded as yourself of that,' she replied; 'I know 'tis only one of Johnson's whims; but people you know will have their whims, and it was great courtesy in you to sacrifice a night's rest to his humour: my servants have been spoilt by indulgence, but it is to be hoped they will learn better submission by your example.' There was a sarcastic tone in my aunt's manner of uttering this, which gave it more the air of ridicule than compliment, and I blushed to the eyes with the consciousness of deserving it.

After breakfast she took me into her closet, and desiring me to sit down to a writing-table: 'Nephew,' says she, 'I know my brother Antony full well; he is a tyrant in his nature, a bigot to his opinions, and a man of a most perverted understanding, but he is rich, and you have your fortune to make; he can insult, but you can flatter; he has his weaknesses, and you can avail yourself of them; suppose you write him a penitential letter.'—I now saw the opportunity present for exerting my new-made resolution, and felt a spirit rising within me, that prompted me to deliver myself as follows;

'No, madam, I will neither gratify my uncle's pride, nor lower my own self-esteem, by making him any submission: I despise him for the insults he has put upon me, and myself for having in some sort deserved them; but I will never flatter him or any living creature more; and if I am to forfeit your favour by resisting your commands, I must meet the consequences, and will rather trust to my own labour for support, than depend upon the caprice of any person living; least of all on him.' 'Heyday,' cried my aunt, 'you refuse to write!—you will not do as I advise you?' 'In this particular,' I replied, 'permit me to say I neither can nor will obey you.' 'And you are resolved to think and act for yourself?' 'In the present case I am, and in all cases, let me add, where my honour and my conscience tell me I am right.' 'Then,' exclaimed my aunt, 'I acknowledge you for my nephew: I adopt you from this hour;' and with that she took me by the hand most cordially; 'I saw,' said she, 'or thought I saw the symptoms of an abject spirit in you, and was resolved to put my suspicions to the test; all that has passed here since your coming has been done in concert and by way of trial; your haunted chamber, the pretended fears of my butler, his blunt refusal, all have been experiments to sound your character, and I should totally have despaired of you, had not this last instance of a manly spirit restored you to my esteem: you have now only to persist in the same line of conduct to confirm my good opinion of you, and ensure your own prosperity and happiness.'

Thus I have given my history, and if the example of my reformation shall warn others from the contemptible character, which I have fortunately escaped from, I shall be most happy, being truly

anxious to approve myself the friend of mankind, and the Observer's very sincere will-wisher,

WILL. SIMPER.

NUMBER CIX.

Οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως ἡδὺ ἀνθρώποις ἔφυ
Ὥστ' τὸ λαλέειν τ' ἀλλότρια.

MENANDER.

Still to be tattling, still to prate,
No luxury in life so great.

THE humours and characters of a populous county-town at a distance from the capital, furnish matter of much amusement to a curious observer. I have now been some weeks resident in a place of this description, where I have been continually treated with the private lives and little scandalizing anecdotes of almost every person of any note in it. Having passed most of my days in the capital, I could not but remark the striking difference between it and these subordinate capitals in this particular: in London we are in the habit of looking to our own affairs, and caring little about those, with whom we have no dealings: here every body's business seems to be no less his neighbour's concerns than his own: a set of tattling gossips, including all the idlers in the place, male as well as female, seem to have no other employment for their time or tongue, but to run from house to house, and circulate their silly stories up and down. A few of these contemptible impertinents I shall now describe.

Miss Penelope Tabby is an antiquated maiden of at least forty years standing, a great observer of decorum, and particularly hurt by the behaviour of

two young ladies, who are her next door neighbours, for a custom they have of lolling out of their windows and talking to fellows in the street: the charge cannot be denied, for it is certainly a practice these young ladies indulge themselves in very freely; but, on the other hand, it must be owned, Miss Pen Tabby is also in the habit of lolling out of her window at the same time to stare at them, and put them to shame for the levity of their conduct: they have also the crime proved upon them of being unpardonably handsome, and this they neither can nor will attempt to contradict. Miss Pen Tabby is extremely regular at morning prayers, but she complains heavily of a young staring fellow in the pew next to her own, who violates the solemnity of the service by ogling her at her devotions: he has a way of leaning over the pew, and dangling a white hand ornamented with a flaming paste-ring, which sometimes plays the lights in her eyes, so as to make them water with the reflection, and Miss Pen has this very natural remark ever ready on the occasion—'Such things, you know, are apt to take off one's attention.'

Another of this illustrious junto is Billy Bachelor, an old unmarried petit-maitre: Billy is a courtier of ancient standing; he abounds in anecdotes not of the freshest date, nor altogether of the most interesting sort; for he will tell you how such and such a lady was dressed, when he had the honour of handing her into the drawing-room: he has a court-atalantis of his own, from which he can favour you with some hints of sly doings amongst the maids of honour, particularly of a certain dubious duchess now deceased, for he names no names, who appeared at a certain masquerade *in puris naturalibus*, and other wonderful discoveries, which all the world has long ago known, and long ago been tired of. Billy has a

smattering in the fine arts, for he can net purses, and make admirable coffee, and write sonnets; he has the best receipt in nature for a dentrifice, which he makes up with his own hands, and gives to such ladies as are in his favour, and have an even row of teeth: he can boast some skill in music, for he plays Barbarini's minuet to admiration, and accompanies the airs in the Beggar's Opera on his flute in their original taste: he is also a play-house critic of no mean pretensions, for he remembers Mrs. Woffington, and Quin, and Mrs. Cibber; and when the players come to town, Billy is greatly looked up to, and has been known to lead a clap, where nobody but himself could find a reason for clapping at all. When his vanity is in the cue, Billy Bachelor can talk to you of his amours, and upon occasion stretch the truth to save his credit: particularly in accounting for a certain old lameness in his knee-pan, which some, who are in the secret, know was got by being kicked out of a coffee-house, but which to the world at large he asserts was incurred by leaping out of a window to save a lady's reputation, and escape the fury of an enraged husband.

Dr. Pyeball is a dignitary of the church, and a mighty proficient in the *belles lettres:* he tells you Voltaire was a man of some fancy and had a knack of writing, but he bids you beware of his principles, and doubts if he had any more Christianity than Pontius Pilate: he has wrote an epigram against a certain contemporary historian which cuts him up at a stroke. By a happy jargon of professional phrases, with a kind of Socratic mode of arguing, he has so bamboozled the dons of the cathedral, as to have effected a total revolution in their church music, making Purcell, Crofts, and Handel give place to a quaint, quirkish style, little less capricious than if the organist was to play co-

tillions, and the dean and chapter dance to them. The doctor is a mighty admirer of those ingenious publications, which are entitled *The Flowers* of the several authors they are selected from: this short cut to Parnassus not only saves him a great deal of round-about riding, but supplies him with many an apt couplet for off-hand quotations, in which he is very expert, and has besides a clever knack of weaving them into his pulpit essays, for I will not call them sermons, in much the same way as 'Tiddy-Doll stuck *plums* on his short pigs, and his long pigs, and his pigs with a curly tail.' By a proper sprinkling of these spiritual nosegays, and the recommendation of a soft insinuating address, Doctor Pyeball is universally cried up as a very pretty genteel preacher, one who understands the politeness of the pulpit, and does not surfeit well-bred people with more religion than they have stomachs for. Amiable Miss Pen Tabby is one of his warmest admirers, and declares Doctor Pyeball in his gown and cassock is quite the man of fashion: the ill-natured world will have it she has contemplated him in other situations with equal approbation.

Elegant Mrs. Dainty is another ornament of this charming cotérie: she is separated from her husband, but the eye of malice never spied a speck upon her virtue; his manners were insupportable, she, good lady, never gave him the least provocation, for she was always sick and mostly confined to her chamber in nursing a delicate constitution: noises racked her head, company shook her nerves all to pieces; in the country she could not live, for country doctors and apothecaries knew nothing of her case: in London she could not sleep, unless the whole street was littered with straw. Her husband was a man of no refinement; 'all the fine feelings of the human heart' were heathen Greek to him; he

loved his friend, had no quarrel with his bottle, and, coming from his club one night a little flustered, his horrid dalliances threw Mrs. Dainty into strong hysterics, and the covenanted truce being now broken, she kept no further terms with him, and they separated. It was a step of absolute necessity, for she declares her life could no otherwise have been saved; his boisterous familiarities would have been her death. She now leads an uncontaminated life, supporting a feeble frame by medicine, sipping her tea with her dear quiet friends every evening, chatting over the little news of the day, sighing charitably when she hears any evil of her kind neighbours, turning off her femme-de-chambre once a week or thereabouts, fondling her lap-dog, who is a dear sweet pretty creature, and so sensible, and taking the air now and then on a pillion behind faithful John, who is so careful of her and so handy, and at the same time one of the stoutest, handsomest, best-limbed lads in all England.

Sir Hugo Fitz-Hugo is a decayed baronet of a family so very ancient, that they have long since worn out the estate that supported them. Sir Hugo knows his own dignity none the less, and keeps a little snivelling boy, who can scarce move under the load of worsted lace that is plastered down the edges and seams of his livery: he leaves a visiting card at your door, stuck as full of emblems as an American paper dollar. Sir Hugo abominates a tradesman; his olfactory nerves are tortured with the scent of a grocer, or a butcher, quite across the way; and as for a tallow-chandler, he can wind him to the very end of the street; these are people, whose visits he cannot endure; their very bills turn his stomach upside down. Sir Hugo inveighs against modern manners as severely as Cato would against French cookery; he notes down omissions

in punctilio as a merchant does bills for protesting: and in cold weather Sir Hugo is of some use, for he suffers no man to turn his back to the fire and screen it from the company who sit round: he holds it for a solecism in good-breeding for any man to touch a lady's hand without his glove: this as a general maxim Miss Pen Tabby agrees to, but doubts whether there are not some cases when it may be waved: he anathematizes the heresy of a gentleman's sitting at the head of a lady's table, and contends that the honours of the upper dish are the unalienable rights of the mistress of the family: in short, Sir Hugo Fitz-Hugo has more pride about him than he knows how to dispose of, and yet cannot find in his heart to bestow one atom of it upon honesty: from the world he merits no other praise, but that of having lived single all his life, and being the last of his family; at his decease the Fitz-Hugos will be extinct.

This society may also boast a tenth muse in the person of the celebrated Rhodope: her talents are multifarious: poetical, biographical, epistolary, miscellaneous: she can reason like Socrates, dispute like Aristotle, and love like Sappho; her magnanimity equals that of Marc Antony; for when the world was at her feet, she sacrificed it *all for love*, and accounted it *well lost*. She was a philosopher in her leading-strings, and had travelled geographically over the globe ere she could set one foot fairly before the other: her cradle was rocked to the iambic measure, and she was lulled to sleep by singing to her an ode of Horace. Rhodope has written a book of travels full of most enchanting incidents, which some of her admirers say was actually sketched in the nursery, and only filled up with little temporary touches in her riper years: I know they make appeal to her style as internal evidence of what they assert

about the nursery; but though I am ready to admit that it has every infantine charm, which they discover in it, yet I cannot go the length of thinking with them, that a mere infant could possibly dictate any thing so nearly approaching to the language of men and women: we all know that Goody Two-shoes, and other amusing books, though written for children, were not written by children. Rhodope has preserved some singular curiosities in her museum: she has a bottle of coagulated foam, something like the congealed blood of Saint Januarius: this she maintains was the veritable foam of the tremendous Minotaur of Crete of immortal memory; there are some, indeed, who profess to doubt this, and assert that it is nothing more than the slaver of a noble English mastiff, which went tame about her house, and, though formidable to thieves and interlopers, was ever gentle and affectionate to honest men. She has a lyre in fine preservation, held to be the identical lyre which Phaon played upon, when he won the heart of the amorous Sappho; this also is made matter of dispute amongst the *cognoscenti;* these will have it to be a common Italian instrument, such as the ladies of that country play upon to this day; this is a point they must settle as they can, but all agree it is a well-strung instrument, and *discourses sweet music.* She has in her cabinet an evergreen of the cypress race, which is supposed to be the very individual shrub that led up the ball when Orpheus fiddled and the groves began a vegetable dance; and this they tell you was the origin of all country dances, now in such general practice. She has also in her possession the original epistle which King Agenor wrote to Europa, dissuading her from her ridiculous partiality for her favourite bull, when Jupiter in the form of that animal took her off in spite of all Agenor's remonstrances, and carried

her across the sea with him upon a tour, that has immortalized her name through the most enlightened quarter of the globe: Rhodope is so tenacious of this manuscript, that she rarely indulges the curiosity of her friends with a sight of it; she has written an answer in Europa's behalf after the manner of Ovid's epistle, in which she makes a very ingenious defence for her heroine, and every body, who has seen the whole of the correspondence, allows that Agenor writes like a man who knew little of human nature, and that Rhodope in her reply has the best of the argument.

NUMBER CX.

Homo extra est corpus suum cùm irascitur.

P. SYRUS.

It is wonderful to me that any man will surrender himself to be the slave of peevish and irascible humours, that annoy his peace, impair his health, and hurt his reputation. Who does not love to be greeted in society with a smile? Who lives that is insensible to the frowns, the sneers, the curses of his neighbours? What can be more delightful than to enter our own doors amidst the congratulations of a whole family, and to bring a cheerful heart into a cheerful house? Foolish, contemptible self-tormentors ye are, whom every little accident irritates, every slight omission piques! Surely we should guard our passions as we would any other combustibles, and not spread open the inflammable

magazine to catch the first spark that may blow it and ourselves into the air.

Tom Tinder is one of these touchy blockheads, whom nobody can endure; the fellow has not a single plea in life for his ill temper; he does not want money, is not married, has a great deal of health to spare, and never once felt the slightest twinge of the gout. His eyes no sooner open to the morning light than he begins to quarrel with the weather; it rains, and he wanted to ride; it is sunshine, and he meant to go a fishing; he would hunt only when it is a frost, and never thinks of skating but in open weather; in short the wind is never in the right quarter with this testy fellow; and though I could excuse a man for being a little out of humour with an easterly wind, Tom Tinder shall box the whole compass, and never set his needle to a single point of good humour upon the face of it.

He now rings his bell for his servant to begin the operation of dressing him, a task more ticklish than to wait upon the toilet of a monkey: as Tom shifts his servants about as regularly as he does his shirt, 'tis all the world to nothing if the poor devil does not stumble at starting; or if by happy inspiration he should begin with the right foot foremost, Tom has another inspiration ready at command to quarrel with him for not setting forward with the left; to a certainty then the razor wants strapping, the shaving water is smoked, and the devil's in the fellow for a dunce, booby, and blockhead.

Tom now comes down to breakfast, and though the savage has the stomach of an ostrich, there is not a morsel passes down his blaspheming throat without a damn to digest it; 'twould be a less dangerous task to serve in the morning mess to a fasting bear. He then walks forth into his garden;

there he does not meet a plant, which his ill-humour does not engraft with the bitter fruit of cursing; the wasps have pierced his nectarines; the caterpillars have raised contributions upon his cabbages, and the infernal blackbirds have eaten up all his cherries: Tom's soul is not large enough to allow the denizens of creation a taste of Nature's gifts, though he surfeits with the superabundance of her bounty.

He next takes a turn about his farm; there vexation upon vexation crosses him at every corner: the fly, a plague upon't, has got amongst his turnips; the smut has seized his wheat, and his sheep are falling down with the rot: all this is the fault of his bailiff, and at his door the blame lies with a proportionable quantity of blessings to recommend it. He finds a few dry sticks pickt out of *his* hedges, and he blasts all the poor in his neighbourhood for a set of thieves, pilferers, and vagabonds. He meets one of his tenants by the way, and he has a petition for a new gate to his farm-yard, or some repairs to his dove-house, or it may be a new threshing-floor to his barn—hell and fury! there is no end to the demands of these cursed farmers—his stomach rises at the request, and he turns aside speechless with rage, and in this humour pays a visit to his masons and carpenters, who are at work upon a building he is adding to his offices: here his choler instead of subsiding only flames more furiously, for the idle rascals have done nothing; some have been making holiday, others have gone to the fair at the next town, and the master workman has fallen from the scaffold, and keeps his bed with the bruises: every devil is conjured up from the bottomless pit to come on earth and confound these dilatory miscreants; and now let him go to his dinner with what stomach he may. If a humble parson or depend-

ant cousin expects a peaceful meal at his table, he may as well sit down to feed with Thyestes or the Centaurs. After a meal of misery and a glass of wine, which ten to one but the infernal butler has clouded in the decanting, he is summoned to a game at back-gammon: the parson throws size-ace, and in a few more casts covers all his points: the devil's in the dice! Tom makes a blot, and the parson hits it: he takes up man after man, all his points are full, and Tom is gammoned past redemption—can flesh and blood bear this? Was ever such a run of luck? The dice-box is slapt down with a vengeance: the tables ring with the deafening crash, the parson stands aghast, and Tom stamps the floor in the phrensy of passion—despicable passion! miserable dependant!

Where is his next resource? the parson has fled the pit; the back-gammon table is closed; no cheerful neighbour knocks at his unsocial gate; silence and night and solitude are his melancholy inmates; his boiling bosom labours like a turbid sea after the winds are lulled; shame stares him in the face; conscience plucks at his heart, and, to divert his own tormenting thoughts, he calls in those of another person, no matter whom—the first idle author that stands next to his hand: he takes up a book; 'tis a volume of comedies: he opens it at random: 'tis all alike to him where he begins; all our poets put together are not worth a halter; he stumbles by mere chance upon 'The Choleric Man:' 'twas one to a thousand he should strike upon that blasted play—What an infernal title! What execrable nonsense! What a canting, preaching puppy of an author! Away goes the poet with his play, and half a dozen better poets than himself bound up in the same luckless volume, the innocent sufferers for his offence.

Tom now sits forlorn, disgusted, without a friend living or dead to cheer him, gnawing his own heart for want of other diet to feed his spleen upon: at length he slinks into a comfortless bed; damns his servant as he draws the curtains round him, drops asleep and dreams of the devil.

Major Manlove is a near neighbour, but no intimate of Tom Tinder's: with the enjoyments that result from health, the Major is but rarely blest, for a body-wound, which he received in battle, is apt upon certain changes of the climate to visit him with acute pains. He is married to one of the best of women: but she has too impaired her health by nursing him when he was wounded, and is subject to severe rheumatic attacks. Love, however, has an opiate for all her pains, and domestic peace pours a balsam into the husband's wound. It is only by the scrutinizing eye of affection, that either can discover when the other suffers, for religion has endowed both hearts with patience, and neither will permit a complaint to escape, which might invite the sympathizing friend to share its anguish. Disabled for service, Major Manlove has retired upon half-pay, and as he plundered neither the enemy's country nor his own during the war, he is not burthened with the superfluities of fortune; happily for him these are not amongst his regrets, and a prudent economy keeps him straight with the world and independent.

One brave youth, trained under his own eye in the same regiment with himself, is all the offspring Heaven hath bestowed upon this worthy father, and in him the hearts of the fond parents are centred; yet not so centred, as to shut them against the general calls of philanthropy; for, in the village where they live, they are beloved and blessed by every creature. The garden furnishes amusement to Mrs.

Manlove, and when the sharp north-east does not blow pain into the Major's wound, he is occupied with his farm: his trees, his crops, his cattle are his nurslings, and the poor that labour in his service are his children and friends. To his superiors Major Manlove deports himself with that graceful respect, that puts them in mind of their own dignity without diminishing his; to his inferiors he is ever kind and condescending: to all men he maintains a natural sincerity, with a countenance so expressive of the benevolence glowing in his heart, that he is beloved as soon as known, and known as soon as seen. With a soul formed for society, and a lively flow of spirits, this amiable man no sooner enters into company, than his presence diffuses joy and gladness over the whole circle: every voice bids him welcome; every hand is reached out to greet him with a cordial shake. He sits down with a complacent smile; chimes in with the conversation as it is going, hears all, overbears none, damps nobody's jest, if it is harmless; cuts no man's story if it is only tedious, and is the very life and soul of the table.

According to annual custom I passed some days with him last autumn: there is a tranquillity, which transpires from the master and mistress of this family through every member belonging to it; the servants are few, but so assiduous in their respective stations, that you can be no where better waited on: the table is plain, but elegant, and though the Major himself is no sportsman, and has done carrying a gun, the kindness of his neighbours keeps him well supplied with game, and every sort of rural luxury, that their farms and gardens can furnish. Nothing can be more delightful than the face of the country about him, and I was charmed with his little ornamented farm in particular: the disposition

of the garden, and the abundance of its fruits and flowers bespeak Mrs. Manlove no common adept in that sweet and captivating science.

One day as my friend and I were riding through the fields to enjoy the western breeze of a fine September morning, our ears were saluted with the full chorus of the hounds from a neighbouring copse, and as we were crossing one of the pastures towards them, we heard two men at high words behind a thick hedge, that concealed them from our sight, and soon after the sound of blows which seemed to be heaivly laid on, accompanied with oaths and cries that made us push to the next gate, with all the speed we could muster. One of the combatants was lying on the ground, roaring for mercy under the cudgel of his conqueror, who was belabouring him at a furious rate: the person of the victor was unknown to Major Manlove: the vanquished soon made him recognize the rueful features of Tom Tinder, who called upon the Major by name to interpose and save him from being murdered.

This was no sooner done than the cudgeller, who was a sturdy clown, gave us to understand, that he had been doing no more than every Englishman has a right to do, returning the loan of a blow with proper interest to the lender: this the prostrate hero did not deny, but asserted that the rascal had headed the hare as she was breaking cover, and turned her into the wood again, by which means he had spoilt the day's sport.—'And did you this designedly?' said the Major. 'Not I, master,' replied the countryman, 'as Heaven shall judge me! I love the sport too well to spoil it wilfully: but if I was travelling along the road just as puss was popping through the hedge, could I help it? Am I in the fault? And should this gentleman, if he be a gentleman, ride up to me as if he would have trampled me like a dog

under his horse's feet, and lay the butt of his whip upon my scull? I think no man can bear that; so I pulled him out of the saddle, and banged him well, and I think no good man as you appear to be, will say otherwise than that he well deserved it. If this be so, answered the Major, I can say nothing to the contrary.—How, Sir, exclaimed the squire, who was now upon his leg, , a rascal like this to return blow for blow, and does Major Manlove abet him in such insolence?—I am sorry, Sir, replied the Major, calmly, you should put such a question to me; but when gentlemen lose their temper—Sir, quoth Tom, interrupting him, I have lost my horse, and that's the worse loss of the two—'Tis what you are least used to, replied the Major, and without more words quietly trotted homewards.

As we jogged along my friend began to comment with such pleasantry upon this ridiculous incident, interlarding his discourse every now and then with remarks of a more serious sort upon the ill effects of a hasty temper, and giving me some traits of his neighbour's habits of life, which, though not so uncommon as I could wish, were nevertheless such as, when contrasted with his benevolent character, may perhaps serve to furnish out no very unedifying topic for an Essay in 'The Observer.'

NUMBER CXI.

Neque lex est justior ulla
Quam necis artifices arte perire suâ.

We have heard so much of the tragical effects of jealousy, that I was not a little pleased with an ac-

count lately given me of a gentleman, who has been happily cured of his jealousy without any of those melancholy circumstances, which too frequently result from that fatal passion, even when it is groundless: as this gentleman's jealousy was of that description, I am the rather tempted to relate the story, under proper caution as to names and persons, because there is a moral justice in its catastrophe, which is pleasing even in fiction, but more particularly so when we meet it in the real occurrences of life.

Sir Paul Testy in his forty-eighth year married the beautiful Louisa in her eighteenth: there are some parents, who seem to think a good settlement can atone for any disparity of age, and Louisa's were of this sort. Sir Paul had a maiden sister several years younger than himself, who had kept his house for some time before his marriage with Louisa, and as this lady was in fact an admirable economist, and also in possession of a very considerable independent fortune, the prudent baronet took his measures for her continuance in his family, where, under pretence of assisting the inexperience of his young bride, she still maintained her government in as absolute authority as ever: as Miss Rachel would have been better pleased with her brother, had he chosen a wife with less beauty and more fortune than Louisa brought into the family, it may well be doubted if she would have remained with him after his marriage, had she not been pretty far advanced in an affair of the heart with a certain young gentleman, whose attentions, though in fact directed to her purse, she was willing to believe had ben honourably addressed to her person; this young gentleman, whom I shall call Lionel, was undoubtedly an object well deserving the regards of any lady

in Miss Rachel's predicament; with a fine person and engaging address, he had the recommendation of high birth, being a younger son of the Lord Mortimer, a venerable old peer, who resided at his family mansion within a few miles of Sir Paul, and lived upon the most friendly terms with him in a frequent intercourse of visits: Lionel had given this worthy father great uneasiness from his early dissipation and extravagance; considerable sums had been paid for him to clear his debts, but the old lord's estate being a moderate one, and entailed upon his eldest son, Lionel had been obliged to sell out of the army, and was now living at home upon the bounty of his father, on a reduced and slender allowance.

It is not to be wondered at that Lionel, who felt his own embarrassments too sensibly to neglect any fair means of getting rid of them, should be willing to repair his shattered fortunes by an advantageous match; and though Miss Rachel was not exactly the lady he would have chosen, yet he very justly considered that his circumstances did not entitle him to choose for himself; he was also strongly urged to the measure by his father, to whose wishes he held himself bound to conform, not only on the score of duty, but of atonement likewise: at this time the affair was in so promising a train, that there is little doubt but it would have been brought to a conclusion between the parties, had not Sir Paul's marriage taken place as it did; but as Miss Rachel, for reasons which are sufficiently explained, determined upon remaining with her brother, the intercourse between the lovers was renewed, as soon as Sir Paul had brought home his bride, and was sufficiently settled to receive the visits of his friends and neighbours on the occasion.

Now it was that the unhappy Rachel became a

victim to the most tormenting of all human passions: her sister-in-law had a thousand charms, and she soon discovered, or fancied she discovered, that Lionel's attentions were directed towards a fairer object than herself: she had now the strongest of all motives for keeping a watchful eye upon Louisa's behaviour, and it is the property of jealousy to magnify and discolour every thing it looks upon; for some time, however, she kept herself under prudent restraint; a hint now and then, cautiously introduced in the way of advice, was all she ventured upon; but these hints were so little attended to by Louisa, whose innocent gaiety lent no ear to such remonstrances, that they were occasionally repeated in a graver tone; as these grew more and more peevish, Louisa began to take a little mischievous pleasure in teazing, and was piqued into a behaviour, which probably she would never have indulged herself in towards Lionel, had not Rachel's jealousy provoked her to it; still it was innocent, but so far imprudent, as it gave a handle to Rachel's malice, who now began to sow the seeds of discontent in her brother's irritable bosom.

In one of those sparring dialogues, which now frequently passed between the sisters, Rachel, after descanting upon the old topic with some degree of asperity, concluded her lecture with many professions of zeal for Louisa's happiness, and observed to her, as an apology for the freedom of her advice, that she had a right to some little experience of the world more than had yet fallen to the other's lot; to which Louisa replied with some tartness—'True! for you have lived more years in it than I have.'—'A few, perhaps,' answered Rachel.—'As few or as many as you choose to acknowledge,' added Louisa: 'it is one amongst a variety of advantages over me, which you are too generous to

boast of, and I am too humble to repine at.'—'Be that as it may,' said the elder damsel, 'you will give me leave to observe, that you have a double call upon you for discretion; you are a married woman.'

'Perhaps that very circumstance may be a proof of my indiscretion.'

'How so, madam! I may venture to say my brother Sir Paul, was no unseasonable match for your ladyship; at least I can witness some pains were employed on your part to obtain him.'

'Well, my dear sister,' replied Louisa, with an affected nonchalance, 'after so much pains is it not natural I should wish to repose myself a little?'—'Indiscretion admits of no repose; health, honour, happiness are sacrificed by its effects; it saps the reputation of a wife; it shakes the affections of a husband.'

'Be content!' cried Louisa, 'if you will give no cause for disturbing the affections of the husband, I will take care none shall be given for attainting the reputation of the wife.'

At this moment Sir Paul entered the room, and perceiving by the countenances of the ladies, that they were not perfectly in good-humour with each other, eagerly demanded of Louisa why she looked so grave.

'I would look grave if I could,' she replied, 'out of complimeut to my company; but I have so light a conscience and so gay a heart, that I cannot look gravity in the face without laughing at it.'

This was delivered with so pointed a glance at Rachel, that it was not possible to mistake the application, and she had no sooner left the room, than an explanation took place between the brother and sister, in the course of which Rachel artfully contrived to infuse such a copious portion of her

own poisonous jealousy into the bosom of Sir Paul, that upon the arrival of Lord Mortimer, which was at this crisis announced to him, he took a sudden determination to give him to understand, how necessary it was become to his domestic happiness, that Lionel should be induced to discontinue his visits in his family.

Under these impressions, and in a very awkward state of mind, Sir Paul repaired to his library, where Lord Mortimer was expecting him in a situation of no less embarrassment, having conned over a speech for the purpose of introducing a proposal for an alliance between the families, and with a view to sound how Sir Paul might stand affected towards a match between his son Lionel and Miss Rachel.

As soon as the first ceremonies were over, which were not very speedily dismissed, as both parties were strict observers of the old rules of breeding, his lordship began after his manner, to wind about by way of reconnoitring his ground, and having composed his features with much gravity and deliberation, began to open his honourable trenches as follows—'In very truth, Sir Paul, I protest to you there are few things in life can give me more pleasure than to find my son Lionel so assiduous in his visits to this family.'—The baronet, whose mind at this moment was not capable of adverting to any other idea but what had reference to his own jealousy, stared with amazement at this unexpected address, and was staggered how to reply to it: at last, with much hesitation, in a tone of ill counterfeited raillery, he replied, that he truly believed there was one person in his family, to whom Mr. Lionel's visits were particularly acceptable: and as this was a subject very near his heart, nay, that alone upon which the honour and happiness of him

and his family depended, he assured his lordship that it was with avidity he embraced the opportunity of coming to an explanation, which he hoped would be as confidential on his lordship's part, as it should be on his own. There was something in the manner of Sir Paul's delivery, as well as in the matter of the speech itself, which alarmed the hereditary pride of the old peer, who, drawing himself up with great dignity, observed to Sir Paul, that for his son Lionel he had this to say, that want of honour was never amongst his failings; nay, it was never to be charged with impunity against any member of his family, and that to prevent any imputation of this sort from being grounded upon his son's assiduities to a certain lady, he had now sought this interview and explanation with his good friend and neighbour.

This was so kind a lift in Sir Paul's conception towards his favourite point, that he immediately exclaimed—'I see your lordship is not unapprised of what is too conspicuous to be overlooked by any body who is familiar in this house; but as I know your lordship is a man of the nicest honour in your own person, I should hold myself essentially bound to you, if you would prevail upon your son to adopt the like principles towards a certain lady under this roof, and caution him to desist from those assiduities, which you yourself have noticed, and which, to confess the truth to you, I cannot be a witness to without very great uneasiness and discontent.'

Upon these words the peer started from his seat as nimbly as age would permit him, and with great firmness replied—'Sir Paul Testy, if this be your wish and desire, let me assure you, it shall be mine also; my son's visits in this family will never be

repeated; set your heart at rest: Lionel Mortimer will give you and your's no further disturbance.'

'My lord,' answered the baronet, 'I am penetrated with the sense of your very honourable proceedings, and the warmth with which you have expressed yourself on a subject so closely interwoven with my peace of mind; you have eased my heart of its burthen, and I shall ever be most grateful to you for it.'

'Sir,' replied the peer, 'there is more than enough said on the subject; I dare say my son will survive his disappointment.'—'I dare say he will,' said Sir Paul; 'I cannot doubt the success of Mr. Lionel's attentions; I have only to hope he will direct them to some other object.'

Lord Mortimer now muttered something which Sir Paul did not hear, nor perhaps attend to, and took a hasty leave. When it is explained to the reader that Miss Rachel had never, even in the most distant manner, hinted the situation of her heart to her brother, on the contrary had industriously concealed it from him, this *mal-entendu* will not appear out of nature and probability. Lionel, whose little gallantries with Louisa had not gone far enough seriously to engage his heart, was sufficiently tired of his mercenary attachment to Miss Rachel; so that he patiently submitted to his dismission, and readily obeyed his father's commands by a total discontinuance of his visits to Sir Paul: to the ladies of the family this behaviour appeared altogether mysterious; Sir Paul kept the secret to himself, and watched Louisa very narrowly: when he found she took no other notice of Lionel's neglect, than by slightly remarking, that she supposed he was more agreeably engaged, he began to dismiss his jealousy and regain his spirits.

It was far otherwise with the unhappy Rachel; her heart was on the rack; for though she naturally suspected her brother's jealousy of being the cause of Lionel's absence, yet she could not account for his silence towards herself in any other way than by supposing that Louisa had totally drawn off his affections from her, and this was agony not to be supported; day after day passed in anxious expectation of a letter to explain this cruel neglect, but none came; all communication with the whole family of Lord Mortimer was at a stop; no intelligence could be obtained from that quarter, and to all such inquiries as she ventured to try upon her brother, he answered so drily, that she could gather nothing from him: in the mean time, as he became hourly better reconciled to Louisa, so he grew more and more cool to the miserable Rachel, who now too late discovered the fatal consequences of interfering between husband and wife, and heartily reproached herself for her officiousness in aggravating his jealousy.

Whilst she was tormenting herself with these reflections, and when Louisa seemed to have forgotten that ever such a person as Lionel existed, a report was circulated that he was about to be married to a certain lady of great rank and fortune, and that he had gone up with Lord Mortimer to town for that purpose. There wanted only this blow to make Rachel's agonies complete; in a state of mind, little short of phrensy, she betook herself to her chamber, and there shutting herself up, she gave vent to her passion, in a letter fully charged with complaints and reproaches, which she committed to a trusty messenger, with strict injunctions to deliver it into Lionel's own hand, and return with his answer: this commission was faithfully performed, and the following is the answer she received in return:

'MADAM,

'I am no less astonished than affected by your letter: if your brother has not long since informed you of his conference with my father, and the result of it, he has acted as unjustly by you as he has by my Lord Mortimer and myself: when my father waited upon Sir Paul, for the express purpose of making known to him the hopes I had the ambition to entertain of rendering myself acceptable to you upon a proposal of marriage, he received at once so short and peremptory a dismission on my behalf, that, painful as it was to my feelings, I had no part to act but silently to submit and withdraw myself from a family, where I was so unacceptable an intruder.

'When I confirm the truth of the report you have heard, and inform you that my marriage took place this very morning, you will pardon me if I add no more than that I have the honour to be,

'Madam, your most obedient
'And most humble servant,
'LIONEL MORTIMER.'

Every hope being extinguished by the receipt of this letter, the disconsolate Rachel became henceforth one of the most miserable of human beings: after venting a torrent of rage against her brother, she turned her back upon his house for ever, and undetermined where to fix, whilst at intervals she can scarce be said to be in possession of her senses, she is still wandering from place to place in search of that repose, which is not to be found, and wherever she goes exhibits a melancholy spectacle of disappointed envy and self-tormenting spleen.

NUMBER CXII.

'WHAT good do you expect to do by your Observers?' said a certain person to me t'other day: as I knew the man to be a notorious *damper*, I parried his question, as I have often parried other plump questions, by answering nothing, without appearing to be mortified or offended: to say the truth, I do not well know what answer I could have given, had I been disposed to attempt it: I shall speak very ingenuously upon the subject to my candid readers, of whose indulgence I have had too many proofs to hesitate at committing to them all that is in my heart relative to our past or future intercourse and connexion.

When I first devoted myself to this work, I took it up at a time of leisure and a time of life when I conceived myself in a capacity for the undertaking; I flattered myself I had talents and materials sufficient to furnish a collection of miscellaneous essays, which through a variety of amusing matter should convey instruction to some, entertainment to most, and disgust to none of my readers. To effect these purposes I studied in the first place to simplify and familiarize my style by all means short of inelegance, taking care to avoid all pedantry and affectation, and never suffering myself to be led astray by the vanity of florid periods and laboured declamation: at the same time I resolved not to give my morals an austere complexion, nor convey reproof in a magisterial tone, for I did not hold it necessary to be angry in order to persuade the world that I was in earnest; as I am not the age's censor either by

office or profession, nor am possessed of any such superiorities over other men as might justify me in assuming a task to which nobody has invited me, I was sensible I had no claim upon the public for their attention, but what I could earn by zeal and diligence, nor any title to their candour and complacency but upon the evidence of those qualities on my own part. As I have never made particular injuries a cause for general complaints, I am by no means out of humour with the world, and it has been my constant aim throughout the progress of these papers to recommend and instil a principle of universal benevolence; I have to the best of my power endeavoured to support the Christian character by occasional remarks upon the evidences and benefits of Revealed Religion: and as the sale and circulation of these volumes have exceeded my most sanguine hopes, I am encouraged to believe that my endeavours are accepted, and if so, I trust there is no arrogance in presuming some good may have resulted from them.

I wish I could contribute to render men mild and merciful towards each other, tolerating every peaceable member who mixes in our community without annoying its established church: I wish I could inspire an ardent attachment to our beloved country, qualified however with the gentlest manners, and a beaming charity towards the world at large: I wish I could persuade contemporaries to live together as friends and fellow-travellers, emulating each other without acrimony, and cheering even rivals in the same pursuit with that liberal spirit of patriotism, which takes a generous interest in the success of every art and science, that embellish or exalt the age and nation we belong to: I wish I could devise some means to ridicule the proud man out of his folly, the voluptuary out of his false

pleasures; if I could find one conspicuous example, only one, amongst the great and wealthy, of an estate administered to my entire content, I should hold it up with exultation; but when I review their order, from the wretch who hoards to the madman who squanders, I see no one to merit other praise than of a preference upon comparison; as for the domestic bully, who is a brute within his own doors and a sycophant without, the malevolent defamer of mankind, and the hardened reviler of religion, they are characters so incorrigible, and held in such universal detestation, that there is little chance of making any impression upon their nature, and no need for provoking any greater contempt, than the world is already disposed to entertain for them; I am happy in believing that the time does not abound in such characters, for my observations in life have not been such as should dispose me to deal in melancholy descriptions and desponding lamentations over the enormities of the age; too many, indeed, may be found, who are languid in the practice of religion, and not a few, who are flippant in their conversation upon it; but let these senseless triflers call to mind, if they can, one single instance of a man, however eminent for ingenuity, who either by what he has written, or by what he has said, has been able to raise a well-founded ridicule at the expense of true religion; enthusiasm, superstition and hypocrisy may give occasion for raillery, but against pure religion the wit of the blasphemer carries no edge; the weapon when struck upon that shield, shivers in the assassin's hand, the point flies back upon his breast, and plunges to his heart.

I have not been inattentive to the interests of the fair sex, and have done my best to laugh them out of their fictitious characters: on the plain ground of truth and nature they are the ornaments of creation,

but in the maze of affectation all their charms are lost. Where vice corrupts one, vanity betrays an hundred; out of the many disgraceful instances of nuptial infidelity upon record, few have been the wretches, whom a natural depravity has made desperate, but many and various are the miseries, which have been produced by vanity, by resentment, by fashionable dissipation, by the corruption of bad example, and most of all by the fault and neglect of the husband.

They have associated with our sex to the profit of their understandings and the prejudice of their morals: we are beholden to them for having softened our ferocity and dispelled our gloom; but it is to be regretted that any part of that pedantic character, which they remedied in us, should have infected their manners. A lady, who has quick talents, ready memory, and ambition to shine in conversation, a passion for reading, and who is withal of a certain age or person to despair of conquering with her eyes, will be apt to send her understanding into the field, and it is well if she does not make a ridiculous figure before her literary campaign is over. If the old stock of our female pedants were not so busy in recruiting their ranks with young novitiates, whose understandings they distort by their training, we would let them rust out and spend their short annuity of nonsense without annoying them; but whilst they will be seducing credulous and inconsiderate girls into their circle, and transforming youth and beauty into unnatural and monstrous shapes, it becomes the duty of every knight-errant in morality to sally forth to the rescue of these hag-ridden and distressed damsels.

It cannot be supposed I mean to say that genius ought not to be cultivated in one sex as well as in the other; the object of my anxiety is the preserva-

tion of the female character, by which I understand those gentle unassuming manners and qualities peculiar to the sex, which recommend them to our protection and endear them to our hearts; let their talents and acquirements be what they may, they should never be put forward in such a manner as to overshadow and keep out of sight those feminine and proper requisites, which are fitted to the domestic sphere, and are indispensable qualifications for the tender and engaging duties of wife and mother; they are not born to awe and terrify us into subjection by the flashes of their wit or the triumphs of their understanding: their conquests are to be effected by softer approaches, by a genuine delicacy of thought, by a simplicity and modesty of soul, which stamp a grace upon every thing they act or utter. All this is compatible with every degree of excellence in science or art; in fact it is characteristic of superior merit, and amongst the many instances of ladies now living, who have figured as authors or artists, there are very few, who are not, as conspicuous for the natural grace of character as for talents; prattlers and pretenders there may be in abundance, who fortunately for the world do not annoy us any otherwise than by their loquacity and impertinence.

Our age and nation have just reason to be proud of the genius of our women; the advances they have made within a short period are scarcely credible, and I reflect upon them with surprise and pleasure: it behoves every young man of fashion now to look well to himself, and provide some fund of information and knowledge, before he commits himself to societies where the sexes mix: every thing that can awaken his ambition, or alarm his sense of shame, call upon him for the exertions of study, and the improvement of his understanding;

and thus it comes to pass that the age grows more and more enlightened every day.

Away then with that ungenerous praise, which is lavished upon times past for no other purpose than to degrade and sink the time present upon the comparison!

Plus vetustis nam favet
Invidia mendax, quam bonis præsentibus.

PHÆDRUS.

I conscientiously believe the public happiness of this peaceful æra is not to be paralleled in our annals. A providential combination of events has conspired to restore our national dignity, and establish our internal tranquillity, in a manner which no human foresight could have pointed out, and by means which no political sagacity could have provided. It is a great and sufficient praise to those, in whom the conduct of affairs is reposed, that they have clearly seen and firmly seized the glorious opportunity.

Let us, who profit by the blessing, give proof that we are deserving of it, by being cordially affectioned towards one another, just and generous to all our fellow-creatures, grateful and obedient to our God.

NUMBER CXIII.

ADELISA, possessed of beauty, fortune, rank, and every elegant accomplishment that genius and education could bestow, was withal so unsupportably capricious, that she seemed born to be the torment of every heart, which suffered itself to be attracted

by her charms. Though her coquetry was notorious to a proverb; such were her allurements, that very few upon whom she thought fit to practise them, had ever found resolution to resist their power. Of all the victims of her vanity, Leander seemed to be that over whom she threw her chains with the greatest air of triumph; he was indeed a conquest to boast of, for he had long and obstinately defended his heart, and for a time made as many reprisals upon the tender passions of her sex as she raised contributions upon his; her better star at length prevailed; she beheld Leander at her feet, and though her victory was accomplished at the expense of more tender glances, than she had ever bestowed upon the whole sex collectively, yet it was a victory which only piqued Adelisa to render his slavery the more intolerable for the trouble it had cost her to reduce him to it. After she had trifled with him and tortured him in every way that her ingenious malice could devise, and made such public display of her tyranny, as subjected him to the ridicule and contempt of all the men, who had envied his success, and every woman who resented his neglect, Adelisa avowedly dismissed him as an object which could no longer furnish sport to her cruelty, and turned to other pursuits, with a kind of indifference as to the choice of them, which seemed to have no other guide but mere caprice.

Leander was not wanting to himself in the efforts he now made to free himself from her chains; but it was in vain; the hand of beauty had wrapped them too closely about his heart, and love had rivetted them too securely for reason, pride, or even the strongest struggles of resentment to throw them off; he continued to love, to hate, to execrate and adore her. His first resolution was to exile himself from her sight: this was a measure of absolute ne-

cessity, for he was not yet recovered enough to abide the chance of meeting her, and he had neither spirits nor inclination to start a fresh attachment by way of experiment upon her jealousy. Fortune, however, befriended him in the very moment of despair; for no sooner was he out of her sight, than the coquetish Adelisa found something wanting, which had been so familiar to her; that Leander, though despised when possest, when lost was regretted. In vain she culled her numerous admirers for some one to replace him; continually peevish and discontented, Adelisa became so intolerable to her lovers, that there seemed to be a spirit conjuring up amongst them, which threatened her with a general desertion. What was to be done; her danger was alarming—it was imminent; she determined to recal Leander: she informed herself of his haunts, and threw herself in the way of a rencontre: but he avoided her: chance brought them to an interview, and she began by rallying him for his apostacy: there was an anxiety under all this affected pleasantry, that she could not thoroughly conceal, and he did not fail to discover: he instantly determined upon the very wisest measure, which deliberation could have formed; he combated her with her own weapons; he put himself apparently so much at his ease, and counterfeited his part so well, as effectually to deceive her: she had now a new task upon her hands, and the hardest as well as the most hazardous she had ever undertaken. She attempted to throw him off his guard by a pretended pity for his past sufferings, and a promise of kinder usage for the future: he denied that he had suffered any thing, and assured her that he never failed to be amused by her humours, which were perfectly agreeable to him at all times—'then it is plain,' replied she, that you never thought of me as a wife;

for such humours must be insupportable to a husband.'—'Pardon me,' cried Leander, 'if ever I should be betrayed into the idle act of marriage, I must be in one of those very humours myself: defend me from the dull uniformity of domestic life! What can be so insipid as the tame strain of nuptial harmony everlastingly repeated? Whatever other varieties I may then debar myself of, let me at least find a variety of whim in the woman I am to be fettered to.'—'Upon my word,' exclaimed Adelisa, 'you would almost persuade me that we were destined for each other.' This she accompanied with one of those looks, in which she was most expert, and which was calculated at once to inspire and to betray sensibility: Leander, not yet so certain of his observations as to confide in them, seemed to receive this overture as a raillery, and, affecting a laugh, replied—'I do not think it is in the power of Destiny herself to determine either of us; for if you was for one moment in the humour to promise yourself to me, I am certain in the next you would retract it; and if I was fool enough to believe you, I should well deserve to be punished for my credulity: Hymen will never yoke us to each other, nor to any body else; but if you are in the mind to make a very harmless experiment of the little faith I put in all such promises, here is my hand; 'tis fit the proposal should spring from my quarter, and not yours; close with it as soon as you please, and laugh at me as much as you please, if I vent one murmur when you break the bargain.'—'Well, then,' said Adelisa, 'to punish you for the sauciness of your provoking challenge, and to convince you that I no not credit you for this pretended indifference to my treatment of you, here is my hand, and with it my promise: and now I give you warning, that if ever I do keep it, 'twill be only from the

conviction that I shall torment you more by fulfilling it than by flying from it.'—' Fairly declared,' cried Leander, ' and since my word is passed, I'll stand to it; but take notice, if I was not perfectly secure of being jilted, I should think myself in a fair way to be the most egregious dupe in nature.'

In this strain of mutual raillery they proceeded to settle the most serious business of their lives, and whilst neither would venture upon a confession of their passion, each seemed to rely upon the other for a discovery of it. They now broke up their conference in the gayest spirits imaginable, and Leander, upon parting, offered to make a bet of half his fortune with Adelisa, that she did not stand to her engagement, at the same time naming a certain day as the period of its taking place.—' And what shall I gain,' said she, ' in that case, by half your fortune, when I shall have a joint share in possession of the whole?'—' Talk not of fortune,' cried Leander, giving loose to the rapture which he could no longer restrain, ' my heart, my happiness, my life itself is yours.'—So saying, he caught her in his arms, pressed her eagerly in his embrace, and hastily departed.

No sooner was he out of her sight, than he began to expostulate with himself upon his indiscretion: in the ecstacy of one unguarded moment, he had blasted all his schemes, and, by exposing his weakness, armed her with fresh engines to torment him. In these reflections he passed the remainder of the night; in vain he strove to find some justification for his folly: he could not form his mind to believe that the tender looks she had bestowed upon him, were any other than an experiment upon his heart, to throw him from his guard, and re-establish her tyranny. With these impressions he presented

himself at her door next morning, and was immediately admitted: Adelisa was alone, and Leander immediately began, by saying to her—'I am now come to receive at your hands the punishment which a man who cannot keep his own secret richly deserves; I surrender myself to you, and I expect you will exert your utmost ingenuity in tormenting me; only remember that you cannot give a stab to my heart, without wounding your own image, which envelopes every part, and is too deeply impressed for even your cruelty totally to extirpate.'—At the conclusion of this speech, Adelisa's countenance became serious; she fixed her eyes upon the floor, and, after a pause, without taking any notice of Leander, and, as if she had been talking to herself in soliloquy, repeated in a murmuring tone—'Well, well, 'tis all over; but no matter.'—'For the love of Heaven,' cried Leander, in alarm, 'what is all over?'—'All that is most delightful to woman,' she replied; 'all the luxury which the vanity of my sex enjoys in tormenting yours; oh, Leander, what charming projects of revenge had I contrived to punish your pretended indifference, and depend upon it, I would have executed them to the utmost rigour of the law of retaliation, had you not, in one moment, disarmed me of my malice, by a fair confession of your love. Believe me, Leander, I never was a coquette but in self-defence: sincerity is my natural character; but how should a woman of any attractions be safe in such a character, when the whole circle of fashion abounds with artificial coxcombs, pretenders to sentiment, and professors of seduction? When the whole world is in arms against innocence, what is to become of the naked children of Nature, if experience does not teach them the art of defence? If I have employed this art more particularly against you than others, why

have I so done, but because I had more to apprehend from your insincerity than any other person's and proportioned my defences to my danger? Between you and me, Leander, it has been more a contest of cunning that an affair of honour, and, if you call your own conduct into fair review, trust me, you will find little reason to complain of mine. Naturally disposed to favour your attentions more than any other man's, it particularly behoved me to guard myself against propensities at once so pleasing and so suspicious. Let this suffice in justification of what is past; it now remains that I should explain to you the system I have laid down for the time to come: if ever I assume the character of a wife, I devote myself to all its duties; I bid farewell at once to all the vanities, the petulances, the coquetries of what is falsely called a life of pleasure, the whole system must undergo a revolution, and be administered upon other principles and to other purposes: I know the world too well to commit myself to it, when I have more than my own conscience to account to; when I have not only truths, but the similitudes of truths to study; suspicions, jealousies, appearances to provide against; when I am no longer singly responsible on the score of error, but of example also; it is not, therefore, in the public display of an affluent fortune, in dress, equipage, entertainments, nor even in the fame of splendid charities my pleasures will be found; they will centre in domestic occupations; in cultivating nature and the sons of nature, in benefiting the tenants and labourers of the soil that supplies us with the means of being useful; in living happily with my neighbours; in availing myself of those numberless opportunities, which a residence in the country affords, of relieving the untold distresses of those who suffer in secret, and are too humble, or perhaps

too proud to ask.'—Here the enraptured Leander could no longer keep silence, but breaking forth into transports of love and admiration, gave a turn to the conversation, which it is no otherwise interesting to relate, than as it proved the prelude to an union which speedily took place, and has made Leander and Adelisa the fondest and the worthiest couple in England.

From Adelisa's example I would willingly establish this conclusion, that the characters of young unmarried women, who are objects of admiration, are not to be decided upon by the appearances, which they are oftentimes tempted to assume upon the plea of self-defence: I would not be understood by this to recommend disguise in any shape, or to justify those who resort to artifice upon the pretended necessity of the measure; but I am thoroughly disposed to believe, that the triflings and dissemblings of the young and fair do not so often flow from the real levity of their natures, as they are thought to do: those, in particular, whose situation throws them into the vortex of the fashion, have much that might be said in palliation of appearances. Many coquettes besides Adelisa have become admirable wives and mothers, and how very many more might have approved themselves such, had they fallen into the hands of men of worth and good sense, is a conjecture which leads to the most melancholy reflections. There is so little honourable love in the men of high life before marriage, and so much infidelity after it, that the husband is almost in every instance the corrupter of his wife. A woman, as she is called, of the world, is in many people's notions a proscribed animal: a silly idea prevails that she is to lead a husband into certain ruin and disgrace; parents in general seem agreed in exerting all their influence and authority for keep-

ing her out of their families: in place of whom they frequently obtrude upon their sons some raw and inexperienced thing, whom they figure to themselves as a creature of perfect innocence and simplicity, a wife who may be modelled to the wishes of her husband, whose manners are untainted by the vices of the age, and on whose purity, fidelity, and affection, he may repose his happiness for the rest of his days. Alas! how grossly they misjudge their own true interests in the case: how dangerous is the situation of these children of the nursery, at their first introduction into the world! Those only who are unacquainted with the deceitfulness of pleasure can be thoroughly intoxicated by it; it is the novelty which makes the danger; and surely it requires infinitely more judgement, stronger resolutions, and closer attentions, to steer the conduct of a young wife without experience, than would serve to detach the woman of the world from frivolities she is surfeited with, and, by fixing her to your interests, convert what you have thought a dissipated character into a domestic one.

The same remark applies to young men of private education: you keep them in absolute subjection till they marry, and then in a moment make them their own masters; from mere infancy you expect them to step at once into perfect manhood: the motives for the experiment may be virtuous, but the effects of it will be fatal.

I am now approaching to the conclusion of this my fourth volume,* and according to my present purpose, shall dismiss the Observers from any fur-

* This refers to the arrangement of the volumes when first published.

ther duty: the reader and I are here to part. A few words, therefore, on such an occasion, I may be permitted to subjoin: I have done my best to merit his protection, and as I have been favourably heard whilst yet talking with him, I hope I shall not be unkindly remembered when I can speak no more: I have passed a life of many labours, and now being near its end, have little to boast but of an inherent good-will towards mankind, which disappointments, injuries, and age itself, have not been able to diminish. It has been the chief aim of all my attempts to reconcile and endear man to man: I love my country and contemporaries to a degree of enthusiasm that I am not sure is perfectly defensible, though to do them justice, each in their turns have taken some pains to cure me of my partiality. It is, however, one of these stubborn habits, which people are apt to excuse in themselves, by calling it a *second nature*. There is a certain amiable lady in the world, in whose interests I have the tenderest concern, and whose virtues I contemplate with paternal pride: to her I have always wished to dedicate these volumes; but when I consider that such a tribute cannot add an atom to her reputation, and that no form of words which I can invent for the occasion, would do justice to what passes in my heart, I drop the undertaking, and am silent.

NUMBER CXIV.

THAT period of the Athenian history, which is included within the æra of Pisistratus and the death of Menander the comic poet, may be justly styled *the literary age of Greece.* I propose to dedicate some of these papers to a review of that period; but as the earlier ages of poetry, though in general obscure, yet afford much interesting matter of inquiry, it will be proper to take up the Athenian history from its origin, because it is so connected with the account I mean to give, that I cannot otherwise preserve that order and continuation in point of time, which perspicuity requires.

This account may properly be called a history of the human understanding within a period peculiarly favourable to the production of genius; and, though I cannot expect that my labour will in the end furnish any thing more than what every literary man has stored in his memory, or can resort to in his books, still it will have the merit of being a selection uninterrupted and unmixed with other events, that crowd and obscure it in the original relations, to which he must otherwise refer. The wars, both foreign and domestic, which the small communities of Greece were perpetually engaged in, occupy much the greater part of the historian's attention, and the reader, whose inquiries are directed to the subject I am about to treat of, must make his way, through many things, not very interesting to an elegant and inquisitive mind, before he can discover,

Quid Sophocles et Thespis et Æschylus utile ferrent.

Such will not envy me the labour of having turned over a heavy mass of scholiasts and grammarians,

or hesitate to prefer accepting the result of my inquiries to the task of following the like track in pursuit of his own.

The Athenians were a most extraordinary people; eminent in arms and in arts: of their military achievements I do not profess to treat, and if the reader takes less delight in hearing of the ravages of war than of the progress of literature, he may, in the contemplation of these placid scenes, undisturbed by tumult and unstained with blood, experience some degree of that calm recreation of mind, which deludes life of its solicitude, and forms the temperate enjoyment of a contemplative man.

Ogyges is generally supposed to have been the founder of the Athenian monarchy, but in what era of the world we shall place this illustrious person, whether he was Noah or one of the Titans, grandson to Jupiter or contemporary with Moses, is an inquiry which the learned have agitated with much zeal and very little success. It is, however, agreed, that there was a grievous flood in his time, which deluged the province afterwards called Attica: but that happily for King Ogyges, being a person of gigantic stature, he survived the general calamity. A period of one hundred and eighty-nine years succeeded to this flood, in which this province remained so depopulated, that it is generally supposed no king reigned over it till the time of Cecrops, the founder of Athens, from him at first named Cecropia.

Cecrops made many prudent institutes for the benefit of his rising state during a long reign of fifty years, and, by establishing the rites of matrimony, abolished the promiscuous commerce of the sexes, in which they lived before his time; by these and other regulations, upon a general numbering of all his subjects, he found the male adults in his domi-

nions to amount to twenty thousand, every person of the above description being directed to bring a stone in his hand and cast it down in a stated place: this prince, being an Egyptian, introduced the mythology of his native country, upon which so many Grecian fables were formed, and from which a learned modern has with great sagacity traced a very curious analogy with the Mosaic accounts of the early ages; the Greeks adopted the fables without comprehending their allusions, and thereupon formed the constitution of a religion, which kept possession of great part of the world, till revelation dispelled its errors and enlightened the Gentile nations. Till Cecrops erected altars to Jupiter, made libations and established his worship, he was not known in Greece as a god: he set up the image of Mercury, sacrificed to Saturn, Ops, Rhea, Juno, and Minerva, and was in fact the institutor of the Pagan theology; the gods of Cecrops were soon made useful instruments in the hand of the founder of a monarchy, for before he could induce his people to cultivate the dry and barren country of Attica, he was forced to play off his new machinery, by raising a contest in heaven between Neptune and Minerva for the patronage of Cecropia, the capital of his new empire: he found interest enough with the deities to turn their decision in Minerva's favour; and by this contrivance he diverted his subjects from their maritime attachments to agriculture, and particularly to the cultivation of the olive: to strengthen still further the tutelary title of Minerva, he enforced the dedication of the city, by changing its name from Cecropia to Athenæ, a sacrifice few founders would have made, and a strong proof of his good sense and talents for government. If the reader recollects the story Ovid relates of Minerva's treatment of Erichthonius, Cecrop's son, he will not conceive highly of the gratitude, or even purity of

that virgin deity's character; though as we are setting out upon the Athenian ground, it may not be very prudent to talk scandal of Minerva.

At virgo est—negat Aglaurus, negat anguis apertus.
DAR. PHRYG. LIB. II.

Cecrops enjoyed his new government for the space of fifty years, but his attachment to his native soil of Egypt drew him into an unlucky expedition with King Pharaoh, in whose company he was drowned in the Red Sea, whilst in pursuit of the Israelites; notwithstanding which we are informed, upon the authority of the poet Euripides, that he was translated into the starry sphere, and become a constellation of some dignity after his death; and if we consider what obligations this prince had conferred on the gods, as well as men, we shall not think him too highly rewarded; on the contrary, we must own he was rather hardly dealt with both by Minerva as well as Mercury; the former of which shut his son in a chest in company with a dragon, and the latter betrayed his daughter into a false step; an attachment, which though it does not convict her of vulgarity of taste, certainly does no credit to the chastity of her morals, or the gratitude of her seducer.

Cranaüs succeeded on the death of Cecrops, and after a reign of nine years was deposed by Amphictyon, who seized the throne of Athens, and rendered his name memorable to posterity by establishing the great Council or Law-Courts of the Amphictyons, who held their meetings at Thermopylæ. This prince introduced the practice of diluting and mixing wines; a practice that obtained through all Greece for many ages: in memory of which sober institution, Amphictyon erected an altar to Bacchus the Upright, and placed it in the Temple of the Hours: he also consecrated an altar to the nymphs near at hand in the same Temple, that mankind

might thereby be kept in mind of the gracefulness of temperance: and it is not easy to find any instance in the pagan worship, where superstition has been applied to more elegant or moral purposes. In small communities such regulations may be carried into effect, where all the people are under the eye of the sovereign; and in the same spirit of reformation Amphictyon published an edict, that none of his subjects should indulge themselves in the use of undiluted wine, except in one small glass after their meals to give them a taste of the potency of the god; under this restriction he permitted the free use of diluted wines, provided they observed in their meetings to address their libations to Jupiter, the preserver of man's health.

This virtuous usurper, after an administration of ten years, was in his turn expelled from the throne of Athens, by that Erichthonius, the son of Cecrops, whom Minerva shut up in a chest with his companion the dragon, and committed to the keeping of his sisters: this is the person whom Homer mentions in his second book of the Iliad by the name of Erechtheus: he is celebrated for having first yoked horses to a chariot, and also for introducing the use of silver coin in Attica.

Primus Erichthonius currus et quatuor ausus
Jungere Equos, rapidisque rotis insistere Victor.

VIRG. GEORG. 3, 113.

But the institutions which have rendered the name of Erichthonius famous to all posterity, are those of the Eleusynian Mysteries and the Feasts of the Panathenæa. The first of these he established in honour of Ceres, on account of a seasonable supply of corn from the granaries of Egypt, when the city and territory of Athens were in imminent danger of starving by an extraordinary drought: these sacred mysteries were of Egyptian origin, and as they con-

sisted of forms and rites, unintelligible to the vulgar, and probably very little comprehended even by the initiated, the secret was well kept.

As for the Panathenæa, they were instituted, as their name indicates, in honour of Minerva, and were the great festival of the Athenians : the celebration was originally comprised in one day, but afterwards it was extended to several, and the various athletic games and races, with the recitation of poems, that accompanied it, attracted an immense resort of spectators. Every species of contention, both on foot and horseback, drew the bold and adventurous to the field of fame, whilst the prizes for music and the rival display of the drama in aftertimes recreated the aged, the elegant, and the learned : the conquerors in the several games gave entertainments to their friends, in which they presided, crowned with olive in honour of the guardian deity : these were scenes of the greatest festivity, till, when Athens had submitted to the Roman yoke, those sanguinary conquerors introduced the combats of gladiators into these favourite solemnities. Every age had its share in contributing to the spectacle ; the old men walked in procession with branches of olive in their hands, the young in armour with shield and spear ; the labouring peasants with spades, and their wives with water-buckets ; the boys crowned with garlands, and dressed in frocks or surplices of white, chaunted hymns to Minerva ; and the girls followed with baskets, in which the sacrificing utensils were contained.

A superstition, supported by splendour, and enlivened with festivity, was well calculated to keep a lasting hold upon the human mind.

NUMBER CXV.

THE Eleusynian Mysteries, instituted by Erichthonius, were celebrated in the time of autumn every fifth year at Eleusis, where a great concourse of people met upon the occasion; the ceremonies of initiation were preceded by sacrifices, prayers and ablutions; the candidates were exercised in trials of secrecy, and prepared by vows of continence; every circumstance was contrived to render the act as awful and striking as possible; the initiation was performed at midnight, and the candidate was taken into an interior sacristy of the temple, with a myrtle garland on his head; where he was examined if he had duly performed his stated ablutions; clean hands, a pure heart, and a native proficiency in the Greek tongue were indispensable requisites: having passed this examination, he was admitted into the temple, which was an edifice of immense magnitude: after proclamation made that the strictest silence should be observed, the officiating priest took out the sacred volumes containing the mysteries; these books were written in a strange character, interspersed with the figures of animals and various emblems and hieroglyphics; they were preserved in a cavity between two large blocks of stone, closely fitted to each other, and they were carefully replaced by the priest with much solemnity, after he had explained what was necessary to be initiated out of them. The initiated were enjoined to honour their parents, to reverence the immortal gods, and abstain from

particular sorts of diet, particularly tame fowls, fish, beans, and certain sorts of apples.

When this was finished, the priests began to play off the whole machinery of the temple in all its terror; doleful groans and lamentations broke out from the fane, thick and sudden darkness involved the temple, momentary gleams of light flashed forth every now and then with tremblings, as if an earthquake had shaken the edifice; sometimes these coruscations continued long enough to discover all the splendour of the shrines and images, accompanied, with voices in concert, dancings and music: at other times, during the darkness, severities were exercised upon the initiated by persons unseen; they were dragged to the ground by the hair of their heads, and there beaten and lashed, without knowing from whom the blows proceeded, or why they were inflicted: lightnings and thunderings and dreadful apparitions were occasionally played off, with every invention to terrify and astonish; at length, upon a voice crying out *Conx! Ompax!* the ceremony was concluded and the initiated dismissed. The garment worn upon this occasion was not to be laid aside, whilst it would hang together, and the shreds were then to be dedicated at some shrine, as a tattered trophy of the due performance of the mysteries of Ceres.

These initiations were conceived to lead to the enjoyment of a happier lot in this life, and to fit a man for a more dignified place amongst the blest hereafter; and they were in such general respect, that it afforded great cause of reproach against Socrates, for having neglected his initiation. The vows of secrecy, and the penalties to be inflicted on violation, were as binding as could possibly be devised.

Hitherto the rising state of Athens had not been

engaged in war; but no sooner was it involved in disputes with the Eleusynians, on account of some predatory incursions, than the idea took its rise of devoting human victims to appease the hostile divinities, and to purchase conquest by the oblation of what was dearest and most valuable in life.

As we are now approaching towards the time of Homer, who records instances of this sort, it may be curious to mark when that savage superstition had its origin. No example occurs to me in Grecian story antecedent to Erichthonius, who, in obedience to an oracle, sacrificed one of his daughters, and some say all, to purchase thereby success against the Eleusynians. It is, however, a matter of less wonder than regret how this idea should obtain so generally; when a people are in the habit of making animal sacrifices a part of their worship, and whose religion it is to believe that intercession can be made to the gods, and favours obtained by the blood of victims taken from the brute creation, the thought of ascending a step higher in the dignity of the oblation, naturally leads to the hope of purchasing a greater reward. With these ideas enthusiastic spirits, like Decius and Curtius among the Romans, rushed upon self-destruction, and Erichthonius, King of Athens, devoted his daughters; Codrus himself.—'If the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood,' &c. &c. &c. There is a wild magnanimity in the idea highly captivating: Cicero more than once alludes to this action of Erichthonius, and in his oration for Sextus exclaims—'Shall I after so many illustrious deeds shrink from death, which even the daughters of Erichthonius, with all the weaknesses of their sex about them, resigned themselves to without regret?'

Let the mind be possessed with the persuasion of immortal happiness annexed to the act, and there will be no want of candidates to struggle for the glorious prerogative. Erichthonius and his daughters were associated to the deities after their death, altars were dedicated and a temple erected to them in the citadel of Athens, where divine honours were paid to their memories. The Eleusynians were defeated and despoiled of all they possessed, except the mysteries of Ceres above-mentioned; of these they were left in undisturbed enjoyment: their king Eumolpus was slain in battle, but Neptune, whose son he was, revenged his loss by striking his conqueror dead with his trident.

Thus perished Erichthonius by immortal hands, if we take the authority of Euripides the tragic poet, after he had reigned fifty years in Athens: in his time the people of Attica, heretofore called Cecropians, took the name of Athenians: Ovid, whose metamorphoses mix much ancient truth with fable, says 'that this prince at his death left it doubtful with posterity, whether he excelled most in justice as a King, or in military glory as a General.'

Ægeus, the reputed father of Theseus, was the eighth king of Athens, reckoning from Cecrops, and son of Pandion II. grandson of Erichthonius, the crown having descended regularly from father to son through several generations: after remaining childless for several years he consulted the oracle at Delphi upon the mode of obtaining an heir; to a very plain question he obtained a very obscure answer, and, not being able to solve the enigma himself, consulted several persons upon the interpretation of it, and amongst others his friend Pittheus, King of Trœzene, from whose sagacity he promised himself a solution of the difficulty: this wise prince had a daughter named Æthra, and she having ad-

mitted Ægeus to a secret consultation by night in the fane of Minerva, proved a more able interpreter of the Delphic oracle than her father, and put Ægeus in possession of his wishes, by bearing him a son: this son was the hero Theseus, but it cannot be disguised, that a doubt was started, whether Neptune had not a better claim to the child than Ægeus; for the princess Æthra is charged with admitting both visiters in the same evening, and when the controversy lies between a mortal and an immortal lover, the most that can be said for Ægeus is, that it leaves the case doubtful. The King of Athens put in his claim, by leaving his sword and sandals in custody of Æthra, when he understood she was pregnant, enjoining her to let the child, if it proved a son, remain at Trœzene, until he became adult, and had strength enough to remove a block of stone, under which he deposited his pledges; on the hilt of the sword which was ivory, he caused to be engraved his name and titles, and Ægeus declared he would acknowledge the bearer of those pledges, and adopt him as his heir; this being done, he returned to Athens, and celebrated the Panathenæa with uncommon splendor.

This monarch filled the throne of Athens for the space of forty-eight years, and terminated his life by casting himself into the sea thence called Ægean, in despair upon discovering the vessel, that brought his son Theseus from his Cretan expedition against the Minotaur, approach the shores of Attica with black sails, when the signal of life and victory was to be the contrary display of white ones, which Theseus by a fatal neglect had failed to put out upon his coming in sight of the coast.

The impatient and despairing parent precipitated himself into the ocean, and the son succeeded to his throne. There is no hero in antiquity, who for his

magnanimity, his adventures, or the exquisite beauty and perfection of his person has been more celebrated than Theseus: in some of the actions of his life he performed real and distinguished services to his country; in others he appears to have been governed merely by an extravagant and wild passion for adventure: no hero has furnished more themes to the poets, and few princes have at times deserved better of their subjects: by his valour in action and the terror of his name he cleared many regions of those lawless clans of robbers and plunderers, with which they were infested to the disgrace and danger of society: ambitious to emulate the fame of his contemporary Hercules, he seems sometimes to have forgotten that he had subjects under his care and command, and roved about in quest of adventures, the general champion of distress, and the sworn exterminator of monsters and tyrants, wherever they were to be found: preceded by his axe-bearers, in commemoration of his destruction of the robbers, and carrying on his shoulder the ponderous club of Corynætes, whom he vanquished, he marched in triumph to Delphi, like another Hercules after his labours: the bulls of Crete and Marathon, and the Cremmyonian boar, were trophies that might vie with the hydra; and Corcyon, whom he slew, was as formidable a champion as Antæus, and fixed the triumph of agility over strength: he killed Procrustes, whose couch was as fatal as the den of Cacus.

Theseus, upon his accession to the government of Attica, reformed the state of justice, and amended the condition of his subjects by many kingly regulations; before his time the people were dispersed about the country in small and separated clans, more like the settlements of savages than a regular community; the police of course was very imperfect;

the laws were merely local and arbitrary, nor did they generally agree in the same definition or distribution of justice; to remedy these evils he enlarged his capital, assembled the people from all parts, fixed them to a residence in Athens, and established general courts of law and justice, where all his subjects might resort to decide their properties, or compose their wrongs, by stated rules and institutes, expounded and administered by judges competent to their vocation.

These are services beneficial to mankind, the actions of a patriot king and legislator, infinitely superior to the extermination of boars or bulls, the unravelling a labyrinth, or conflicting with a wrestler. One should have thought that the rambling spirit of Theseus might henceforward have subsided, and, if Hercules had not been upon earth, this would probably have been the case, and he would have descended to posterity one of the greatest characters in ancient history; but the expedition against the Amazons drew him out upon fresh and foolish adventures, and, though his friendship and his amours may have furnished pleasing tales and fables to Hesiod and others, the historian will do well to pass over this period of his life in silence and regret.

It suffices to relate that Menestheus took advantage of his absence, and established himself so firmly in power, that Theseus on his return finding it impossible to dispossess him of his usurped authority, retired to Scyros, and there either put a voluntary end to his life, or was destroyed by Lycomedes.

In the reign of Menestheus the famous siege of Troy, memorable to all ages, was undertaken by the joint forces of all the Grecian principalities: the combined fleets assembled at Athens, and took their final departure from that port: Agamemnon conducted a hundred ships from Mycenæ, Menelaus

sixty from Sparta, and Menestheus joined with fifty: the latter excelled all the generals of Greece, Nestor only excepted, in military science for arranging and disposing troops in order of battle. Homer has left this testimony in his favour, and the authority is as indisputable as the record is immortal; the town was taken in the last year of Menestheus's life and reign; he died in the Island of Melos, and being one of the chiefs inclosed in the Trojan horse, had a leading share in the capture and destruction of that celebrated city.

> No chief like thee, Menestheus, Greece could yield,
> To marshal armies in the dusty field,
> Th' extended wings of battle to display,
> Or close th' embodied host in firm array;
> Nestor alone, improv'd by length of days,
> For martial conduct bore an equal praise. POPE.

NUMBER CXVI.

THE expedition of the Greeks against Troy has supplied a subject to an heroic poem, which remains the wonder of all time and the unrivalled standard of the epic art. It must be owned no poet ever made a happier choice, for what could be more interesting to a Grecian reader, than the recital of an action founded in justice and terminated in success? The event itself was magnificent; a coalition of the Grecian states in vindication of an injured prince, who was one of their number. Had it recorded the expedition of one great monarch against another, it is easy to comprehend how much that brilliant va-

riety of character, which now gives such dramatic lustre to the composition, would have lost by the nature of such a subject; whereas the emulation of the rival leaders constitutes that compound action, that striking contrast and discrimination of character, which render the Iliad so peculiarly enchanting. The justice of the undertaking fortifies the poet with a moral, which secures the good opinion of his readers, and interests them cordially in his cause; it is so permanent a pledge for their good wishes, that it enables him to throw into the scale of the Trojans every episode of pity, every ornament of magnanimity and valour, which can beautify his poem, without the danger of creating false prejudices in behalf of the offenders; in short, we can mourn for Hector, and not regret the victory of Achilles.

If Homer found these incidents ready to his hands, their combination was supremely happy; if he created them, his invention was almost miraculous. The period at which he wrote was no less fortunate, being neither too remote to impair the interest of his subject, nor so near the time of the action as to confine his fancy to the limits of strict historical truth. So wonderful an assemblage of parts meet in this great work, that there is not a passion in the human breast but will find its ruling interest gratified by the perusal; and it is so happily contrived, that the combination of those parts, multitudinous as they are, never violates the uniformity of design; the subject remains simple and entire; our ideas never stray from the main object of the poem, though they are continually carried out upon excursions through the regions of earth and heaven upon the strongest pinions of fancy. The manner in which Homer employs his deities, with the machinery that accompanies them, gives an amazing brilliancy to the picturesque and descriptive powers

of the poem; the virtues, vices, prejudices, passions of those imaginary beings set them on a level with human nature so far as to give us an interest in their situations, which a juster representation of superior essences could not impart; while their immortality and power are engines in the poet's hand, whose influence is unlimited by the laws of Nature; these extraordinary personages, at the same time that they take a part very essential to the action of the drama, bring about the incidents by those sudden and supernatural means, which mortal heroes of the most romantic sort could not so readily effect. This is an advantage on the part of a Heathen poet, for which the Christian writer has no substitute; for those moderns, who, in order to create surprise, have invented capricious beings to produce extravagant events above the reach of human powers, and below the dignity of divine, violate our reason, whilst they struggle to amuse our fancy; but the Pagan theorist can find a deity for every purpose, without giving scandal to the believer, or revolting the philosopher.

Amongst the numberless excellences of the Iliad, there is none more to be admired than the correct precision with which Homer draws his characters, and preserves them uniformly through the poem; an excellence, in which Virgil and the Roman poets in general are greatly his inferiors: with Homer's heroes we have more than historical acquaintance, we are made intimate with their habits and manners, and whenever he withdraws them for a time, we are certain upon the next meeting to recognize and acknowledge the same characteristic traces that separate each individual so decidedly from all others. —But it is time to return to our history.

After the death of Menestheus the crown of Athens returned into the family of Theseus, and Demophoon his son, who also was present at the siege

of Troy, succeeded to his inheritance: Oxynthes, Aphidas, and Thymœtes reigned in succession after Demophoon, and the line of the Erichthidæ expired in the person of Thymœtes. This was a remarkable revolution, for that family had possessed the throne of Athens for a period of four hundred and twenty-nine years. The monarchy, properly so called, was now drawing to its conclusion; Melanthus, who succeeded to Thymœtes, was a Messenian and a descendant from Neleus; he had been expelled from Messene by the Heraclidæ, and had taken refuge in the Athenian state; he obtained the crown by very honourable means; Thymœtes, being challenged to single combat by Xanthus, King of Bœotia, declined the challenge; Melanthus accepted it in his stead, slew Xanthus, and obtained the crown of Athens in reward for his success: at his death it devolved to his son Codrus. The manner in which this prince devoted himself to death for his country scarce needs a recital; but it is not generally known that Codrus was in a very advanced age when this event took place, and, moreover, that the Athenians urged him to the deed upon the report of Cleomantis, a citizen of Delphi, who made them acquainted with the answer of the oracle touching the conditions on which victory was to be obtained. The Athenians, having prevailed with Codrus to embrace the fatal conditions of their deliverance, sacrificed their aged monarch, and, impressed with the persuasion that Apollo would verify his prediction, fought and overcame their enemy.

Codrus being dead, the government of Athens underwent a material revolution; for the popular party pretending a respect to his memory, put forward a decree prohibiting any other person to reign in Athens by the title of King; the change, however, for the present was more nominal than essential, for

they did not alter the succession, nor materially reduce the power of the monarchy. The prince, or perpetual archon, for each title is used occasionally, held the government for life, subject notwithstanding to account to the state for the administration of public affairs.

Medon, son of Codrus, succeeded to his father by this new title: thirteen princes reigned under this description from Medon to Alcmæon inclusive, comprehending a period of three hundred and seven years.

Some authorities maintain that Homer came to Athens in the time of Medon, and was hospitably received by that prince; but it is generally thought the age of Homer does not answer to this date, and that he was born about two hundred years after the siege of Troy: this falls within the time of Archippus, grandson of Medon, and third perpetual archon; in the beginning of whose reign Hesiod was born; Homer some few years after at the close of it: Archippus reigned nineteen years; and this æra seems established by the best chronologists.

Archippus, at the conclusion of whose administration we have placed the birth of Homer, was succeeded by Thersippus, who held the government of Athens for a long incumbency of forty-one years, and he was succeeded by Phorbas, who was thirty years archon; in the period of these seventy-one years we have the Athenian æra of the life of Homer.

This however must in some degree be left to opinion, for before the institution of the Olympiads the Grecian chronicles are so vague and obscure, that the precise age of Homer will for ever remain a subject of conjecture. The above period has at least the merit of holding a middle place between their opinions, who suppose he was born soon after the siege

of Troy, and such as contend he was contemporary with Lycurgus. The late Mr. Robert Wood, in his essay on the original genius and writings of Homer, inclines to think the Iliad and Odyssey were finished about half a century after the capture of Troy; he has offered internal evidence in support of this opinion in Homer's account of the family of Æneas, and his argument is acute and critical: they, who make him contemporary with Lycurgus, have internal evidence against them, which, though perhaps it does not serve to establish Mr. Wood's position, certainly confutes the latter chronologists. Aristotle places Homer in the same epoch with Iphitus and the first Olympiad, but he rests his conjecture upon the weakest of all arguments; whilst the best authorities, as well as the majority in number, point to the period which I have suggested; and here for the present I will leave it.

The last but one of the perpetual archons was Æschylus, and in the second year of his government the Olympiads were first instituted by Iphitus at Elis; from this period we shall proceed with greater chronological precision.

The successor of Æschylus and the last of the perpetual archons was Alcmæon. The people of Athens had new modelled their government upon the death of Codrus, by abolishing the title of King, and reducing their chief magistrate to be in fact rather the first subject of the state, than the monarch: this regulation appears to have been effected without any struggle on the part of the reigning family; thirteen archons in succession had now been permitted to hold the government for life, when, upon the expiration of Alcmæon's administration, the people thought fit by a fresh reform to limit the duration of the chief magistracy to the term of ten years. Charops, brother of Alcmæon and son of Æschylus,

was the first decennial archon; and this revolution took place in the first year of the seventh Olympiad. Whilst the Athenian state was by these steps enlarging its liberties, Romulus and Remus were forming the embryo of a mighty empire fated in the course of time to become mistress of the world; these adventurers collected a body of Latin shepherds, amongst whom they had been educated, and, settling themselves on the Palatine Mount, became the founders of Rome: this event is supposed to fall within the period of the seventh Olympiad, when Charops was decennial archon. It is generally supposed, that this mighty empire was set in motion from one spark, which Greece had scattered from the conflagration of Troy, and which lighted on the shores of Italy, where it was kept alive for more than four centuries, till Rome was founded; but Æneas's Italian colonization is a very questionable point, and I am inclined to agree with Mr. Wood, in his treatise above-mentioned, that the posterity of Æneas did not migrate into Italy, but established themselves in the Troade, and reigned over the scattered remains of the Trojans after the destruction of Ilium.

A revolution of eighteen Olympiads produced a third change in the constitution of the Athenian government in favour of popular freedom, by limiting the archons to one year, making the magistracy annual: neither was this all, for the command was no longer lodged in the hands of one person only, but of nine, the first of which was styled by preeminence archon, and from him the year had its name; the second entitled Basileus, took charge of religious ceremonies, and the Polemarc, or third in office, had the conduct of military affairs, whilst all civil and judicial business was referred to the council of the remaining six, called Thesmothetæ. None

but pure Athenians of three descents could be chosen by lot into this council; an oath of office was administered to them publicly in the portico of the palace, purporting that they would execute the laws with justice and fidelity, and take no gifts either from their clients or the people at large. When they had performed their annual functions, and acquitted themselves without impeachment, they were in course aggregated to the Areopagites, and held that dignity for life. Every thing relating to the care of orphans and widows, or the estates of minors, was vested in the principal magistrate, properly styled archon; he had the charge of divorces and the superintendance of the parents and children of soldiers who fell in battle, and of all such citizens who were maintained at the public charge.

Of these annual archons, Creon was the first, and was elected about the twenty-fourth Olympiad.

NUMBER CXVII.

THE Athenian state continued to be governed by annual archons according to the alteration made in its constitution in the twenty-fourth Olympiad, without any thing occurring of importance to merit a recital from the time of Creon to the administration of Draco in the thirty-ninth Olympiad. The Athenians, having reduced the monarchical power to the most diminutive of all kingly representatives, an annual archon had to all appearance effectually established their liberties; but it has been the fate of

freedom to be turned into abuse in all ages, and the licentiousness of the people now seemed in more want of reform, than the prerogative of the king had been in the most arbitrary times. The moral purity of Draco's manners, and the stern inflexibility of his temper, fitted him for an office, that required both rigorous virtue and resolute despatch, for his time was short and his task laborious and full of danger: had his power been permanent, it is probable he would have qualified the severity of those famous laws, which, from their sanguinary nature, were figuratively said to be written in blood, and it is certain they breathe a spirit calculated rather for the extinction of society, than for its reformation. We must, however, admit the difficulty of devising any code of penal statutes, by which degrees of punishment shall be equitably proportioned to degrees of offence. We have no experience or history of any such code now existing, or that ever did exist. A citizen of the world will not estimate crimes and offences by the same rule and standard as a citizen of any one particular community will; local circumstances will give a fainter or deeper colourings to crimes according to the peculir constitution of the state against which they are committed; the Athenians in the time of Draco were governed by annual magistrates; the administration of these magistrates was made subject to popular inquiry upon its termination: they had expunged from their constitution the wholesome though high-sounding principle, that a king cannot do wrong; it was now become scarce possible that his substitute could do right; the people sat in judgement on their governors, and many of the most virtuous citizens in the state suffered under their sentence: fear restrained the timid from exertion, and the allurements of power debauched the interested and ambitious from

their duty; whilst the magistrate aimed at popularity, the people became intolerably licentious. The rigour of Draco impresses us with a high idea of his purity of principle; his abhorrence of the abuses of his predecessors in office, and his indignation against the depravity of his fellow-citizens, embittered his mind, and made him rather a misanthrope than a statesman.

Draco seems to have considered the commission of crimes, not in proportion to their offence against society, but according to the principle of the criminal, holding a transgressor equally guilty whether he broke the law in the least tittle, or in its greatest extent; for he punished indiscriminately with death in both cases: in this there is as little wisdom as mercy, and it is to the honour of Solon that he revoked such undistinguishing and bloody laws. Justly to ascertain and define the various degrees of human depravity is impracticable for those who cannot search the human heart; nor in the nature of things is it possible for any man or council of men, to form a system of punishments to meet the several degrees and definitions of crimes with proportioned retribution: sentence of death is at once the highest exertion of authority one fellow-creature can exercise over another; and the heaviest atonement any offender can make to the laws of that society in which he is enlisted: Draco excused himself from the charge of indiscriminate rigour by pleading that he could devise no punishment greater than death; the nature of the plea gives an insight into the character of the man, that needs no comment; it is plain, however, that he had no idea of aggravating death by tortures: he did not know, or would not practise, those detestable arts and refinements, which now prevail in too many parts of the Christian world, of extorting criminations and confessions by height-

ening the agonies of death. The short duration of his authority, as I before observed, precipitated him upon this system of severity, which time and reflection would probably have corrected: a hasty reformer is equally to be dreaded with a deliberate tyrant; legal cruelty is of all most terrible; a law once made is made to be executed; the will of the judge cannot mitigate it, and the power of the sovereign can only release from punishment, but not apportion or modify it: herein consists the irreparable defect of all established rules of fixed punishment; to include different degrees of criminality under one and the same degree of penalty is not strict equity, but to live without laws at the arbitrary disposal of any human tribunal is slavery of the most insupportable sort.

By Draco's laws an Athenian was equally guilty of death, whether he pilfered a cabbage or murdered a citizen: horrible decree! If the principle of punishment does not consist in revenging what is past, but in preventing the culprit from repeating and the community from suffering the like or any other offence from the same person, it may well be doubted if death need be inflicted in any case; the terror of example, not the spirit of revenge, must constitute the necessity of such a mode of punishment, if any necessity exists; but if punishments may be devised, by which guilty persons shall be made to atone to society without cutting them from it, and if these punishments may be such as shall deter and terrify the evil-minded equally with death itself, policy, independent of religion, will be interested to adopt them.

'It was not to be expected that the Athenians would be remedied by such sanguinary laws as those of Draco, and they had been in operation nearly half a century, when Solon, in the third year

of the forty-sixth Olympiad, found the people in as much need of reformation, as Draco did in the beginning of the thirty-fifth Olympiad.

Solon was of noble birth and of an elevated soul; he was a friend to liberty, but a lover of order; descended from Codrus, he was a patriot by inheritance; though he was a great adept in the philosophy of the times, it neither soured his manners nor left him without attention to the public. When he withdrew himself from the world for the purposes of study and contemplation, it was to render himself a more useful citizen on his return to society: with a fortune rather below mediocrity he had such a spirit of benevolence and generosity that he was obliged in his youth to apply himself to commerce to support his independence: Solon's philosophy did not boast any unnatural contempt of pain or pleasure; he affected no apathy: on the contrary, when he was reproached for weeping at the death of his son, as if it was unbecoming of a wise man to bewail an evil he could not remedy, he answered with a modest sensibility of his weakness, that it was on that very account he did bewail it.

The anecdote Plutarch gives us of Solon's interview with the contemporary Thales, and the silly method that philosopher took for convincing Solon of the advantages of celibacy, by employing a fellow to make a false report to him of his son's death, heightens our affection for the man, without lowering our respect for the sage: Thales in the true spirit of sophism triumphed in the superiority of his wisdom by avoiding those connexions, which soften the human heart, and vainly supposed he sunk the dignity of Solon's character by exposing to ridicule the tender feelings of the father.

The Athenians were exhausted by a tedious and unprosperous war with the people of Megara; the

important Island of Salamis was lost, and such was their despair of ever recovering it, that they passed a law for making it a capital offence in any citizen to propose the retaking it. Solon who regarded this degrading edict with honest indignation, feigned himself insane, and rushing into the forum harangued the populace, abrogated the edict, and declared war against the Megarensians: on this occasion he addressed the people in elegiac verses of his own composing, one hundred in number; the power of his muse prevailed, for it was great; the people gave him the command of an expedition against Salamis, in which he had the good fortune to reduce that island and re-annex it to his country, which had made such public avowal of its despair.

Solon is so highly celebrated as a poet, that some ancient authorities have equalled him to Hesiod, and even to Homer: we have few and small remains, but many testimonies of his writings; in particular we are informed, that he composed five thousand verses on the commonwealth of Athens, recording the transactions of his own time, not as a history in praise, but in defence of himself, and with a view to encourage his countrymen to persist in a course of public virtue and private morality. He wrote iambics also and odes, and composed even his laws in verse, of which Plutarch has quoted the exordium.

He employed stratagem in the reduction of the Island of Salamis; but as the celebrated Pisistratus was joined with him in this enterprise, it must not be disguised that some authorities give the success of the expedition to Pisistratus; both were men of consummate address and resource, and each no doubt had his share of merit in the service; the reputation Solon gained by this event was still increased by his conduct in the defence of the famous temple of Delphi against the sacrilegious Cirrhæans:

though he was only assessor to the general Clisthenes the Sicyonian in this campaign, the successful termination of the war by the capture of Cirrha was universally attributed to Solon.

Athens was now rent by popular feuds and dissensions; the commonwealth was in imminent peril, every thing tending to civil tumult and confusion, and the people in a state little short of absolute anarchy: in this extremity every eye was turned towards Solon, and he was elected archon by the general voice of his fellow-citizens. It was now not only in his power to make himself absolute master of the state, and to establish that tyranny in his own person, which he lived to see Pisistratus aspire to and obtain, but that step was also pressed upon him by the unanimous solicitation of his friends and the public at large: religion had its share in the temptation, for the temple of Delphi uttered its oracular decree for his assuming the supreme power in Athens, and when he withstood the dazzling offer, he had to combat the reproaches and invectives of all parties for refusing it. A magnanimity that was proof against temptation was not to be shaken by calumny; supported by conscious integrity he opposed the torrent, and contenting himself with the limited authority of an annual magistracy, framed and published those mild and salutary ordinances, which have endeared his name to all posterity. Amongst the pacifying measures of his government he found it expedient to relieve the people by an ordinance for the remission of debts of a certain description; this act raised a storm of opposition and abuse from all the rich and usurious against his administration, and some who had been his intimates took part in the faction, and began to persecute him in the bitterest manner, charging him with the meanness of exempting himself as a creditor from the conditions of

the act; he soon turned the odium of the charge upon the contrivers of it, by giving public proof to the city that he himself had been the first who obeyed his own law, and remitted a considerable sum to his debtors; this proof of his disinterestedness as a creditor convinced his countrymen of his uprightness as a legislator, and he rose the higher in their esteem for the malevolent attack he had so fully repulsed: reason and public gratitude at length prevailed, and the voice of faction being put to silence, the whole care of the commonwealth was surrendered into his hands, to be regulated and reformed according to his wisdom and discretion.

Solon, though too magnanimous to accept the title of king, was too good a citizen to decline the trust, and now it was that he abrogated all Draco's sanguinary laws, except those that affected murderers: this, as I before observed, occurred in the course of the forty-sixth Olympiad; he arranged the people into four classes, according to the different proportions of their property; he erected the principal council of the Areopagites, with inferior courts for the administration of law and justice, and published his famous manifesto for rendering infamous all persons, who in civil seditions should remain spectators of their country's danger by a criminal neutrality; he enacted many wholesome regulations respecting marriages, tending to the increase of population; he suppressed libels, and made idleness punishable by law; he put under certain disabilities, parents who were convicted of having grossly neglected the education of their families, and restrained by sumptuary laws every species of public excess. Many more of his laws might be enumerated, if it were necessary to enlarge upon facts so generally known, but it will suffice to mention, that when he had completed his code, he bound the senators to

the observance of what it contained by the solemnest oath he could devise, and causing his laws to be engraven on tables of wood, hung them up in the public courts that no man might plead ignorance.

The nature of this oath is curious: the senator was led up to a ponderous stone preserved in the forum; there the oath was publicly administered, and the obligation of it was, that he should dedicate a piece of gold to the temple of Delphi of equal weight with the stone if he was proved guilty of having violated his oath: not content with thus swearing the judges and senators to the faithful administration of his laws, he also bound the people by oath to their due observance; and having done all this with a temper and prudence, particularly expressive of his character, Solon took his leave of Athens and set out upon his travels into Egypt.

BODLEIAN BIBLIOTHECA

NUMBER CXVIII.

Although the wisdom and magnanimity of Solon are conspicuous in every action of his life, which history has transmitted to us, nothing is more worthy of our admiration and praise than the circumstance last recorded of his secession from Athens.

It is not necessary to follow him in his travels, in which, after some time spent in visiting Egypt, Cyprus, and Lydia, he obeyed the summons of his fellow-citizens and returned to Athens: that city during his absence had been distracted by furious and contending factions; Lycurgus headed one party, Megacles son of Alcmæon another, and Pisistratus was

leader of a third, in which was included nearly the whole inferior order of the people; all these parties nevertheless preserved a respect for their ancient benefactor and lawgiver, and he spared no pains in return to assuage and compose the disorders of the state, but in vain; age, indeed, had not yet deprived him of his mental faculties, but his corporeal ones were debilitated, and the crisis called for more activity than he was now capable of exerting; he could no longer speak in public, nor address the people in the forum as he was accustomed to do; he tried his influence separately and in private with the leaders of the several factions. Pisistratus, whose manners were of the gentlest kind, affected to receive the advice and counsels of Solon with great external respect, but ambition had taken too firm hold of his heart, and he had laid his plans too deep to be diverted from them by the patriotic discourses of this venerable citizen; the sagacity of Solon penetrated his designs, and when he was convinced of his dissimulation, and saw the liberties of his country on the point of being overthrown by this artful demagogue, he came into open court in military array, and presented himself to the assembly ready to head the friends of their country, and expel Pisistratus by force of arms: the noble effort was too late, for the spirit of the people was lost, and all men seemed disposed to surrender themselves without resistance to the usurper. Solon, finding that he could not rouse them to a consideration of their ancient dignity, nor inspire them with a becoming sense of the value of liberty, laid aside his arms, and suspending them at the door of the Court-house, took a short but pathetic leave of Athens, and once again retired into voluntary banishment: whither is not distinctly ascertained: many pressing invitations were addressed to him from different parts, and I am in-

clined to think he accepted that of Crœsus King of Lydia, and that he closed an illustrious life in extreme old age in the Island of Cyprus. His ashes, by his express direction, were transported to his native island of Salamis, and there deposited. The Athenians erected his statue in brass, but Pisistratus revoked his laws: the laws of Draco, notwithstanding their severity, were in execution for a longer period than the mild and prudent ordinances of Solon. The people it is true never wholly forfeited their respect for this excellent person, but they were unworthy of him; even Pisistratus, amidst the struggles of ambition, offered no insult to his person, and every country which his fame had reached, presented an asylum to the venerable exile.

As an orator, Solon stands high in point of merit, and first in order of time: as a poet, his genius was sublime, various, and fluent; in subjects of fiction and fancy he never dealt; but though he chose his topics with the gravity of a statesman, and handled them with the fidelity of an historian, he composed with ardour, and never failed to fire his hearers with the recitation of his poems: he is supposed to have reprobated the drama; but, if this be a fact, we may well conclude, that it was the old corrupt masque of Bacchus and the Satyrs, of which he signified his dislike, and in this he is warranted. In two expeditions where he had a military command, he was eminently successful, and gained a high degree of glory: no statesman ever stood in times more perilous, no citizen ever resisted more alluring offers of ambition, and no legislator ever regulated a more disorderly community: though devoted to the study of philosophy, and a great master in the early science of the times, he mixed with cheerfulness in society, was friendly and convivial, and did not hold back from those tender ties and attachments, which

connect a man to the world, and which by some have been considered incompatible with a life devoted to wisdom and sublime philosophy; strict in his morals as Draco, he was not like him disposed to put criminals to death whilst there was any hope of conducting them by gentle measures to repentance: his modesty was natural and unaffected, and though he was generally silent in company, his silence threw no damp upon festivity, for it did not savour of sullenness, and he was known to be a friend to the use of wine with freedom, but without excess: at the meeting of the seven celebrated sages, his contemporaries and colleagues in wisdom, when they were entertained by Periander at Corinth, the golden salver, which the Milesian fishermen had dragged out of the sea in ther net, and which the Delphic oracle, upon reference of the controversy, had decreed to the wisest man of the age, was, by general suffrage, given to Solon; each person with becoming deference to the others, had severally declined the prize; but Solon was at length constrained to receive it by concurrent vote of the whole assembly.

Historians are not agreed upon the exact time of Solon's departure from Athens, and some maintain that he continued there till his death; this is not probable; but the result of the accounts puts it out of doubt that he remained there whilst there was any hope of composing the disturbances of the state, and of restoring its tranquillity and freedom, under the prudent regulations he had established when he was archon.

But no sooner had this excellent citizen turned his back upon Athens than all these hopes perished, and universal despair took place; the degeneracy of the people became incurable, and no one was found with authority or zeal to oppose the approaching revolu-

tion: though Solon was far in the decline of life, yet if there had been any public virtue subsisting, the liberty of Athens had not been lost without a struggle; but, although neutrality in civil commotions had been declared infamous and criminal by the laws of Solon, the populace, through despair or indolence, declined the contest, and held themselves in readiness to receive a master in either of the contending partizans, who should prevail over his competitors.

Fortune and superior address at length decided the prize of ambition to Pisistratus and his party, for he possessed every qualification that could recommend him to the public; of insinuating manners, with a beautiful and commanding person, he was gallant, eloquent, and munificent; no man acquitted himself more gracefully as a public speaker, and when Pericles in after-times alarmed the jealousy of the Athenians, the resemblance he bore to Pisistratus in eloquence as well as in features was so striking, that he was universally called the *Second Pisistratus*, and the comic poets in their satirical allusions exhibited him on the stage by that name and character.

Whilst these party struggles were in suspense, Pisistratus used an artifice for recommending himself to the people, which was decisive in his favour: one day on a sudden he rushed into the forum, where the citizens were assembled, as if he had been flying from assassins, who were in pursuit of him, and presented himself to public view defaced with wounds, and covered with blood; he was mounted in his chariot, and the mules that drew him were streaming with blood as well as himself: the crowd flocked around him, and in this situation, without wiping his wound, or dismounting from his chariot, he harangued the forum; he told them he had that instant escaped from the assassinating swords of the nobles, who had cruelly attempted to destroy the

man of the people for his activity in opposing the exactions of sordid creditors and usurious tyrants; his tears, his sufferings, the beauty of his person now streaming with blood, which he had spilt in their cause, his military services at Megara, and his protestations of affection to the people, in whose defence he solemnly protested a determination to persist or perish, altogether formed such an address to the passions, and presented such a picture to the eye, that were irresistibly affecting.

Though it soon appeared in proof, that the whole was artifice, and that all these wounds about himself and his mules were of his own giving for the impression of the moment; still the moment served his purpose, and in the heat of popular tumult he obtained a decree for granting him a body-guard, not armed as soldiers, but with sticks and clubs: at the head of this desperate rabble he lost no time in forcing his way into the citadel, and took possession of it and the commonwealth in the same moment: he next proceeded to exile the most powerful and obnoxious of his opponents. Megacles and Lycurgus, with their immediate adherents, either fled from the city or were forcibly driven out of it; the revolution was complete.

The tumult having subsided, Pisistratus began to look around him, and to take his measures for securing himself in the authority he had seized: for this purpose he augmented his body-guard, which, as they were first voted to him, consisted only of fifty; these he endeavoured to attach to his person by liberal payments, and whilst he equipt them at all points like soldiers, he put a cunning stratagem in practice, by which he contrived to seize all the private arms of the citizens, and totally dismantled Athens: he used less ceremony with the nobles, for he stripped them of all weapons of offence openly

and by force; and now he found himself, as he believed, in safe possession of the sovereign power and throne of Athens.

This passed in the fifty-first Olympiad, when Comias was archon.

It rarely happens that dominion, rapidly obtained, proves firmly established. The factions of Megacles and Lycurgus were broken by this revolution, but not extinguished, and Pisistratus either could not prevent their re-uniting, or perhaps over-security made him inattentive to their movements: he enjoyed his power for a short time, and was in his turn driven out of Athens by those he had exiled, and his effects were put up to public sale, as the property of an outlaw.

Megacles and Lycurgus now divided the government between them; this was a system that soon wrought its own overthrow: and Megacles finding his party the weaker, invited Pisistratus to return to Athens, vainly imagining he could lull his ambition, and secure him to his interest by giving him his daughter Cæsyra in marriage. Pisistratus accepted the terms, and obeyed the welcome recal, but it was in such a manner, as might have put the weakest man upon his guard; for his return and entrance into Athens were accompanied by one of the most barefaced attacks upon public credulity and superstition, that is to be found in the history of man.

He had already succeeded in several hardy stratagems, and all had been discovered after they had served his purposes. His pretended assassination, his contrivances for arming his body-guard and for disarming the citizens at large, were all well known to the people, so that he must have taken a very nice measure of their folly and blindness, when upon his entering the city, he undertook to bring in his train a woman, named Phæa, whom he dressed in

the habit of the goddess Minerva, and imposed her on the vulgar for their tutelar deity in person: he had instructed her how to address the people in his behalf, commanding them to reinstate him in his power, and open the gates of the citadel at his approach: the lady was sufficiently personable for the character she assumed, and as a proof of her divinity, was of colossal stature: extravagant as the experiment may seem, it succeeded in all points; the human deity was obeyed, and the ingenious demagogue carried all before him: this Grecian Joan of Arc received the adoration of the superstitious vulgar in public, and the grateful caresses of the exulting tyrant in private: the lady was not of very distinguished birth and fortune, for before she took upon her the character of a goddess she condescended to the mortal occupation of a flower-girl, and made garlands after the custom of the Greeks for feasts and merry-makings: Pisistratus rewarded her liberally, by giving her in marriage to his son Hipparchus; a commodious resource for disposing of a cast-off goddess; as for himself, he was engaged to Cæsyra: Phæa's marriage with Hipparchus soon convinced the world that she was a mortal, but Pisistratus gave himself no concern to prevent the discovery; in process of time it came to pass, upon Pisistratus's second expulsion, that Phæa was publicly impeached and condemned upon the charge of of *læsæ Majestatis*.

NUMBER CXIX.

Pisistratus had been five years in exile, when Megacles brought about his recal, and vainly thought to fix him in his interest by giving him his daughter Cæsyra in marriage; such alliances rarely answer the political ends for which they are made: Pisistratus had several sons by his first wife, and having re-established himself in the tyranny after the manner we have been describing, and bestowed his favourite Phæa upon his son Hipparchus, he took the daughter of Megacles as the condition of his contract with her father, but with a fixed determination against a second family, whose pretensions might come in competition with those of his children by his first marriage, in whose favour he wished to secure the succession, and who, both by age and capacity, were fit for government, whenever it should devolve upon them.

Cæsyra put up with her husband's neglect for some time, but at length she imparted her disgust to her mother, and she of course communicated it to Megacles. Justly offended by the indignity of such treatment, Megacles immediately took his measures with the enemies of his son-in-law for his second expulsion, prudently disguising his resentment, till he was in a condition to put it in force: it did not long escape the penetration of Pisistratus, but when he came to the knowledge of the conspiracy that had been formed against his power, he found himself and party too weak to oppose it, and seizing the hour of safety, made a voluntary abdication, by

retiring into Eretria without a struggle, and in the utmost precipitation.

Megacles and his friends seem to have considered this secession of Pisistratus as decisive, or else the time did not allow them to follow it by any active measures for preventing his return: eleven years however passed, and still he remained an exile from Athens; old as he was his ambition does not seem to have cooled, nor was he idle in the interim; he had an interview with his sons in Eretria, and concerted measures with them for his restoration; he formed alliances with several of the Grecian cities, particularly Thebes and Argos, and obtained a seasonable supply of money, with which he enlisted and took into his pay a considerable army of mercenaries, and began hostilities in the Athenian state by seizing upon Marathon. This successful measure drew out many of his secret partisans from Athens to join him in this place, where the promising aspect of his affairs and the popularity of his character, had induced great numbers to resort to his standard: thus reinforced he put his army in motion, and directed his march towards the city. The ruling party at Athens hastily collected troops to oppose his approach, and put them under the command of Leogaras, who no sooner took the field against Pisistratus, than he suffered himself and army to be surprised by that experienced general; and fled in disorder over the country; the politic conquerer stopped the pursuit, and despatched his sons after the fugitives to assure them of pardon and protection, if they would go back to their homes and resume their occupations in peace like good citizens: Pisistratus was far advanced in age, and having carried this decisive action by stratagem, took every prudent precaution for establishing his advantage, by seizing the sons of the leading partisans in opposition to his

government, and detaining them in close custody as hostages for the peaceable behaviour of their parents. He conducted himself on the occasion with so much temper and judgement, the splendor of his talents and the elegance of his manners reflected so much lustre on his court and country, that his usurpation was either no longer remembered, or remembered without aversion and regret; in short his genius for government was such that no man questioned his right: even Solon, with all his zeal for liberty, pronounced of Pisistratus, that Athens would not have contained a more virtuous citizen, had his ambition been directed to a more justifiable pursuit; he was mild and merciful in the extreme, winning in address, an eloquent orator, a just judge, and a munificent sovereign; in a word, he had either the merit of possessing, or the art of dissembling, every good quality, and every brilliant accomplishment.

Having now brought down this brief recapitulation of the Athenian history to the last period of the reign of Pisistratus, we are arrived at the point of time, in which that remarkable æra commences, which I call *The Literary Age of Greece:* it was now that Pisistratus conceived the enlarged and liberal idea of instituting the first public library in Greece, and of laying it open to the inspection and resort of the learned and curious throughout the kingdoms and provinces of that part of the world—*Libros Athenis disciplinarum liberalium publice ad legendum præbendos primus posuisse dicitur Pisistratus tyrannus.* Aul. Gell. cap. xvii. lib. vi.———Through a long, though interrupted reign of three and thirty years, he had approved himself a great encourager of literature, and a very diligent collector of the works of learned men: the compiler of the scattered rhapsodies of Homer, and the familiar friend of the great

epic poet Orpheus of Croton, author of the Argonautics, he was himself accomplished in the learning of the age he lived in; and, whilst his court became a place of resort for contemporary genius, he pushed his researches after the remains of the ancient poets and philosophers, through every spot where the liberal sciences had been known to flourish; collecting books in Ionia, Sicily, and throughout all the provinces of Greece with much cost and diligence; and having at length completed his purpose, and endowed a library with the treasures of the time, he laid it open to all readers for the edification of mankind—'Who of those times surpassed him in learning,' says Cicero, 'or what orator was more eloquent or accomplished than Pisistratus, who first disposed the works of Homer in that order of compilation we have them at this very time?' De Orat. iii. 137.

The institution of this library forms a signal epoch in the annals of literature, for from this period Attica took the lead of all the provinces of Greece in arts and sciences, and Athens henceforward became the school of philosophers, the theatre of poets, and the capital of taste and elegance, acknowledged to a proverb throughout the world. From this period to the death of Menander, the comic poet, an illustrious scene presents itself to our observation. Greece, with unbounded fertility of genius, sent a flood of compositions into light, of which, although few entire specimens have decended to posterity, yet these, with some fragments, and what may be further collected on the subject, from the records of the scholiasts and grammarians, afford abundant matter for literary disquisition.

It is painful in the extreme to reflect upon the ravages of time, and to call to mind the host of au-

thors of this illuminated age, who have perished by the irruptions of the barbarous nations. When we meditate on the magnificence of the ancient buildings of Greece and Rome, the mind is struck with awe and veneration: but those impressions are of a very melancholy cast, when we consider that it is from their present ruins we are now measuring their past splendor; in like manner from a few relicks of ancient genius, we take a mournful estimate of those prodigious collections, which, till the fatal conflagrations at Alexandria, remained entire, and were, without comparison, the most valuable treasure upon earth.

Pisistratus, as we have observed, established the first public library in Greece; Xerxes plundered Athens of this collection, much augmented by the literary munificence of Hipparchus and the succeeding archons. Xerxes was not, like the barbarians of the lower ages, insensible to the treasure he had possessed himself of; on the contrary, he regarded these volumes as the most solid fruits of his expedition, and imported them into Persia as splendid trophies of his triumph on his return. Seleucus, sirnamed Nicanor, afterwards restored this library to Athens, with a princely magnanimity. The kings of Pergamus also became great collectors, and the Pergamæan library grew into much reputation and resort. But of all the libraries of antiquity that collected at Alexandria by the Ptolemies of Egypt was much the most respectable. Athenæus says (p. 3.) that Ptolemy Philadelphus purchased the Pergamæan library, and in particular the books collected by Nileus, principally consisting of the Greek dramatists, which, with what he got at Athens and Rhodes, furnished the great library at Alexandria with forty thousand volumes. This library was, unhappily, set on fire, when Julius Cæsar found it ne-

cessary to burn his ships in the docks at Alexandria; so Plutarch states the case; but Aulus Gellius says, they were set on fire accidentally by the auxiliary troops—*non sponte, neque operâ consultâ, sed a militibus forte auxiliariis incensa sunt.*—This misfortune was in a great measure repaired by the library which Marc Antony presented to Cleopatra, and by subsequent additions was increased to such an amount, that when it was at last irretrievably destroyed by the Caliph Omar, it consisted of seven hundred thousand volumes.

This amazing repository of ancient science was buried in ashes by the well-known quibbling edict of that barbarous fanatic—'If,' said the caliph, 'these volumes contain doctrines conformable to the Koran, then is the Koran alone sufficient without these volumes; but, if what they teach be repugnant to God's book, then it is fitting they were destroyed.'—Thus, with false reason for their judge, and false religion for their executioner, perished an innumerable company of poets, philosophers, and historians, with almost every thing elegant in art and edifying in science, which the most illuminated people on earth had in the luxuriancy of their genius produced. In vain did the philosopher John of Alexandria intercede to save them; universal condemnation to the flames, was the sentence ignorance denounced against these literary martyrs. The flow of wit, the flights of fancy, and the labours of learning, alike contributed to feed the fires of those baths, in which the savage conquerors recreated themselves after the siege. Need we enquire when art and science were extinct, if darkness overspread the nations? It is a period too melancholy to reflect upon, and too vacant to record. History passes over it, as over the chart of an ocean without a shore, with this cutting recol-

lection accompanying it, that in this ocean are buried many of the brightest monuments of ancient genius.

It appears that, at the time Terence was writing, Rome was in possession of two thousand Greek comedies: all of which *væ barbaris!* not one hath descended to us, except what are found in our scanty volume of Aristophanes, and these are partly of the old personal class. The gleanings of a few fragments from the grammarians and scholiasts, with the translations of the Roman stage, are now the only samples of the Greek comedy in its last purity and perfection. It is true, that writers of the lower ages, and even the fathers of the Christian church have quoted liberally from the new comedy of the Greeks; these fragments are as respectable for their moral cast, as for their elegant turn of expression; but what a poignancy do they give to our regret, when we compute the loss posterity has suffered by the scale of these remains!

On the part of tragedy, although very many noble works have perished, yet, as some specimens of the great masters have come down to us entire, we have more to console us in this than in the comic department. Happily for the epic muse, the rage of ignorance could not reach the immortal poems of Homer: what other compositions of that great bard may have been lost to the world, is but a dark inquiry at the best; many poems of an antecedent, and some of a contemporary date, have undoubtedly been destroyed; but I am inclined to think, that from the time when those wonderful productions of the Iliad and Odyssey were collected and made public at Athens, till the Augustan æra, little was attempted in the epic branch.

NUMBER CXX.

By revising what history has delivered of the first poets of Greece we shall be able to form a very tolerable conjecture of the authors, whose works Pisistratus collected at the time he instituted his library in Athens; but before I undertake this, it is proper to remark that some authorities, ancient as well as modern, have ascribed the honour of compiling Homer's rhapsodies to Hipparchus the son of Pisistratus, and not to Pisistratus himself: I am not willing, therefore, to pass over the question without some explanation of it.

The ancient authorities I allude to are those of Plato in his Hipparchus, and Ælian in the second article of his eighth book: the first is a naked assertion; the second sets forth more circumstantially—'That Hipparchus the son of Pisistratus, was the first who brought Homer's poems to Athens, and made the rhapsodists rehearse them in the general assembly of the Grecian states'—But this author, who is generally a faithful though a minute collector of anecdotes, expressly contradicts himself in the fourteenth article of the thirteenth book, and tells us that Pisistratus compiled the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer: Cicero, in the quotation from his Orator, mentioned in a preceding paper, gives the credit of the work to Pisistratus; Suidas, under the article of Homer, says—'That various persons were at the pains of collecting and arranging these books in succeeding times, but of these Pisistratus of Athens was

the first.'—Eustathius in his commentary on the Iliad concurs in the same testimony; he says—' That the grammarians, who compiled the Iliad, did it, as it is said, by command of Pisistratus; that they corrected it at discretion, and that the principal of these was Aristarchus, and next to him Zenodotus.' *Comm. ad Iliad.* lib. i. In this latter particular the learned commentator has fallen into an error; for it is well known that the celebrated critic Aristarchus, as well as Zenodotus, lived many years after the time of Pisistratus: I shall mention only one authority more on the same side of the question, which I take to be more decisive than any of the foregoing, and this is an ancient epigrammatist, who, in a distich upon a statue of Pisistratus, celebrates him on this very account, and gives a very probable conjecture, that this statue was erected in commemoration of the great work of the abovementioned compilation. *Anthol.* lib. iv. cap. iv.

From these authorities, as well as from strength of circumstance, it seems highly probable that the founder of the first public library should be studious to enrich his collection with the poems of the Iliad and Odyssey.

This important work was both extremely difficult to execute, and attended with very considerable expense in the progress of it. The rhapsodies of Homer were scattered up and down amongst the cities of Greece, which the itinerant poet had visited, and were necessarily in a very mutilated state, or recorded in men's memories after an imperfect manner, and by piecemeal only: in some places these inestimable relicks had been consumed by fire; and in the lapse of time it is natural to suppose they had suffered many injuries by accident and not a few by interpolation. Solon himself is accused of having made insertions in favour of the Athenians for poli-

tical purposes. Nothing but the most timely exertions could have rescued them from oblivion, and Pisistratus, by restoring Homer, has justly made his own name the companion of the poet's in immortality: to his ardour we are indebted for their present existence. Understanding that there were rhapsodists, who went about the several Grecian states reciting, some an hundred, some a thousand, lines in detached passages of the Iliad and Odyssey, he caused public proclamation to be made of his design to collect those famous poems, offering a reward to every man who should bring him any fragment to assist his intended compilation, and appointing proper persons to receive their respective contributions. The resort on this occasion soon became prodigious; Pisistratus, however, still intent upon the work, adhered to his conditions, and let no man go away without his reward, though the same passages had been furnished ever so often by others before him: the inspectors of the work, by these means, had an opportunity of collating one with the other, and rejecting what appeared spurious upon collation: this was an office of great delicacy, and the ablest men of the time were selected for that purpose, with liberal allowances for their trouble; they were many in number, and when each had made his separate collection, and the rhapsodists ceased to come in, Pisistratus caused them all to assemble and produce their several copies for general review: the whole was now arranged according to the natural order of the poems, and in that order submitted to the final supervision of two persons, who were judged most competent: the poem, thus compiled and corrected according to their judgement and discretion, was fairly transcribed, and the copy with great solemnity deposited in the library: had the like care been extended to the *Margites* and the

rest of Homer's poems, the world would probably have now been in possession of them also; and it is fair to conclude, from the circumstance of their extinction, that both the Iliad and Odyssey would have shared the same fate, had not this event so happily taken place under the patronage of Pisistratus. Let us mark this era, therefore, as the most important in the annals of literature, and let every man, who admires the genius of Homer, revere the memory of Pisistratus.

Lycurgus we know brought Homer's poems out of Asia, and dispersed them amongst his countrymen at Lacedæmon; but Lycurgus considered these poems as a collection of maxims moral and political; he knew the influence which poetry has over rude uncivilized tempers, and the same reasons, that engaged him to employ the songs of Thales the Cretan in his first preludes towards a constitution of government, led him to adopt and import the epic poems of the Iliad and Odyssey: he saw they were of a sublime and animating cast, inspiring principles of religion, love of our country, contempt of death, and every heroic virtue that can dignify man's nature; that they manifested to Greece what misfortunes attended the disunion of her powers, and what those powers were capable of performing, when united; he wished to see an indissoluble alliance and compact of all the states of Greece for their common glory and defence, but he wished to see the state of Sparta, like the sons of Atreus, at the head of the league: in all these particulars the poems of Homer fully met his wishes and fell in with his views, and, as he had made his observations on the manners and characters of the Asiatics during his travels amongst them, he persuaded himself the time might come, when the united arms of Greece would again prevail over the nations

of the East, especially when the natural bravery of the Greeks was stimulated by an heroic poem so flattering to their country and so encouraging to their hopes.

Pisistratus, on the other hand, was actuated by no such public principles; but, though he had not a patriotic yet he had an elegant mind, and the same love of learning, which had dictated the thought of erecting a public repository for such works of genius as were worthy to be preserved, inspired him with the ambition of being the editor of Homer's scattered remains: this never once occurred to the Spartan legislator, who valued them not as poems, but as precepts, in which light they were no less beneficial in their separated state than when complete.

The Athenian tyrant contemplated them with the eye of a critic, and perceiving they would make the sublimest and most perfect compilation the world had ever seen, he ushered them into it with all the passion of an enthusiast. As he evidently perceived they inculcated no doctrines inimical to monarchy, on the contrary, that they recommened acquiescence under rule and obedience to discipline, he obliged the rhapsodists to rehearse them publicly in the ears of Greece at the great festival of the Panathenæa.

The publication of Homer's poems in this state of perfection was the cause that produced such a flow of compositions, especially in the dramatic line; for, as I before observed, it operated to the discouragement of epic writing, and few instances of any poems under that description occur after the compilation of the Iliad and Odyssey: men of genius are not easily disposed to imitate what they despair of equalling, and the contemplation of a perfect work in any branch of composition will of

course deter other adventurers from inferior attempts.

The drama was now in its dawn, and had made some advances before the compilation of the Iliad and Odyssey, but it received such improvement from those poems, that it is generally asserted, and by Aristotle amongst others, to have derived its origin from Homer: in the further progress of these papers I shall fully examine how that question stands; for the present it will be my purpose to take a review of the state of literature in Greece at this remarkable period, when Pisistratus founded his library in Athens; a disquisition, which, although it will carry us into times of very remote antiquity and of doubtful history, will, I hope, prove not devoid of entertainment, even to such of my readers, as have not habituated themselves to studies of this nature.

It is for the sake of such, and in justice to the opinion I would wish to impress of the amiable character of Pisistratus, that I subjoin to this paper some explanation of the term *Tyrant*, by which, in conformity to history, I have been obliged to denominate him: the word, according to our construction of it, conveys the most odious idea, but when it was applied to Pisistratus it was a title of royalty and not a term of reproach: in the age of Homer, Hesiod, and the Greek poets of that date, the word was not in use; they used no term but *Basileus*, which they applied even to the cruellest of despots, as the learned reader may be convinced of, if he will consult the Odyssey, (*Rhap. E.* 84.) This is a point of criticism so well agreed upon by all philologists, that the hymn to Mars, which some have attributed to Homer, is by internal evidence now fully convicted of being posterior to him, because the term *Tyrannus* is found in it. The word is said

to be derived from the Tyrrhenians, and to have come into use about the age of Archilochus, who flourished in the eighteenth Olympiad, many years subsequent to Homer, and prior to Pisistratus, at which time, viz. the age of Archilochus, Gyges, Tyrant of Lydia, was the first so entitled: for this we have the authority of Euphorion, a writer born in the 126th Olympiad, and librarian to Antiochus the Great, King of Syria; also of Clemens, the historian. (*Strom.* 1.)

NUMBER CXXI.

I NOW propose to review the state of literature in Greece antecedent to the time when Pisistratus founded his library in Athens.

Letters, or the alphabet, were probably imported into Greece from Phœnicia: this is ascribed to the poet *Linus:* this poet, according to the fabulous taste of the times, was of divine origin, being reputed the son of Apollo by Terpsichore, according to other accounts, of either Mercury, or Amphimarus, by Urania: if in a pedigree so doubtful, we may choose for ourselves, Mercury, as inventor of the lyre, seems to have a preferable claim to Amphimarus or Apollo, for Linus is said to have been the father of lyric poetry; he is also recorded as the instructor of Hercules in letters; but, if the elder Orpheus was also his disciple, he must have been of too early an age to have been contemporary with Hercules, for Orpheus is placed eleven ages before the siege of Troy. Hercules may have been instructed by the Theban Linus, who was considerably

junior to this of Chalcedon: Linus of Thebes was the son of the poet Eumolpus, and imparted to Greece the knowledge of the globes: he also before the time of Hesiod composed a poem, in which he gives the genealogy of the deities; all we know respecting it is that it differs in some particulars from Hesiod's Theogony: he paid dearly for the honour of being Hercules's preceptor, for that deified hero put Linus to death; though he gave the genealogy of the heathen gods, he is supposed to have taught a sublimer doctrine of the unity of the Supreme Being.

Of the name of *Orpheus* grammarians reckon no fewer than five epic poets; their histories are involved in fable, and their distinctions uncertain and obscure. The Thracian Orpheus, who is the elder of the name, is said to have been the disciple of Linus, and to have lived before the Trojan war eleven ages: he was a prophet as well as a poet, and instituted many ceremonies in the Pagan theology; he delivered precepts in verse relative to the modes of initiation: the mysterious rites of Ceres and Bacchus are supposed to have originated with him, but as it is pretty clear that these rites were Egyptian, they might be introduced, but not invented, by Orpheus.

The second Orpheus was sirnamed Ciconæus, or Arcas, and was also of Thracian extraction; he is said to have flourished two generations before the siege of Troy; he also was an heroic poet, and wrote fables and hymns addressed to the deities. Orpheus Odrysius and Orpheus Camarinæus were epic poets, but he, who was sirnamed Crotoniates, was contemporary with Pisistratus, and lived in great favour and familiarity at the Athenian court; he is said to have written the Argonautics; the

hymns and the poems 'De Lapidibus' now in our hands.

The ancients, in the true spirit of fable, ascribed miraculous powers to the harmony of Orpheus's lyre, and almost all the Roman poets have echoed his praises in the same fanciful strain. Ovid gives us a list of forest trees that danced to his lyre, as long as a gardener's calendar: (*Metam. fab.* 2. *lib.* 10.) Seneca, in his 'Hercules Furens' gives him power over woods, rivers, rocks, wild beasts, and infernal spirits (*Herc. Fur.* 569.) Horace adds to these the winds, and Manilius places his lyre amongst the constellations, having enumerated all her supernatural properties in the following short but comprehensive and nervous description:

At lyra diductis per cœlum cornibus inter
Sidera conspicitur, quâ quondam cerperat Orpheus
Omne quod attigerat cantu; manesque per ipsos
Fecit iter, domuitque infernas carmine leges.
Huic similis honos, similisque potentia causæ:
Tunc silvas et saxa trahens, nunc sidera ducit,
Et rapit immensum mundi revolubilis orbem.

MANIL.

Of the name of Musæus there were also several poets; the elder, or Athenian Musæus, son of Antiphemus, was the scholar of Orpheus. The poetry of these ancient bards was chiefly addressed to the services of religion; their hymns were chaunted as parts of divine worship, and the power of divination was ascribed to them, as the natural tribute of a barbarous multitude to men of superior and enlightened talents: the knowledge of simples and their use in healing diseases or wounds, was amongst the arts by which these early benefactors to mankind attracted the reverence of the vulgar, and Musæus is said to have composed a poem on the cure

of diseases; this Musæus was the father of Eumolpus, and it will be found by them, who have curiosity to search into the records of these ancient bards, that the great prerogatives of prophet and poet descended regularly through certain families after the manner of the Eastern and Jewish castes. Eumolpus, who was of this family, besides the hymns and verses he composed upon the mysteries of Ceres and Bacchus, possessed the art of divination by inspection of the human palm; an art of Egyptian origin.

Thamyris, the son of Philamon, is reckoned amongst the epic poets who flourished before the time of Homer: he composed a long poem, consisting of nearly three thousand lines, entitled The Theology; but as this could not be denominated an epic poem, and as no record remains of any composition of his in that branch of poetry, it is a great doubt whether it is not owing to the fictions of the early grammarians, who were industrious to detract from the originality of Homer's epic, that Thamyris and so many others are enumerated under that description of poets antecedent to Homer; for some accounts make Thamyris the eighth epic poet prior to Homer, an authority to which no credit seems due.

Marsyas and Olympus are supposed to have lived in the time of the Argonautic expedition, but they, as well as Amphion, are more celebrated for their musical talents and inventions, than for their skill in poetry: of Demodocus, Phemius, and Asbolus the Centaur, supposed to have been poets antecedent to Homer, I find no particulars.

The exact time in which Hesiod lived, as referring to the age of Homer, remains a point of controversy in the chronology of the poets: they, who

give credit to the verses, he is by some supposed to have written in competition with Homer, must place him as his contemporary; the best authorities fix him in a period somewhat antecedent to Homer's; Aulus Gellius inclines to the opinion of Hesiod being posterior to Homer, but Aristophanes, in his comedy of the Frogs, places Homer in order of time after Hesiod: he introduces the poet Æschylus reciting the praises of Orpheus in the first place, secondly of Musæus, thirdly of Hesiod, and lastly of Homer, which order of placing them the old scholiast interprets to apply to the times in which they lived: the passage is as follows:

> The holy rites of worship Orpheus taught,
> And warn'd me to abstain from human blood:
> In divination and the healing arts
> Musæus was my master: Hesiod gave
> The useful lesson how to till the earth.
> And mark'd the seasons when to sow the grain,
> And when to reap; but Homer, bard divine!
> Gods! to what height he soars, whilst he arrays
> The warrior bright in arms, directs the fight,
> And with heroic virtue fires the soul!
>
> ARISTOPH. FROGS.

The bards of the Orphean family and others of high antiquity employed their talents in composing hymns and offices of devotion; and it is natural that such should be the first use and application of the powers of poetry; the reason is good on both sides why there should in all times have subsisted an alliance between poetry and prayer. Metre aids and is adapted to the memory; it accords to music, and is the vehicle of enthusiasm; it makes the moral doctrines of religion more sublime, and the mysterious ones more profound; it can render truth more awful, and superstition more imposing: if the eastern nations have set apart a language for

their priests, and dedicated it as sacred to the purposes of prayer, we may well believe that the ancient Heathen bards, who were chiefly Asiatic Greeks, performed religious rites and ceremonies in metre, with accompaniments of music, to which they were devoted in the extreme: the hymns of David and the patriarchal prophecies were in metre, and speak for themselves; we have the same authority for knowing that the Chaldean worship was accompanied with music; the fact does not need illustration; the divinations of Musæus and the hymns of Orpheus were of the same character; initiations were performed, oracles were delivered, and even laws promulgated in verse: the influence of poetry over the human heart is coeval with it, not limited by time or country, but universal to the world in all its parts and all its periods; it is the language of rapture, springs with invention, and flows with devotion; the enthusiast in love or glory breaks forth into it spontaneously, and the voice of lamentation, attuned by sensibility, falls naturally into numbers.

When I am speaking of the Oracular Poets, or Diviners, it is not possible to pass over the Sibyls, the most extraordinary in this order of bards; their oracles have been agitated by the learned in all ages, and received with the utmost veneration and respect by the Greeks first, and afterwards by the Romans: Heathen writers and some of the first and most respectable fathers of the Christian Church refer to them without hesitation, and the fact of their existence rests upon such strength of testimony, as seems to amount to historical demonstration and universal assent. It appears that the Delphic and Erythrean Sibyls, were the oldest of the name, lived before the Trojan war: the verses of the Ery-

threan Sibyl, foretelling the coming of Christ, are seriously referred to by Eusebius and St. Austin; they are thirty-three in number, and now in our hands. She who was supposed to have offered the nine volumes of oracles to Tarquinius Priscus at Rome, was the Cumæan; the Chaldæan, Persic or Hebrew Sibyl prophesied of Alexander of Macedon; the Hellespontic was coeval with Solon; the Samian and others lived in later periods.

Of the Capitoline Oracles there is ample room to doubt; such a political engine in the hands of the priests, and to a certain degree under the direction of the patrician order, offered opportunities for abuse too tempting to be withstood in a constitution so subject to popular commotions: it is true, they were sparingly applied to, and never brought out but in pressing exigences, yet those exigences and the blind idolatry of the people encouraged the abuse by its practicability as well as by its expedience. There is a passage in Cicero's private letters, which makes confession to this very point. The original oracles were destroyed by fire, together with the capitol itself, in which they were deposited; the substitutes, which were collected in Greece and many other parts of the world, to replace them, were finally burned by Stilicho in the reign of the Emperor Honorius.

The lines which have come down to us under the character of Sibylline Oracles, must be cautiously admitted; their authenticity is dubious in most parts, evidently fictitious in many, but some passages have by great authorities been considered as genuine: the great critic Bentley, speaking of them generally in his dissertations on Phalaris, calls the Sibylline Oracles now extant 'clumsy cheats:' The learned professor Whiston has investigated them with much industry and some address; he

separates certain parts, which he believes to be genuine, and his argument merits serious consideration: I am aware that this author must be heard with reserve in matters of prediction, forasmuch as he lived long enough to see two completions of his own Milennium. He traces the interpolated passages however with considerable sagacity, and imputes them with good appearance of reason to the heretical sectaries of the fourth century; those, which he adopts as genuine, he translates into literal prose, and they are curious records. External testimonies make strongly in favour of these passages, and it is remarkable that the sagacity of critics have urged no internal characters in evidence against them. The elder Sibyl has predictions of Homer and the Trojan war; their style much resembles that of Homer himself, and ancient writers do not scruple to say that Homer borrowed several of these Sibylline lines and inserted them in his poem, as the Sibyl herself foretells he would do in the following words, viz.—'Then an old lying writer shall appear in that time again, counterfeiting his country, being also dim-sighted: he shall have much wit and eloquence, and shall compose a wise poem, made up of two parts, and he shall say he was born at Chios, and he shall use the same verse: he shall be the first that shall much adorn the commanders in the war by his praises, Priamus's son, Hector, and Achilles, the son of Peleus, and all others who are famous in war, and he shall make the gods to assist them, writing falsely in every thing. *Sib. Or. lib.* viii. *v.* 357. *ad* 368.

This is amongst the passages which Mr. Whiston thinks genuine; it is curious at least, and the reader must subscribe as much or little of his belief to it, as he thinks it deserves; but of the actual existence of these ancient prophetesses he will find sufficient

testimony, and if he chooses to close with the translator in his deductions, he will conclude that—'Whilst God sent his Jewish prophets to the nation of the Jews from Moses to Malachi, he seems also to have sent all along these Gentile prophetesses to the Gentiles, for their guidance and direction and caution in religious matters.'

I shall observe in general, that these Sibylline oracles are illuminated and supported by the fourth Eclogue of Virgil, which by the best opinions is decided not to allude to Hesiod's poems, as some have interpreted it. The Sybil chaunted her oracles standing on a stone, in a wild manner and with the voice of one that was frantic: these oracles declare the desolation of empires, and the various convulsions of nature by earthquakes, inundations, and volcanoes: some revolutions are distinctly pointed out, other things are shadowed distantly and in obscurity; but what is most extraordinary upon the whole is, that certain events, in times that must have been posterior to the composition of these verses, even admitting them to be spurious, seem to fulfill these predictions in a very singular manner. The following passage, relative to the conflagration, resurrection, and renovation of all things is selected from the fourth book of oracles, which Mr. Whiston judges to be genuine: I give the translation in his words, viz. 'If you will not be persuaded by me, O men of an evil heart! but love unrighteousness and receive these advices with a perverse mind, a fire shall come into the world, and these signs shall appear in it, swords and the sound of a trumpet, when the sun rises, and all the world shall hear a bellowing and vehement noise, and the earth shall burn; and after the fire hath destroyed all mankind, and all cities and rivers and seas shall be soot and ashes, and God shall extinguish this immense fire,

which he had kindled, out of those bones and ashes God shall again form men; and when he hath made them as they were before, then shall the judgement be; in which God shall act justly, judging the world again: and those men who have lived wickedly, the earth shall cover them; but they who are righteous shall live again on the earth, God giving the pious spirit and life and sufficient provisions; and then all men shall see themselves. Most happy is that man! who shall be in being at that time.'

In conclusion I think it a fair remark to be made upon these famous Sibylline verses, that the evidence there is of interpolations in several parts of them makes strongly for the presumption, that there did really exist certain ancient and genuine verses, uttered by true or pretended prophetesses, called Sibyls, whereupon these several forgeries were grounded: the assent of the learned, both Heathen and Christian, corroborates this opinion: but whether the copy now in our hand does or does not contain any genuine lines of these Sibyls, is a question I will not now take on myself to discuss; all that need be said on this point at present is, that there are some passages, whose antiquity is established by the references and quotations of the old Heathen writers, and against which no objections can be drawn from the internal characters and marks of the text.

NUMBER CXXII.

THE first effusions of poetry having been addressed to prayer and worship, to the mysteries and genealogies of the deities, to religious rites, sacrifices, and initiations, and to the awful promulgation of oracles by enthusiastic Sibyls, chaunting forth to the astonished multitude their tremendous denunciations, the time was now in approach, when that portion of divine inspiration, which seems to be the moving spring of poetry, should branch into a new department.

When the human genius was more matured and better qualified by judgement and experience, and the thoughts, instead of being hurried along by the furious impulse of a heated fancy, began to take into sober contemplation the worldly actions of men, and the revolutions and changes of human events, operating upon society, the poet began to prepare himself by forethought and arrangement of ideas for the future purposes of composition: it became his first business to contrive a plan and groundwork for the structure of his poem: he saw that it must have uniformity, simplicity, and order, a beginning, a middle, and an end; that the main object must be interesting and important, that the incidents and accessary parts must hinge upon that object, and not wander from the central idea, on which the whole ought to rest; that a subject corresponding thereto, when elevated by language, superior to the phrase and dialogue of the vulgar,

would constitute a work more orderly and better constructed, than what arose from the sudden and abrupt effusions of unpremeditated verse.

In this manner Homer, the great poet of antiquity, and the father and founder, as I must think, of epic poetry, revolving in his capacious mind the magnificent events of the Grecian association for the destruction of Troy, then fresh in the tradition, if not in the memories of his contemporaries, planned the great design of his immortal Iliad. With this plan arranged and settled in his thoughts beforehand, he began to give a loose to the force and powers of his imagination in strains and rhapsodies, which by frequent recitation fixed upon his memory, and, as he warmed with the advancing composition, he sallied forth in search of hearers, chaunting his verses in the assemblies and cities that received him; his fancy working out those wonderful examples of the sublime, as he took his solitary migrations from place to place: when he made his passages by sea, and committed himself to the terrors of the ocean, the grandest scenes in nature came under his view, and his plastic fancy, seizing every object that accorded to its purposes, melted and compounded it into the mass and matter of the work, on which his brain was labouring: thus with nature in his eye, inspiration at his heart, and contemplation ever active, secured by solitude against external interruption, and undisturbed by worldly cares and concerns from within, the wandering bard performed what time has never equalled, and what to all posterity will remain the standard of perfection.—*Hunc nemo in magnis sublimitate, in parvis proprietate, superaverit: idem lætus ac pressus, jucundus et gravis, tum copia tum brevitate mirabilis; nec poeticâ modò sed oratoriâ virtute eminentissimus.*

[*Quint. lib. x.*1.] 'Him no one ever excelled in sublimity on great topics, in propriety on small ones; whether diffused or compressed, gay or grave, whether for his abundance or his brevity, he is equally to be admired, nor is he super-eminent for poetical talents only, but for oratorical also.'

There is no doubt but Homer composed other poems besides his Iliad and Odyssey; Aristotle in his Poetics decidedly ascribes the Margites to Homer; but as to the Ilias Minor, and Cypriacs, though it is evident these poems were in his hands, yet he seems ignorant of their author: the passage I allude to will be found in the twenty-third chapter of his Poetics; he is comparing these two poems with the Iliad and Odyssey, as furnishing subjects for the drama, and observes that the stage could not properly draw above one or at most two plots for tragedy from the Iliad and Odyssey respectively, whereas many might be taken from the Cypriacs, and he enumerates to the amount of ten, which might be found in the Ilias Minor: it is evident by the context, that he does not think either of these poems were composed by Homer, and no less evident than he does not know to whom they are to be ascribed; their high antiquity, therefore, is the only point, which this celebrated critic has put out of doubt.

The Ilias Minor appears to have been a poem, which includes the taking of Troy and the return of the Greeks: the incidents of the Æneid, as far as they refer to the Trojan story, seem to have been taken from this poem, and in particular the episode of Sinon, which is amongst the dramatic subjects mentioned by Aristotle: the controversy between Ajax and Ulysses for the armour of Achilles was copied by Ovid from the same poem. If this work

is not to be given to Homer, we must believe it was written since the Iliad, from the evidence of its title; but if the author's name was lost in Aristotle's time, his antiquity is probably little short of Homer's: some scholiasts have given this poem to Lesches, but when Lesches lived, and of what country he was, I find no account.

The Cypriacs are supposed to contain the love-adventures of the Trojan ladies during the siege, and probably was a poem of fiction. Herodotus has an observation in his second book upon a passage in this poem, in which Paris is said to have brought Helen from Sparta to Troy in the space of three days, whereas Homer says they were long driven about on their voyage from place to place; from this want of correspondence in a fact of such consequence, Herodotus concludes upon fair grounds of criticism, that Homer was not author of the Cypriacs, though Pindar ascribes it to him; some give the Cypriacs to Hegesius of Salamis, others to Stasinus, a poet of Cyprus, and by some Homer is said to have given this poem, written by himself, by way of portion to his daughter married to Stasinus; this daughter of Homer was called Arsephone, and his sons Theriphon and Theolaus; Nævius translated the Cypriacs into Latin verse: many more poems are ascribed to Homer, which would be tedious to particularize; they are enumerated by Suidas, whom the reader, if his curiosity so inclines him, may readily consult.

As to any other information personally respecting this great poet, it has been given to the world so ably by the late Mr. Wood, in his essay *on the original genius and writings of Homer*, that I can add nothing on the occasion, except the humble recommendation of my judgement in its favour. The in-

ternal evidence which this essayist adduces to fix the birth-place and early residence of his poet in Ionia, is both learnedly collected and satisfactorily applied: he observes that Homer, in his general manner of describing the geography of countries, speaks of them as more or less distant in proportion to their bearing from Ionia; he describes Zephyrus as a rude and boisterous wind, blowing from Thrace; this circumstance had been urged against Homer as a proof of his error in geography, and the soft and gentle quality of Zephyrus, so often celebrated by poets in all times, is quoted in aid of the charge; but the sagacity and local knowledge of Mr. Wood divert the accusation, and turn it into an argument for ascertaining the spot of Homer's nativity and residence, by reminding us, that when the poet describes the wind blowing from the Thracian mountains upon the Ægean sea, it must of course be a west wind in respect to Ionia, from which circumstance he draws his consequence that Homer was an Ionian. This argument must surely be satisfactory as to the place in which the poem was written, and when we have located Homer in Ionia, whilst he was employed in writing his poem, we have one point of doubt at least cleared up in his history to our conviction, and his accuracy in one branch of knowledge vindicated from the cavils of critics.

Having established this point, viz. that Homer was an Asiatic Greek, inhabiting the sea-coast, or an island on the coast of Ionia, and having vindicated his accuracy in geographical knowledge, the ingenious author of the essay proceeds to show, by way of corollary from his proposition thus demonstrated, that Homer must have been a great traveller: that geographical knowledge was in those days no otherwise to be acquired; that he appears to have been

thoroughly conversant in the arts of building and navigating ships, as then understood and practised: and that his map of Greece, which both Strabo, Apollodorus the Athenian, Menogenes and Demetrius of Scepsis illustrated in so diffusive a manner, puts it out of doubt, that he must have visited the several countries, and surveyed them with attention, before he could have laid them down with such geographical accuracy: certain it is, that so great was the authority of Homer's original chart, that it was a law in some cities that the youth should learn it by heart: that Solon appealed to it for establishing the right of Athens to Salamis in preference to the claims of the Megarensians; and that territorial property and dominion were in several instances decided by referring to this Homeric chart: another evidence of Homer's travels he derives from his lively delineations of national character, which he observes are marked with such precision, and supported throughout with such consistency, as not to allow us to think that he could have acquired this knowledge of mankind from any other source but his own observations.

It is more than probable Homer did not commit his poems to writing; it is mere conjecture whether that invention was actually in existence at the time he lived; there is nothing in his works that favours this conjecture, and in such a case silence is something more than negative: the retention of such compositions is certainly an astonishing effort of the human memory, but instances are not wanting of the like nature in early and uncivilized states, and the memory is capable of being expanded by habit and exercise to an extraordinary and almost unlimited compass. Unwritten compositions were always in verse; and metre was certainly used in

aid of memory. It must not, however, be taken for a consequence that writing first came into use when Pherecydes and Cadmus first composed in prose, as some have imagined; for it undoubtedly obtained before their time, and was probably brought into Greece from Phœnicia.

The engraving of the laws of Draco is supposed to have been the first application of that art: but it was a work of labour, and required the tool of the artist, rather than the hand of the penman. Thales and Pythagoras left us no writings behind them, though they spread their learning over Greece, and from their schools peopled it with philosophers. The unwritten drama was long in existence before any compositions of that sort were committed to writing. Solon's laws were engraved in wood or stone, and there appears to have been but one table of them. Of Lycurgus's regulations there was no written record; the mind of the judge was the depository of the law. Draco published his laws in Olymp. xxxix; Pisistratus died in Olymp. lxiii; a century had nearly passed between the publication of these laws and the first institution of a public library at Athens; great advances no doubt were made within that period in the art of writing; nevertheless it was by no means an operation of facility in Pisistratus's time, and his compilation of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey was a work of vast labour and of royal expense: the book remained at Athens as a princely monument of his munificence and love of letters; his library was resorted to by all men of science in Greece, but copies of the work were not circulated till the time of the Ptolemies; even Alexander of Macedon, when he had possessed himself of a complete copy of his favourite poet, locked it up in the rich chest of which he had despoiled King Darius, as the most

worthy case in which he could inclose so inestimable a treasure; when a copy of Homer was considered by a prince as a possession so rare, it cannot be supposed his written works were in many hands: as for the detached rhapsodies which Lycurgus in more early times brought with him out of Asia, they must have been exceeding imperfect, though it is to be presumed they were in writing.

NUMBER CXXIII.

FROM the scarcity of transcribers in the time of Pisistratus, and the difficulties of collecting and compiling poems, which existed only in the memories of the rhapsodists, we are led to consider the institution of the Athenian Library, as a most noble and important work; at the same time, when we reflect how many compositions of the earliest poets depended on the fidelity of memory, we cease to wonder that we have so many more records of names than of works. Many poets are enumerated antecedent to the time of Homer; some of these have been already mentioned, and very few, indeed, of their fragments, are now in existence.

Conjecture, and even fiction, have been enviously set to work by grammarians and others within the Christian era to found a charge of plagiarism against Homer, and to dispute his title to originality. We are told that Corinnus, who was a scholar of Pala-

medes, inventor of the Doric letters, composed a poem called the Iliad, whilst Troy was standing, in which he celebrates the war of Dardanus against the Paphlagonians, and that Homer formed himself upon his model, closely copying him; it is asserted by others, that he availed himself of the poems of Dictys the Cretan, who was of the family of Idomeneus, and lived in the time of the Trojan war: but these fables are still less probable than the story of his contest with Hesiod, and of the prize being decreed against him. Orpheus, Musæus, Eumolpus, and Thamyris, all of Thrace; Marsyas, Olympus, and Midas, all of the Ionian side of the Meander, were poets antecedent to Homer: so were Amphion, Demodocus, Philammon, Phemius, Aristæus, author of the Arimaspia, Isatides, Drymon, Asbolus the Centaur, Eumiclus the Cyprian, Horos of Samos, Prosnautis of Athens, and the celebrated Sibyl.

The five poets, who are generally styled the masters of epic poetry, are Homer, Antimachus the Colophonian, Panyasis of Halicarnassus, Pisander of Camiros, and Hesiod of Cumæ: and all these were natives of the Asiatic coast.

Before I cease speaking of Homer I cannot excuse myself from saying something on the subject of Mr. Pope's translation, which will for ever remain a monument of his excellence in the art of versification: it was an arduous undertaking, and the translator entered upon it with a candid confession that he was—'utterly incapable of doing justice to Homer,' he also says—'That if Mr. Dryden had translated the whole work, he would no more have attempted Homer after him than Virgil, his version of whom, notwithstanding some human errors, is the most noble and spirited translation he knows in any language.' This is a de-

claration, that reflects as much honour on Mr. Pope, as it does on Mr. Dryden: great as his difficulties were, he has nevertheless executed the work in such a manner as to leave stronger reasons why no man should attempt a like translation of Homer after him, than there were why he should not have undertaken it after Mr. Dryden. One thing above all surprises me in his execution of it, which is, 'The Catalogue of the Ships;' a difficulty that I should else have thought insurmountable in rhyme: this, however, he has accomplished in the smoothest metre, and a very curious poem it is: no further attempt, therefore, remained to be made upon Homer, but of a translation in blank verse or in literal prose: a contemporary of eminence in the republic of letters has lately given a prose translation of the Iliad, though Mr. Pope had declared in his preface that 'no literal translation can be just to an excellent original in a superior language.'—It is easy to see what Mr. Pope aims to obtain by this position, and we must interpret the expression of the word *just* to mean that no such literal translation can be equal to the spirit, though it shall be *just* to the sense of its original: he knew full well, that no translation in rhyme could be literal, and he was therefore interested to premise that no literal translation could be *just*; whether he has hereby vindicated his own deviations from the sense of his author, and those pleonasms, which the shackles of rhyme have to a certain degree driven him into, and probably would have driven any other man much more, must be left with the classical reader to judge for himself; some of this description, and in particular a learned lecturer in Rhetoric, who has lately favoured the public with a collection of essays, pronounce of Mr. Pope's poem 'that it is no translation of Homer:' the same au-

thor points out the advantages of Miltonic verse, and it must be confessed that Miltonic verse seems to be that happy medium in metre, which stands the best chance of giving the compressed sense of Homer without debasing its spirit: it is a stern criticism to say that Mr. Pope's ' is no translation of Homer:' his warmest admirers will admit that it is not a close one, and probably they will not dispute but that it might be as *just*, if it had a closer resemblance to its original, notwithstanding what he says in the passage I have quoted from his preface. It is agreed, therefore, that an opening is still left between literal prose and fettered rhyme; I should conceive it might be a pleasant exercise for men of talents to try a few specimens from such passages in the Iliad, as they might like best, and these perhaps might engage some one or more to proceed with the work, publishing a book at a time, as it were experimentally, by which means they might avail themselves of the criticisms of their candid judges, and make their final compilation more correct: if this was ably executed, a very splendid work might in time be completed, to the honour of our nation and language, embellished with engravings of designs by our eminent masters from select scenes in each rhapsody, according to the judgement of the artist.

Small engines may set great machines in motion, as weak advocates sometimes open strong causes; in that hope, and with no other presumption whatever, I shall conclude this paper with a few lines translated from the outset of the Iliad, which the reader, whose patience has hitherto kept company with me, may or may not peruse as he thinks fit.

SING, Goddess Muse, the wrath of Peleus' son,
Destructive source of all the numerous ills
That vex'd the sons of Greece, and swept her host

Of valiant heroes to untimely death;
But their unburied bodies left to feast
The dogs of Troy and carrion birds of prey:
So Jove decreed, and let Jove's will be done!
In that ill hour when first contention sprang
'Twixt Agamemnon, of the armies chief,
And goddess-born Achilles. Say, what power
'Mongst Heaven's high synod stirr'd the fatal strife!—
Son of Latona by Almighty Jove
He, for the king's offence, with mortal plague
Smote the contagious camp, vengeance divine
For the insulted honour of his priest
Sage Chryses; to the stationed fleet of Greece
With costly ransom off'ring to redeem
His captive daughter, came the holy seer;
The laurel garland, ensign of his God,
And golden sceptre in his hand he bore;
And thus to all, but chief the kingly sons
Of Atreus, suppliant he addressed his suit.
 'Kings, and ye well-appointed warriors all!
So may the Gods, who on Olympus' height
Hold their celestial mansions, aid your arms
To level yon proud towers, and to your homes
Restore you, as to me you shall restore
My captive daughter and her ransom take,
In awful reverence of the God I serve.'
 He ceas'd; the assembled warriors all assent,
All but Atrides; he, the general voice
Opposing, with determin'd pride rejects
The proffer'd ransom, and insults the suit.
 'Let me not find thee, Priest! if thou presum'st
Or here to loiter, or henceforth to come,
'Tis not that sceptre, no, nor laurel crown
Shall be thy safe-guard: hence! I'll not restore
The captive thou demand'st; doom'd for her life
In distant Argos, where I reign, to ply
The housewife's loom and spread my nightly couch;
Fly, whilst thy flight can save thee, and begone!'
 No more; obedient to the stern decree,
The aged suitor turns his trembling steps
To the surf-beaten shore; there calls his God,
And in the bitterness of anguish prays.
 'Hear me, thou God, who draw'st the silver bow;
Hear thou, whom Chrysa worships; hear, thou king
Of Tenedos, of Cilla; Smintheus, hear!

And, if thy Priest hath ever deck'd thy shrine
Or on thy flaming altars offer'd up
Grateful oblations, send thine arrows forth;
Strike, strike these tyrants, and avenge my tears!'
Thus Chryses pray'd, nor was the pray'r unheard;
Quick at his call the vengeful God uprear'd
His tow'ring stature on Olympus' top;
Behind him hung his bow; onward he strode
Terrific, black as night, and as he shook
His quiver'd arrows, the affrighted air
Echo'd the dreadful knell: now from aloft
Wide o'er the subject fleet he glanc'd his eye,
And from his silver bow with sounding string
Launch'd th' unerring shaft: on mules and dogs
The missile death alighted; next to man
Spread the contagion dire; then thro' the camp
Frequent and sad, gleam'd the funereal fires.
Nine mournful days they gleam'd; haply the tenth
With better omens rose; Achilles now
Conven'd the Grecian chiefs, thereto inspir'd
By Jove's fair consort, for the Goddess mourn'd
The desolating mischief: at the call
Of great Achilles none delay'd to come,
And in full council thus the hero spake.
'If quick retreat from this contagious shore
Might save a remnant of our war-worn host,
My voice, Atrides, would advise retreat;
But not for me such counsels: call your seers,
Prophets and priests, interpreters of dreams,
For Jove holds commerce with mankind in sleep,
And let that holy convocation say
Why falls Apollo's vengeance on our heads;
And if oblations can avail for peace
And intermission from this wasting plague,
Let victims bleed by hecatombs, and glut
His altars, so his anger be appeas'd.'

NUMBER CXXIV.

HESIOD's heroic holds a middle place between the Orphean and Homeric style; his Genealogy of the Deities resembling the former, and his Shield of Hercules at due distance following the latter: his famous poem in praise of illustrious women is lost; from the words, Ἢ Οἵη, with which it opened, it came in time to be generally known by the name of the *Eoics*, or *The Great Eoics*, and this title, by misinterpretation, has been construed to refer to the proper name of some favourite mistress, whom he chose to make the heroine of his poem: the poet being born at Ascra, a small village in the neighbourhood of Mount Helicon, *Eoa* was supposed to have been a beautiful damsel of Ascra, whom he was in love with: this poem seems to have been considered as the best work of the author, at least it was that which brought him most in favour with his contemporaries, and gained him some admirers, who even preferred him to Homer; we cannot wonder if that sex at least, who were the objects of his panegyric, were the warmest in his praise. I suspect that Homer did not pay much court to the ladies in his Margites, and as for the Cypriacs, they were professedly written to expose the gallantries of the fair sex: the character of Penelope, however, in the Odyssey, is a standard of conjugal fidelity; and Helen, though a frail heroine in the Iliad, is painted with such delicate

touches, as to recommend her in the most interesting manner to our pity and forgiveness.

Hesiod's address carried every thing before it, and the choice of his subjects shows that popularity was his study; for, not content with engaing the fair sex in his favour by the gallantry of *The Great Eoics*, he flattered the heroes of his time, or at least the descendants of heroes, by a poem, which he entitled *The Heroic Genealogy:* as one was a professed panegyric of beautiful and illustrious women, the other was written in the praise of brave and distinguished men: if this heroic catalogue comprised only the great and noble of his own sex, his *Times* and *Seasons* were addressed to the community at large, and conveyed instruction to the husbandman and labourer; nor was this all, for great authorities have given to Hesiod the fables commonly ascribed to Æsop, who is supposed only to have made some additions to Hesiod's collection; if this were so, we have another strong reason for his popularity—'For fables, as Quintilian well observes, are, above all things, calculated to win the hearts of the vulgar and unlearned, who delight in pleasing tales and fictions, and are easily led away with what they delight in.'—In short, Hesiod seems to have written to all ranks, degrees, and descriptions of people: to rich and poor, to the learned and unlearned, to men, women, and even to the deities themselves.

Can we be surprised, then, if this politic and pleasing author was the idol of his time, and gained the prize, even though Homer was his competitor? His contemporaries gave judgment in his favour, but posterity revokes the decree: Quintilian, who probably had all his works before him, pronounces of Hesiod—'That he rarely soars; that great part of his works are nothing else but catalogues and strings

of names, intermixed, however, with useful precepts gracefully delivered and appositely addressed; in fine, that his merit consists in the middle style of writing.'—Talents of this sort probably recommended him to the unreserved applause of all, whom superiority of genius in another affects with envy and provokes to detraction. Many such, besides the grammarian Daphidas, were found to persecute the name of Homer with malevolence, whilst he rose superior to their attacks: the rhapsodists, whose vocation it was in public and private to entertain the company with their recitations, were so constantly employed in repeating Homer's poems preferably to all others, that in time they were universally called Homerists. Demetrius Phalereus at length introduced them into the theatres, and made them chaunt the poems of his favourite author on the stage: the poet Simonides, celebrated for his memory, repeated long passages of Homer, sitting in the public theatre on a seat erected for him on the stage for that purpose; Cassander, King of Macedonia, had the whole Iliad and Odyssey by heart, and was continually repeating, not in company only, but in his private hours to himself: Stesichorus also, the sublimest of all poets next to Homer, and his greatest imitator, was remarkably fond of chaunting forth passages in the Iliad and Odyssey; it is related also that he used frequently to repeat verses of Hesiod, Archilochus, Mimnermus, and Phocylides the Milesian, who is the supposed author of the poem entitled *Parænesis* yet extant. We are obliged to the grammarians for many scraps or fragments from the wrecks of authors, but in the case of Hesiod's Eoics meet with one remnant only preserved by Pausanias, and this relates to Iphigenia, who, by Hesiod's account, was, by the favour of Diana, reprieved from extinction, and

immortalized in the person of the goddess Hecate.

As for the bards of the Orphean family, it is difficult to adjust their chronologies and descents; I have already enumerated five poets of the name of Orpheus, and said in general terms, that there were several of the name of Musæus; they may be thus described; viz. first, Musæus, son of Antiphemus and disciple of Orpheus, styled an epic poet; he wrote a long poem of four thousand verses, containing precepts addressed to his son Eumolpus, and thence entitled *The Eumolpiad;* he wrote a hymn to Ceres, a poem on the cure of diseases, and published certain prophetic verses, though his title to these has been brought into dispute by the artifices of one Onomacritus, a plagiarist and pretended diviner in the time of Hipparchus, who put off these verses of Musæus as his own. The second Musæus was grandson of the first and second Eumolpus; various poems are given to this Musæus, particularly the Theogony, The Sphere, The Mysteries of Initiation and Lustration, the Titans, &c. The third Musæus, a Theban, was son of Thamyris and grandson of Philammon; he flourished about the time of the Trojan war: his father Thamyris is recorded by Homer.

> And Dorion fam'd for Thamyris' disgrace,
> Superior once of all the tuneful race,
> Till vain of mortals' empty praise he strove
> To match the seed of cloud-compelling Jove;
> Too daring bard! whose unsuccessful pride
> Th' immortal Muses in their art defy'd;
> Th' avenging Muses of the light of day
> Depriv'd his eyes, and snatch'd his voice away:
> No more his heav'nly voice was heard to sing,
> His hand no more awak'd the silver string.
>
> POPE, IL. 2.

Such was the fate of blind Thamyris, but he has double security for immortality, having a place not only in the Iliad of Homer, but also in the Paradise Lost of Milton:

> Thee, Sion, and the flow'ry brooks beneath
> That wash'd thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
> Nightly I visit; nor sometimes forget
> Those other two equall'd with me in fate,
> So were I equall'd with them in renown,
> Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides.
>
> BOOK III.

Thus although the works of this famous bard have totally perished, and 'his heavenly voice is no more heard to sing,' yet it has been his singular good fortune to be celebrated by the greatest poet of antiquity, and ranked with that very poet by the greatest of the moderns; and all three involved in the same visitation of blindness; an extraordinary concurrence!

The fourth Musæus was son of Orpheus and President of the Eleusinian Mysteries: this is the Musæus, whom Justin Martyr says was instructed by his father in a more rational religion than he practised in the temple of Ceres, and taught the knowledge and worship of one supreme God, creator of all things. The fifth was Musæus of Ephesus, an epic poet; the sixth a grammarian, whose treatise on the Isthmian games is quoted by Euripides: and the seventh and last, is that Musæus, whom the poet Martial mentions for having written *Pathicissimos libellos*, and the author, as it is probable, of the little poem upon Hero and Leander, now extant, which Scaliger so much admires.

Archilochus flourished in Olymp. xxiii. and was a very early writer of Iambics;—He excels, says Quintilian, in energy of style; his periods strong,

compressed and brilliant, replete with life and vigour: so that if he is second to any it is from defect of subject, not from natural inferiority of genius.

He adds that—'Aristarchus was of opinion, that of all the writers of Iambic verse, Archilochus alone carried it to perfection.' Athenæus has preserved a little epigram of his no otherwise worth recording than as it is the only relick of his muse, except one distich in long and short verse, purporting that he was devoted to Mars and the Muses: the epigram may be translated as follows:

> Glutton, we ask thee not to be our guest,
> It is thy belly bids thee to our feast. ARCHIL.

Archilochus fell in battle by the hand of Calondas, who immolated his own son to the manes of the poet, to atone the vengeance of Apollo: he was a man of great private virtue and distinguished courage, but a severe unsparing satirist.

Tisias, commonly called Stesichorus, from his invention of the chorus, which he sung to the accompaniment of the harp, was contemporary with Solon, and born at Himera in the Island of Sicily; as a lyric poet he was unequalled by any of the Greeks but Pindar; his subjects were all of the epic cast, and he oftentimes rose to a sublimity, that rivalled Homer, upon whose model he formed himself: this he would have done throughout, according to the opinion of Quintilian, if his genius had not led him into a redundancy; but his characters are drawn with great dignity and preserved justly. He did not visit Greece till he was far advanced in age, and died in Olymp. lvi. in the city of Catana, in his native island of Sicily, where he was buried at the

public cost with distinguished ceremony and magnificence. A tomb was erected to his memory near one of the city gates, which was thenceforward called the gate of Stesichorus; this tomb was composed of eight columns, had eight steps and eight angles after the cabalistical numbers of Pythagoras, whose mysterious philosophy was then in general vogue; the cubic number of eight was emblematic of strength, solidity, and magnificence, and from this tomb of Stesichorus arose the Greek proverb Πάντα 'Οκτὼ, by which was meant any thing perfect and complete. Phalaris of Agrigentum erected a temple to his name, and decreed him divine honours; all the cities in Sicily conspired in lamenting the death of their favourite poet, and vied with each other in the trophies they dedicated to his memory.

Epimenides of Crete, the epic poet, was contemporary with Solon, and there is a letter in the life of that great man, inserted by the sophists, which is feigned to have been written by Solon in his exile to Epimenides: this poet, as well as his contemporary Aristæus, is said to have had the faculty of stopping the functions of life and recalling them at pleasure. Aristæus wrote a poem entitled Arimaspea, containing the history of the northern Arimaspeans, a people of Scythia, whom he describes as the fiercest of all human beings, and pretends that they have only one eye; he also composed an heroic poem on the genealogy of the deities: Strabo says, if ever there was a quack in the world, this Aristæus was one. Simonides the poet lived in the court of Hipparchus, and was much caressed by that elegant prince; he was a pleasing courtly writer, and excelled in the pathetic. Alcæus was poet, musician, and warrior; Quintilian gives him great praise for the boldness of his satire

against tyrants, and occasionally for the moral tendency of his writings, but admits that sometimes his muse is lóose and wanton : it appears from some fragments preserved by Athenæus, that he wrote several poems or sonnets in praise of drinking; there is also a fragment in the martial style, describing the variety of armour, with which his house was adorned. Callimachus, Theocritus, Anacreon and Sappho, are to a certain degree known to us by their remains. Every branch of poetry, but the drama, was at this era at its greatest perfection.

NUMBER CXXV.

THERE is a considerable fragment in Athenæus of a love-poem written by Hermesianax of Colophon to his mistress Leontium; the poet recommends his passion by telling her how love has triumphed over all the great geniuses in their turns, and begins with the instances of Orpheus and Musæus, and brings them down to Sophocles, Euripides, Pythagoras, and Socrates. This Hermesianax must have been a contemporary of Epicurus, forasmuch as Leontium was the mistress of that philosopher as well as of his disciple Metrodorus : it is plain, therefore, that the learned Gerard John Vossius did not advert to this circumstance, when he puts Hermesianax amongst the poets of a doubtful age. Leontium was an Athenian courtezan, no less celebrated for science than beauty, for she engaged in a philosophical controversy with Theophrastus, of

which Cicero takes notice [*lib.* 1. *de Nat. Deor.*] Pliny also records an anecdote of her being painted by Theodorus sitting in a studious attitude.

This fragment may not improperly be called the amours of the Greek poets, and as it relates to many of whom we have been speaking, and is withal a very curious specimen of an author very little known even by name, I have inserted the following translation, in the hope that it will not be unacceptable to my readers.

Οἵην μὲν φίλος υἱὸς ἀνήγαγεν Οἰάγροιο
Ἀγριόπην, Θρῇσσαν στειλάμενος κιθάρην—
&c. ATHEN. LIB. XIII.

SUCH was the nymph, whom Orpheus led
From the dark mansions of the dead,
Where Charon with his lazy boat
Ferries o'er Lethe's sedgy moat;
Th' undaunted minstrel smites the strings,
His strain thro' hell's vast concave rings;
Cocytus hears the plaintive theme,
And refluent turns his pitying stream;
Three-headed Cerberus, by fate
Posted at Pluto's iron gate,
Low-crouching rolls his haggard eyes
Ecstatic, and foregoes his prize.
With ears erect at hell's wide doors
Lies listening as the songster soars:
Thus music charm'd the realms beneath,
And beauty triumph'd over death.

The bard, whom night's pale regent bore
In secret on the Athenian shore,
Musæus felt the sacred flame,
And burnt for the fair Theban dame
Antiope, whom mighty Love
Made pregnant by imperial Jove;
The poet plied his amorous strain,
Press'd the fond fair, nor press'd in vain.

For Ceres, who the veil undrew,
That screen'd her mysteries from his view,
Propitious this kind truth reveal'd,
That woman close besieg'd will yield.

Old Hesiod too his native shade
Made vocal to th'Ascrean maid,
The bard his heav'n-directed lore
Forsook, and hymn'd the gods no more:
Soft love-sick ditties now he sung,
Love touch'd his harp, love tun'd his tongue,
Silent his Heliconian lyre,
And love's put out Religion's fire.

Homer, of all past bards the prime,
And wonder of all future time,
Whom Jove with wit sublimely blest,
And touch'd with purest fire his breast,
From gods and heroes turn'd away
To warble the domestic lay.
And wand'ring to the desert isle,
On whose parch'd sands no seasons smile,
In distant Ithaca was seen
Chanting the suit-repelling Queen.

Mimnermus tun'd his am'rous lay,
When time had turn'd his temples gray;
Love revell'd in his aged veins,
Soft was his lyre, and sweet his strains;
Frequenter of the wanton feast,
Nanno his theme, and youth his guest.

Antimachus with tender art
Pour'd forth the sorrows of his heart;
In her Dardanian grave he laid
Chryseïs his beloved maid;
And thence returning sad beside
Pactolus' melancholy tide,
To Colophon the minstrel came,
Still sighing forth the mournful name,
Till lenient time his grief appeas'd,
And tears by long indulgence ceas'd.

Alcæus strung his sounding lyre,
And smote it with a hand of fire,

To Sappho, fondest of the fair,
Chanting the loud and lofty air.

Whilst old Anacreon, wet with wine,
And crown'd with wreaths of Lesbian vine,
To his unnatural minion sung
Ditties that put to blush the young.

Ev'n Sophocles, whose honey'd lore
Rivals the bee's delicious store,
Chorus'd the praise of wine and love,
Choicest of all the gifts of Jove.

Euripides, whose tragic breast
No yielding fair one ever prest.
At length in his obdurate heart
Felt love's revengeful rankling dart,
Thro' Macedon with furious joy
Panting he chas'd the pathic boy;
'Till vengeance met him in the way,
And blood-hounds made the bard their prey.

Philoxenus, by wood-nymphs bred
On fam'd Cithæron's sacred head,
And train'd to music, wine and song,
'Midst orgies of the frantic throng,
When beauteous Galatea died,
His flute and thyrsus cast aside;
And wand'ring to thy pensive coast,
Sad Melos, where his love was lost,
Each night thro' the responsive air
Thy echoes witness'd his despair:
Still, still his plaintive harp was heard,
Soft as the nightly-singing bird.

Philotas too in Battis' praise
Sung his long-winded roundelays:
His statue in the Coan grove
Now breathes in brass perpetual love.

The mortified abstemious sage,
Deep read in learning's crabbed page,
Pythagoras, whose boundless soul
Scal'd the wide globe from pole to pole,

Earth, planets, seas, and heav'n above,
Yet found no spot secure from love;
With love declines unequal war,
And trembling drags his conqueror's car;
Theano clasp'd him in her arms,
And wisdom stoop'd to beautys' charms.

E'en Socrates, whose moral mind
With truth enlighten'd all mankind,
When at Aspasia's side he sate,
Still found no end to love's debate;
For strong, indeed, must be that heart
Where love finds no unguarded part.

Sage Aristippus by right rule
Of logic purg'd the Sophist's school,
Check'd folly in its headlong course,
And swept it down by reason's force:
Till Venus aim'd the heart-felt blow,
And laid the mighty victor low.

A little before the time that Pisistratus established his tyranny at Athens, the people of Greece had distinguished certain of their most eminent sages by the denomination of the Seven Wise Men. This flattering pre-eminence seems to have been distributed with more attention to the separate claims of the different states, than to the particular pretensions of the persons who composed this celebrated junto: if any one community had affected to monopolize the prerogative of wisdom, others would hardly have subscribed their assent to so partial a distribution; and yet when such distinguished characters as Pythagoras, Anacharsis the Scythian, Mison, Pherecydes, Epimenides, and Pisistratus himself, were excluded, or at best rated only as wise men extraordinary, many of their admirers complained of the exclusion, and insisted on their being rated in the list; hence arises a difficulty in determining the precise number of the principals; the common account, however, is as follows, viz.

Solon of Athens, Thales of Meletus, Periander of Corinth, Cleobulus the Rhodian, Chilon the Lacedæmonian, Bias of Priene, and Pittacus of Mitylene.

This distribution was well calculated to inspire emulation amongst rival states, and to that emulation Greece was indebted for the conspicuous figure she made in the world of letters. The Ionic and Italian schools of Philosophy were established under Thales and Pythagoras: the first was supported by Anaximander the successor of Thales, by Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Diogenes, Zeno and other illustrious men: Pythagoras's school devolved upon Empedocles, Heraclitus, Zenophanes, Democritus, Pyrrho, and Epicurus. The original tenets of the first masters were by no means adhered to by their descendants; the wanderings of error are not to be restrained by system; hypothesis was built upon hypothesis, and the labyrinth at length became too intricate to be unravelled: sparks of light were in the mean time struck out by the active collision of wit; noble truths occasionally broke forth, and sayings, worthy to be registered amongst the doctrines of Christian revelation, fell from heathen lips: in the lofty spirit of philosophy they insulted pain, resisted pleasure, and set at defiance death itself. Respect is due to so much dignity of character; the meek forgiving tenets, which Christianity inculcates, were touched upon but lightly and by few; some, however, by the force of intellect followed the light of reason into a future state of immortality; they appear to have contemplated the Divine Essence, as he is, simple and supreme, and not filtered into attributes corruptly personified by a synod of divinities. Of such men we must think and speak with admiration and affection.

Thales, the founder of the Ionic school, was a great man and a good citizen; he studied geometry under Egyptian masters, and introduced some new discoveries in astronomy and the celestial sphere, regulating and correcting the Greek calendar, which Solon, about the same time, made some attempts to reform at Athens. This he did by bringing it to a conformity with the Hebrew calendar, except that his year began with the summer solstice, and that of the Hebrews with the vernal. Now the Hebrew calender comprised twelve months, and each month severally comprised the same, or nearly the same number of days as ours. This appears by an examination of Moses's account of the Deluge in the seventh chapter of Genesis.

Amongst other nations the calendar was exceedingly vague and unsettled: the Egyptians measured their year by four months; the Arcadians by three; the Carians and Acarnanians by six; and the people of Alba by ten; at the same time all these nations were in the practice of making up the year to its natural completion by intercalendary months or days. In the time of Romulus the Romans followed the calendar of the Albanians; and of the ten months which their year consisted of, four comprised thirty-one days each, viz. Martius, Maius, Quintilis, October; the six other consisted of thirty days, and were made Aprilis, Junius, Sextilis, September, November, December. By this calendar Romulus's year regularly consisted of only 304 days, and to complete the natural period he was obliged to resort to the expedient of intercalendary days.

Numa was too much of a philosopher not to seek a remedy for these deficiences, and added two months to his year: the former of these he named

Januarius from Bifrons Janus, one of whose faces was supposed to look towards the past, and the other towards the succeeding year; the other new month he called Februarius, from Februus, the deity presiding over lustrations; this being the month for the religious rites of the Dii Manes, it was made to consist of twenty-eight days, being an even number; all the others, conformably to the superstition of the times, consisted of odd numbers as more propitious, and accordingly Martius, Maius, Quintilis, October, had each thirty-one days, and the other seven, twenty-nine days, so the year, thus regulated, had 355 days, and it was left to the priests to make up the residue with supplementary days.

This commission became a dangerous prerogative in the hands of the sacerdotal order, and was executed with much irregularity and abuse; they lengthened and shortened the natural period of the year, as interest influenced them to accord to the prolongation or abbreviation of the annual magistracies dependent thereupon. In this state things were suffered to remain till Julius Cæsar succeeded to the pontificate; he then undertook a reform of the calendar, being in his third consulate, his colleague being Æmilius Lepidus. Assisted by the best astronomers of the time, particularly the philosopher Sosigenes, he extended the year of his reform to 442 days, and thenceforward ordained that the year should consist of 365 days, distributed into months as it now stands, except that he added one day to February every fifth year, and not every third.

Thales died in the fifty-eighth Olympiad in extreme old age: the famous philosopher Pherecydes died a few years before him of that horrible distem-

per called the Morbus Pediculosus, and in his last illness wrote, or is supposed to have written, to Thales as follows:

PHERECYDES TO THALES.

'May your death be easy, when the hour shall come! for my part, when your letter reached me, I was sinking under the attack of a most loathsome disease, accompanied with a continual fever. I have, therefore, given it in charge to my friends, as soon as they shall have committed my remains to the earth, to convey my manuscripts to your hands. If you and the rest of your wise fraternity shall, on perusal, approve of making them public, do so; otherwise, let them not see the light; certainly they do not satisfy my judgement in all particulars; the best of us are liable to error; the truth of things is not discoverable by human sagacity, and I am justly doubtful of myself: upon questions of theology I have been cautious how I have committed myself: other matters I have treated with less reserve; in all cases, however, I suggest rather than dictate.

'Though I feel my dissolution approaching and inevitable, I have not absolutely dismissed my physicians and friends; but as my disease is infectious, I do not let them enter my doors, but have contrived a signal for informing them of my condition, and have warned them to prepare themselves for paying the last offices to my corpse to-morrow.

'Farewell for ever!'

NUMBER CXXVI.

Ignotum Tragicæ genus invenisse Camœnæ
Dicitur, et plaustris vexisse poëmata Thespis,
Quæ canerent agerentque peruncti fæcibus ora.
HOR. ARS POET. 275.

HAVING carried down the history of Athens to that period, when a new species of poetry made its appearance, I propose in this place to treat of the origin and introduction of the drama: in doing this, my chief study will be to methodize and arrange the matter, which other writers have thrown out, sensible that in a subject so often exhausted, very little else can now remain to be done.

Aristotle says—'That Homer alone properly deserves the name of poet, not only as being superior to all others so called, but as the first who prepared the way for the introduction of the drama; and this he did, not merely by the display of his powers on grave and tragic subjects, but inasmuch as he suggested the first plot and device for comedy also; not founding it upon coarse and opprobrious invective, but upon wholesome and facetious ridicule: so that his Margites bears the same analogy to comedy, as his Iliad and Odyssey do to tragedy.'

This assertion in favour of Homer coming from such high authority, has been adopted by the scholiasts, critics, and commentators, who have treated either of that great poet or of the drama from the time when it was made to the present: but it should

be observed, that Aristotle is not here speaking of the drama professedly as a chronologist, but reviewing it as an object of criticism, and under this view it can no otherwise come into contemplation than in its more advanced and perfect state, when built upon the model of Homer's fables and characters; after it had thrown off the barbarous traces of its real origin, and had quitted Bacchus and the Satyrs. Of tragedy, as a written and consistent poem, Homer may well be styled the father: for when Phrynichus and Æschylus introduced on the scene Μύθους καὶ Πάθη, 'the stories and calamities of heroes,' tragedy became Homeric, or, in other words, assumed a dignity of tone and character, that was copied from the epic of Homer, as comedy was from his iambic; and agreeably to this Aristotle names Epicharmus as the first comic poet, who was professedly a copyist of the Margites.

Now, by settling the dates of a few well-established facts, we shall bring this question into closer view. Pisistratus, after a broken reign of thirty-three years, died in Olymp. lxiii. whereas the Marmor Chronicon records, that the first tragedy at Athens was made by Thespis, and acted on a waggon in Olymp. lxi. Suidas confirms this record; from the same authority viz. [Mar. Chron.] we collect that Susarion made the first comedy at Athens, and acted it on a moveable scaffold in the middle of Olymp. liv. being one year before Pisistratus established his tyranny. By these dates it appears that comedy was made and acted at Athens several years before the compilation of Homer's epic poems, and tragedy before or at that time, admitting for the present that Thespis was the first who made tragedies, and that the record above cited was the date of his first tragedy.

I am aware that these facts alone will not prove that the inventors of the drama did not copy from Homer: for it cannot be denied that Thespis and even Susarion might have resorted to his poems, before they were compiled by Pisistratus: and as for Thespis, if we were to admit the tragedies, which Suidas ascribes to him, to be genuine, it is evident from their titles that some of them were built upon Homeric fables; but good critics find strong reasons to object to this list, which Suidas has given us, and I must think it a fair presumption against their authenticity, that Aristotle who gives Homer the credit of furnishing the first suggestions of the drama, does not instance Thespis's tragedies; for had they been what Suidas reports, it can hardly be supposed that Aristotle would have overlooked an instance so much to his purpose, or failed to have quoted Thespis, as the first tragic writer, when he names Epicharmus as the first comic one, who copied from Homer.

Plutarch, in his Symposia, says—'That when Phrynichus and Æschylus first turned the subject of tragedy to fables and doleful stories, the people said, What's this to Bacchus?'—According to this anecdote, how could Thespis, who was anterior to Phrynichus and Æschylus, be a writer of such tragedies as Suidas has ascribed to him?

Another very ingenious argument for their confutation, is drawn from a short fragment, which the same author has quoted from the Pentheus, one of those tragedies which Suidas gives to Thespis: this fragment purports that—'The Deity is situated remote from all pleasure or pain.' A passage of this cast can never have been part of a ludicrous drama belonging to Bacchus and the Satyrs; and, therefore, either Plutarch must be mistaken in his anecdote

above cited, or Suidas in his author of 'The Pentheus;' but it is further urged by a sagacious critic, that this fragment bears internal evidence of a forgery, being doctrine of a later date than Thespis, and plainly of the fabrication of Plato's academy: in confirmation of this remark, circumstances of a more positive nature are adduced, and Diogenes Laertius is brought forward, who actually charges Heraclides of writing certain tragedies and fathering them upon Thespis, and this charge Laertius grounds upon the authority of Aristoxenus the musician; the credit of Aristoxenus as a philosopher, historian, and faithful relator of facts, is as well established with the learned world, as the character of Heraclides is notorious for plagiarism, falsehood and affectation; he was a vain rich man, a great juggler in literature, aspiring to rival Plato in his writings, and one who was detected in bribing the Pythia to decree a crown of gold and divine honours to him after his decease; a man as apt to palm his own productions upon others as he was to assume other men's productions to himself, which he was convicted of by Chamæleon in his spurious treatise upon Homer and Hesiod.

This practice of fathering tragedies upon great names obtained in more instances than one; for Dionysius wrote a tragedy called Parthenopæus and palmed it upon Sophocles, a bolder forgery than this of Heraclides; and it is remarkable, that Heraclides himself was caught by this forgery, and quotes the Parthenopæus as genuine. .

Plato speaking of The Deity uses these words—Πoῤῥω ἡδονῆς καὶ λύπης ἕδραται τὸ θεῖον—'The Deity is situated remote from all pleasure and pain:' a sentiment so coincident with the fragment quoted by Plutarch from the Pentheus ascribed to Thespis,

seems to warrant the remark before made, which supposes it to have been fabricated in the academy of Plato. This, with the authority of Aristoxenus, for the general forgery, and Plutarch's assertion that tragedy was satiric before Phrynichus and Æschylus, will have its weight against the titles of Thespis's tragedies, as they are given in Suidas; and accordingly I find that the editor of Suidas, commenting upon this very article, in effect admits the error of his author: this argument moreover accounts for the silence of Aristotle as to Thespis's tragedies.

I am aware that it has been a question with some critics, whether tragedy originated with Thespis, notwithstanding the record of the Marmor Chronicon, and Suidas states the pretensions of Epigenes the Sicyonian prior to Thespis; but in this he is single and unsupported by any evidence, except what Plato asserts generally in his Minos—'That tragedy was extremely ancient at Athens, and that it is to be dated neither from Thespis, nor from Phrynichus;'—some authorities also place Thespis's first tragedy in a higher period than Olymp. lxi. as it stands in the Marmor; for Laertius says—'That Solon hindered Thespis from acting his tragedies, believing those feigned representations to be of no use.'—And Plutarch tells us—'That Solon saw one of Thespis's plays, but disliking the manner of it, forbade him to act any more.'—I need not observe that this must have passed before Pisistratus established his tyranny, which did not take place till the last year of Olymp. liv.; but if these facts be admitted, they seem to be decisive as to the tragedy's being allusive to Bacchus and the Satyrs in its first instance at least; because it can hardly be supposed that so profest an admirer of Homer as

Solon was known to be, and himself a poet, would have objected to any drama formed upon his model.

As to Plato's general assertion with respect to the high antiquity of the Athenian tragedy, it seems thrown out as a paradox, which he does not attempt to illustrate or support, and I cannot think it stands in the way of Thespis's pretensions to be considered as the father of tragedy, confirmed by so many authorities.

All these seeming difficulties will be reconciled, if we concur with the best opinions in the following particulars, viz. that tragedy, which was concerned about Bacchus and the Satyrs, was in no instance committed to writing: that Thespis's first tragedy, which Solon saw and disliked, was of this unwritten and satiric sort: that in process of time the same author actually wrote tragedy, and first acted it on a waggon in Olymp. lxi. within the era of Pisistratus, and according to the record of the Marmor Chronicon, so often referred to.

I will not disguise that Dr. Bentley, whose criticism is so conclusive for the forgery of those tragedies quoted by Plutarch, and enumerated by Suidas; Julius Pollux and Clemens of Alexandria, is of opinion 'Thespis himself published nothing in writing;' but as there are so many testimonies for his being the father of tragedy in general, and some which expressly say he was the first *writer* of tragedy, I hope I shall not trespass too far on my reader's patience, if I lay the chief of these authorities before him.

The Arundel Marble, which is of date as high as Olymp. cxxix. sets forth, that 'Thespis was the first who gave being to tragedy.' The epigram of Dioscorides, printed in Mr. Stanley's edition of Æschylus, gives the invention to Thespis. In the

Anthologia there are two epigrams, which expressly say the same; one begins—Θέσπιδος εὕρεμα τοῦτο—the other—Θέσπις ὅδε, τραγίκην ὃς ἀνέπλασε πρῶτος ἀοιδήν. Plutarch in his Solon says—'That Thespis gave rise and beginning to the very rudiments of tragedy.' Clemens of Alexandria makes Thespis the contriver of tragedy, as Susarion was of comedy. Athenæus says both comedy and tragedy were struck out at Icarius, a place in Attica, where Thespis was born. Suidas records to the same effect, and Donatus speaks expressly to the point of written tragedy.'—*Thespis autem primas* hæc scripta *in omnium notitiâ protulit.*—What Horace says of Thespis in his Art of Poetry, and more particularly in the Epistle to Augustus, where he classes him with Æschylus and Sophocles, certainly implies that he was a *writer* of tragedy, and is so interpreted by Cruquius and the old commentator preserved in his edition. I shall add one circumstance to the above authorities, which is, that the Chorus alone performed the whole drama, till Thespis introduced one actor to their relief; this reform could hardly be made, much less be recorded by Aristotle, unless Thespis had *written* tragedies, and published them to the world.

Upon the whole I incline to consider Thespis as the first author of the written tragedy, and to place him in Olymp. lxi. From him tragedy descended through Pratinas, Carcinus and Phrynichus to Æschylus, and this is the first age of the tragic drama.

NUMBER CXXVII.

ABOUT two centuries had elapsed from the date of Thespis's tragedy to the time when Aristotle wrote his Poetics; which must have been after he quitted the service of Alexander, to whom he sent a copy of that treatise: the chain of dramatists from Thespis to Euripides had been continued in regular succession, and it is not to be supposed, but that he might have given a more particular and methodical account of the first inventors of tragedy, if it had fallen within the scope of his work; but this being merely critical, he takes his account of tragedy and comedy from Æschylus and Epicharmus, contenting himself with a brief detail of such vague and dubious traditions relative to the first inventors, as common fame seems to have thrown in his way.

He loosely observes—'that the people of Megaris claim the invention of comedy; that there is reason to think it took its origin in a popular and free form of government, which that of Megaris then was: that Epicharmus the Sicilian was far senior to Chionides and Magnes, the first Athenian writers of comedy:'—He also throws out an idle suggestion from the etymology of the words *comedy* and *drama*, the former of which he derives from Κώμαι, villages, and the latter from the verb Δρᾶν, ὅτι μιμοῦνται Δρῶντες.—Now the people of Peloponnesus he tells us use the words Κώμαι and Δρᾶν in their dialect, whereas the Athenians express themselves by those of Δῆμοι and Πράττειν, and upon

this rests the Peloponnesians' pretensions to be considered as the inventors of the drama: he then refers to what he considers as the true source and foundation of the drama, the works of Homer: and, throwing aside all others, as tales not worth relating, proceeds to the execution of his plan, viz. The definition and elucidation of the tragic poem.

These suggestions were thrown out by Aristotle for no other purpose, as it should seem, but to cast a ridicule upon every other account of the discovery of the drama, but his own: for he might as well have given the invention of comedy to the Megarensians for their being notorious laughers; Γέλως Μεγαρικὸς 'to laugh like a Megarensian,' being a phrase in vulgar use with the Athenians; nay indeed he might have gone a step further, and given them tragedy also, for *Megarensian tears* were as proverbial as *Megarensian laughter;* but a true Athenian would have answered, that the former alluded only to the onions, which their country abounded in, and was applied in ridicule of those who counterfeited sorrow: in short, the Megarensians seem to have been the butts and buffoons of the Athenians, and held in sovereign contempt by them. As for the Peloponnesian etymologies, Aristotle must have known that neither the one nor the other had the least foundation; and that there is not a comedy of Aristophanes, in which he does not use the verb Δρᾶν frequently and in the mouths of Athenian speakers; in his *Birds* I find it within a few lines of the verb Πράττειν, and used by one and the same speaker; I have no doubt the like is true of Κῶμαι, but I did not think the search worth following.

Bacchus and the Satyrs were both source and subject of the first drama, and the jocund rites of that deity were celebrated at all times and under all

governments with the same unrestrained festivity; this celebration was too closely interwoven with popular superstition to be checked by the most jealous of tyrants; the privileged seasons of Bacchus were out of the reach of the magistrate; nor was the old satirical masque of the Athenians in Pisistratus's time less licentious than that of the Megarensians in their freest state; though it soon happened that the republic of Megara became an oligarchy, and the monarchy of Athens was converted into a republic.

The manner in which the drama was struck out may naturally be accounted for. The Greeks from early time were in the habit of chaunting songs and extemporary verses in the villages in praise of Bacchus at the *Trina Dionysia*, which times answer to March, April, and January; afterwards they performed these songs or dithyrambs at the Panathenæa, which were celebrated in the month of August. The Athenians were of all people living the most addicted to raillery and invective; these village-songs and festivities of Bacchus gave a scope to the wildest extravagances of mummery and grimace, mixed with course but keen raillery from the labourers and peasants concerned in the vintage; the women from their carts masked and disguised with lees of wine, and men accoutred in rude grotesque habits like satyrs, and crowned with garlands of ivy and violets, vented such prompt and irregular sallies, as their inebriated fancies furnished on the instant, or else rehearsed such little traditional and local ballads in iambic metre, as were in fashion at the time; accompanying them with extravagant gesticulations and dances incidental to the subject, and suitable to the character of the deity they were celebrating.

The drunken festivities of the ancient Danes, when they sacrificed to their rural deities—*Annuæ ut ipsis contingeret felicitas, frugumque et annonæ uberrimus proventus*—and the Highland ceremonies and libations of the *Bel-tein* are of this character.

The Athenian calendar was crowded with these feasts: drinking-matches were rewarded with prizes and even crowns of gold; their Phallic ceremonies were of this description: they used vehement gesticulations in reading and speaking; their rhapsodists carried this habit to excess, and in the dithyrambic hymn every outrageous gesture, which enthusiasm inspires, was put in practice: the dithyramb was conceived in a metaphorical inflated style, stuffed with an obscure jargon of sounding phrases, and performed in honour of Bacchus.

In these dithyrambic verses and Phallic songs we have the foundation of tragedy and comedy; the solemn and swelling tone of the first, and the petulant vivacity of the latter, appositely point to the respective character of each. The satire and scurrility they indulged from their vintage waggons, their masks and disguises in the hairy habits of satyrs, their wanton songs and dances at the Phallic ceremonies, and the dark bombast of the dithyramb, chaunted by the rhapsodists with every tumid and extravagant action, all together form a complete outline of the first drama: as soon as dialogue and repartee were added, it became to all intents a masque, and in this state it is discovered in very early times throughout the villages of Greece. When it had reached this period, and got something like the shape of a drama, it attracted the curiosity of the villagers, who, in reward for their amusement in the spectacle, decreed a prize to the performance agreeable to the object in view, and the

means of the spectators; this prize consisted of a cask of wine, and the performance before named simply *Comœdia*, or the *village-song*, was thenceforward called *Trugœdia*, or the *song for the cask*, compounded of τρύγα and ᾠδή.

These names are descriptive of the drama in its progressive stages, from a simple *village-song*, till it took a more complicated form, by introducing the Satyrs, and employing the chorus in recitation through a whole fable, which had a kind of plot or construction, though certainly not committed to writing. In this stage, and not before, the prize of *the cask of wine* was given, and thence it proceeded to attract not the husbandmen and labourers only, but the neighbours of better degree. The drama under the designation of *Trugœdia* was satiric, and wholly occupied in the praise of Bacchus; it was unwritten, jocose, and confined to the villages at the seasons of the *Trina Dionysia;* but after a prize, however inconsiderable, had been given, that prize created emulation, and emulation stimulated genius.

The village bards now attempted to enlarge their walk, and, not confining their spectacles merely to Bacchus and the Satyrs, began to give their drama a serious cast, diverting it from ludicrous and lascivious subjects to grave and doleful stories, in celebration of illustrious characters amongst their departed heroes; which were recited throughout by a chorus, without the intervention of any other characters than those of the Satyrs, with the dances proper thereunto.

This spur to emulation having brought the drama a step forward, that advance produced fresh encouragement, and a new prize was now given, which still was, in conformity to the rustic simplicity of

the poem and its audience, a *Goat*, τράγος, a new prize created a new name, and the serious drama became distinguished by the name of *Tragœdia*, or *the song for the goat:* thus it appears that *Tragedy*, properly so called, was posterior in its origin to comedy: and it is worthy of remark that *Trugœdia* was never applied to the tragic drama, nor *Tragœdia* to the comic: after this comedy lost its general designation of *Trugœdia*, and was called by its original name of *the village-song* or *Comœdia*.

The next step was a very material one in point of advance, for the village poets having been excited by emulation to bring their exhibitions into some shape and consistence, meditated an excursion from the villages into the cities, and particularly into Athens. Accordingly, in Olymp. liv. *Susarion*, a native of Icarius, presented himself and his comedy at that capital, rehearsing it on a moveable stage or scaffold, presuming on the hope, that what had given such delight to the villagers, would afford some amusement to the more refined spectators in Athens: this was the first drama there exhibited, and we should naturally expect, that a composition to be acted before the citizens of the capital should be committed to writing, if we did not know that the author was on these occasions the actor of his own piece; the rude interludes of Bacchus and the Satyrs being introduced upon the scene according to their old extemporary manner by the *Syleni* and *Tityri*, whose songs and dances were episodical to the drama: it continued to be the custom for authors to act their own plays in the times of Phrynichus and Æschylus, and I therefore think it probable Susarion's comedy was not a *written* drama; and I close with the authorities for Epicharmus being the first *writer* of comedy,

who, being retained in an elegant court at Syracuse, choosing his plots from the *Margites*, and rejecting the mummeries of the Satyrs, would naturally compose his drama upon a more regular and elaborate plan.

NUMBER CXXVIII.

In the plan, which I have laid down for treating of the literature of the Greeks, and to which I have devoted part of these papers, I have thought it adviseable, for the sake of perspicuity, to preface the account with an abstract of the Athenian history, within those separate periods which I mean to review. In conformity to this plan, I have already brought down my narration to the death of Pisistratus, and this has been followed with a state of the drama at that period: I now propose to proceed with the history to the battle of Marathon inclusive, beyond which I shall have no occasion to follow it, and shall then resume my account of the literature of the Greeks, which will comprehend all the dramatic authors, both tragic and comic, to the death of Menander.

At the decease of Pisistratus the government of Athens devolved quietly upon Hipparchus, who associated his brother Hippias with him in power. Pisistratus had two other sons by a second wife, who were named Jophon and Thessalus; the elder died in his father's life-time, and the other, who was of a turbulent and unruly spirit, did not long survive him.

Hipparchus was not less devoted to science and the liberal arts than his father had been: the famous Phæa, who had personated Minerva, shared his throne, and, though he communicated with his brother Hippias on matters of government, and imparted to him so great a portion of authority, that they were jointly styled Tyrants of Athens, yet it seems evident that the supreme power was actually vested in Hipparchus; and it is extraordinary, for the space of fourteen years, until his death, his government was undisturbed by any disagreement with his brother or complaint from his subjects.

The most virtuous citizens of Athens, in the freest hours of their republic, look back upon this reign as the most enviable period in their history. Plato himself asserts, that all the fabulous felicity of the golden reign of Saturn was realized under this of Hipparchus: Thucydides gives the same testimony, and says that his government was administered without envy or reproach: the tradition of the golden days of Hipparchus was delivered down through many generations, and became proverbial with the Athenians. A prince, who had deserved so well of letters, was not likely to be forgotten by poets, historians, or philosophers; but such was the public tranquillity under his administration, that the patriots and declaimers for freedom in the most popular times have not scrupled to acknowledge and applaud it.

Hipparchus not only augmented the collection of books in the public library, but engaged several eminent authors to reside at Athens: he took Simonides of Ceos into his pay at a very high stipend, and sent a fifty-oared galley for Anacreon to Teos, inviting him with many princely gifts to live at his court: he caused the poems of Homer to be pub-

licly recited at the great assembly of the Panathenæa, and is generally supposed to have suggested the plan of collecting the scattered rhapsodies of the Iliad and Odyssey, so happily executed by his father. His private hours he devoted to the society of men of letters, and on these occasions was accompanied by Simonides the lyric poet, Onomacritus, Anacreon, and others. He did not confine his attention to the capital of his empire, but took a method, well adapted to the times he lived in, of reforming the understandings of his more distant and less enlightened subjects in the villages, by erecting in conspicuous parts of their streets or market-places statues of the god Mercury, placed upon terms or pedestals, on which he caused to be inscribed some brief sentence or maxim, such as—'Know thyself—Love justice—Be faithful to thy friend'—and others of the like general utility.

It is not easy to devise a project better calculated for the edification of an ignorant people than these short but comprehensive sentences, so easy to be retained in the memory, and which, being recommended both by royal and divine authority, claimed universal attention and respect.

This excellent and most amiable prince was assassinated by Harmodius and Aristogiton, and a revolution being in the end effected favourable to the popular government of Athens, the assassins were celebrated to all posterity as the assertors of liberty and the deliverers of their country. Of all the rulers of mankind, who have fallen by the hand of violence, how few have been sacrificed in the public spirit of justice, and how many have fallen by the private stab of revenge! when we contemplate the elder Brutus brandishing the dagger of Lucretia, we cannot help recollecting that Tarquinius Superbus

had murdered his brother. Hipparchus is said to have put an affront upon Harmodius's sister, by dismissing her from a religious procession, in which she was walking, at the festival of Panathenæa: Harmodius was the handsomest youth in Attica, and the prince is by the same account charged with having conceived an unnatural passion for him, in which he was repulsed. If this account were to be credited in the whole, it would be an incident of so unmanly a sort on the part of Hipparchus, as to leave an everlasting mark of disgrace upon a character otherwise meritorious.

The general prevalence of a turpitude, which neither the religion nor the laws of Greece actually prohibited, may induce our belief of the charge against Hipparchus, as far as concerns Harmodius; but the supposed insult to the sister is irreconcileable to his character. It were far more natural to suppose his resentment should have been pointed against Aristogiton, who was the favourite of Harmodius: such circumstances as we have now related would have carried their own confutation upon the face of them, even though historians had not greatly varied in their accounts of the transaction; but when so respectable an author as Plato gives the narrative a turn entirely opposite to the above, whilst modern historians have only retailed vulgar errors without examining testimonies of better credit, I hope I may be allowed the equitable office of summing up the evidences in this mysterious transaction, for the purpose of rescuing a a most amiable character from misrepresentation.

Plato in his Hipparchus says—' That the current account above given was not the account believed and adopted by people of the best condition and repute; that the insult vulgarly supposed to have been

put upon the sister of Harmodius by Hipparchus was ridiculous and incredible upon the face of it; that Harmodius was the disciple of Aristogiton, a man of ordinary rank and condition; that there was a mutual affection between the pupil and his master; that they had admitted into their society a young Athenian of distinction, whose name had escaped his memory, of whom they were very fond, and whom they had by their conversation and instructions impressed with high ideas of their talents and erudition; that this young Athenian, having found access to the person of Hipparchus, attached himself to his society, and began to fall off from his respect for his former preceptors, and even treated their inferiority of understanding with contempt and ridicule; that thereupon they conceived such hatred and resentment against the prince for this preference shown by their pupil for his company, and for the method he had taken of mortifying their vanity, that they determined upon dispatching Hipparchus by assassination, which they accordingly effected.'

Justin gives a different account, and says—'That the affront was put upon the sister of Harmodius, not by Hipparchus, but by his brother Diocles; that Harmodius, with his friend Aristogiton, entered into a conspiracy for cutting off all the reigning family at once, and pitched upon the festival of the Panathenæa as a convenient time for the execution of their plot, the citizens being then allowed to wear arms; that the complete execution of their design was frustrated by one of their party being observed in earnest discourse with Hippias, which occasioned them to suspect a discovery, and so precipitated their attack before they were ready; that in this attack, however, they chanced upon Hipparchus, and put him to death.'

There are other accounts still differing from these, but they have no colour of probability, and only prove an uncertainty in the general story.

Plutarch relates—'That Venus appeared to Hipparchus before his assassination in a dream, and from a phial, which she held in her hand, sprinkled his face with drops of blood.' Herodotus also says—'That he was warned by a vision on the eve of his murder, being addressed in sleep by a man of extraordinary stature, and beauty in verses of an enigmatical import, which he had thoughts of consulting the interpreters upon next morning, but afterwards passed it off with contempt as a vapour of the imagination, and fell a sacrifice to his incredulity.'

This at least is certain, that he governed the capricious inhabitants of Attica with such perfect temper and discretion, that their tranquillity was without interruption; nor does it appear that the people, who were erecting statues and trophies to his murderers, in commemoration of the glorious re-establishment of their freedom, could charge him with one single act of oppression; and, perhaps, if Hippias, who survived him, had not galled them with the yoke of his tyranny during the few years he ruled in Athens after the death of Hipparchus, the public would not have joined in styling those assassins the deliverers of their country, who were known to be guided by no other motives than private malice and resentment.

Harmodius was killed on the spot; Aristogiton fled and was seized in his flight. The part which Hippias had now to act, was delicate in the extreme; he was either to punish with such rigour, as might secure his authority by terror, or endear himself to the people by the virtue of forbearance: he had the experience of a long administration, conducted by his brother on the mildest and most mer-

ciful principles; and if these assassins had been without accomplices, it is reasonable to suppose he would not have reversed a system of government, which had been found so successful; but, as it appeared that Harmodius and Aristogiton were joined by others in their plot, he thought the Athenians were no longer to be ruled by gentle means, and that no other alternative remained, but to resign his power, or enforce it with rigour.

NUMBER CXXIX.

HIPPIAS began his measures by putting Aristogiton to the torture; he seized the person of Leæna, a courtezan, who was in the secret of the conspiracy, but whilst he was attempting to force her to a confession, she took the resolute method of preventing it, by biting off her tongue. Aristogiton, with revengeful cunning, impeached several courtiers and intimates of the tyrant. Athens now became a scene of blood; executions were multiplied, and many principal citizens suffered death, till the informer, having satiated his vengeance upon all who were obnoxious to him or friendly to Hippias, at length told the tyrant that he had been made the dupe of false accusations, and triumphed in the remorse that his confession occasioned: some accounts add, that he desired to whisper to Hippias, and in the act suddenly seized his ear with his teeth, and tore it from his head.

Hippias henceforward became a tyrant in the worst sense of the word; he racked the people with

taxes, ordered all the current coin into the royal coffers upon pretence of its debasement, and for the period of three years continued to oppress the state by many grievous methods of exaction and misrule. His expulsion and escape at length set Athens free, and then it was that the Athenians began to celebrate the action of Harmodius and Aristogiton with rapture and applause; from this period they were regarded as the saviours of their country; a public edict was put forth, directing that no slave, or person of servile condition, should in future bear the names of these illustrious citizens: assignments were made upon the Prytaneum for the maintenance of their descendants, and order was given to the magitrate styled Polemarchus to superintend the issue of the public bounty; their posterity were to rank in all public spectacles and processions as the first members of the state, and it was delivered in charge to the superintendants of the Panathenæa, that Harmodius and Aristogiton should be celebrated in the recitations chaunted on that solemnity. There was a popular ode or song composed for this occasion, which was constantly performed on that festival, and is supposed to have been written by Callistratus: it grew so great a favourite with the Athenians, that it became a general fashion to sing it at their private entertainments; some fragments of the comic poets are found to allude to it, and some passages in the plays of Aristophanes. It is a relic of so curious a sort, that, contrary to the practice I shall usually observe, I shall here insert it in the original with a translation.

Φίλταθ' Ἁρμοδιε, οὔπω τέθνηκας·
Νήσοις δ' ἐν μακάρων στέφασιν εἶναι,
Ἵναπερ ποδώκης Ἀχιλλέυς
Τυδείδην τέ φασι τὸν ἐσθλὸν Διομηδέα

Ἐν μύρτων κλαδὶ τὸ ξίφος φορήσω,
Ὥσπερ Ἁρμόδιος καὶ Ἀριστογείτων,
Ὅτ' Ἀθηναίης ἐν θυσίαις
Ἄνδρα τύραννον Ἱππάρχον ἐκταινέτην·

Ἀεὶ σφῶν κλέος ἔσσεται κατ' αἶαν
Φίλταθ' Ἁρμόδιε καὶ Ἀριστογείτων,
Ὅτε τὸν τύραννον κταινέτην,
Ἰσονόμους τ' Ἀθήνας ἐποιησάτην.

He is not dead, our best belov'd,
Harmodius is not lost,
But, with Troy's conquerors, remov'd
To some more happy coast.

Bind then the myrtle's mystic bough,
And wave your swords around,
For so they struck the tyrant low,
And so their swords were bound.

Perpetual objects of our love
The patriot pair shall be,
Who in Minerva's sacred grove
Struck and set Athens free.

The four last lines of this ode are quoted by Athenæus, and I also find amongst the adulatory verses made in commemoration of these illustrious tyrannicides, a distich written by Simonides of Ceos, congratulating with the Athenians on their delivery from the tyranny of Hipparchus: this poet is made famous to posterity for his memory, which was almost miraculous; it is to be lamented that it should fail to remind him of such a patron and benefactor. The lines are not worth translating; the author and the subject reflect no honour upon each other.

The first statues, which the Athenian artists ever cast in metal, were the brazen statues erected in

honour of Harmodius and Aristogiton, in the first year of Olymp. lxviii. thirteen years after the murder of Hipparchus, when Isagoras was archon, and the memorable era of Rome, when Tarquinius Superbus was dethroned and expelled: they were conspicuously placed in the forum of Athens, and it was a curious event, after the revolution of five centuries, that the statue of the younger Brutus, when he had killed Cæsar, was placed between these very statues, erected in the year when his ancestor expelled the Tarquins: they were the workmanship of Antenor; and Xerxes, when he plundered Athens, removed them out of Greece, from other motives probably than of respect to their intrinsic merit; they were in succeeding time restored to the city, but whether by Alexander after his defeat of Darius, by Antiochus, or by the munificence of Seleucus, authorities are not agreed; I am inclined to think they were given back by Seleucus. There were two others of the same materials afterwards cast by Critias, and again two others, the workmanship of the celebrated Praxiteles. Pliny says these last-mentioned statues were of consummate beauty and excellence, and there is reason to think they were the first performances of that great master in metal. The honour of a statue in brass was rarely decreed by the Athenians to any of their most illustrious citizens, and few other instances occur, except one to Solon, and one to Conon for his services against the Lacedæmonians. The expedient made use of to perpetuate the heroic constancy of Leæna was ingenious; for as it was not fitting to erect a public statue to a courtezan, they devised the figure of a lioness in allusion to her name, which they cast in brass, and without a tongue, in memory of the resolute method she had

taken to prevent confession: this figure was placed in the porch of the citadel, where it kept its station for many generations.

Pisistratus and his sons maintained their usurpation during a period of sixty-eight years, including those of Pisistratus's secessions from Athens; had Hippias shared the fate of his brother, their annals would have been unstained by any other act of violence or injustice, except that of reviving a regal authority, which by gradual revolutions had been finally abolished. The measures of Hippias during the time he reigned alone, which scarce exceeded three years, blasted the merits of his predecessors, and embittered the minds of the Athenians against his family to the latest posterity.

Clisthenes and Isagoras, two rich and leading citizens, finding themselves unsafe under his government, left Athens and took shelter amongst the Phocians. They were in fact no less ambitious than himself, turbulent partisans, and though they proved the instruments of extricating their country from his tyranny, they were no more actuated by a pure love of liberty, as a general principle, than Harmodius and his accomplice were, when they assassinated Hipparchus.

The state of Lacedæmon both in point of resource and of its alliances, was at this time in condition to assume a leading share in the affairs of Greece, and it was the first object of Clisthenes and Isagoras to engage the Lacedæmonians in their party for the emancipation of Athens; to carry this point with a people so jealous of the Athenian greatness, required some engine of persuasion more powerful than philanthropy or the dictates of common justice; the temple of Delphi opened a resource to them, and by a seasonable bribe to the

Pythia, they engaged her to give such responses to her Lacedæmonian clients on all occasions, as should work upon their superstition to accord to their wishes.

The plot succeeded, and an expedition was set on foot for the expulsion of Hippias, sanctified by the authority of Apollo; but it miscarried; the effort was repeated, and when things were in that doubtful posture as seemed to menace a second disappointment, chance produced the unexpected success. Hippias and his adherents, foreseeing that the capital would be invested, sent their women and children to a place of better security, and the whole party fell into the hands of the enemy. Such hostages brought on a treaty, and the parent consented to renounce his power for the redemption of his children; Hippias upon this retired from Athens to the court of his kinsman Hegesistratus, in the city of Sigeum, in the Troade on the Asiatic coast.

NUMBER CXXX.

CLISTHENES and Isagoras had now effected a complete revolution in favour of liberty, but being men of ambitious spirit and of equal pretensions, the state was soon thrown into fresh convulsion by their factions. Clisthenes made his court to the people, Isagoras again had recourse to the Lacedæmonians.

Lacedæmon, always disposed to control the growing consequence of her neighbours, and sensible of the bad policy of her late measures, had opened her eyes to the folly of expelling Hippias upon the forged responses of the Pythia, of whose corruption and false dealing she had now the proofs: she complied with the requisitions of Isagoras so far as related to her interference at large, but in the mode of that interference she by no means met his wishes, for it was immediately resolved to invite Hippias into Sparta, where he was publicly acknowledged and received, and a herald sent to Athens with a haughty message to Clisthenes and his party. The Athenians, intimidated and divided, threw themselves upon new and desperate resourses, sending an embassy, or rather petition, to the Persian satrap Artaphernes, brother of the reigning king Darius, and governor of Lydia.

The Persian had not at this time ever heard the name of Athens, and peremptorily demanded homage; the ambassadors yielded to the demand, but the state revoked it at their return with indignation; for the Corinthians had in the mean time taken measures very favourable to their interests, by separating from the Lacedæmonian alliance, and protesting strongly against the proposal of restoring Hippias; their opposition seems to have been founded in principle, having lately experienced a tyranny of the same sort in their own persons, and they carried their point by compelling Hippias to return in despair to Sigeum, from whence he betook himself to Lampsacus, where he began to cabal in the court of Æantides the tyrant, who was in great favour with the Persian monarch. By this channel Hippias introduced himself to Darius, and with all the inveteracy of an exiled sovereign, not abated

by age or length of absence, became a principal instrument for promoting his expedition into Greece, which concluded in the memorable battle of Marathon, at which he was present, twenty years after his expulsion.

It was fortunate for the liberties of Athens, that when she sent her embassy to Artaphernes, he required as an indispensable condition of his aid that Hippias should be re-established in his tyranny. A more dangerous step could not have been resolved upon than this of inviting the assistance of the Persian, and in this applauded era of liberty it is curious to remark such an instance of debasement, as this embassy into Lydia: the memory, however, of past oppression was yet too fresh and poignant to suffer the Athenians to submit to the condition required, and nothing remained but to prepare themselves to face the resentment of this mighty power; with this view they gave a favourable reception to Aristogaras the Milesian, who was canvassing the several states of Greece to send supplies to the Ionians, then on the point of falling under the dominion of Persia: Lacedæmon had refused to listen to him, and peremptorily dismissed him out of their territory: From Athens he obtained the succours he solicited, in twenty gallies well manned and appointed: the Athenian forces, after some successful operations, suffered a defeat by sea, and the breach with Persia became incurable. Before the storm broke immediately upon Athens, the Persian armies were employed against the frontier colonies and islands of Greece with uninterrupted success: they defeated the Phœnician fleet and reduced Cyprus; many cities on the Hellespontic coast were added to their empire: in the confines of the Troade several places were taken; impressions were made upon

Ionia and Æolia by the forces of Artamenes and Otanes, and in further process of the war the rich and beautiful city of Miletus was besieged and taken, and the inhabitants of both sexes removed into the Persian territories, and colonized upon new lands: the isles of Chios, Lesbos, and Tenedos shared the same fate, and not a city in Ionia, that had been involved in the defection, but was subjected in its turn; in the Hellespont and Propontis every thing on the European shore was reduced, together with the important station of Chalcedon: the like success followed their arms in the Thracian Chersonesus. These operations were succeeded by the next year's campaign under the conduct of Mardonius, the son of a sister of Darius, a young and inexperienced general: and the check, which the power of Persia received this year by the wreck and dispersion of their fleet off the coast of Macedonia, under Mount Athos, in the Singitic bay, afforded the first seasonable respite from the ill fortune of the war.

At length the formidable torrent, which had so long threatened Athens at a distance, seemed ready to burst upon her, and surely a more unequal contest never occupied the attention of mankind. Mardonius, who had been so unsuccessful in his first campaign, was now superseded, and the vast army of Persia was put under the joint command of Datis a Mede, and the younger Artaphernes, nephew to king Darius and son to the Prefect of Lydia. These commanders pursued a different route by sea from what Mardonius had taken, avoiding the unlucky coast of Macedonia, and falling upon Eubœa in the neighbourhood of Attica by a straight course through the Ægean sea. Having reduced the city of Carystus, they laid siege to Eritria, the capital

of Eubœa; the Athenians had reinforced the garrison with four thousand troops; but although the Eretrians for a time stood resolutely to the defence of their city, it was given up by treachery on the seventh day, and pillaged and destroyed in a most barbarous manner, the very temples being involved in the common ruin and conflagration.

Having struck this stroke of terror under the very eye of Athens, the Persians embarked their troops, and passing them over the narrow channel, which separates Attica from Eubœa, landed for the first time on Athenian ground, and encamped their vast army upon the sandy plain of Marathon.

Hippias, who had been now twenty years in exile, and in whose aged bosom the fires of ambition were not yet extinguished, accompanied the Persian forces into his native country, and according to the most probable accounts was slain in action. If any death can be glorious in a guilty cause, this of Hippias may be so accounted; to have brought three hundred thousand men in arms, after a career of victory, landed them on the Athenian territory, and there to have put the very existence of his country to the issue of a combat, was an astonishing effort both of mind and body, at a period of life which human nature rarely attains to. Ten thousand Greeks, under the command of Miltiades, discomfited this overgrown host in a pitched battle upon an open plain, where all the Persian numbers could act: but it has often happened that a small band of disciplined warriors have worsted an irregular multitude, how great soever. The army of Darius was broken and repulsed; six thousand were left on the field, and the fugitives returned into Asia overwhelmed with shame and disappointment.

This memorable day established the liberty and the glory of Athens, and from this we are to look forward to the most illuminated age in the annals of mankind. Though Hippias had several children, who survived him, yet as his descendants never gave any further disturbance to the liberties and constitution of Athens, we are henceforward to consider the race of Pisistratus as historically extinct.

The friend of freedom, who reviews them as tyrants, will dismiss them with reproach; we, who have regarded them only as patrons of literature, may take leave of them with a sigh.

NUMBER CXXXI.

Graiis ingenium; Graiis dedit ore rotundo
Musa loqui, præter laudem nullius avaris.

HOR. ARS POET. 323.

THE advances which the drama had made within the period now reviewed, were considerable; for the tragic poets Pratinas, Chærilus, Phrynichus and Æschylus were in possession of the stage, whilst Epicharmus and Phormis in Sicily, Chionides, Dinolochus, Evetes, Euxenides, Mylus and others in Attica, were writing comedy. Bacchus and his Satyrs were expelled, and a new species of composition, built upon short fables selected from the poems of Homer, succeeded to the village masque, and numbers of ingenious competitors began to apply themselves to the work.

Thespis had been acting tragedies, but Thespis was one of those early dramatists, who come under the description of Οἱ περὶ Διόνυσον, writers about Bacchus.

Pratinas succeeded Thespis, and wrote fifty tragedies, if they may be so called, when two and thirty of the number were satiric, or allusive to the Satyrs. He was a Peloponnesian of the celebrated city of Philus, but resorted to Athens for the purpose of representing his dramas: he entered the lists with Chærilus and Æschylus about the time of Olymp. lxx., some years antecedent to the battle of Marathon: he bore away the prize from his competitors with one composition only; on all other occasions he saw the palm decreed to the superior merit or better interest of his rivals.

Plays were still exhibited upon scaffolds or in booths, where the spectators as well as the performers were placed, till upon the representation of one of Pratinas's tragedies, the scaffolding broke down under the weight of the crowd, and much mischief ensued upon the accident: from this time the Athenians set about building a theatre in proper form and of more solid materials, and the drama, like the edifice, assumed a more dignified character and a better construction.

Pratinas struck out a considerable improvement in the orchestral part of his drama, by revoking the custom of allowing the minstrels to join in the chaunt or strain with the chorus, and suffering them only to accompany with their pipes: the recitative was by this alteration given more distinctly to the audience, and the clamorous confusion of voices avoided: the people, however, not yet weaned from their old prejudice for the noisy bacchanalian songs of their village masques, opposed themselves violently against this refined innovation, and the

whole theatre was thrown into confusion, when in the midst of the tumult Pratinas appeared on the stage in person, and in a kind of Salian song, accompanied with dancing, addressed his audience to the following effect:

PRATINAS.

What means this tumult? Why this rage?
What thunder shakes th' Athenian stage?
'Tis frantic Bromius bids me sing,
He tunes the pipe, he smites the string;
The Dryads with their chief accord,
Submit and hail the drama's lord.
Be still! and let distraction cease,
Nor thus prophane the Muse's peace;
By sacred fiat I preside
The minstrel's master and his guide;
He, whilst the chorus-strains proceed,
Shall follow with responsive reed;
To measur'd notes whilst they advance,
He in wild maze shall lead the dance,
So generals in the front appear,
Whilst music echoes from the rear.
Now silence each discordant sound!
For see, with ivy chaplet crown'd,
Bacchus appears! He speaks in me—
Hear, and obey the god's decree!

EX ATHENÆO.

Phrynichus, the tragic poet, was the son of Melanthus and the disciple of Thespis: Suidas thinks there was another of the name, son of Chorocles, who also wrote tragedies, but there is reason to think he is in an error. This Phrynichus first introduced the measure of tetrametres; this he did because the trochaic foot is most proper for dancing, and the drama of this age was accompanied with dances characteristic and explanatory of the fable.

There were masters professedly for the purpose of composing and teaching these dances, and in some instances the author performed in person; hence it was that the early dramatists were called Ὀρχηστικοὶ, or Dancers. When tragedy was in a more improved state, and the business was no longer conducted by dance and spectacle, but committed to dialogue, they changed the tetrametres to iambics, which Aristotle observes were fit for declamation rather than singing with the accompaniment of the dance.

This author was the first who produced the female mask upon the scene; he took upon himself the task of instructing the dancers and performed in person; accordingly we find him burlesqued by Aristophanes in his last scene of 'The Wasps,' on account of his extravagant gesticulations—'He strikes and flutters,' says the old humourist Philocleon, 'like a cock; he capers into the air, and kicks up his heels to the stars:' Whilst Philocleon is capering on the stage after this fashion, the son who is on the scene, observes—'This is not agility, it is insanity.' 'It is either the plot of a tragedy,' replies the servant, 'or the caprice of a madman; give him hellebore; the man's beside himself.'

Dancing was so essential a part of the first scenic spectacle, and the people were so attached to their old bacchanalian customs, that the early reformers of the tragic drama found it no easy task to make the dance accord to the subject of the scene and weave it into the fable. This was generally understood to be done under the direction of the poet, and in many cases he was principal performer in person; but where an author was not competent to this part of his duty, he called in the assistance of

a professed ballet-master, who formed dances upon the incidents of the drama, and instructed the chorus how to perform them. There is a very eminent professor of this art upon record, named Telestes, who had the honour of a statue decreed to him, which was conspicuously placed within the theatre, whilst those of the most celebrated poets were not admitted to a nearer approach than the steps or portico. These dances prevailed till after the time of Æschylus, when they were finally laughed out of fashion by the parody of the satirical comedy.

Though the fate of Phrynichus's tragedy on the 'Siege of Miletus' has been frequently mentioned, I cannot here omit the story. This beautiful city had been lately sacked by the Persian troops; it was the capital and pride of Ionia, a very ancient colony of the Athenians, settled by Neleus, son of Codrus, the last and most beloved of their kings. Of its riches and renown Strabo tells us the account would exceed belief; it had given birth to men illustrious for science and for military fame; Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes in succession had been natives of Miletus; Hecatæus the historian was born there, as were his contemporaries Histiæus and Aristogaras, celebrated men, who took so great a lead in the affairs of the Ionians introductory to the invasion of the Persians, and to whose conspicuous talents even Darius himself, when exulting at their death, gave the honourable tribute of his applause.

Such was the city, upon whose deplorable fate Phrynichus founded his tragedy; the spectacle dissolved his audience into tears; the national and affecting scene operated on the sensibility of the Athenians in so serious a manner, that the magistracy thought it a case fit for their interference, and

by public edict prohibited any author in future to touch upon that melancholy subject: nor was this all, they put a heavy fine upon the poet. His judgment certainly wanted correction; but it should have been the correction of an indiscretion rather than of a crime: as the tragedy, like its subject, is long since perished, we cannot properly decide upon the severity of the edict; it must be owned the event was too recent and domestic; the idea of such a city in flames, the destruction of its temples and the massacre of its inhabitants, many of whom perhaps had friends and relations present at the spectacle, was not to be supported. It is not the province of the drama to attack the human heart with such realities; the whole region of invention is open to its choice, free to work its moral purposes by piety or by terror; but if a plot is to be constructed upon truth, the tragic history is to be taken from time far distant, or from scenes out of the spectators' knowledge. *Flectere non frangere* is the poet's motto; if he terrifies let him not rend the heart; if he softens let him not seduce it: the man, who is melted with pity becomes as a child, but he is the child of his poet, and has a claim upon him for the protection of a parent.

This author exhibited a famous tragedy, entitled Pyrrhicistæ, or 'The Dance of armed Soldiers:' the Athenians were charmed with the martial manner in which he conducted this spectacle, and Ælian says they made him their general, and put him at the head of their army for his skill and address in the performance; if it were so, it would seem to have been the fate of Phrynichus to be punished without mercy, and rewarded without merit; but the anecdote does not obtain with good critics, and it

is clear that the poet lived in a more early period than Phrynichus the general, for the lowest date we have of him, whom we are speaking of, is the circumstance given by Plutarch in his Themistocles, viz. That in Olymp. lxxv. 4. Phrynichus bore away the prize with his tragedy, probably The Phœnissæ, in compliment to Themistocles, who was at the charge of the representation, and who in commemoration thereof set up the following inscription—'Themistocles of the parish of Phreari was at the charge; Phrynichus made the tragedy, and Adimantus was archon.'

From this play of The Phœnissæ, Æschylus took the design of the famous tragedy of the Persæ.

NUMBER CXXXII.

Post hunc, personæ pallæque repertor honestæ,
Æschylus, et modicis instravit pulpita tignis;
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.

HOR. ARS POET. 278.

WE now are to speak of a poet, some of whose inestimable remains are in our hands. Æschylus was born in the last year of Olymp. lxiii. the son of Euphorion an Athenian; he was in the flower of manhood at the battle of Marathon, and served with distinguished reputation; his three brothers, Aminias, Euphorion, and Cynægirus, were in the same action, and signalized themselves on that glorious day. In the sea-fight off Salamis, Aminias lost an arm, and bore away the first prize for valour in that well-fought action: it so happened at the re-

presentation of one of Æschylus's plays, that the people rose against him on account of some attack he had made upon their superstitions, and were proceeding to stone him to death, when this Aminias, putting aside his mantle, exhibited his amputated arm, and turned their fury aside from the devoted poet; an anecdote, which at once demonstrates their ferocity and their magnanimity.

Æschylus, though he had just reason to value himself highly on his poetical talents, yet like Alcæus and Archilochus, continued through life to hold his military character more at heart than his literary one, and directed to be engraved on his tomb-stone a distich in short and long verse, in which he appeals 'to the field of Marathon and the long-haired Mede' to witness to his valour; by the Mede he probably means the general Datis. The personal gallantry for which Æschylus and his brethren were so conspicuous, gives a strong and manly colouring to his compositions; it is the characteristic of his genius, and his pen, like his sword, is a weapon of terror; the spectacle, which his drama exhibits is that of one sublime, simple scene of awful magnificence; his sentiment and style are in unison with his subject, and though he is charged with having written his tragedies in a state of inebriety, to which he was in general addicted, still they do not betray the traces of a confused imagination, as Sophocles insinuated, though occasionally they may of an inflated one; and it was a weakness in Sophocles, to give his motive no worse a name, to pronounce of Æschylus, 'that he did not know what he did, although he did things well;' as if he had written in a state of absolute intoxication and mental disability; an imputation which convicts itself.

Æschylus's excess was the vice of his time and nation, I might add of his profession also, as a soldier: and one should slmost suspect that he considered it as a becoming quality in a hero, seeing that he had the hardiness to exhibit Jason drunk upon the scene, an attempt which stands recorded as the first of the sort, though afterwards he was followed in it by Epicharmus and Crates, comic poets, and in latter times even by the sententious Euripides himself; in short, the literary annals of Greece are deeply stained with this excess, and the stage at one period was far from discouraging it.

Æschylus not only instructed his chorus in the dances incidental to the piece, but superintended also and arranged the dresses of the performers with the most correct precision, and this he did in a taste so dignified and characteristic, that the priests and sacrificing ministers of the temples did not scruple to copy and adopt his fashions in their habiliments; he did not indeed perform on the stage as Phrynichus did, but he never permitted the intervention of a master, as many others did: the dances which he composed for his tragedy of The Seven Chiefs, were particularly apposite to the scene, and were performed with extraordinary success and applause: he brought fifty furies at once on the stage in the chorus of his Eumenides, and displayed them with such accompaniments and force of effect, that the whole theatre was petrified with horror, pregnant women miscarried on the spot, and the magistracy interposed for the prevention of such spectacles in future, and limited the number of the dancers, annexing a penalty to the breach of the restriction. Aristophanes has an allusion to the Eumenides of Æschylus in his comedy of the Plutus, [Act. ii. Scene 4.] where Chremylus and Blepsidemus being on the scene are suddenly accosted by *Poverty* in the

person of a squalid old woman, and whilst they are questioning who she may be, Blepsidemus cries out—

> 'Some fury from the scenes of Æschylus
> Some stage Erinnys; look! her very face
> Is tragedy itself.'

CHREM.

> 'But where's her firebrand?

BLEPS.

> 'Oh! there's a penalty for that.'

That the poet Æschylus was of a candid mind appears from his well-known declaration, viz. 'That his tragedies were but scraps from the magnificent repasts of Homer;' that he was of a lofty mind is from nothing more evident, than from his celebrated appeal upon a certain occasion, when the prize was voted to his competitor evidently against justice—'I appeal to posterity, says Æschylus, to posterity I consecrate my works, in the assurance that they will meet that reward from time, which the partiality of my contemporaries refuses to bestow.'

Though the candour of Æschylus called his tragedies fragments or scraps from Homer, and seemed to think it sufficient honour to be able to wield with tolerable grace one weapon out of the armoury of this gigantic spirit, yet I would submit to the reader's judgment, whether the tragic poem does not demand a stronger exertion of the mental faculties, within the compass of its composition, than the epic poem. In a drama, where every thing must be in action, where characters must be strongly marked and closely compressed, the passions all in arms, and the heart alternately seized by terror and subdued by pity, where the diction must never sleep

in detail, nor languish in description, but be lofty yet not dilated, eloquent but not loquacious, I have no conception how the human genius can be strained to greater energy: at the same time it must be admitted, that the continuation of exertion, which the epic requires, inferior though it may be in force, falls heaviest on the poet of that department; the scope of his work is much more diffused, and history perhaps presents so few fit subjects to his choice, that we cannot wonder at the general predilection of the literary world for dramatic composition; least of all can we want a reason why the Greeks, an animated and ingenious race of writers, addicted to spectacle and devoted to music and dancing, should fall with such avidity upon the flowery province of the drama.

But when they made it a contest as well as a study, when they hung up wreaths and crowns as the reward of victory, and turned dramatic spectacles into a kind of Olympic games, they brought a crowd of competitors to the lists. The magistrate generally, and private citizens in particular cases, furnished the exhibition at an immense expense, and with a degree of splendour we have little conception of. The happy poet, crowned with the wreath of triumph, presenting himself to the acclamations of a crowded theatre, felt such a flood of triumph, as in some instances to sink under the ecstacy and expire on the spot; whilst on the other hand disappointment operating upon susceptible and sanguine minds, has been more thon once productive of effects as fatal: such minds, though they claim our pity, do not merit our respect, and it is a consolation to reflect, that where there is a genius like that of Æschylus, there is generally found a concomitant magnanimity, which can disregard,

with conscious dignity, the false misjudging decrees of the vulgar.

The appeal which Æschylus made to posterity was soon verified, for after his death the Athenians held his name in the highest veneration, and made a decree for furnishing the expense of representing his tragedies out of the public purse; he carried away many prizes during his life, and many more were decreed to his tragedies after his death: a statue was erected in memory of him at Athens, and a picture was painted descriptive of his valour in the fight at Marathon.

Amongst other reasons suggested for his leaving Athens, some assert that he retired in disgust at being superseded in a prize by Sophocles, who was a very young competitor; but a vague assertion of this invidious sort is readily confuted by the character of Æschylus, to which it is not reconcileable upon any other than the strongest authority. It is agreed that he removed to Sicily to the court of King Hiero, where he was very honourably received, and after three years' residence died and was buried in a sumptuous and public manner: the fable of the eagle dropping a tortoise on his head, and his being killed by the blow, was probably allegorical, and emblematical of his genius, age and decay. Valerius Maximus however, gives the story for truth, and refers to the authorities of Aristophanes, Pliny, and Suidas, concluding his account with the following expression—*Eoque ictu origo et principium fortioris tragœdiæ extinctum est.* He died at the age of sixty-nine years, after a life spent alternately in great labour and great excess. This event took place in the first year of Olymp. lxxxi. In Olymp. lxx. when he was between twenty and thirty years old, he contested the prize

with Pratinas and Chærilus, when Myrus was archon; Chærilus was an Athenian, and wrote tragedies to the amount of one hundred and fifty, of all which not even a fragment survives. At the battle of Marathon, Æschylus was thirty-seven years old; twelve years after this celebrated action Xerxes passed into Greece at the head of his armies, burnt Athens, and carried off the library collected by Pisistratus and his sons. When Æschylus was turned of fifty he carried away the prizes with his tragedies of Phineus, the Persæ, Glaucus Potniensis, and The Prometheus. Three years before his death he performed his Agamemnon, and bore away the prize with that, with The Chæphoris, The Eumenides, and The Proteus, a satiric drama, the charges of the theatre being defrayed by Xenocles Aphidneus. If he passed into Sicily, therefore, he must have left Athens immediately after this success, and this is another circumstance which makes against the story of his disgust.

At the death of Æschylus, Sophocles was in his twenty-seventh year, and Euripides in his twenty-first: Chionides and Dinolochus, writers of the old comedy, flourished in his time; as did the philosophers Zeno Eleates, Anaxagoras, and Parmenides: Socrates was in his twenty-second year when Æschylus died, and Pindar died two years before him.

NUMBER CXXXIII.

In the Frogs of Aristophanes, three entire acts are occupied by a contest between Æschylus and Euripides for the tragic chair amongst the departed spirits. The matter is put to reference before Bacchus and others, who proceed to a solemn hearing of the parties. The author evidently leans to Æschylus thoughout the controversy, and in the end makes Bacchus give a full decision in his favour: the irascible proud spirit of Æschylus and the litigious talkative character of Euripides are well marked, and in a peculiar vein of comic humour: the contending poets alternately repeat passages in their respective prologues and chorusses, which the other party as constantly criticizes and turns to ridicule: amongst the many defects which Euripides pretends to discover in Æschylus's dramas, he urges the taciturnity of his principal character.

EURIPIDES.

' First then, he'd muffle up his characters,
Some Niobe, for instance, or Achilles,
And bring them on the stage, their faces hid,
As mutes; for not a single word they utter'd.

BACCHUS.

' Not they, by Jupiter!

EURIPIDES.

—' Meantime the chorus
Sang regularly four successive strains;
But they kept silence.

BACCHUS.

'And that silence truly
Pleas'd me as much as all our modern speeches.
—But tell me to what purpose
This fellow did it?

EURIPIDES.

From impertinence,
To keep the audience during the performance
Waiting to hear when Niobe should speak.
—Having play'd these tricks,
Just as the piece was above half concluded,
They'd speak perhaps some dozen bellowing words,
Of such high-crested and terrific form,
The audience truly could not comprehend them.'

DUNSTER'S TRANS.

The decree which Aristophanes makes Bacchus pronounce in favour of Æschylus, is by implication as decisive against Sophocles as against Euripides, for Sophocles declares his acquiescence under the judgement, if it shall be given for Æschylus, but if otherwise, he avows himself ready to contest the palm with Euripides: a circumstance which sufficiently discriminates the modest complacency of his character, from the peevish disputatious temper of Euripides: it is at the same time an implied confirmation of the pre-eminence of these three tragic poets over all other competitors in that department of the drama, and puts Æschylus at the head of the triumvirate. How they ranked in the judgement of Aristophanes is further manifest by what he puts in the mouth of Æschylus after judgement is given for him: he says to Pluto—

—'Do thou to Sophocles
Consign my seat, to keep possession of it,
In case I should again return: for he
Doubtless comes nearest me in tragic powers.'

DUNSTER.

It appears, therefore, that although we have few remains of the Greek tragedy, yet they are remains of the best masters. There are authorities which say that Æschylus wrote above one hundred tragedies, and the titles of all these have been collected and published by Meursius; seven only survive; the like number of Sophocles, and a few more of Euripides, comprise all the remains of the Greek tragedy now in our possession; but although these are highly valuable, as being specimens of the best masters, it does not follow that they are the best, or amongst the best performances of their respective authors; at all events we can judge but in part from so small a proportion, and as these authors were in the habit of forming their dramas upon plots that were a continuation of the same story, it must be to the disadvantage of any one piece, that happens to come down to us disjunctively, as in the instance of the Prometheus of Æschylus, and more which might be named amongst the remains of the two other surviving poets.

We have now English translations of all the Greek tragedies, and, without carrying my remarks any farther than appertains to the poet of whom I am speaking, I should feel it as an injustice to the merit of a very able and ingenious contemporary, if I could mention Æschylus and overlook his translator: a work so arduous as that which Mr. Potter has executed, might claim much more indulgence than his performance will ever stand in need of; but these translations, could they be executed up to the full spirit of their originals, can never interest an English reader like his native drama: to the poet they afford a great subject for display in odes and choruses, and relieve him at the same time from the heaviest part of his work, the labour of the plot;

but with the reader, who cannot judge of their orchestral accompaniments, they will never stand in competition with the activity of the English drama, its warm and rapid incident, transition of scene, variety of character, brevity of dialogue, busy plot and domestic fable. A man of genius, who writes for the closet, may have a curiosity to build a drama upon Greek construction, but he will hardly succeed in an attempt to naturalize it on our stage.

No translator can engage with a more difficult original than Æschylus; time has thrown some sublimities out of our sight, and many difficulties in our way by the injuries of the text: the style of his tragedy bespeaks a fiery and inflated imagination: the time in which he wrote and his own martial habits, doubtless give a colour and character to his diction; perhaps the intemperance in which he indulged may sometimes give a heat to his fancy more than natural, and there are some passages of so figurative and metaphorical a sort, that I have been often tempted to suppose, that his campaigns against the Persians might have tinctured his language with something of the Oriental tone of expression.

Sophocles, in times more pacific, has a softer versification, and a style more sweet and feeble; of habits and education more effeminate, of a fair and comely person, we hear of him dancing naked round a trophy erected for the victory of Salamis, his lyre in his hand, and his limbs anointed with oil to increase their activity; he studied music and the dance under Lampsus, and in both arts was an adept; he danced at the performance of his own Nausicaa, and he accompanied the choruses of his Thamyris with his voice and harp: devoted to the fair sex in the extreme, the softness of his natural character is conspicuous in his writings: his pictures of women

are flatteringly drawn, and his style is compared to the honey of the bee for sweetness ; the sensibility of his mind was extreme; though he lived near a hundred years, old age did not deaden his feelings, for whilst judgement was passing on his Œdipus Coloneus, the last play he exhibited, his spirit was so agitated by the anxious suspense, that when the prize was at length decreed in his favour, the tumult of passion was too violent for his exhausted frame, and the aged poet expired with joy.

Euripides, on the other hand, was of mean birth, the son of a poor woman who sold herbs, at which circumstance Æschylus points when he says in the Frogs—

> O thou from rural goddess sprung !

He was educated by his father to engage as an athletic in the Eleusinian and Thesean games ; he was also a student in natural philosophy, under Anaxagoras, in rhetoric under Prodicus, and a pupil of Socrates in moral philosophy. When he began to study tragedy he shut himself in a cave, wild and horrid and sequestered from the world, in the island of Salamis: he is charged with having a profest antipathy to women, and every feature both of nature and education, as now described, is discoverable in his writings ; his sentiments breathe the air of the schools, his images are frequently vulgar, and his female characters of an unfavourable cast ; he is carping, sour, and disputatious, and, though he carried away only five prizes out of seventy-five plays, he is still indignant, proud, and self-assuming ; his life was full of contention, and his death of horror, for he was set upon by mastiffs and killed. He was the friend of Socrates, and grossly addicted to unnatural passion.

NUMBER CXXXIV.

In a scene between Xanthias the slave of Bacchus, and Æacus, in the comedy of the Frogs before mentioned, the latter, upon being asked why Sophocles did not put in his claim for the tragic chair, replies—

—Not he, by Jove!
When hither he came down, he instantly
Embrac'd Æschylus, shook him by the hand,
And in his favour gave up all pretentions:
And now, as by Clidemides I 'm told,
He will attend the trial as third man,
Content if Æschylus victorious prove;
But otherwise, has said he'll try his skill
In contest with Euripides.

DUNSTER'S TRANS.

The tragedies of Æschylus have all the marks of an original genius: his scene is cast with an awful and majestic grandeur, and he designs in the boldest style; in some situations his principal figures are painted with such terrible effect, that I can only liken them to a composition, where Spagnolet had drawn the persons of the damned in tortures, and Salvator Rosa had filled up the scenery of hell in his strongest manner. No poet introduces his character on the scene with more dignity and stage-effect: he is in the practice of holding the spectator in suspense by a preparatory silence in his chief person, which is amongst the most refined arts of the dramatic poet: this was well understood by our

Shakspeare and some others of the old school; on the French stage I conceive it is very little in use.

In the introductory scene of the Prometheus, the principal character preserves a dignified silence for a considerable space of time, during which all the tremendous machinery incidental to his tortures, is going forward under the superintendence of imaginary beings, and the vengeance of almighty Jupiter in chaining him to a rock, there to languish for innumerable ages, is in actual execution. This is a prelude infinitely more dramatic, sublime and affecting, than if the scene had been interwoven with lamentations, cries, and complaints, though ever so well expressed; the picture tells its own tale, and the spectacle speaks to the heart without a vehicle of words; it is well observed by Mr. Potter, the translator of Æschylus, that 'there is a dignity and even sublimity in this silence of Prometheus beyond the expression of words; but as soon as the instruments of tyranny have left him, he bursts into a strain of pathetic lamentation, and invokes all nature to attest to his undeserved sufferings.'

> Æthereal air, and ye swift-winged winds,
> Ye rivers springing from fresh founts, ye waves,
> That o'er th' interminable ocean wreath
> Your crisped smiles, thou all-producing earth,
> And thee, bright sun, I call, whose flaming orb
> Views the wide world beneath.—
>
> POTTER.

The scenery and spectacle of the Prometheus must have been the finest that poet ever devised: all the characters are supernatural beings, and their language is not unworthy of Olympus.

The Agamemnon is a wonderful production, and though no other tragedy but this had come down to us from the pen of the author, it would be matter of

astonishment to me that any critic should be found of such proof against its beauties, as to lower its author to a comparison with Sophocles or Euripides; yet some there have been, who have reversed the decree of Bacchus, and given their preference to Sophocles, nay even to Euripides. The same management is observable in this tragedy upon the introduction of Cassandra, as we have just now remarked in the case of Prometheus: Agamemnon recommends his captive to the protection of Clytemnestra; they are left upon the scene together; the Queen of Argos solicits her to descend from her car and enter the palace; the chorus second the invitation; she makes no reply; Clytemnestra doubts if she speaks the language of Greece, and calls upon her to make some acknowledgement by signs; when this draws nothing from her, she grows exasperated and exclaims—

'Tis frenzy this, the impulse of a mind
Disorder'd; from a city lately taken
She comes, and knows not how to bear the curb,
Till she has spent her rage in bloody foam:
But I no more waste words to be disdain'd.

POTTER.

Cassandra still is silent; when upon the departure of the queen, this gloomy cloud that hung upon the foreground of the prospect at once disperses, and a scene of such dazzling splendour and sublimity bursts forth upon the instant, as must have thrown the theatre into astonishment; seized with the prophetic fury, she breaks out into such gusts and agonies of divination, as can no otherwise be described, but with silent wonder how any human imagination could furnish such ideas, or find words to give them utterance. The chorus I confess stand the shock with wonderful presence of mind, but the

phlegm and apathy of a Greek chorus is proof against every thing; though the prophetess plainly denounces the impending murder of the king by Clytemnestra, and points out the bath as the scene of his assassination, the chorus tamely answers—

> To unfold the obscure oracles of heav'n
> Is not my boast.—
>
> POTTER.

I need not be reminded that incredulity was annexed by Apollo to the predictions of Cassandra, and that the plot and catastrophe would not admit of precipitation; for I must still contend that incredulity itself is a good dramatic engine, and if the chorus had not stood in his way, would have been otherwise managed by the author; but I take the character of a true Greek chorus to be such, that if Apollo himself had come in person to tell them, that the earth would open and swallow them up, if they did not instantly remove from the spot on which they stood, they would have stopt to moralize, or hymn an ode, in strophe and antistrophe, to Jupiter or Venus, or the gods below to whom they were descending, though the ground was cleaving under their feet—provided, as I before premised, that they had the true spirit of a Greek chorus in them. To have a genius like this of Æschylus encumbered with a chorus, is as if a millstone was tied round the pinions of an eagle.

The Agamemnon was the last tragedy he wrote for the Athenian stage; the poet was then turned of sixty years: the Athenians decreed the prize to him for this inestimable performance, which has been the admiration of all ages, and will be to all posterity.

The tragedy of The Persians, and that also of the

Furies, are a study for poets and painters; the imagery in both these pieces is of a wonderful and surpassing sublimity. In the former of these every reader must be struck with the introduction of the ghost of Darius, and the awful rites and incantations that are preparatory to its appearance: the sudden interruption of the unfinished hymn by the royal spectre; the attitudes of the prostrate Satraps, the situation of Atossa, and the whole disposition of the scene, are a combination in point of effect which no dramatic spectacle ever exceeded.

In The Furies the scene presents to the spectator the temple of the Pythian Apollo: the priestess opens the tragedy with a speech from the vestibule; the gates are drawn back and the interior of the fane is discovered, the god appears on the scene in person, Orestes is at his feet in a supplicating posture, and the furies to the number of fifty are dispersed in different attitudes, but all buried in profound sleep: Apollo addresses himself to his suppliant, and points to the sleeping furies—

—See this grisly troop!
Sleep has oppress'd them, and their baffled rage
Shall fail, grim-visag'd hags, grown old
In loath'd virginity: nor god nor man
Approach'd their bed, nor savage of the wilds;
For they were born for mischiefs, and their haunts
In dreary darkness, 'midst the yawning gulfs
Of Tartarus beneath, by men abhorr'd,
And by th' Olympian gods.

POTTER.

Can there be a finer, a more tremendous picture? There can: but it is the genius of Æschylus must heighten it: the ghost of Clytemnestra rises on the scene, and completes the horror; stained with the blood of her husband, and gashed with wounds in-

flicted by the parricidal hand of her own son, she calls out to the avenging deities—

> What, can you sleep? Is this a time t' indulge
> Your indolent repose?
> Hear me, oh hear; 'tis for my soul's repose
> I plead: rouse your keen sense, infernal powers!
> 'Tis Clytemnestra calls you in your dreams.
>
> POTTER.

The furies scream out in their sleep, the spectre again urges them to rouse—

> —And is this all? Awake,
> Arise.—
> —With fiery breath
> That snuffs the scent of blood, pursue this son,
> Follow him, blast him!
>
> POTTER.

What art! what aggravation in this horrid prelude! what preparation for effect! with what a burst must they have sprung from their dream!—Well may we give credit to the account of the terrors which they imprest upon the spectators: their numbers, their attire, their temples wreathed with snakes, and their hands armed with flames, the clangor of the orchestra, the violence of their motions, their yelling screams, seem to empty the whole infernal regions on the stage. We must take into our recollection also, that this spectacle was exhibited to a people, who considered these beings as deities, at whose shrines they paid divine worship, and to whose eyes and imaginations this snaky attire was wholly new; for it was the bold fancy of the poet, which first dressed them in this manner, and they have kept the fashion from that moment to the present.

I cannot dismiss this tragedy without observing, that there is a shift of the scene from Delphi to

Athens, which I take to be a single instance of the sort on the Greek stage.

The number of the chorus being limited by public edict after the exhibition of this tragedy, it is clear that the tragedy of The Supplicants must have been subsequent to it, inasmuch as the chorus of Danaides consisted of fifty persons; and as the whole tenor of this soft and pathetic drama bears an air of atonement to the superstition of the vulgar, and is full of pious submission to the will of Jupiter, and religious veneration for the gods, it seems to me very probable, that the poet had a view in this tragedy of The Supplicants, of reconciling the people after the offence he had given them on a former occasion by making too free with the deities, and for which he narrowly escaped their resentment.

As to the tragedy of The Seven Chiefs against Thebes, it is said to have been the favourite of its author, and we know it has the testimony of the critic Longinus. The scenery is beautiful; the dialogue characteristic and of a martial glow; the armorial bearings charged on the shields of the armed chiefs are most fancifully devised: and the tender contrast of the persons of the chorus, composed of the daughters of Cadmus, associate every pleasing and animating contemplation that can meet within the compass of one simple drama.

I believe there is no ancient poet, that bears so close a resemblance in point of genius to any of the moderns, as Æschylus bears to Shakspeare: the comparison might afford a pleasing subject to a man of learning and leisure; if I was further to compare the relation, in which Æschylus stands to Sophocles and Euripides, with that of Shakspeare to any of our later dramatists, I should be inclined to put Sophocles in the line with Rowe, and Euripides with Lillo.

NUMBER CXXXV.

I SHALL now proceed to lay before the public such an account as I have been enabled to collect of the several Greek writers of comedy.

The learned reader needs not to be informed, how little is to be found in Aristotle's Poetics on the subject of comedy; that treatise by no means answers to the general profession of its title: if it had come down to us as perfect and entire, as it probably was when the author put the last hand to it, and presented a correct copy of his work to Alexander, we might conclude otherwise of it: but to speak of it as it is, we can call it nothing more than a dissertation upon tragedy, in which many things are evidently out of place and order, some no doubt lost, and others mutilated: it is thus considered by the learned commentator Daniel Heinsius, who, in his supplementary treatise annexed to his edition, professedly speaks only of the construction of tragedy, and endeavours with great diligence and perspicuity to methodize the whole work, and dispose his author's system into some order and regularity.

With the exception of a few obvious remarks upon the epic, as tending to illustrate the drama, and two or three passages where comedy is spoken of only as contrasted with tragedy, the whole of this celebrated dissertation is nothing more than a set of rules for the drama, which are mere transcripts from the compositions of the great writers of the Homeric tragedy, Æschylus, Sophocles, and

Euripides: he analyzes and defines a poem, then actually carried to its perfection; but gives no new lights, no leading instructions, for the furtherance and improvement of what had not arrived to the like state of maturity.

With the remains of the three tragic poets abovementioned in our hands, I profess I do not see how we are edified by Aristotle's dissertation, which offers nothing but what occurs upon the reading of their dramas; unless posterity had seen fit to abide by the same laws which they observed, and the modern tragedy had been made exactly to conform to the Greek model.

Aristotle, as we have before remarked, speaks of no comedy antecedent to the comedy of Epicharmus: there is reason to think that this author did not fall in with the personal comedy, in the licentious manner it prevailed upon the Athenian stage, even to the time of Aristotle, for it was not reformed there, till the personal satirists were awed into better respect by the Macedonian princes, who succeeded to Alexander; whereas Epicharmus wrote for the court of an absolute prince.

Now, it is remarkable, that Aristotle makes no strictures upon the licentiousness of the Athenian comedy, nor offers any rules for the correction of the stage, though the schools proscribed it, and the tribunals were at open hostility with it. It is plain he states things as they were, not as they ought to have been; for he pronounces of comedy—'that it is a picture of human nature, worse and more deformed than the original.'

I cannot hold this to be a just character of comedy, as it stood at the time when Aristotle pronounced it: the only entire comedies we have to refer to, are a contradiction to the assertion; for no

one will contend that the corrupt and abominable manners of the times in which Aristophanes wrote, did not fully warrant the severity of his satire, or that his characters of depravity are in general overcharged, 'and his pictures of human nature more deformed than their originals.' As for the rest of the comic fraternity, their fragments only can plead for them: but they are fragments of such a nature, as prove them to have been moralists of the sublimest sort, and they have been collected, translated, and applauded, by the gravest and most sententious of the Christian writers, for many ages. I will venture to say, that in these scattered relics of the comic stage, more useful knowledge and good sense, better maxims for right conduct in life, and a more generous display of benevolence, justice, public spirit, and all the moral virtues of natural religion, are to be found, than in all the writings of the philosophers, which are so much more entire.

Socrates, it is true, could hardly be prevailed upon to enter the comic theatre, but I infer very little against the poets on that account; Plato, I am aware though an intimate of Aristophanes, banished the drama out of his visionary republic: but what is that more than to say, that if all men were virtuous there would be no need of satirists? The comic poets in return lashed the philosophers over the stage, and they had what they merited, the public applause on their side; the schools and academies of sophists furnished an inexhaustible fund for wholesome ridicule; their contradictory first principles, their demons and clouds, and water and fire, with all their idle systems and hypotheses, their fabulous conceits, dreams, and devices, to catch the vulgar, and the affected rigour of their manners, whilst in secret they were addicted to the grossest debauchery and impu-

rity, were continual subjects of satire; and if hypocrisy is not the comic poet's lawful game, what is? There is not a play of Aristophanes to be named, in which these sanctified sinners have not their share in the ridicule; and, amongst the fragments above mentioned, a very large proportion falls to their lot.

Aristotle, who had very little feeling for Plato and his academy, or indeed for practical philosophy in general, which he seems to have professed only in opposition to Xenocrates, concerned himself no further about the state of the stage, than to comment and remark upon the tragedies of the three chief writers above mentioned; and it is humiliating enough to the pride of criticism to observe, that tragedy, after all his pains to hold it up to the standard of Sophocles and Euripides, sunk with those authors, and was no more heard of; whilst comedy, without his help, and in defiance of his neglect, rose in credit with the world, till it attained perfection under the auspices of Menander.

I have spoken of tragedy as a *written poem* before comedy of the same description, because I think that Susarion did not *write* comedy, though he acted it so early as the fiftieth Olympiad; and I also think that Thespis did *write* tragedy in the sixty-first Olympiad, if not sooner; in other words, although the complexion of the original drama was comic in the most extravagant degree, yet it appears probable that tragedy had the start in point of publication. The nature of the first comedy, compared with that of the first tragedy, seems to warrant this opinion; for it is easy to suppose that the raillery and satire of the village masques, which would pass off at a lawless festival, spoken off-hand, and without the malice of premeditation, would not so readily have been committed to writing by the poet, as

the tragic drama; which being composed in honour of deceased heroes, or on religious and grave subjects, not only called for greater deliberation on the part of the author, but would also be made public without danger or offence.

It now remains to enquire into the chronology of the *written* comedy.

I have already observed, that Aristotle ascribes the first written comedy to Epicharmus.

Both Aristotle and Horace call him a Sicilian, but in what particular place he was born is not agreed; some contend that he was a Syracusan, some that he was a native of Crastum, others of Megara in Sicily: Diomedes the grammarian says he was born in Cos, and derives the word comedy from the name of that island, a derivation that sets aside his authority altogether. The father of Epicharmus was named Chimarus, or, according to others, Tityrus, and his mother Sicida. Cicero, in his Tusculans, calls him, *acutum nec insulsum hominem:* Demetrius Phaleræus celebrates him for the elegant and apposite choice of his epithets, on which account the Greeks gave the name of *Epicharmion* to his style, making it proverbial for its beauty and purity. It is difficult to fix the precise time when he began to write comedy, especially as he lived to the great age of ninety-seven: it is certain, however, he was still writing in the reign of Hiero, in or about Olymp. lxxiv. at which time Phormis also wrote comedy in Sicily; and Chionides, Dinolochus, and Magnes, comic poets, flourished at Athens.

Suidas's chronology does not agree with Aristotle's, for he makes Chionides antecedent to Epicharmus, and calls him the first writer of comedy; 'adding, that Evetes, Euxenides and Mylus, all Athenians, were his contemporaries; he allows, however, that

Epicharmus and Phormis were the first writers in the island of Sicily; but this is in the vague manner of his dates, and not to be relied upon: he takes no notice of Aristotle's express assertion, that Epicharmus was long senior to Chionides; and yet he might have recollected, that facts are so far in favour of Aristotle's chronology of these poets, that there is a title upon record of one of Chionides's plays called *The Persians*, which must have been posterior to the Persian æra, when it is on all hands agreed that Epicharmus was living.

Amongst the epigrams of Theocritus, published by Henry Stevens in 1579, there are some lines upon Epicharmus, which appear to have been inscribed upon the pedestal of a statue of brass, which the Syracusans had set up in his honour as their fellow-citizen: it consists of ten lines in the Doric dialect, which he used; it settles the point of his birth, expressly saying he was a Syracusan, and ascribes to him the invention of Comedy—

—χ' ὡ 'νηρ, ὁ τὰν Κωμῳδίαν
Εὑρὼν 'Επίχαρμος.

'Epicharmus, the man who invented Comedy.'

In the conclusion, it celebrates him for the many useful maxims which he gave for the instruction of youth; but this I am disposed to think may apply to the circumstance of his having been a schoolmaster at Syracuse; for if we are to take our judgement of Epicharmus's drama from his imitator Plautus, perhaps its morality, though not to be overlooked amongst other excellences, is nevertheless not the most striking feature in its character. And though it is probable that Epicharmus did not launch out into that personality, which the freer Athenians in-

dulged to such excess, yet I can suppose him to have been not very chaste in his dialogue, from the anecdote which Plutarch gives us, of his being heavily fined and compelled to manual labour by order of Hiero for certain obscene jests, which he suffered to pass in hearing of his queen: I must ground another remark upon this anecdote, respecting the time in which he is generally thought to have struck out his comedy, as being long antecedent to the time of Hiero; which being admitted, it will follow that he was near the close of his life, when this sentence of manual labour was executed upon him; a kind of punishment so very unlikely to be inflicted on a man of ninety-six years by a prince of Hiero's magnanimity and benevolence, that, if I am to take the anecdote for granted, I cannot assent to those authorities that have placed him so high in time, for the purpose only of putting his title of first founder of comedy out of dispute.

Upon the whole, I think it likely the Athenians wrote comedy as soon as the Sicilians, but that Epicharmus was the first who formed his drama upon the poems of Homer: it is also clear, that his countryman and contemporary Phormis wrote comedy as soon, or nearly as soon as he did; for although Theocritus, in the epigram above cited, says expressly that Epicharmus struck out comedy, yet it must be remarked that Theocritus was a Syracusan by birth, living in the time of Ptolemy Lagus; and in giving this testimony for his fellow-citizen, it is more than probable he spoke locally of the Sicilian comedy only, as Suidas did in after times, when he said that Epicharmus and Phormis first struck out comedy in Sicily.

I would therefore fix Epicharmus's first comedy antecedent to Olymp. lxxv. at the lowest date,

because we have it from good authority that he was teaching scholars at Syracuse four years before the Persian era; and this date is confirmed by the age of Phormis, who certainly flourished in the time of Gelon, and was in great favour in the court of that prince, who was predecessor to Hiero, and was succeeded by him in Olymp. lxxvii.

NUMBER CXXXVI.

EPICHARMUS was a liberal benefactor to the stage. Porphyry says, that Apollodorus the grammarian made a collection of his plays in ten volumes; Suidas reckons fifty-two; Lycon only thirty-five; but modern philologists have given the titles of forty, with the authorities by which they are ascertained.

It is not my purpose in these papers to make a practice of loading the page with lists of titles, which may too truly be called dead names; but, in the instance of an author like Epicharmus, who stands at the head of his department, every relique seems an object of some curiosity; and therefore, although the following catalogue may strike the dramatic reader as what may properly enough be called 'a beggarly account of empty boxes,' yet I shall proceed to enumerate the titles of forty comedies, all of which are, upon good grounds of criticism, ascribed to this celebrated author.

TITLES OF THE COMEDIES OF EPICHARMUS.

The Husbandman. The Halcyon. Amycus, Son of Neptune. The Banditti. Atalanta. The

Bacchæ. Busiris. Earth and Sea. The Fathers of the People. The Bacchanalians. Diphilus. Hope. The Festival. The Celebration of the Victory. Hebe's Wedding. Juno's Nuptials. Vulcan, or the Revels. The Ambassadors to the Oracle. The Cyclops. The Reasoner. The Megarensian. The Muses. The Islands. Niobe's Wedding. Ulysses the Deserter. Ulysses Shipwreckt. The Chitterlings. The Pædagogues. The Paragon. The Persians. The Statesman. Prometheus, the Fire-stealer. Pyrrha, the Wife of Deucalion. The Sirens. The Isle of Scyros. The Sphynx. The Trojans. Philoctetes. The Chorus Troop. The Potters.

The same respect, which led me to insert these titles, led me also to search with all possible diligence for every fragment which I could find of Epicharmus. I wish they had been more in number, and of greater importance than they are ; but such as they are, I have reason to believe they are the whole amount of what can be picked up from the wreck of this once valuable poet. The reader must not expect, that either in this author's instance, or that of any other Greek comedian, except in very few cases, that the particular play can be ascertained, to which the fragments belong; for the grammarians and others, who quote them, only give the name of the author, and not that of the comedy from which they extract them. I must in this place once for all give vent to an anxiety, which presses on my mind respecting these fragments of the Greek comedy, whether the insertion of them will or will not be approved of by the generality of my readers: my sole object is to furnish them with rational and moral amusement, and if I fail of that object in these

my hearty endeavours, I have taken a great deal of pains to render these passages into English in the best manner my capacity enabled me to do, to a very unfortunate purpose indeed. The learned reader will bear me witness, that these fragments have been the admiration of all ages; and I am sensible that very many of them possess intrinsic beauty both of style and sentiment: and if my translations have not robbed them of their original merit, some pleasure, and let me hope some profit, may attend their perusal. I have studied so to class them, as not to burthen or distract the reader with a mere succession of miscellaneous quotations without any reference or connexion, which I am sensible could not be an agreeable mode of publication, though Stobæus, Hertelius, and some others, have taken it up; but, on the contrary, I have endeavoured to introduce them with some anecdote or other, which serves to weave them into the thread of the work. Most of the translations will be found in metre, in which I have strove to copy the free style of our old metrical comic poets: some I have turned into rhyme, where the thought allowed it, and the expressions were terse and epigrammatical: others I have put into prose; and in all I have been as close and faithful to the original, as the language and my construction of the author would permit. If the candid reader will accept this preface in apology, I shall give him no further trouble on the subject.

Epicharmus, in one of his comedies, we may suppose The Statesman, introduces the following retort from some man of low birth to a prating old woman, who is vapouring about her ancestry.

> 'Good gossip, if you love me, prate no more:
> What are your genealogies to me?
> Away to those, who have more need of them!

Let the degenerate wretches, if they can,
Dig up dead honour from their father's tombs,
And boast it for their own—Vain, empty boast!
When every common fellow that they meet,
If accident hath not cut off the scroll,
Can show a list of ancestry as long.
You call the Scythians barbarous, and despise them;
Yet Anacharsis was a Scythian born;
And every man of a like noble nature,
Tho' he were moulded from an Æthiop's loins,
Is nobler than your pedigrees can make him.'

The following is a false antithesis, in which bodily strength is substituted for mental—

'It demands the strength of a lion to subdue the weakness of love.'

MORAL MAXIMS.

'Be sober in thought! be slow in belief! These are the sinews of wisdom.'

'It is the part of a wise man to foresee what ought to be done, so shall he not repent of what is done.'

'Throw not away thine anger upon trifles! Reason, and not rage, should govern.'

'Mankind are more indebted to industry than to ingenuity: the gods set up their favours at a price, and industry is the purchaser.'

'A man without merit, shall live without envy; but who would wish to escape on these terms?'

'Live so as to hold yourself prepared either for a long life, or for a short one!'

There is no subject, which the comic poets whet their wits upon more frequently than marriage. The wives of Syracuse were not much obliged to Epicharmus for the following sally.

'Marriage is like a cast of the dice: if you get a

wife of good morals and a quiet temper withal, happy is your lot: if you light upon a gadding, gossipping, extravagant hussy, it is not a wife you wed, but an eternal plague in the apparel of a woman. There is not in the habitable globe so dire a torment; I feel it to my sorrow: the better luck is his, who has never tried it.'

Mr. Congreve, in his Double Dealer, has the following passage between Mellafont and Cynthia upon the very eve of their nuptuals.

Cynth. Then I find marriage is like cards; if either of us have a good hand, it is an accident of fortune.

Mell. No, marriage is rather like a game at bowls: Fortune indeed makes the match, and the two nearest, and sometimes the two farthest are together; but the game depends entirely upon judgment.

Cynth. Still it is a game, and consequently one of us must be a loser.

Mell. Not at all; only a friendly trial of skill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment.

Neither this, nor any part of the scene to which it appertains, is in Mr. Congreve's best manner. The wit does not flow, but is pumped up with labour, and not very clean when it comes.

Of Phormis, the contemporary of Epicharmus, no fragments are to be found.

Chionides, of Athens wrote comedy before the Persian era, and is the oldest writer of the Athenian stage. All the memorials I can obtain of him are, that he wrote three plays, entitled, The Heroes, The Liars, and The Poor Men.

Magnes was an Athenian, and began to appear as a writer of Comedy, whilst Chionides was living: Aristophanes makes mention of him in his play of The Knights. The Scholiast in his comment on the passage observes, that all his works are perished,

nothing remaining but the titles of nine comedies, of which two bear the same names with two of Aristophanes, viz. The Frogs, and The Birds; the same Scholiast informs us, that Magnes bore away two prizes.

Dinolochus was contemporary with Magnes: he used the Doric dialect, and is said to have produced fourteen plays. Some place his birth at Syracuse, others at Agrigentum. Suidas says he flourished so early as Olymp. lxxiii. but this ill agrees with the circumstance of his being the son, or, as others contend, the scholar of Epicharmus. His works have totally perished.

These five poets, three of whom were Sicilians, must be called The Fathers of Comedy, and all that now remains of them is comprised in a few short passages here inserted.

Whilst their comedies were in representation, tragedy was advancing under Pratinas and Chærilus, and Æschylus had already taken possession of the stage: Sophocles and Euripides were born, the former six years before the latter: Ion, surnamed Xuthis, son of Orthomenes of Chios, began to write tragedy in the first year of Olymp. lxxxii. Æschylus being then dead. Theognis, from the coldness of his drama nicknamed Snow, was contemporary with Ion.

The magistracy of Athens in Olymp. lxxxv. when Myrrichides was archon, published a decree, prohibiting the representation of comedies in Athens: this decree held in force only two years under Glaucides and Theopompus; for when Euthymenes succeeded to that annual dignity, he found it expedient to gratify the people by a revocation of the edict, and the comic muse was reinstated on the stage by the celebrated triumvirate of Eupolis, Cratinus and

Aristophanes; Cratinus opening the theatre with his celebrated comedy of The Winter Amusements, Eupolis with The New Moons, and Aristophanes with the Acharnensians.

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CRATINUS, Eupolis and Aristophanes are generally classed together as rivals and principals in what is called The Old Comedy. Cratinus was senior in age to both his competitors, and Eupolis is charged by the old annotator upon Aristophanes of having copied from him very freely: I confess this is stubborn authority, and yet it seems hard to believe that Eupolis, who was so constantly engaged in competition with his rival, should expose himself to certain detection of so disgraceful a sort; and had it been so, I should rather have expected to meet with the charge in the text of Aristophanes, than in the comment; I must add, that upon the closest search I can find nothing that favours this imputation in any other author which speaks of Eupolis; but many circumstances, on the contrary, which seem to place his pretensions to originality on as good ground as that of his contemporaries, with whom he is equally celebrated.

These poets were in high favour with the people on account of the boldness and personality of their satire, and for the same reason proportionably obnoxious to the nobles and magistrates, whom they lashed without mercy. Aristophanes was much the

least bitter of the three, and yet we have some smart specimens of his severity. Persius seems to make this distinction in the following passage—

> *Audaci quicunque afflate Cratino,*
> *Iratum Eupolidem prægrandi cum sene palles,*
> *Aspice et hæc.* i. 123.

In these lines he characterizes Cratinus and Eupolis by the epithets of *audax* and *iratus*, whereas he introduces Aristophanes under the description only of *prægrandis senex*, which is interpreted to refer to the superior gravity and dignity of his style.

Horace, in the fourth satire of his first book, instances these three poets by pre-eminence from amongst all the writers of the old comedy.

> *Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poëtæ,*
> *Atque alii, quorum comœdia prisca virorum est,*
> *Si quis erat dignus describi, quod malus aut fur,*
> *Quod mœchus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui*
> *Famosus, multa cum libertate notabant.*

> The comic poets, in its earliest age,
> Who form'd the manners of the Grecian stage,
> Was there a villain, who might justly claim
> A better right of being damn'd to fame,
> Rake, cut-throat, thief, whatever was his crime,
> They freely stigmatiz'd the wretch in rhyme.
>
> FRANCIS.

It appears by this quotation, that Horace does not consider their comedy in the same light with Aristotle, as if they represented human nature in worse colours than it deserved.

Quintilian expressly says, that these are the chief writers of the old comedy—*Plures ejus auctores; Aristophanes tamen et Eupolis, Cratinusque præcipui*:—and he recommends the old Greek comedy, and these authors in particular, as the best

model, Homer only excepted, for his orator to form himself upon: inasmuch as it is there only he will find the Attic style in its purity and perfection; and though the old comedy, as he observes, is chiefly occupied in wit and sarcasm for the purpose of chastising vice, yet it has many excellences of a more general sort: it is energetic, elegant, and full of graces; so that if Homer alone, who like his own Achilles, has the privilege of being always put above comparison, be excepted, no other school for oratory can come in competition with this.

CRATINUS.

Cratinus was the son of Callimedes an Athenian; we have the titles of at least thirty comedies of his writing, so that Suidas is mistaken in ascribing to him only twenty-one: he was a poet of strong imagination, and a florid lively style; he carried away no less than nine prizes, which is a large proportion of success, compared with others who rank amongst the highest both in the comic and tragic line. A second edict came out in his time for restraining the licentiousness of the stage in point of personality, and Cratinus, in common with the rest of his contemporaries, found himself obliged to divert his satire from the living to the dead. Sarcasms were now levelled at men's productions, not at their persons; the tragic authors felt the chief weight of the attack, though even Homer did not escape, as may be gathered from 'The Ulysses' of Cratinus, in which he parodies and ridicules the Odyssey.

Cratinus lived to an extreme old age, though according to the loose morals of the Greeks he indulged his passions both natural and unnatural

without restraint; he carried his love of wine to such excess, that he got the name of Φιλοπότης, launching out in praise of drinking, and rallying all sobriety out of countenance, asserting that no author can be good for any thing, who does not love his bottle, and that dramatic poets in particular ought to drink hard, as a duty due to Bacchus for his peculiar patronage and protection of the stage. Horace, who was not very averse from his doctrine, quotes his authority in the first lines of an epistle to Mecænas.

Prisco si credis, Mecænas docte, Cratino,
Nulla placere diu, nec vivere carmina possunt,
Quæ scribuntur aquæ potoribus. EPIST. 1, 19.

O learn'd Mecænas, hear Cratinus speak,
And take this maxim from the gay old Greek;
No verse shall please, or lasting honours gain,
Which coldly flows from water-drinker's brain.

As for the love of wine, it seems to have stood in the place of a merit with the Greeks: but Cratinus's excess was attended in his old age with some marks of weakness and want of retention, incidental to an exhausted constitution, which gave a handle to Aristophanes, who was a younger man, and not much more abstemious, to bring his old competitor on the stage, and hold him up to ridicule for this infirmity. The charge was unmanly, and roused the aged veteran to return the attack: Cratinus, then nearly approaching to a hundred, had left off writing, but he was not yet superannuated, and lived to complete a comedy, which he appositely entitled 'The Flaggon.' In the plot of this piece he feigns himself married to comedy, whom he personifies, and represents the lady in disgust with her husband for his unconjugal neglect, on which account she states

her charge, and roundly sues for an actual divorce: upon this hearing, certain friends and advocates are introduced on the scene in behalf of the party accused, who make suit to the dame to stay her proceedings, and not be over hasty in throwing off an old spouse; but on the contrary recommend to her to enter calmly into an amicable discussion of her grievances: to this proposal she at length accedes, and this gives occasion to take up the charge of Aristophanes, accusing the old bard of drunkenness and the concomitant circumstances, which had been published with so much ill-nature to make him ridiculous at the end of life. Then follows a very pleasant refutation of all these libels, by which he contrives to turn the laugh against Aristophanes, and so concludes the comedy. One feels a satisfaction, even at this distance of ages, to know, that the old poet bore away the prize with this very comedy, and soon after expired in the arms of victory at the age of ninety-seven, in the first year of Olymp. lxxxix.

The Athenians gave him a monument, and an epitaph, in which they omit all mention of his fine talents, and record nothing but his drunkenness. He spared no man when living, and even death itself could not protect him from retaliation.

> *Θανόντος ἀνδρὸς πᾶσ' ἀπόλλυται χάρις."*
>
> STESICHORUS.

> The evil that he did liv'd after him,
> The good was all interred with his bones.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

There is scarce a fragment of this poet, once so great a favourite, that is now to be found; the very few scraps of sentences remaining are too imperfect

to merit a translation: one little spark of his genius however will be seen in the following epigrammatic turn of thought upon the loss of a statue, which being the workmanship of Dædalus he supposes to have made use of its privilege, and escaped from its pedestal.

> My statue's gone! By Dædalus 'twas made.
> It is not stolen therefore; it has stray'd.

EUPOLIS.

Eupolis became a very popular author some years before the death of Cratinus: the bold strong spirit of his satire recommended him to the public more than the beauties and graces of his style, which he was not studious to polish. He attacked the most obnoxious and profligate characters in Athens, without any regard to his personal safety; to expose the cheat, and ridicule the impostor was the glory of his muse, and neither the terrors of the magistracy, nor the mysteries of superstition could divert him from it. He wrote two comedies professedly against Autolycus the Areopagite, whose misbehaviour in the Chæronesian war had made him infamous, and he called them after his name, 'The first and second Autolycus.' In his famous comedy called 'The Baptæ' he inveighs against the effeminate turpitude of his countrymen, whom he exhibits dancing after the manner of the lascivious priests of Cotytto, viz. 'The Baptæ,' in the habits and fashion of female minstrels.

> *Talia secretâ coluerunt orgia tedâ*
> *Cecropiam soliti Bapta lassare Cotytto.*
>
> JUV. ii. 91.

The prevailing account of his death is, that the persons whom he had satirized in this play of 'The Baptæ,' suborned certain assassins to throw him into the sea, as he was passing the Hellespont with the Athenian forces, then on an expedition against the Lacedæmonians: and several authorities impute this revengeful deed to Alcibiades, who had been severely handled in that piece; but Cicero, in his first epistle of the sixth book to Atticus, speaks of this report as a vulgar error, and quotes Eratosthenes for the fact of Eupolis having written certain comedies after the time when the event of his death is dated—*redarguit Eratosthenes; affert enim quas ille post id tempus fabulas docuerit.*

Pausanias tells us, that his tomb was erected upon the banks of the Æsopus, in Sicyonia, and as it is not likely this honour should be paid to his memory by the Sicyonians, he being an Athenian born, unless he had died in their county; the authority of Pausanias seems to confirm the account of Eratosthenes, and discredit the fable of his being thrown into the Hellespont.

In his comedy, called 'The People', by the fiction of the scene he raises the shades of their departed orators and demagogues from the dead: and when Pericles, last of the troop, arises, the poet demands, 'Who is it that appears?' The question being answered, and the spirit of Pericles dismissed, he pronounces his encomium—'That he was pre-eminent as an orator, for man never spoke as he spoke: when he started like a courser in the race, he threw all competitors out of sight, so rapid was the torrent of his eloquence; but with that rapidity there flowed such sweetness and persuasion from his lips, that he alone of all orators,

struck a sting into the very souls of his hearers, and left it there to remain for ever.'

I think it probable the following fragment has been the opening speech of this very comedy; for in it he addresses the people, and complains of the preference they are apt to bestow upon foreigners, to the neglect of their own countrymen—' Receiving every thing with favour that falls from their lips, and applauding them as oracles of human wisdom; whereas, if any one of your own countrymen addresses you, though in no respect their inferior, you look down upon him with contempt; nay, you are ready to pronounce that the man is in his dotage; a fool who never had senses, or a madman who has lost them—but hark ye, gentlemen! let me have a word with you at starting; let me prevail with you to revoke these unjust proceedings, and give a fellow-citizen, and your humble servant, a fair hearing and impartial judgement.'

I suspect this to be a sly blow at Aristophanes, who was not an Athenian born, and perhaps at this time had not his adoption. He proceeds to lament the state of public affairs, and the degeneracy of the times; for in the old comedy it was usual for the poet to harangue the theatre, either in the opening of the piece, or at any convenient interval between the scenes, sometimes in his own person, sometimes by the mouth of the chorus. We cannot wonder if such sentiments as the following, delivered from the stage, should render Eupolis obnoxious to men in Power.

Address to the Audience by Eupolis.

' Of many things, which offer themselves to my consideration, I cannot find words to speak, so

penetrated am I with affliction, when I turn my thoughts to the condition of the commonwealth; for you must be conscious, O citizens, it was not so administered in times past, when men of high birth, men whose rank, fortune and merit, gave them a consideration in the state, filled the first offices of government. To such we deferred, as to the deities themselves; for they merited our respect, and under their protection we enjoyed security: now we have no other guide in our election but blind ignoble chance, and on whatsoever head it falls, though he be the worst and meanest of mankind, he starts up a great man at once, and is installed with all proper solemnity a rogue in state.'

Here the poet speaks out of the rostrum rather than from the stage; this is a plain bold language: and tempts me to call our countryman Ben Jonson on the scene, who was deep in all these remnants of the old Greek poets, and frequently talks the very language of the Athenian theatre.

Asper, in character of Presenter of the play, thus opens the comedy of Every Man out of his Humour.

Address to the Audience by B. Jonson.

Away!
Who is so patient of this impious world,
That he can check his spirit or rein his tongue:
Who can behold such prodigies as these,
And have his lips seal'd up? Not I; my soul
Was never ground into such oily colours,
To flatter vice and daub iniquity:
But with an armed and resolved hand
I'll strip the ragged follies of the time,
Naked as at their birth—

I fear no mood stamp in a private brow,
When I am pleased to unmask a public vice.

I fear no strumpet's drugs, nor ruffian's stab,
Should I detect their hateful luxuries;
No broker's usurers, lawyer's gripe,
Were I dispos'd to say, They're all corrupt.
I fear no courtier's frown, should I applaud
The easy flexure of his supple hams.
Tut! these are so innate and popular,
That drunken custom would not shame to laugh
In scorn at him, and should not dare to tax them.
&c. &c.

This is the very spirit of the old Greek comedy, speaking through the organs of our English Aristophanes, and old Ben fills the character of the *prægrandis senex*, as well as he for whom it was designed. It is the *Comœdia, vocem tollens*, and asserting her determination to keep up her rights, according to ancient custom of her founders—*Siquis erat dignus describi.*—In the third year of Olymp. lxxxix. which was two years after the decease of Cratinus, Eupolis acted his comedy, called 'The Flatterers,' Alcæus being archon. I cannot doubt but the following is a fragment of this comedy; it is a part of the speech of a parasite, and runs over a few of the arts by which he gulls the rich boobies that fall in his way.

The Parasite of Eupolis.

Mark now, and learn of me the thriving arts,
By which we parasites contrive to live:
Fine rogues we are, my friend, of that be sure,
And daintily we gull mankind.—Observe!
First I provide myself a nimble thing
To be my page, a varlet of all crafts;
Next two new suits for feasts and gala days,
Which I promote by turns, when I walk forth
To sun myself upon the public square:
There if perchance I spy some rich dull knave,

Straight I accost him, do him reverence,
And saunt'ring up and down, with idle chat
Hold him awhile in play! at every word,
Which his wise worship utters, I stop short
And bless myself for wonder; if he ventures
On some vile joke, I blow it to the skies,
And hold my sides for laughter—Then to supper
With others of our brotherhood to mess
In some night-cellar on our barley cakes,
And club inventions for the next day's shift.

The Parasite of Ben Jonson.

MOSCA.

—Oh! your parasite
Is a most precious thing, dropt from above,
Not bred 'mongst clods and clot-poles here on earth
I muse the mystery was not made a science,
It is so liberally profest. Almost
All the wise world is little else in nature
But parasites and sub-parasites. And yet
I mean not those, that have your bare town-art,
To know who's fit to feed them; have no house,
No family, no care, and therefore mould
Tales for men's ears, to bait that sense—nor those,
With their court dog-tricks, that can fawn and fleer,
Make their revenue out of legs and faces,
Echo, My Lord, and lick away a moth;
But your fine elegant rascal, that can rise,
And stoop almost together like an arrow,
Shoot thro' the air as nimbly as a star,
Turn short as doth a swallow, and be here,
And there, and here, and yonder all at once;
Present to any humour all occasion,
And change a vizor swifter than a thought;
This is the creature had the art born with him.

Lucian's Parasite, which is a master-piece of character and comic writing, and Horace's dialogue between Tiresias and Ulysses, which is the fifth

satire of the second book, might perhaps be traced in passages of this comedy of Eupolis, if we had it entire.

Eupolis, in his Lacedæmonians, attacks both the public and private character of Cimon, charging him with improper partiality for the Lacedæmonians, with drunkenness, and even with an incestuous commerce with his own sister Pnyce: Plutarch takes notice of this attack, and says it had a great effect in stirring up the populace against this celebrated commander.

He wrote his comedy, entitled Marica, against the orator Hyperbolus, whom Thucydides mentions to have been banished by Ostracism.

We have the titles of upwards of twenty plays of this author's composition.

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ARISTOPHANES.

Ut templum Charites, quod non labatur, haberent, Invenere tuum pectus, Aristophanes.

JOS. SCALIGER EX PLATONE.

THIS is an eulogy the more honourable to Aristophanes, as it fell from Plato, the disciple of Socrates. If I were to collect all the testimonies that are scattered through the works of the learned in behalf of the author we are now about to review, I should fill my pages with panegyric; but this I am the less concerned to do, as the reader has a part

of him in possession, which as it is near a fourth of the whole man, he has more than a foot by which to measure this Hercules.

Both the parentage and birth-place of Aristophanes are doubtful; he was an adopted, not a natural citizen of Athens, and I incline to think he was the son of Philippus, a native of Ægina, where our poet had some patrimony. He was in person very tall, bony, and robust, and we have his own authority for his baldness; but whether this was as disgraceful at Athens, as it was amongst the Romans, I have not been anxious to inquire. He was, in private life, of a free, open, and companionable temper, and his company was sought after by the greatest characters of the age, with all possible avidity; Plato, and even Socrates, shared many social hours with him: he was much the most popular character in Athens, as the great dæmagogue Cleon experienced to his cost, not to mention Socrates himself: every honour that could be paid to a poet was publicly bestowed upon Aristophanes by the Athenian people: nor did they confine their rewards to honorary prizes only, but decreed him fines and pecuniary confiscations from those who ventured to attack him with suits and prosecutions. Dionysius of Syracuse in vain made overtures to him of the most flattering sort, at the time when Æschines and Aristippus, Socratic philosophers, were retained in his court with so much infamy to their private characters, and when even Plato himself had solicited his notice by three several visits to Syracuse, where he had not the good fortune to render himself very agreeable. The fame of Aristophanes had reached to the court of Persia, and his praises were there sounded by the great king himself, who considered him not

only as the first poet, but as the most conspicuous personage at Athens. I do not find him marked with any other immorality, than that of intemperance with regard to wine, the fashionable excess of the time, and in some degree a kind of prerogative of his profession, a *licentia poetica*. Athenæus the Deipnosophist says he was drunk when he composed, but this is a charge that will not pass upon any man who is sober; and if we rejected it from Sophocles in the case of Æschylus, we shall not receive it but with contempt from such an accuser as Athenæus. He was not happy in his domestic connexions, for he naturally declares that 'he was ashamed of his wife'——Τὴν γυναῖκα δ' αἰσχύνομαι, and as for his two sons, Philippus and Ararotes, they did him as little credit, and he considered them accordingly. He was blest with a good constitution, and lived to turn above seventy years, though the date of his death is not precisely laid down.

Though he was resolute in opposing himself to the torrent of vice and corruption which overspread the manners of his country, yet he was far more temperate in his personal invective than his contemporaries. He was too sensitive in his nature to undertake the performance of his own parts in person, which was general with all the comic poets of his time; and he stood their raillery for not venturing to tread the stage as they did. Amipsias and Aristonymus, both rival authors, charged him with availing himself of the talents of other people, from consciousness of his own insufficiency: their raillery could not draw him out, till his favourite actor Callistratus declined undertaking the part of Cleon, in his personal comedy of 'The Knights,' dreading the resentment of that powerful demagogue,

who was as unforgiving as he was imperious. In this dilemma Aristophanes conquered his repugnance, and determined upon presenting himself on the stage for the first time in his life: he dressed himself in the character of this formidable tribune: and having coloured his face with vermillion up to the hue of the brutal person he was to resemble, he entered on the part in such a style of energy and with such natural expression, that the effect was irresistible; and the proud factious Cleon was stript of his popularity, and sentenced in a fine of five talents by the knights' decree, as damages for the charge he had preferred against the author touching his right of citizenship, which was awarded and secured to him by the same instrument.

Such was Aristophanes in person, manners, and character: as a poet I might refer the learned reader to his works, which speak so ably for themselves: they are not only valuable as his remains, but when we consider them as the only remains, which give us any complete specimens of the Greek comedy, they become inestimable through the misfortunes of all the rest. We receive them as treasures thrown up from a wreck, or more properly as one passenger escaped out of a fleet, whose narrative we listen to with the more eagerness and curiosity, because it is from this alone we can gain intelligence of the nature of the expedition, the quality of the armament, and the characters and talents of the commanders, who have perished and gone down into the abyss together.

The comedies of Aristophanes are universally esteemed to be the standard of Attic writing in its greatest purity; if any man would wish to know the language as it was spoken by Pericles, he must seek it in the scenes of Aristophanes, where he is

not using a foreign or affected diction, for the purpose of accommodating it to some particular or extravagant character. The ancient authors, both Greek and Roman, who had all the productions of the Athenian stage before them, speak of him with such rapture and admiration, as to give him a decided preference before all other comic poets, with an exception, as I believe, of Plutarch only, who brings him into comparison with Menander, and after discussing their different pretensions decides peremptorily for Menander: this criticism of Plutarch's I shall reserve for future consideration; and when I said that he is single in his preference of Menander, perhaps I ought to recall the expression, as that poet has his admirers, but none that I know of, who have deliberately given judgement in his favour upon a critical comparison with Aristophanes, except Plutarch abovementioned.

The drama of Aristophanes is of a mixed species; sometimes personal, at other times inclining to parody, according to the character of the middle comedy: he varies and accommodates his style to his subject and the speakers on the scene; on some occasions it is elevated, grave, sublime, and polished to a wonderful degree of brilliancy and beauty; on others it sinks and descends into humble dialogue, provincial rusticity, coarse naked obscenity, and even puns and quibbles; the versatility of his genius is admirable; for it gives us every rank and description of men in his scenes, and in every one is strictly characteristic. In some passages, and frequently in his choruses, he starts out of the ordinary province of comedy into the loftiest flights of poetry, and in these I doubt if Æschylus or Pindar have surpassed him: in sentiment and good sense he is not inferior to Euripides, and in the

acuteness of his criticisms equalled by none: in the general purport of his moral he seldom, if ever, fails; but he works occasionally with unclean tools, and, like Juvenal in the lower ages, chastises vice by an open exposure of its turpitude, offending the ear, whilst he aims to mend the heart. This habit of plain speaking was the fashion of the times he wrote in, and the audience demanded and would have it; that he may be studied by the purest readers we should conclude, when we are told he was the pillow companion of a Christian saint, as the well known anecdote of Chrysostom will testify. If we cannot entirely defend the indelicacy of his muse, we cannot deny but that a great share of the blame rests with the spectators: a dramatic poet cannot model his audience, but in a certain degree must of necessity conform to their taste and humour; it can be proved that Aristophanes himself laments the hard task imposed upon him of gratifying the public at the expense of decency; but with the example of the poet Cratinus before his eyes, who was driven from the stage because he scrupled to amuse the public ear with tawdry jests, it is not to be wondered at, if an author, emulous of applause, should fall in with the wishes of the theatre, unbecoming as they were: let me add, in further palliation of this fault, that he never puts obscenity but in the mouths of obscene characters, and so applies it as to give his hearers a disgust for such unseemly habits. Morality I confess deserves a purer vehicle, yet I contend that his purpose was honest, and I dare believe went further towards reforming the loose Athenians, than all the indecisive positions of the philosophers, who being enlisted into sects and factions scarce agreed in any one point of common morality.

This part of his defence would have been very easily handled a century or two ago; Ben Jonson, for instance, could have helped his argument out with his own example, if occasion had required: but the task falls very heavy upon an advocate in this age, which is of purer ears than to listen to obscenity: and though my particular difficulties have thereby been increased, I shall never repine under the weight of any burthen, which the merit of my contemporaries lays upon me.

His wit is of various kinds; much is of a general and permanent stamp; much is local, personal and untransferable to posterity: no author still retains so many brilliant passages, yet none has suffered such injury by the depredations of time: of his powers in ridicule and humour, whether of character or dialogue, there might be no end to instances: if Plautus gives us the model of Epicharmus, he does not equal him; and if Terence translates Menander, his original does not approach him in these particulars: I doubt if the sum total of wit and humour in all their stage-lacqueys would together balance the single character of Cario in the Plutus. His satire, whether levelled against the vices and follies of the people at large, against the corruption of the demagogues, the turpitude and chicanery of the philosophers, or the arrogant self-sufficiency of the tragic poets, cuts with an edge that penetrates the character, and leaves no shelter for either ignorance or criminality.

Aristophanes was author of above sixty comedies, though they are erroneously stated under that amount. The Plutus now in our hands, which is the second he wrote of that title, has been twice published in our language by two different translators: one of these I have seen, which was jointly

executed by the celebrated Henry Fielding and the Rev. Mr. Young: there is an English translation, as I am told, of 'The Clouds,' but this has never been in my hands, and also a very late one of 'The Frogs' in metre, which I have perused. Much praise is due to the labours of learned men, who thus endeavour to make his wit current amongst us; and every man who knows the difficulties of their task, will find his candour strongly called upon to excuse any errors or inequalities, that may appear in their performances.

NUMBER CXXXIX.

I SAID in my former paper that Plutarch had made a comparison between Aristophanes and Menander, and given his decided judgement for the latter. It might well be expected, that a Greek of the lower ages, living in the time of Trajan, and in court favour with that emperor, should prefer a polished elegant author like Menander to one so bold, personal, and sarcastic as the poet he compares with him. Horace even in the time of Augustus had begun to decry the *Plautinos Sales*, and the manners were much more refined in Plutarch's time than in his. As we can take little estimate of Menander from the fragments only of his comedies which now remain, we cannot see what general reasons Plutarch, or any other critic of his time, might have for preferring him: but as far as he has entered into

strictures and objections in his examination of Aristophanes, so far we can follow him; this part at least of his criticism is still open to be controverted, and if it shall appear that he has condemned one party without reason, it may be presumed he has preferred the other without justice.

Plutarch asserts that Aristophanes is a punster, a quibbler upon words, and ridiculously given to parody. It is unfortunate for this charge that he follows it up with quotations, in every one of which Aristophanes is not only to be defended but applauded; he could not have selected passages less to the purpose; and the accusation has accordingly been turned against him by Frischlinus and other advocates of the poet.

He arraigns the style of Aristophanes on account of its inequalities and variations, observing that it is sometimes high and sometimes low, now turgid and inflated, now grovelling and depressed—as if he had not been aware that the great variety of characters, which his comedy exhibits, naturally demands as great a variety of style: he applauds Menander for the uniform and equal tenor of his style, not seeming to recollect, that his comedy on the contrary had one uniform complexion, contained no choruses, and introduced no living characters; whereas Aristophanes, according to the spirit of the old comedy, makes use of choruses, many of which are of so fanciful and imaginary a nature, that it is necessary to employ all the powers of poetry in their display, and in some cases even to create a new style, and almost language, for the occasion: he also introduces gods, heroes, poets, orators, philosophers, ambassadors, priests, on his scene: some of these professedly demand a swelling tragic pomp of words; for instance Æschylus, So-

phocles and Euripides: in short, the very excellence of Aristophanes is discrimination of style and character. Should Socrates and a slave speak in the same phrase? Should Lamachus, a mere *miles gloriosus*, talk in the tone of a beggarly Megarensian pedlar? Certainly not; nor is there any need to dwell longer on this criticism of Plutarch's, in which the ingenious author has shown little of his usual candour or judgement. That he should be prepossessed in favour of the new comedy is very natural; elegant and moral fictions are both more pleasing and more proper subjects for the drama, than bold and coarse truths and living realities: the even suavity of Menander's style might be more to his taste than the irregular sublimity of Aristophanes's; but when I see him manage the argument in a manner so much below his usual sagacity, I cannot help suspecting there might be some other besides general prejudice in his mind against Aristophanes, and I make no doubt he had fostered strong resentments against him for his attacks upon Soci ates; I also see some grounds for believing that he had been opposed by Pliny, in his partiality for Menander, whom that author calls *omnis luxuriæ interpres;* a charge which was resented by Plutarch, who nevertheless was compelled to admit it. It is not improbable, therefore, that this might have given some occasion to him for entering into a more formal comparison between the two authors, and for publishing his strictures upon Aristophanes. Upon looking over the titles of the comedies of the last-mentioned author, which are lost, I find one entitled *Bœotia*, which play was translated and brought upon the Roman stage by Plautus, as it is generally thought, though we are told that M. Varro gave it to one

Aquilius: be this as it may, the comedy was produced by one or the other, and there is a fragment of it in proof, which would be found in Pareus's edition of Plautus: here is fresh reason for Plutarch, who was a Bœotian, to take up a resentment against Aristophanes: and, if it were a subject worth following, I could shew that Plutarch's national prejudices were uncommonly strong: the comedy, indeed, is not in existence, both original and translation being perished: but we can easily believe that Bœotia did not escape out of Aritophanes's hands without a pretty smart flagellation; and this was the more galling to Plutarch, because it was naturalized on the Roman stage, and if it was still in representation, might give a handle to the wits of the time for a run upon his native country. But I perceive my zeal is carrying me into an unprofitable research, and I proceed with my subject.

Aristophanes has sometimes been reproached for his attacks upon Euripides; but this author was a fair subject for satire in his literary character, and, though he was the friend of Socrates, his private morals were no less open to reproof. The voice of the Heathen world has been so loud in the praise of Socrates; he is so decidedly the hero of all the Ciceros and declaimers upon morality, that even now, after so many centuries of Christianity, it is with a kind of superstitious reverence we approach his character. His contemporaries, who saw him in the nearest light, treat him with the least respect: Aristophanes, as Ben Jonson expresses it, 'hoisted him up with a pulley, and made him play the philosopher in a basket: measure how many foot a flea could skip geometrically by a just scale, and edify the people from the engine.'—Time and prejudice

have since cast a veil before him, that it would be a hardy deed to attempt to withdraw.

This attack of Aristophanes has doomed him to almost universal detestation; the praise we give him is no more than his superior genius extorts, and it is paid grudgingly, like a tax, without cordiality, or good-will: we admire him for his bold attacks upon Cleon, and we can find some palliation for his strictures upon Euripides; the languid affectation of the poet, and the turbulent ferocity of the demagogue, justify the satirist; but when he assaults the sacred character of Socrates, when he arraigns the unspotted purity of the great master of morality, it is no longer satire, it is sacrilege. But is all this to pass without one word for the poet? Was he given up by his contemporaries for this atrocious act? was he given up by the friends and disciples of Socrates? By none; not even by Plato himself, who, on the contrary, caressed, admired, and extolled him both in verse and prose: he adopted his sentiments on the subject of *Love*, and engrafted them into his own *Symposium;* he applauded him to Dionysius of Syracuse, and put his comedies into his hands as the only pure and perfect model of Attic elegance: the tyrant read them, admired them, and even rehearsed them by heart; nay, he did more, he turned poet himself, and wrote a play for the Athenian stage, which, of course, was honoured with a prize. And now why should we be more angry than Plato was? What have we discovered which he did not know, that we should take the matter up so high? We have discovered that Aristophanes took a bribe of Melitus and his faction to attack Socrates, and pave the way for their criminal charge, by which he suffered; and this we take upon credit from Ælian's insinuations in an article of his Various History,

which for its authority in this case is about as good an evidence, as any story out of the Incredibilia of Palæphatus Heraclitus. Ælian, however, does not hardily advance this as a fact, but hooks it in by way of question—'Where is the absurdity, he asks, of supposing, that the poet, who was known to be needy, had taken a bribe?'—This is a mere insinuation, by which he tries the credulity of his readers: if they will believe it, so much the better for his purpose; if not, he has nothing else to offer: he has done his best to blacken the character of Aristophanes in this case, as he did in that of his intemperance: he has accused him of writing plays when he was drunk, and now he accuses him of taking a bribe for writing them: the man who believes the one, may take the other into the bargain; for his own part, the improbability stares him so fully in the face, that he immediately subjoins to his insinuation above quoted—'That for the truth of this, it was best known to Aristophanes himself.'—This can never pass with any candid reader. As for the success of the attack, that he confesses was beyond all example; the comedy was applauded to the skies; never did any poet receive such honours from the public, as Aristophanes for this play of The Clouds.

As to the charge of the bribe, I need not observe, that if it was not an easy thing for any advocate of the poet to prove the negative in Hadrian's days, when Ælian threw it out, it cannot be less difficult now to do it, when more than two millenniums have interposed between the fact and our examination of it: and yet we know that Aristophanes, in a short time after the representation of his Clouds, brought this very Melitus, who is supposed to have suborned him by a bribe, before the audience, and

exposed his vicious character with the most unsparing severity. If this is not proving a negative, it is as near it as circumstance and presumption can go.

But there is another part of Ælian's charge which can be more clearly disproved than the above, and this is the assertion he advances, that this attack upon Socrates from the stage was contrived by Anytus and Melitus as a prelude to their criminal accusation of him: this Ælian expressly asserts, adding that the faction were afraid of his popularity, and therefore set Aristophanes upon him to feel the pulse of the people before they ventured to bring their public charge against him. Here he flatly confutes himself; for had this been the proving attack, what experiment could answer more completely, when, even by his own account, all Athens was in raptures with the poet, and the comedy went off with more general applause than any was ever known to receive? nay, more than this, Socrates himself, according to Ælian's own account, was present in the theatre, and stood up in view of the people all the while; yet in spite of his presence, in defiance of this bold appeal, the theatre rung with plaudits, and the philosopher only stood up to be a more conspicuous mark of raillery and contempt. Why then did not the faction seize the opportunity and second the blow? Could any thing answer more fully to their wishes? or rather, could any event turn out more beyond their expectation? From Ælian's account we are left to conclude that this was the case, and that this attack was literally a prelude to their charge; but this inference is alike disingenuous with all the rest, for we know from indubitable dates, that The Clouds was acted at least *eighteen years* before the death of Socrates: it was

in the first year of Olymp. lxxxix. when Isarchus was archon, that Aristophanes acted his first comedy of The Clouds, which was driven off the stage by Alcibiades and his party: in the year immediately following, when Aminias was archon, he brought out the second of that name, which is the comedy in question, now in our hands: these are authentic records; take the earliest date for the death of Socrates, and it will not fall till the first year of Olymp. xcv. when Laches was archon; the interval is as I state it; a pretty reasonable time for such a plot to be ripening: and who now will give credit to Ælian and his Various History?

Having taken some pains to prove what Aristophanes's motives were not, it now remains to show what they were; but this will be the subject of another paper.

NUMBER CXL.

THE Clouds is a satirical and personal comedy, the moral of which is to show how the sophistry of the schools may be employed as an instrument of fraud and evasion in matters of right and property; this is its principal object: but it touches also upon other points by the way, and humourously exposes certain new and chimerical notions about the relation of children to their parents, and of the influence of The Clouds, as superior to the superintending power of Jupiter.

Of its moral, therefore, separately considered,

comprehending the chief duties and relations of men, whether to the gods, to their parents, or to society at large, there can be no doubt; its excellence and importance speak for themselves.

The comedy being written before the practice was restrained of bringing living characters on the stage, a school is here introduced, and the greatest philosopher of the time is represented in person on the stage: this philosopher is Socrates himself, and the school is the school of Socrates.

Socrates is made to advance the hypothesis of The Clouds before mentioned; but it should be constantly kept in remembrance, that he lays down no doctrines, as principles of fraud or injustice: it is not the teacher who recommends, but his disciples who pervert his instructions to the evil purpose of defrauding and eluding their creditors: the like remark holds good in the case of the natural duty of children to their parents; the son in the play it is true strikes and beats his father on the stage, and he quotes the maxims of Socrates in justification; but he does not quote them as positive rules and injunctions for an act so atrocious; he only shows that sophistry may be turned to defend that, or any other thing equally violent and outrageous.

There are two lights in which Socrates is to be viewed; first, in his public character as a teacher; secondly, in his private one as a man. It is chiefly in the former of these that Aristophanes has attacked him; and, as I before observed, it is to expose the evil uses rather than the evil nature of his doctrines, that he brings his school upon the stage; for when the disciple is questioned about the studies which his master is employed in, he makes report of some frivolous and minute researches, which are introduced only for the purpose of raising a harmless

laugh, and so far there can be no offence in this scene.

After all it must be allowed, that these seminaries of sophistry, which the state of Athens thought it necessary to put down by public edict, could not have been improper subjects for dramatic ridicule; for if the schools were found so detrimental to the morals of youth, that the archons and their council, after due deliberation, resolved upon a general expulsion of all masters and teachers thereunto belonging, and effectually did expel them, surely the poet may be acquitted, when he satirizes those obnoxious parties, whom the laws of his country in a short time after cut off from the community.

There can be little doubt but this was a public measure founded in wisdom, if it were for no other reason, than that the Lacedæmonians never suffered a master of philosophy to open school within their realm and jurisdiction, holding them in abhorrence, and proscribing their academies as seminaries of evil manners, and tending to the corruption of youth: it is well known what peculiar care and attention were bestowed upon the education of the Spartan youth, and how much more moral this people was, who admitted no philosophers to settle amongst them, than their Athenian neighbours, in whose dissolute capital they swarmed. In fact, the enormity became too great to be redressed; the whole community was infected with the enthusiasm of these sectaries; and the liberties of Athens, which depended on the public virtue of her citizens, fell a sacrifice to the corruptions of false plilosophy: the wiser Lacedæmonians saw the fatal error of their rivals, and availed themselves of its consequences; they rose upon the ruins of Athens, and it was the triumph of wisdom over wit: these philosophers

were ingenious men, but execrable citizens; and when the raillery of the stage was turned against them, the weapons of ridicule could not be more laudably employed.

As for the school of Socrates in particular, though it may be a fashion to extol it, there is no reason to believe it was in better credit than any other; on the contrary, it was in such public disrepute, on account of the infamous characters of many of his disciples, and of the disgraceful attachments he was known to have, that it was at one time deserted by every body except Æschines, the parasite of the tyrant Dionysius, and the most worthless man living: this Æschines, his sole and favourite disciple, was arraigned by the pleader Lysias, and convicted of the vilest frauds, and branded as a public cheat: he was a wretch, who employed the sophistry and cunning argumentation, which he learnt of his master, to the purpose only of evading his debts, contracted by the most profligate extravagances: he afterwards went over to the school of Plato, and when Socrates was dead, had influence enough with Xantippe to obtain of her some dialogues from her husband's papers, which he published as his own, and set up for an author and preceptor in philosophy. It is very probable Aristophanes had in view the character of this very Æschines, when he brings his old man on the scene, consulting Socrates for sophistical evasions how to elude his creditors.

Another of the scholars of Socrates was Simon the sophist, a man whose rapacity became a proverb (Σίμωνος ἁρπακτικώτερος, *Simoni rapacior*). This Simon was such a plunderer of the public money, that Aristophanes, in his strong manner, says, 'The very wolves run off upon the sight of Simon.'

The despicable Cleonymus, whose cowardice was

as proverbial as Simon's rapacity, and the profligate Theorus, who buried himself in the stews at Corinth, were also fellow students under Socrates, and it is with just indignation against such execrable characters that Aristophanes exclaims—'O Jupiter, if thy bolts are aimed at perjury, why do these wretches, of all most perjured, Simon, Cleonymus, and Theorus, escape the stroke?'

Εἴπερ βάλλει τοὺς ἐπιόρκους, πῶς οὐχὶ Σίμων' ἐνέπρησεν,
'Ουδὲ Κλεώνυμον, οὐδὲ Θέωρον; καίτοι σφόδρα γ' εἴσ' ἐπίορκοι.

ΝΕΦ. 370.

Aristippus, the Cyrenaic founder, was a distinguished disciple of the Socratic school, a parasite also in the court of Dionysius, a buffoon and drunkard, the avowed opposer of every thing virtuous, a master and professor of immorality, who laid down institutes of sensuality, and reduced it to a system.

Of Alcibiades I shall briefly speak, for the stories of Socrates's attachment to him are such as need not be enlarged upon; they obtained so generally, that he was vulgarly called Alcibiades's Silenus: when I glance at these reports in disfavour of a character, which probably stands so high in the opinion of the learned reader, I must hope for a candid interpretation of my motives for collecting these anecdotes, which I do not wish to apply to any other purpose than merely to show that Aristophanes was not singular in his attack upon this celebrated philosopher; neither did this attack bear so hard against him, as many stories, then in general circulation, otherwise did: great authorities have ascribed his attachment to Alcibiades to the most virtuous principle; common fame, or perhaps, more properly speaking, common defamation, turned it into a charge of the impurest nature: in like manner we

find him ridiculed for his devotion to the noted Aspasia, in whose company he is said to have passed much of his time; and Athenæus quotes some passages of his dialogues with her, which he tells us were published by Herodicus, and which we must either totally reject, or allow him to have been subject to such private weaknesses and frailties as were very unsuitable to his public character: what were the real motives for his frequent visits to Aspasia, as well as for his seeming attachment to the strumpet Theodote, must be left to conjecture; of the fact there is no room to doubt. He is stigmatized for his guilty connexions in his youth with his preceptor Archelaus, and yet this charge, however improbable it may seem, rests upon the authority of Aristoxenus, a man of the most candid character, and whose credit stands high with all true critics. Herodicus the historian, whom I have before mentioned, and who lived about three hundred and fifty years before the Christian era, seems to have treated Socrates with the greatest severity, charging him with sitting up all night drinking and carousing with Agatho and others, whom when he had left drunk and asleep, he reeled into the Lyceum, more fit, in the words quoted from the relater, for the society of Homer's cannibals, than of those he found there: in this debauch it is pretended, that although Phedrus, Eryximachus, and many other potent drinkers fled the company, Socrates sate to the last, swallowing drenches of wine out of enormous goblets of silver: he describes him sitting amongst lascivious revellers at a banquet, where dancing-girls and boys were exhibiting their indecent attitudes to the music of harpers and minstrels: he exposes this master of morality entering into a controversy with his scholar Critobulus upon the subject of male

beauty; and because Critobulus had ridiculed him for his ugliness, he asserts that Socrates challenged him to a naked exhibition, and that he actually exposed his unseemly person to a Pathic and a dancing-girl, the appointed umpires of the dispute; the conqueror was to be rewarded with an embrace from each of these umpires, as the prize of superior beauty, and the decision was of consequence given *ex absurdo* to the philosopher, in preference to one of the handsomest young men in Greece, and he enjoyed the prize annexed to the decree. If we can believe this anecdote to have been gravely related by an historian, who lived so near to him in point of time, we shall cease to wonder that Aristophanes had the whole theatre on his side, when such stories were in circulation against the character of Socrates.

As I have no other object in view but to offer what occurs to me in defence of Aristophanes, who appears to have been most unjustly accused of taking bribes for his attack upon Socrates, and of having paved the way for the cruel sentence by which he suffered death, I shall here conclude an invidious task, which my subject, not my choice, has laid upon me.

In our volume of Aristophanes, the comedies are not placed according to the order of time in which they were produced: there is reason to think that The Acharnensians was the first of its author; it was acted in the last year of Olymp. lxxxv. when the edict was reversed which prohibited the representation of comedies; and it is said that Aristophanes brought it out in the name of Callistratus the comedian.

In the last year of Olymp. lxxxviii. he produced his comedy of The Knights, in which he personally attacks the tribune Cleon.

In the first year of Olymp. lxxxix. he produced his first comedy of The Clouds, and in the year following his second of that title, which is now in our hands, and ranks as third in the volume.

In the same year was acted his comedy of The Wasps, in which he satirizes the General Chares for his conduct in the unfortunate expedition to Sicily.

In the fourth year of Olymp. xc. we may place his comedy entitled The Peace. In the first of Olymp. xci. The Lysistrata; and in the second of the same Olympiad that of The Birds.

The Thesmophoriagusæ, or Cerealia Celebrantes and Concionatrices, fall within the period of Olymp. xcii. before the death of Euripides, who is satirized in the former of these pieces.

The Frogs were performed in the last year of Olymp. xciii. after the death of Euripides.

The Plutus, which completes the eleven comedies still remaining, and the last to which he prefixed his own name, was produced in the fourth year of Olymp. xcvii.

It is generally supposed that we owe these remains of Aristophanes to St. Chrysostom, who happily rescued this valuable, though small portion, of his favourite author from his more scrupulous Christian contemporaries, whose zeal was fatally too successful in destroying every other comic author, out of a very numerous collection, of which no one entire scene now remains.

NUMBER CXLI.

I SHALL now proceed to mention some other principal writers of the old comedy, of whose works, though once the favourites of the Athenian stage, few memorials survive, and these so small and imperfect, and withal so separated from each other, consisting only of short quotations in the scholiasts and grammarians, that it is a task to collect them, which nothing would compensate but the hope of being in some degree the instrument of saving from absolute extinction the names of authors once so illustrious.

Amipsias was a contemporary of Aristophanes, and no mean rival; we have the titles of ten comedies of this author. In some of these his satire was personal, but all of them seem by their titles to have been levelled against the reigning vices of his time, such as The Gamesters, The Glutton, The Beard, in which he inveighed against the hypocrisy and affectation of the priests and philosophers, The Adulterers, The Sappho, wherein the morals of the fair sex were exposed, The Purse, a second attack upon the gamesters, and The Philosopher's Cloak, in which it is understood he glanced pretty severely at Socrates.

Plato was a comic poet, high in time and character; a collection of no less than forty titles of his comedies has been made by the learned Meursius, but very few fragments of these are remaining. Clemens asserts that Aristophanes and Plato were mu-

tually charged of borrowing from each other, which in one sense makes greatly to the reputation of our poet. He is quoted by Plutarch in his Alcibiades, and very honourably mentioned by the famous Galen, by Athenæus, Clemens, Julius Pollux, and Suidas. There is a fragment containing four lines and a half upon a statue of Mercury cut by Dædalus, which has an epigrammatic neatness and point in it, that induced me to render it in rhyme: he addresses the statue, mistaking it for a living figure:—

'Hoa there! who art thou? Answer me—Art dumb?'
'—Warm from the hand of Dædalus I come;
My name Mercurius, and, as you may prove,
A statue; but his statues speak and move.'

Plato wrote a comedy personally against the General Cleophon, and called it by his name; there are others of the same description in his catalogue, and some of the middle sort: there are a few lines upon the tomb of Themistocles, which have a turn of elegant and pathetic simplicity in them, that deserves a better translation than I can give.

On the Tomb of Themistocles.

By the sea's margin, on the watery strand,
Thy monument, Themistocles, shall stand;
By this directed to thy native shore
The merchant shall convey his freighted store:
And, when our fleets are summon'd to the fight,
Athens shall conquer with thy tomb in sight.

The following fragment of a dialogue, between a father and a sophist, under whose tuition he had placed his son, probably belonged either to the comedy called The Beard, or The Philosopher's Cloak: it is pretty much in the spirit of our old English drama.

FATHER.

Thou hast destroy'd the morals of my son,
And turn'd his mind, not so dispos'd, to vice,
Unholy pedagogue! With morning drams,
A filthy custom which he caught from thee,
Clean from his former practice, now he saps
His youthful vigour. Is it thus you school him?

SOPHIST.

And if I did, what harms him? Why complain you?
He does but follow what the wise prescribe,
The great voluptuous law of Epicurus.
Pleasure, the best of all good things on earth;
And how but thus can pleasure be obtain'd?

FATHER.

Virtue will give it him.

SOPHIST.

And what but virtue
Is our philosophy? When have you met
One of our sect flush'd and disguis'd with wine?
Or one, but one of those you tax so roundly,
On whom to fix a fault?

FATHER.

Not one, but all,
All who march forth with supercilious brow
High arch'd with pride, beating the city-rounds,
Like constables in quest of rogues and outlaws,
To find that prodigy in human nature,
A wise and perfect man! What is your science
But kitchen science? Wisely to descant
Upon the choice bits of a savoury carp,
And prove by logic that his *summum bonum*
Lies in his head; there you can lecture well,
And, whilst your gray-beards wag, the gaping guest
Sits wondering *with a foolish face of praise.*

PLATO, COM.

Crates, by birth an Athenian, was first an actor, and afterwards a writer of the old comedy; he performed the principal characters in Cratinus's plays,

and was the great rival of Aristophanes's favourite actors Callistratus and Philonides; we have the titles of more than twenty comedies, and but four small fragments of this author: I have searched for his remains more diligently, from the circumstance of his having been so celebrated an actor: a profession which centres in itself more gifts of nature, education, art, and study, than any other. His comedies are said to have been of a very gay and facetious cast; and the author of the Prolegomena to Aristophanes informs us, that he was the first who introduced a drunken character on the Athenian stage: to this anecdote I give credit, because no one could better know how entirely such an attempt depends upon the discretion and address of the actor, who has such a part in his keeping: it is plain the experiment succeeded, becasue even the tragedians exhibited such characters in succeeding times. Modern experience shows us, how subject such representations are to be outraged; the performer generally forgetting, or not knowing, that his own sobriety should keep the drunkenness he counterfeits within its proper bounds. Aristotle ascribes to Crates another innovation with respect to the iambic metre of the old comedy, which he made more free and apposite to familiar dialogue; this also corresponds with the natural and facetious character of his drama. I cannot say the four small fragments which I have collected bear that stamp: on the contrary, they are of a grave and sententious cast: one of them is an observation on the effects of poverty, which Juvenal has either literally translated, or struck upon the very same thoughts in the following passage:

Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se
Quàm quod ridiculos homines facit. Sat. iii. 152.

I find a short stricture upon the gluttony of the Thessalians; a remark upon the indecorum of inviting women to wedding suppers, and making riotous entertainments at a ceremony, which modesty would recommend to pass in private, and within the respective family where it occurs.

The last fragment is a short but touching picture of old age, and the vanity of human wishes: I think the turn of thought and expression extremely beautiful.

ON OLD AGE.

These shrivell'd sinews and this bending frame,
The workmanship of Time's strong hand proclaim;
Skill'd to reverse whate'er the gods create,
And make that crooked which they fashion straight.
Hard choice for man, to die—or else to be
That tottering, wretched, wrinkled thing you see:
Age then we all prefer; for age we pray,
And travel on to life's last lingering day;
Then sinking slowly down from worse to worse,
Find Heaven's extorted boon our greatest curse.

CRATES.

Phrynichus was a contemporary of Eupolis, and a writer of the old comedy; a dramatic poet of the first class in reputation as well as in time. He was an Athenian by birth, and must not be confounded with the tragic poet of that name. I find the titles of ten comedies of his writing; these are The Ephialtes; The Beard, the same title with that of Plato; Saturn; The Revellers; The Satyrs; The Tragedians; The Recluse; The Muses; The Priest, and the Weeding-Women. We have no other guides but these titles to guess at the comedies themselves: we see, however, by some of them what subjects his satire pointed out to the

spectators, in which the philosophers had their share as usual; and by certain fragments it appears, that Alcibiades was also treated with some personal severity.

Pherecrates is the next author I shall notice, a poet famous in his time, and whose character as well as genius descends to us with the warmest testimonies of high authority. His style was of that sort, which has been proverbially dignified as Most Attic: he acquired such reputation by his poems as well as plays, that the metre he used was called by pre-eminence 'the Pherecratian metre.' He was no less excellent in his private character than in his poetical one; he was attached to Alexander of Macedon, and accompanied that great conqueror in his expeditions; he lived in intimacy with Plato at Athens, and in some of his comedies was engaged in warm competition with Crates, the actor and author, of whom I have already spoken. Suidas says he wrote seventeen comedies, and the titles of these are still extant; one of them, viz. The Peasants, is mentioned by Plato in his Protagoras: Clemens quotes a passage from his Deserters, of great elegance, in which the gods are introduced making their heavy complaints of the frauds put upon them by mankind in their sacrifices and oblations: this poet also has a personal stroke at the immoral character of Alcibiades.

Having quoted a passage from Crates on the subject of old age, I shall now select one from this author on the same; and if the reader is curious to observe how the celebrated rivals expressed themselves on a similar sentiment, he has an opportunity of making the comparison.

ON OLD AGE.

Age is the heaviest burthen man can bear,
Compound of disappointment, pain and care;

For when the mind's experience comes at length,
It comes to mourn the body's loss of strength:
Resign'd to ignorance all our better days,
Knowledge just ripens when the man decays:
One ray of light the closing eye receives,
And wisdom only takes what folly leaves.

PHERECRATES.

Pherecrates entitled one of his comedies The Tyranny; it does not appear what particular object he had in view under this title, but from the following fragment he seems to have levelled some share of his satire against the fair sex—

Remark how wisely ancient art provides
The broad-brimm'd cup with flat expanded sides;
A cup contriv'd for man's discreeter use,
And sober potions of the generous juice·
But woman's more ambitious thirsty soul
Soon long'd to revel in the plenteous bowl;
Deep and capacious as the swelling hold
Of some stout bark she shap'd the hollow mould,
Then turning out a vessel like a tun,
Simp'ring exclaim'd—Observe! I drink but one.

PHERECRATES.

Athenæus has preserved a considerable fragment from this author, extracted from his comedy of The Miners, which I look upon to be as curious a specimen of the old comedy as I have met with. It is a very luxuriant description of the riches and abundance of some former times to which he alludes, strongly dashed with comic strokes of wild extravagance and hyperbole. These miners were probably the chorus of the drama, which no doubt was of a satirical sort, and pointed at the luxuries of the rich. By the mention made of Plutus in the first line, we may suppose that these *Mines* were of gold, and probably the deity of that precious metal was one of the persons of the drama.

FROM THE MINERS OF PHERECRATES.

The days of Plutus were the days of gold;
The season of high-feeding and good cheer:
Rivers of goodly beef and brewis ran
Boiling and bubbling thro' the steaming streets,
With islands of fat dumplings, cut in sops
And slippery gobbets, moulded into mouthfuls,
That dead men might have swallow'd; floating tripes
And fleets of sausages in luscious morsels
Stuck to the banks like oysters: here and there,
For relishers, a salt-fish, season'd high
Swam down the savoury tide: when soon, behold!
The portly gammon sailing in full state
Upon his smoaking platter heaves in sight,
Encompass'd with his bandoliers like guards,
And convoy'd by huge bowls of frumenty,
That with their generous odours scent the air.
—You stagger me to tell of these good days,
And yet to live with us on our hard fare,
When death's a deed as easy as to drink.
If your mouth waters now, what had it done,
Could you have seen our delicate fine thrushes,
Hot from the spit, with myrtle-berries cramm'd,
And larded well with celandine and parsley,
Bob at your hungry lips, crying—Come, eat me!
Nor was this all; for pendant over-head
The fairest, choicest, fruits in clusters hung;
Girls too, young girls, just budding into bloom,
Clad in transparent vests, stood near at hand
To serve us with fresh roses and full cups
Of rich and fragrant wine, of which one glass
No sooner was dispatch'd, than straight, behold!
Two gobblets, fresh and sparkling as the first,
Provok'd us to repeat the increasing draught.
Away then with your ploughs, we need them not,
Your scythes, your sickles, and your pruning hooks!
Away with all your trumpery at once!
Seed-time, and harvest-home, and vintage wakes—
Your holidays are nothing worth to us.
Our rivers roll with luxury, our vats
O'erflow with nectar, which providing Jove

Showers down by cataracts; the very gutters
From our house-tops spout wine, vast forests wave,
Whose very leaves drop fatness, smoking viands
Like mountains rise—All Nature's one great feast.

Amphis, the son of Amphicrates an Athenian, was a celebrated comic poet: we have the titles of one and twenty comedies, and he probably wrote many more: by these titles it appears that he wrote in the satirical vein of the old comedy, and I meet with a stroke at his contemporary Plato the philosopher. He has a play entitled The Seven Chiefs against Thebes, which is probably a parody upon Æschylus, and proves that he wrote after the personal drama was prohibited: there is another called The Dicers; and by several scattered passages he appears to have exposed the persons of drunkards, gamesters, courtesans, parasites, and other vicious characters of his time, with great moral severity: there are also two comedies, entitled, Women's Love, and Women's Tyranny.

Hermippus was a writer of the old comedy, and an Athenian. No less than forty comedies are given to this author by Suidas; he attacks Pericles for his dissolute morals, and in one of his plays calls him King of the Satyrs, advising him to assume the proper attributes of his lascivious character: he was the son of Lysides, and the brother of Myrtilus, a comic writer also.

Hipparchus, Philonides and Theopompus complete the list of poets of the old comedy. Philonides, before he became a votary of the muse, followed the trade of a fuller, and if we are to take the word of Aristophanes, was a very silly vulgar fellow, illiterate to a proverb. Athenæus and Stobæus have, however, given us some short quotations, which by no means favour this account, and it is

probable there was more satire than truth in Aristophanes's character of him. Theopompus is described as a man of excellent morals; and though he was long afflicted with a defluxion in his eyes, which put him from his studies, time has preserved the titles of twenty-four comedies of his composing: very little remains upon record either of him or his works.

One short fragment of Philonides is all that remains of his works, and it is a specimen which convinces me that we must not always take the character of a poet from a contemporary wit, engaged in the same studies.

FRAGMENT OF PHILONIDES.

Because I hold the laws in due respect,
And fear to be unjust, am I a coward?
Meek let me be to all the friends of truth,
And only terrible amongst its foes.

— *Soli æquus virtuti atque ejus amicis.*
HOR. SAT. II. 1, 70.

I now take leave of what is properly called The Old Comedy: in the further prosecution of this work, if that shall be permitted to me, it is my intention to review the writers of the Middle, and conclude with those of the New Comedy.

NUMBER CXLII.

I SHALL now resume the plan I have pursued in the foregoing Numbers, and proceed with my review of the writers of the Greek stage.

In No. CXLI. I took leave of what is properly called *The Old Comedy;* I am next to speak of that class of authors, who are generally styled writers of *The Middle Comedy.*

The spirit of a free people will discover itself in the productions of their stage; the comic drama, being a professed representation of living manners, will paint these likenesses in stronger or in fainter colours, according to the degree of licence or restraint which may prevail in different places, or in the same place at different periods. We are now upon that particular æra in the Athenian constitution, when it began to feel such a degree of control under the rising power of the Macedonian princes, as put a stop to the personal licentiousness of the comic poets. If we are to consider Athens only as the capital seat of genius, we must bewail this declension from her former state of freedom, which had produced so brilliant a period in the annals of her literature; but speak of her in a political sense, and it must be acknowledged that whatever restraints were put upon her liberty, and however humbling the disgraces were which she incurred, they could not well be more than she merited by her notorious abuse of public prosperity, and most ungrateful treatment of her best and most de-

serving citizens. When the thunder of oratory was silenced, the flashes of wit were no longer displayed; death stopped the impetuous tongue of Demosthenes, and the hand of power controlled the acrimonious muse of Aristophanes; obedient to the rein, the poet checked his career of personality, and composed his *Æolosicon* upon the plan of what we now denominate the *Middle Comedy*. Cratinus also, though the bitterest of all the old writers, began to sweeten his gall, and, conforming to the necessity of the times, condescended to take up with with the resource of parody, and wrote his *Ulysses* upon the same system of reform; no longer permitted to vent his satire upon living characters, he took post on the boldest ground that was left for him to stand on, and opened his attack upon the dead by ridiculing the immortal Odyssey of Homer. The chorus was now withdrawn, and the poet no longer spoke his own sentiments or harangued his audience by proxy; parody is satire of so inferior a species, that if comedy did not very sensibly decline in its middle æra, which there is no reason to think was the case, it must have been upheld by a very strong exertion of talents, or by collateral resources of a better stamp than this which we are speaking of. Some, who are ranked in the old class of comic writers, continued to compose for the stage, as we have already instanced; it may well be presumed that they at least drooped the wing, and flagged under the pressure of unexperienced restraints; but if I may form a conjecture of the comparative spirit and excellence of the *Middle Comedy* from the samples and fragments of those dramatists, who properly and exclusively belong to it, I find nothing which disposes me to suspect that it had in the least declined from the merit of the first writers, but on the contrary should

conceive that it advanced in perfection no less than it did in time by the revolution which took place.

I shall now produce some specimens of the comedies, which fall under this class, and such accounts as I have been able to collect of their authors, whom I have ranged alphabetically; the first, therefore, which I shall speak of, will be the poet Alexis.

ALEXIS.

This poet was a native of Thurium in Magna Græcia, a town celebrated for being the birth-place of Herodotus; he was great uncle by his father's side to Menander, and was the first to discover and encourage the early genius of that admired writer. Alexis lived to a great age, and we have the authority of Plutarch for saying, that the vigour of his faculties was preserved to the last: "The comic poets, Alexis and Philemon," says that author, "continued to write for the stage to the latest period of their lives, and when death at length surprised them, he found them crowned with the trophies of success, and triumphing in the plaudits of the theatre." The numerous productions of our poet confirm this assertion of Plutarch, for Suidas says he was author of no less than two hundred and forty-five dramas, and I find the titles of one hundred and thirteen of this collection even now upon record; this proves that he possessed a very copious vein of invention, and the fragments, which remain out of the general wreck of his works, indicate the richness as well as copiousness of that vein. The works of such a master were of themselves a study, and, as Menander formed himself upon his instructions, we cannot fail to conceive very highly of the preceptor from the acknowledged excellence of the pupil. I dis-

cover a comedy of Alexis entitled Adelphi; it is generally supposed that Terence copied his comedy of that name from Menander, but unless his commentators have given some better reason than I have yet met with for the fact, it will bear a doubt at least whether that elegant copy may not have been as much indebted to the uncle as to the nephew, for the charms of its dialogue and the delicacy of its character.

Agellius informs us that Alexis formed the plot of one of his comedies upon the life and actions of Pythagoras: posterity will give him credit for his choice, as we cannot conceive a happier fable for an ingenious author to work upon, nor any that would afford a more fruitful field for facetious raillery than the extravagant and juggling tricks and contrivances, which that impostor's story teems with. Amongst his fragments I discover one little scrap, which, though a very small one, seems to have been a splinter of the wreck, wherein he ridicules a certain gluttonous Pythagorean, named Epicharides, for evading the abstemious rule of his sect for eating nothing that has life, by swearing that his meat is killed before it is cooked; there can be no doubt but the tenor of the piece was altogether satirical, for it cannot be supposed that the same man, who lampooned Plato, would spare Pythagoras; and that he did treat Plato in this contemptuous strain we have the word of Laertius, who refers to no less than four of his comedies, in which he ridicules him very severely; there is one short passage still remaining, which conveys a sneer at this philosopher, and so far as it goes confirms the anecdote, which Laertius gives us; but the biographer does more than the admirers of the divine Plato will thank him for, when he informs us of the

grace and comeliness of Alexis's person, and of Plato's partiality to him on that account; and, amongst many other gallantries of the like nature, we find some verses addressed to Alexis, in praise of his beauty, by the enamoured philosopher, whose muse seems to have visited him pretty frequently on these occasions. There is no great point in his love epigram to Alexis, but in that to a certain young man named Stella, who was his fellow-student in astrology, he seems to have been as extravagant in imagination, as Juliet's *concetto* of cutting Romeo *into little stars*, for I question if the whole school of Epicurus can furnish a more ridiculous start of rhapsodical bombast than the following—

> " Oh! that I were that heaven on which you gaze,
> To dart upon thee with a thousand rays!"

What a plunge is this for Pegasus to make with a grave philosopher on his back! Whether it was successful or not with the young star-gazer, I am not curious to inquire; if he was in the humour to be tickled with nonsense, I should think such an address must have been irresistibly charming; but we may be very sure that Alexis was not so complying and that, instead of being pleased with the flattery, he turned the flatterer into ridicule upon all occasions, first in his Meropis, again in his Ancylion, his Olympiodorus, and most of all in his celebrated comedy entitled The Parasite. Aristotle records an answer made by Alexis to an inquisitive fellow, who observed him in his latter years slowing crawling along the steeets of Athens, and demanded ' what he was doing?'—' Nothing;' replied the feeble veteran ' and of that very disease I am dying.' Stobæus has the same anecdote, and I think it unlikely for a man, who preserved so vigorous a mind, as Plutarch

says he did, to extreme old age, to be what Athenæus calls him, 'Οψοφάγος, a glutton: I conclude, therefore, that the Deipnosophist was in the mistake of Congreve's Jeremy, who suspected Epictetus was a real cook, whereas he only wrote receipts. I have one of these now before me, from the pen of Alexis, which does not seem to speak of the Epicurean *summum bonum* with all that respect and approbation which a glutton would naturally profess for it—This it is—

> I sigh'd for ease, and weary of my lot,
> Wish'd to exchange it: in this mood I stroll'd
> Up to the citadel three several days;
> And there I found a bevy of preceptors
> For my new system, thirty in a group;
> All with one voice prepar'd to tutor me—
> Eat, drink, and revel in the joys of love!
> For pleasure is the wise man's sovereign good.

I think it will also bear a doubt, whether a voluptuary could find in his heart to vent such irony as the following, against the the great supporters of his system, harlots and procuresses; I confess it shows Alexis to have been deep in the secrets of their vocation; but a libertine in practice would be branded for a traitor, if he was to tell such tales of the academy he belonged to—He is speaking of the commodious sisterhood of procuresses—

> They fly at all, and, as their funds increase,
> With fresh recruits they still augment their stock,
> Moulding the young noviciate to her trade;
> Form, feature, manners, every thing so chang'd,
> That not a trace of former self is left.
> Is the wench short? a triple sole of cork
> Exalts the pigmy to a proper size.
> Is she too tall of stature? a low chair
> Softens the fault, and a fine easy stoop
> Lowers her to standard pitch—If narrow-hipt,

A handsome wadding readily supplies
What nature stints, and all beholders cry,
See what plump haunches!—Hath the nymph, perchance,
A high round paunch, stuft like our comic drolls,
And strutting out foreright? a good stout busk,
Pushing athwart, shall force the intruder back.
Hath she red brows? a little soot will cure 'em.
Is she too black? the ceruse makes her fair:
Too pale of hue? the opal comes in aid.
Hath she a beauty out of sight? disclose it!
Strip nature bare without a blush—Fine teeth?
Let her affect one everlasting grin,
Laugh without stint—but ah! if laugh she cannot,
And her lips won't obey, take a fine twig
Of myrtle, shape it like a butcher's skewer,
And prop them open, set her on the bitt
Day after day, when out of sight, till use
Grows second nature, and the pearly row,
Will she or will she not, perforce appears.

This passage I have literally rendered, and I suspect it describes the artifices of an impure toilet, with precision enough to show that these Grecian models are not absolutely antiquated by the intervention of so many centuries. Our modern puffers in perfumery may have carried artificial complexions and Circassian bloom to a higher state of perfection; I dare say they have more elaborate means of staining carrotty eye-brows than with simple soot, and cannot think of comparing a little harmless opal with their poisonous farrago of pastes, pomatums, and pearl powders; but I would have my fair and virtuous countrywomen take notice, that the substitution of stuft hips originated with the Athenian prostitutes, with this advantage on the side of good sense, that the inventors of the fashion never applied false bottoms to those whom Nature had provided with true ones; they seem to have had a better eye for due proportion than to add to a redundancy,

because in some cases it was convenient to fill up a vacuum.

As I address this friendly hint to the plumper part of the fair sex, I shall rely upon the old proverb for their good humour, and hope they will kindly interpret it as a proof that my eye is sometimes directed to objects, which theirs cannot superintend; and as they generally agree to keep certain particulars out of sight, a real friend to decency will wish they would consent to keep them a little more out of mind also.

NUMBER CXLIII.

WE are indebted to Vitruvius for a quotation in the beginning of his sixth book, taken from one of the dramas of Alexis to the following effect: 'Whereas all the other states of Greece compel the children of destitute parents, without exception, to provide for the support of those who begot them, we of Athens,' says the poet, 'make the law binding upon such children only, who are beholden to their parents for the blessing of a liberal education.' The proviso was certainly a wise one, and it is with justice that the poet gives his countrymen credit for being the authors of it.

Alexis in one of his comedies very appositely remarks—'that the nature of man in some respects resembles that of wine, for as fermentation is necessary to new wine, so is it also to a youthful spirit; when that process is over, and it comes to settle and

subside, we may then, and not till then, expect to find a permanent tranquillity.' This allusion he again takes up, probably in the same scene, though under a different character, and cries out—'I am now far advanced in the evening of life's day, and what is there in the nature of man, that I should liken it to that of wine, seeing that old age, which recommends the latter, mars the former? Old wine indeed exhilarates, but old men are miserable to themselves and others.' Antiphanes, the comic poet, has struck upon the same comparison, but with a different turn. 'Old age and old wine,' says he, 'may well be compared; let either of them exceed their date ever so little, and the whole turns sour.'

Julius Pollux says, that Alexis named one of his comedies Γυναικοστρατία, and there are some passages which we may presume are reliques of this piece, of a very bitter cast, for he makes one of his female characters roundly assert—

> 'No animal in nature can compare
> In impudence with woman; I myself
> Am one, and from my own experience speak.'

I flatter myself an English audience would not hear such calumny; the modern stage encourages more respectful sentiments—

> Oh! woman, lovely woman! nature made thee
> To temper man; we had been brutes without thee.

Our poet must have been in an ill humour with the sex when he wrote this comedy, or else the Athenian wives must have been mere Xantippes to deserve what follows—

> 'Nor house, nor coffers, nor whatever else
> Is dear and precious, should be watch'd so closely,

As she whom you call wife. Sad lot is ours,
Who barter life, and all its free delights,
To be the slaves of woman, and are paid
Her bridal portion in the luckless coin
Of sorrow and vexation. A man's wrath
Is milk and honey to a woman's rage;
He can be much offended and forgive.
She never pardons those she most offends:
What she should do she slights, what she should not
Hotly pursues: false to each virtuous point,
And only in her wickedness sincere.'

'Who but a lunatic would wed and be
Wilfully wretched? better to endure
The shame of poverty, and all its taunts,
Rather than this. The reprobate on whom
The Censor set his brand, is justly doom'd
Unfit to govern others, but the wretch,
Who weds, no longer can command himself,
Nor hath his woe a period but in death.'

So much for matrimony, according to our author's picture of it! He has left us a description of love, which he has sketched in more pleasing colours—

'The man, who holds true pleasure to consist
In pampering his vile body, and defies
Love's great divinity, rashly maintains
Weak impious war with an immortal God.
The gravest master that the schools can boast
Ne'er train'd his pupils to such discipline,
As love his votaries, unrivall'd power,
The first great deity—and where is he,
So stubborn and determinedly stiff,
But shall at some time bend the knee to love,
And make obeisance to his mighty shrine?
'One day, as slowly sauntering from the port,
A thousand cares conflicting in my breast,
Thus I began to commune with myself—
Methinks these painters misapply their art,
And never knew the being which they draw;
For mark! their many false conceits of love.
Love is nor male nor female, man nor god,
Nor with intelligence, nor yet without it,

But a strange compound of all these, uniting
In one mixt essence many opposites;
A manly courage with a woman's fear,
The madman's phrensy in a reasoning mind,
The strength of steel, the fury of a beast,
The ambition of a hero—something 'tis,
But by Minerva and the gods I swear!
I know not what this nameless something is."

This riddling description of love I consider as a very curious fragment of the Greek comedy, as it has more play of words, and less simplicity of thought and style, than I can recollect in any writer of this age and country. In general, I think I can discover more antithesis in the authors of the Middle Comedy than any others, and I take it to have been one of the consequences of parody. Phædria's picture of love, in the opening scene of Terence's Eunuch, is something in the style of this fragment of Alexis, and the particular expression of *ut cum ratione insanias* seems of a piece with—Ἡ ἄνοια μανίας ὁ δὲ λόγος φρονοῦντος. Which I have rendered—

'A madman's phrensy in a reasoning mind.'

Our Shakspeare is still closer to it, when Romeo describing love calls it—

A madness most discreet.

And again—

Why then, O brawling Love! O loving Hate!
Oh! any thing of nothing first create;
Oh, heavy lightness! serious Vanity!
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is.

Before I take leave of Alexis, I shall subjoin one more passage from his remains, which conveys the

strongest marks of detestation, that language can supply, of that very vice, which Athenæus would persuade us he was addicted to: but I will never be persuaded that a glutton wrote the following lines in the face of his own example, nor would it be an easy matter to convince me, that if any glutton had the will, he would possess the wit, to write them.

> 'You, Sir, a Cyrenean, as I take you,
> Look at your sect of desperate voluptuaries;
> There 's Diodorus—beggary is too good for him—
> A vast inheritance in two short years,
> Where is it? Squander'd, vanish'd, gone for ever:
> So rapid was his dissipation.—Stop!
> Stop, my good friend, you cry; not quite so fast!
> This man went fair and softly to his ruin;
> What talk you of two years? As many days,
> Two little days were long enough to finish
> Young Epicharides; he had some soul,
> And drove a merry pace to his undoing—
> Marry! if a kind surfeit would surprise us,
> Ere we sit down to earn it, such prevention
> Would come most opportune to save the trouble
> Of a sick stomach and an aching head:
> But whilst the punishment is out of sight,
> And the full chalice at our lips, we drink,
> Drink all to-day, to-morrow fast and mourn,
> Sick, and all o'er opprest with nauseous fumes;
> Such is the drunkard's curse, and Hell itself
> Cannot devise a greater—Oh that nature
> Might quit us of this overbearing burthen,
> This tyrant god, the belly! take that from us,
> With all its bestial appetites, and man,
> Exonerated man, shall be all soul.'

ANTIPHANES.

Antiphanes of Smyrna, or, as some will have it, of Rhodes, was born in or about Olymp. XCIII. His father's name was Demophanes, and his mother's Œnoe, people of servile degree; yet our poet,

thus ignoble in his birth, lived to signalize himself by his genius, and was held in such respect by his Athenian patrons, that a public decree was made for the removal of his remains from the Isle of Chios, where he died at the age of seventy-four, and for depositing them in the city of Athens, where his funeral honours were sumptuously performed at the charge of the state.

Various accounts are given of the number of his comedies, but of all the Greek dramatists he appears to have been the most prolific, for the lowest list of his plays amounts to two hundred and ninety, and some contend that he actually composed three hundred and sixty-five, a number almost incredible if we had not the instances of Calderon and De Vega, too well authenticated to admit of a doubt in modern times, to refer to. Antiphanes bore off the prize with thirty comedies; and if these successes appear disproportioned to his attempts, yet they were brilliant, inasmuch as he had to contend with such respectable rivals. We have now no other rule whereby to measure his merit, but in the several fragments selected from his comedies by various authors of the lower ages, and these, though tolerably numerous, will scarce suffice to give such an insight into the original, as may enable us to pronounce upon its comparative excellence with any critical precision. True it is, even these small reliques have agitated the curiosity of the learned moderns, to whom so many valuable authors are lost, but we cannot contemplate them without a sensible regret to find how few amongst them comprise any such portion of the dialogue, as to open the character, style, and manner, of the writer, and not often enough to furnish a conjecture at the fable they appertain to; they are like small crevices, letting in one feeble ray of light into

a capacious building; they dart occasionally upon some rich and noble part, but they cannot convey to us a full and perfect idea of the symmetry and construction of the majestic whole.

I have the titles of one hundred and four comedies under the name of this author.

NUMBER CXLIV.

WHEN I find the Middle Comedy abounding with invectives against women, I am tempted to think it was the æra of bad wives. Antiphanes wrote two plays of a satirical cast, one entitled *Matrimony*, and the other *The Nuptials;* we may venture to guess that the following passages have belonged to one or both of these plays—

> ' Ye foolish husbands, trick not out your wives;
> Dress not their persons fine, but clothe their minds.
> Tell 'em your secrets?—Tell 'em to the crier,
> And make the market-place your confidante!—'
> ' Nay, but there's proper penalties for blabbing.'
> ' What penalties? they'll drive you out of them;
> Summon your children into court, convene
> Relations, friends, and neighbourts to confront
> And nonsuit your complaint, till in the end
> Justice is hooted down, and guilt prevails.'

The second is in a more animated strain of comedy.

> ' For this, and only this, I'll trust a woman,
> That if you take life from her she will die,
> And being dead she'll come to life no more;
> In all things else I am an infidel.

Oh! might I never more behold a woman!
Rather than I should meet that object, Gods!
Strike out my eyes—I'll thank you for your mercy.'

We are indebted to Athenæus for part of a dialogue, in which Antiphanes has introduced a traveller to relate a whimsical contrivance, which the King of Cyprus had made use of for cooling the air of his banqueting-chamber, whilst he sate at supper.

A. You say you've pass'd much of your time in Cyprus.
B. All; for the war prevented my departure.
A. In what place chiefly, may I ask?
B. In Paphos;
Where I saw elegance in such perfection,
As almost mocks belief.
A. Of what kind, pray you?
B. Take this for one—The monarch, when he sups,
Is fann'd by living doves.
A. You make me curious
How this is to be done; all other questions
I will put by to be resolv'd in this.
B. There is a juice drawn from the Carpin tree,
To which your dove instinctively is wedded
With a most loving appetite; with this
The King anoints his temples, and the odour
No sooner captivates the silly birds,
Than straight they flutter round him, nay, would fly
A bolder pitch, so strong a love-charm draws them,
And perch, O horror! on his sacred crown,
If that such profanation were permitted
Of the by-standers, who, with reverend care
Fright them away, till thus, retreating now
And now advancing, they keep such a coil
With their broad vans, and beat the lazy air
Into so quick a stir, that in the conflict
His royal lungs are comfortably cool'd,
And thus he sups as Paphian monarchs should.'

An old man in the comedy, as it should seem, of the Γηρατάδης, reasons thus—

'I grant you that an old fellow like myself, if he be a wise fellow withal, one that has seen much and learnt a great deal, may be good for something and keep a shop open for all customers, who want advice in points of difficulty. Age is as it were an altar of refuge for human distresses to fly to. Oh! longevity, coveted by all who are advancing towards thee, cursed by all who have attained thee; railed at by the wise, betrayed by them who consult thee, and well spoken of by no one—And yet what is it we old fellows can be charged with? We are no spendthrifts, do not consume our means in gluttony, run mad for a wench, or break locks to get at her; and why then may not old age, seeing such discretion belongs to it, be allowed its pretensions to happiness?'

A servant thus rallies his master upon a species of hypocrisy natural to old age.

'Ah good my master, you may sigh for death,
And call amain upon him to release you,
But will you bid him welcome when he comes?
Not you. Old Charon has a stubborn task
To tug you to his wherry and dislodge you
From your rich tables, when your hour is come:
I muse the Gods send not a plague amongst you,
A good, brisk, sweeping, epidemic plague:
There's nothing else can make you all immortal.

Surely there is a good comedy in this raillery of the servant—The following short passages have a very neat turn of expression in the original.

'An honest man to law makes no resort:
His conscience is the better rule of court.'

'The man, who first laid down the pedant rule,
That love is folly, was himself the fool:
For if to life that transport you deny,
What privilege is left us—but to die?

' Cease, mourners, cease complaint, and weep no more!
Your lost friends are not dead, but gone before,
Advanced a stage or two upon that road,
Which you must travel in the steps they trode;
In the same inn we all shall meet at last,
There take new life and laugh at sorrows past.'

When I meet these and many other familiar sentiments, which these designers after nature abound in, I ask myself where originality is to be sought for; not with these poets it is clear, for their sickles are for ever in each other's corn: nor even with the founders of the Greek drama, for they all leant upon Homer, as he perhaps on others antecedent to his æra. As for the earliest writers of our own stage, the little I have read of their rude beginnings seems to be a dull mass of second-hand pedantry coarsely daubed with ribaldry. In Shakspeare you meet originality of the purest cast, a new creation, bright and beaming with unrivalled lustre; his contemporary Jonson did not seem to aim at it.

Though I have already given a Parasite from Eupolis, and compared him with Jonson's admirable Mosca, yet, I cannot refuse admission to a very pleasant, impudent fellow, who gives name to a comedy of Antiphanes, and in the following spirited apology for his life and actions, takes upon him the office of being his own historian.

' What art, vocation, trade, or mystery,
Can match with your fine Parasite?—The painter?
He! a mere dauber: A vile drudge the Farmer:
Their business is to labour, ours to laugh,
To jeer, to quibble, faith Sirs! and to drink,
Aye, and to drink lustily. Is not this rare?
'Tis life, my life at least: the first of pleasures
Were to be rich myself; but next to this
I hold it best to be a Parasite,
And feed upon the rich. Now mark me right!

Set down my virtues one by one: imprimis,
Good-will to all men—Would they were all rich
So might I gull them all: malice to none;
I envy no man's fortune, all I wish
Is but to share it: would you have a friend,
A gallant steady friend? I am your man:
No striker I, no swaggerer, no defamer,
But one to bear all these, and still forbear:
If you insult, I laugh, unruffled, merry,
Invincibly good-humour'd still I laugh:
A stout good soldier I, valorous to a fault,
When once my stomach 's up and supper serv'd:
You know my humour, not one spark of pride,
Such and the same for ever to my friends:
If cudgell'd, molten iron to the hammer
Is not so malleable: but if I cudgel,
Bold as the thunder: Is one to be blinded?
I am the lightning's flash: to be puff'd up,
I am the wind to blow him to the bursting:
Choak'd, strangled? I can do 't and save a halter:
Would you break down his doors; Behold an earthquake:
Open and enter them? A battering-ram:
Will you sit down to supper? I 'm your guest,
Your very *Fly* to enter without bidding:
Would you move off? You 'll move a well as soon:
I 'm for all work, and though the job were stabbing,
Betraying, false accusing, only say
Do this, and it is done! I stick at nothing;
They call me Thunder-bolt for my despatch;
Friend of my friends am I: Let actions speak me;
I 'm much too modest to commend myself.'

I must consider this fragment as a very striking specimen of the author, and the only licence I have used is to tack together two separate extracts from the same original, which meet in the break of the tenth line, and so appositely, that it is highly probable they both belong to the same speech; more than probable to the same comedy and character. Lucian's Parasite seems much beholden to this of Antiphanes.

Antiphanes was on a certain occasion commanded to read one of his comedies in the presence of Alexander the Great; he had the mortification to find that the play did not please the royal critic; the moment was painful, but the poet, addressing the monarch as follows, ingeniously contrived to vindicate his own production, at the same time he was passing a courtly compliment to the prince, at whose command he read it—'I cannot wonder, O king! that you disapprove of my comedy; for he, who could be entertained by it, must have been present at the scenes it represents; he must be acquainted with the vulgar humours of our public ordinaries, have been familiar with the impure manners of our courtesans, a party in the beating up of many a brothel, and a sufferer as well as an actor in those unseemly frays and riots. Of all these things, you, Great Sir, are not informed, and the fault lies more in my presumption for intruding them upon your hearing, than in any want of fidelity with which I have described them.'

NUMBER CXLV.

ANAXANDRIDES.

ANAXANDRIDES of Rhodes, son of Anaxander, was author of sixty-five comedies, with ten of which he bore away the prizes from his competitors. Nature bestowed upon this poet not only a fine genius, but a most beautiful person, his stature was of the tallest, his air elegant and engaging, and, whilst he affected an effeminate delicacy in his habit and appearance, he was a victim to the most violent and uncontrollable passions, which, whenever he was disappointed of the prize he contended for, were vented upon every person and thing that fell in his way, not excepting even his own unfortunate dramas, which he would tear in pieces, and scatter amongst the mob, or at other times devote them to the most ignominious uses he could devise: of these he would preserve no copy, and thus it came to pass that many admirable comedies were actually destroyed and lost to posterity. His dress was splendid and extravagant in the extreme, being of the finest purple, richly fringed with gold, and his hair was not coiled up in the Athenian fashion, but suffered to fall over his shoulders at its full length: his muse was no less wanton and voluptuous than his manners, for it is recorded of him, that he was the first comic poet who ventured to introduce upon the scene incidents of the grossest intrigue: he was not only severe upon Plato and

the Academy, but attacked the magistracy of Athens, charging them with the depravity of their lives, in so daring and contemptuous a style, that they brought him to trial, and, by one of the most cruel sentences upon record, condemned the unhappy poet to be starved to death.

Zarottus and some other commentators upon Ovid interpret that distich in his *Ibis* to allude to Anaxandrides, where he says, ver. 523-4,

> *Utve parum stabili qui carmine læsit Athenas.*
> *Invisus pereas, deficiente cibo.*

> 'Or meet the libeller's unpitied fate,
> Starv'd for traducing the Athenian state.'

I know this interpretation of Zarottus is controverted upon the authority of Pausanias, and Ovid is supposed by some to point at Mævius, by others at Hipponax; but as the name of the sufferer is not given, those who incline to the construction of Eustathius, as well as Zarottus, will apply it to our author.

Of the titles of his comedies eight and twenty remain, but for his fragments, which are few in number, I discover none which seem to merit a translation; had he spared those which his passion destroyed, happy chance might perhaps have rescued something worth our notice.

ARISTOPHON.

This poet has left us more and better remembrances of his muse, though fewer of his history: that he was a writer of the Middle Comedy is all I can collect, which personally concerns him: the titles of four of his comedies are in my hands, but

though Plutarch, Athenæus, Laërtius in his Pythagoras, Stobæus and Gyraldus all make mention of his name, none of them have given us any anecdotes of his history.

Love and matrimony, which are subjects little touched upon by the writers of the Old Comedy, became important personages in the Middle Drama; the former seems to have opened a very flowery field to fancy, the last appears generally to have been set up as the butt of ridicule and invective.—Our author for instance tells us—

'A man may marry once without a crime,
But curs'd is he, who weds a second time.'

On the topic of love he is more playful and ingenious—

'Love the disturber of the peace of heaven,
And grand fomenter of Olympian feuds,
Was banished from the synod of the Gods:
They drove him down to earth at the expense
Of us poor mortals, and curtail'd his wings
To spoil his soaring and secure themselves
From his annoyance—Selfish, hard decree!
For ever since he roams th' unquiet world,
The tyrant and despoiler of mankind.'

There is a fragment of his comedy of The Pythagorista, in which he ridicules that philosopher's pretended visit to the regions of the dead—

'I've heard this arrogant impostor tell,
Amongst the wonders which he saw in hell,
That Pluto with his scholars sate and fed,
Singling them out from the inferior dead:
Good faith! the monarch was not over-nice,
Thus to take up with beggary and lice.

In another passage of the same satirical comedy he thus humorously describes the disciples of Pythagoras—

> 'So gaunt they seem, that famine never made
> Of lank Philippides so mere a shade;
> Of salted tunny-fish their scanty dole,
> Their beverage, like the frogs, a standing pool,
> With now and then a cabbage, at the best
> The leavings of the caterpillar's feast:
> No comb approaches their dishevell'd hair
> To rout the long establish'd myriads there;
> On the bare ground their bed, nor do they know
> A warmer coverlid than serves the crow;
> Flames the meridian sun without a cloud?
> They bask like grasshoppers and chirp as loud:
> With oil they never even feast their eyes;
> The luxury of stockings they despise,
> But, bare-foot as the crane, still march along
> All night in chorus with the screech-owl's song.'

Of AXIONICUS the comic poet I have nothing to relate, but that he was a writer of reputation in the period we are describing, and that we have the titles of six of his comedies, with a small parcel of uninteresting fragments, chiefly to be found in Athenæus.

BATHON I must also pass over like the former, no records of his history, and only a few fragments of his comedies, with three of their titles remaining.

Though I class CHÆREMON amonst the writers of the Middle Comedy, I have some doubt if he should not have been in the list of Old Dramatists, being said to have been the scholar of Socrates: he is celebrated by Aristotle, Athenæus, Suidas, Stobæus, Theophrastus, and others, and the titles of nine of his comedies are preserved in those authors, with some scraps of his dialogue. Aristotle relates that in his comedy of The Hippocentaur he intro-

duced a rhapsody, in which he contrived to mix every species of metre, inventing, as it should seem, a characteristic measure for a compound monster out of nature.

Of CLEARCHUS we have a few fragments, and the titles of three comedies preserved by Athenæus; the same author gives us the title of one comedy by CRITON, of four by CROBYLUS, and of two by DEMOXENUS, one of which is the Self-Tormentor, or Heautontimorumenos; this poet was an Athenian born, and seems to have been a voluminous writer. Of DEMETRIUS there remains only one fragment, yet we have testimony of his having been a comic poet of this period in great reputation.

DIODORUS was a native of Sinope, a city of Pontus, and the birth-place of many eminent poets and philosophers; we have the titles of three of his comedies, and from the few fragments of his works now existing I have selected these which follow—

'This is my rule, and to this rule I'll hold,
To chuse my wife by merit not by gold;
For on that one election must depend
Whether I wed a fury or a friend.'

'When your foe dies, let all resentment cease,
Make peace with death, and death shall give you peace.'

I meet with another fragment of this author, which is so far curious, as it contains a bold blasphemy against the supreme of the heathen deities, and marks the very loose hold, which the established religion had upon the minds of the common people of Athens at this period, who must have been wonderfully changed by the new philosophy from the times of Æschylus and Aristophanes, who both incurred their resentment in a very high degree for

daring to affront the gods, though it is probable neither went the length of Diodorus's parasite, who asserts the superior dignity, authority, and even divinity of his vocation with the following hardy allusion to Jupiter himself—'All other arts,' says he, 'have been of man's invention without the help of the gods, but Jupiter himself, who is our partner in the trade, first taught us how to play the parasite, and he without dispute is of all gods the greatest. 'Tis his custom to make himself welcome in every house he enters, rich or poor, no matter which; wherever he finds the dinner table neatly spread, the couches ready set, and all things in decent order, down sits he without ceremony; eats, drinks, and makes merry, and all at free cost, cajoling his poor host, and in the end when he has filled his belly and bilked his club, coolly walks home at his leisure.'

Dionysius the comic poet was also a native of Sinope, the countryman as well as contemporary of Diodorus. I have nothing but a short sentence from this author, which conveys an excellent maxim so neatly turned, that I shall set it down in the original—

Ἢ λέγε τὶ σιγῆς κρεῖττον, ἢ σιγὴν ἔχε.

'Either say something better than nothing, or say nothing!'

The noted tyrant of Sicily of the above name was also a writer both of tragedy and comedy.

Ephippus, a writer of comedy in this period, was a native of Athens, and one of the most celebrated poets of his age; we have the titles of twelve of his comedies, of all which, that entitled Philyra was the most admired; this Philyra was the mother of Chiron the Centaur.

NUMBER CXLVI.

EPICRATES.

Epicrates was a native of the city of Ambracia, the capital of Epirus; his reputation is high amongst the writers of the class under our present review; he was somewhat junior in point of time to Antiphanes before mentioned, and if we are to give credit to Athenæus, was an imitator of that poet's manner; it is said that he went so far as to copy certain passages out of his comedies and introduce them into his own. Five of his comedies are named, and the following remnant of a dialogue ridicules the frivolous disquisitions of the Academy in so pleasant a style of comic irony, that I think myself happy in the discovery of it. The learned reader will acknowledge a striking similitude in the manner to Aristophanes's remarks upon the occupations of Socrates's scholars in the comedy of The Clouds.

> ' *A.* I pray you, Sir, for I perceive you learn'd
> In these grave matters, let my ignorance suck
> Some profit from your courtesy, and tell me
> What are your wise philosophers engaged in,
> Your Plato, Menedemus and Speusippus?
> What mighty mysteries have they in projection?
> What new discoveries may the world expect
> From their profound researches? I conjure you,
> By Earth, our common mother, to impart them!

B. Sir, you shall know at our great festival
I was myself their hearer, and so much
As I there heard will presently disclose,
So you will give it ears, for I must speak
Of things perchance surpassing your belief,
So strange they will appear; but so it happened,
That these most sage Academicians sate
In solemn consultation—on a cabbage.
A. A cabbage! what did they discover there?
B. Oh Sir! your cabbage hath its sex and gender,
Its provinces, prerogatives, and ranks,
And, nicely handled, breeds as many questions
As it does maggots. All the younger fry
Stood dumb with expectation and respect,
Wond'ring what this same cabbage should bring forth:
The Lecturer eyed them round, whereat a youth
Took heart, and breaking first the awful silence,
Humbly crav'd leave to think—that it was round:
The cause was now at issue, and a second
Opin'd it was an herb—A third conceiv'd
With due submission it might be a plant—
The difference methought was such, that each
Might keep his own opinion and be right;
But soon a bolder voice broke up the council,
And, stepping forward, a Sicilian quack
Told them their question was abuse of time,
It was a cabbage, neither more nor less,
And they were fools to prate so much about it—
Insolent wretch! amazement seiz'd the troop,
Clamour and wrath and tumult rag'd amain,
Till Plato, trembling for his own philosophy,
And calmly praying patience of the court,
Took up the cabbage, and adjourn'd the cause.'

ERIPHUS was also a writer of the Middle Comedy, and, like the poet last reviewed, is charged by Athenæus with being a copyist of Antiphanes. Three small fragments, and the titles of three plays, are every thing which now remains of this author.

EUBULUS.

Eubulus, the son of Euphranor, and a native of Atarna in Lesbos, ranks with the most celebrated poets of this æra, and though Suidas enumerates only four and twenty of his comedies, Athenæus contends that he was the author of fifty, and the names of all these are still upon the list. He flourished in Olymp. CI. which is so high in the period now under review as to make it matter of doubt whether the Old Comedy, has not a joint claim to his productions with the Middle. Ammonius however, expressly classes Eubulus amongst the latter, and quotes his comedy of The Cup-Bearers; it is from this very comedy, as it should seem, that the famous passage was taken in which he introduces Bacchus in person laying down to mankind these temperate and moral rules against the abuse of his blessings—

> Three cups of wine a prudent man may take;
> The first of these for constitution's sake;
> The second to the girl he loves the best;
> The third and last to lull him to his rest,
> Then home to bed! but if a fourth he pours,
> That is the cup of folly, and not ours;
> Loud noisy talking on the fifth attends;
> The sixth breeds feuds and falling-out of friends;
> Seven beget blows and faces stain'd with gore;
> Eight and the watch-patrole breaks ope the door;
> Mad with the ninth, another cup goes round,
> And the swill'd sot drops senseless to the ground.'

When such maxims of moderation proceed from the mouth of Bacchus it argues great impiety in his votaries not to obey them.

The most elegant epigrammatist might be proud to father the following ingenious turn upon the emblem of Love, addressed to a painter—

Why, foolish painter, give those wings to love?
Love is not light, as my sad heart can prove:
Love hath no wings, or none that I can see;
If he can fly! oh! bid him fly from me!

EUPHRON.

Euphron is another poet of our Middle list, and one whose fame has outlived the works on which it was founded. Six of his comedies only have bequeathed their names to us, and a very scanty portion of their contents. One of these was entitled Adelphi, another claimant perhaps upon Terence. Athenæus and Stobæus, thanks to their passion for quotations and fragments! have favoured us with a few small reliques. There is something in the following distich of a melancholy and touching simplicity—

Tell me, all-judging Jove, if this be fair
To make so short a life so full of care?

What next ensues I recommend to the gentlemen who amuse themselves with cutting out work for Doctors'-Commons:—

Hence, vile adulterer, I scorn to gain
Pleasures extorted from another's pain!

The ancients had a notion, that a man, who took no care of his own affairs, was not the fittest person in the world to be entrusted with those of others; writers for the stage must make the most of vulgar errors whilst they are in fashion, and this may have betrayed our poet into a sentiment, which modern wits will not give him much credit for—

Let not his fingers touch the public chest,
Who by his own profusion is distrest;

For long long years of care it needs must take
To heal those wounds, which one short hour will make.

I think the reader will acknowledge a very spirited and striking turn of thought in this short apostrophe.

Wretch! find new gods to witness to new lies,
Thy perjuries have made the old too wise!

HENIOCHUS.

Heniochus, the author of a numerous collection of comedies was born at Athens, a writer of a grave sententious cast, and one who scrupled not to give a personal name to one of his comedies, written professedly against the character of Thorucion, a certain military prefect in those times, and a notorious traitor to his country. The titles of fifteen comedies are upon the list of this poet's works; from one of these a curious fragment has been saved, and though it seems rather of a political than a dramatic complexion, I think its good sense is sufficient to recommend it to a place in this collection.

'I will enumerate to you several cities, which in the course of time have fallen into egregious folly and declension. You may demand why I instance them at this time and in this place—I answer, that we are now present in the city of Olympia, and you may figure to yourself a kind of Pythian solemnity in the scene before us—Granted! you'll say, and what then?—Why then, I may conceive these several cities here assembled by their representatives for the purpose of celebrating their redemption from slavery by solemn sacrifices to the Genius of Liberty. This performed, they deliver themselves over to be governed at the discretion of two certain female personages whom I shall name to you

—the one Democracy, Aristocracy the other.— From this fatal moment universal anarchy and misrule inevitably fall upon those cities, and they are lost.'

MNESIMACHUS.

This poet is recorded by Ælian and Athenæus, and by the samples we have of his comedy, few as they are, we may see that he was a minute describer of the familiar manners and characters of the age he lived in. I take him to have been a writer of a peculiar cast, a dealer in low and loquacious dialogue, a strong, coarse colourist, and one, who, if time had spared his works, would probably have imparted to us more of the *Costuma*, as it is called, than any of his contemporaries: I persuade myself that the samples I am about to produce will justify these surmises with respect to Mnesimachus.

Jonson could not describe, nor Mortimer delineate, a company of banditti or bravos at their meal in bolder caricature, than what the following sketch displays:—

Dost know whom thou 'rt to sup with, friend?—I'll tell thee;
With gladiators, not with peaceful guests;
Instead of knives we 're arm'd with naked swords,
And swallow firebrands in the place of food:
Daggers of Crete are serv'd us for confections,
And for a plate of pease, a fricassee
Of shatter'd spears: the cushions we repose on
Are shields and breastplates, at our feet a pile
Of slings and arrows, and our foreheads wreath'd
With military ensigns, not with myrtle.

There remains a very curious fragment of a dialogue between a master and his slave, which lays open to the reader the whole catalogue of an Athenian fish-market, and after all the pains it has oc-

casioned me in the decyphering, leaves me under the necessity of setting down a few of the articles in their original names, not being able to find any lexicon or grammarian in the humour to help me out of my difficulty.

'*Master*. Harkye, fellow! make the best of your way to Phidon's riding school, your road lies through the cypress-grove burying-place to the forum by the public baths, where our tribunes hold their meetings, and tell those pretty gentlemen, who are there at their exercises of vaulting on their horses and off their horses, you know well enough whom I mean, tell 'em, I say, that their supper is grown cold, their liquor hot, their pastry dry, their bread stale, their roast done to powder, their salt-meat stript from the very bones, their tripes, chitterlings, sausages, and stuft-puddings mangled and devoured by guests, who are before hand with 'em: the glass has gone round, and the wine is nearly out; the company are at their frolics, and the house thrown out of windows—Now mark, and remember every syllable I have said to you.—Dost yawn, rascal?—Let me hear if you can repeat the message I have given you.'

'*Servant*. From the first word to the last, as you shall witness.—I am to bid those sparks come home and not loiter till the cook makes plunder of the broken victuals; I am to say the boil'd and the roast are ready; I am to reckon up their bill of fare, their onions, olives, garlic, coleworts, gourds, beans, lettuce, knot-grass; their salted tunny-fish, their shad, sturgeon, soals, conger, purple-fish, and black-fish, both whole ones, their anchovy, mackarel, fresh tunny, gudgeons, rock-fish, dog-fish, tails, cramp-fish, frog-fish, perch, baccalao, sardin, sea-weed-fish, sea-urchin, surmullet, cuckow-fish, pastinaca, lamprey, barbel, gray-mullet, *Lebius*, *Sparus*, char,

Ælian-fish, Thracian-fish, swallow-fish, prawns, calamary, flounder, shrimps, polypody, cuttle-fish, *Orphus*, lobster, crab, bleak, needle-fish, sprats, sea-scorpion and grigg—I am to put them in mind of their roasts without number, of their goose, pork, beef, lamb, mutton, goat, kid, pullet, duck, swan, partridge, bergander, and a thousand more—I am to warn them that their messmates are already fast by the teeth, chewing, gnawing, cutting, carving, boiling, roasting, laughing, playing, dancing, junketting, drinking, mobbing, scuffling, boxing, battling—that the pipers are at their sport; every body singing, chorussing, clamouring, whilst the house smokes with the odours of cinnamon, frankincense, myrrh, sweet-cane, storax, aloes, ambergris, musk, camphire, cassia, and a flood of all other exquisite perfumes.'

NUMBER CXLVII.

MOSCHION.

MOSCHION stands upon the authority of Clemens Alexandrinus and Stobæus, as a writer of the Middle Comedy, and a dramatist of a very moral and pathetic turn; his fragments fully verify that character. A person in one of his dramas relates the following melancholy circumstance:—

'I met a lamentable example of fortune's instability—A prince of Argos begging his bread—The man, awhile ago so celebrated for his great talents, high birth, and exalted rank, was now reduced to the lowest state of human wretchedness, an object of commiseration to every body who beheld him. Such of us as reached out the hand to him, or consoled him with the words of pity for his miserable condition, could not leave him without abundance of tears; surely such a dismal revolution of worldly fortune can never be contemplated but with sympathy and condolence.'

The tender and religious sentiments conveyed in the next fragment, which we owe to Clemens, certainly demand a place of honour, was such honour in my power to bestow, in this collection.

> Let the earth cover and protect its dead!
> And let man's breath thither return in peace
> From whence it came; his spirit to the skies,
> His body to the clay of which 'twas form'd,

Imparted to him as a loan for life,
Which he and all must render back again
To earth, the common mother of mankind.

Again, in a strain yet more elevated—

Wound not the soul of a departed man!
'Tis impious cruelty; let justice strike
The living, but in mercy spare the dead.
And why pursue a shadow that is past?
Why slander the deaf earth, that cannot hear,
The dumb that cannot utter? When the soul
No longer takes account of human wrongs,
Nor joys, nor sorrows touch the mouldering heart,
As well you may give feeling to the tomb,
As what it covers—both alike defy you.

NICOSTRATUS comes next under our review, a poet in his class of great reputation, as Athenæus, Suidas, Laërtius, and others testify. His comedies were found after his death in a chest, where they had been long missing, and much regretted, we have to the amount of fourteen of their titles, and are further informed that he was so excellent an actor, that it became a proverb of honour to pronounce upon any capital performer, that *He played in the style of Nicostratus.* It is with regret I discover nothing in the few small fragments of this eminent author and actor worth translating; however, that I may not pass over his remains without the grateful ceremony of bestowing one small tribute to his memory, I have rendered this short epigrammatic distich into our language—

If this incessant chattering be your plan,
I would ye were a swallow, not a man!

The talents of the greatest actor at best can survive him by tradition only, but when Nature to those rare attributes adds the gift of a poetic genius,

it gives a double poignancy to our regret, that time should not have left a relique even of these more considerable than the above.

Of PHILLIPUS, the comic poet, I have no anecdotes to record, and nothing but the names of three comedies to refer to.

PHŒNICIDES.

We are beholden to this poet for a very pleasant narrative, made by a lady of easy virtue, in which he describes certain of her keepers with a great deal of comic humour, and it is humour of a sort, that has not evaporated by the intervention of twenty centuries; she was tired of her trade, and therefore, though the theme be a loose one, the moral of it is good: the lady is in conversation with a man named Pythias, but whether the friend of Damon the Pythagorean, or some other, does not appear: the noble professions of arms, physic, and philosophy, had taken their turns in her good graces, but, for the credit they gained by the account, I think it is pretty equally divided amongst them—

So help me, Venus! as I'm fairly sick,
Sick to the soul, my Pythias, of this trade:—
No more on't! I'll be no man's mistress, I:
Don't talk to me of Destiny; I've done with 't;
I'll hear no prophecies—for mark me well—
No sooner did I buckle to this business,
Than straight behold a Man of War assail'd me—
He told me of his battles o'er and o'er,
Shew'd me good stock of scars, but none of cash,
No, not a doit—but still he vapour'd much
Of what a certain prince would do, and talk'd
Of this and that commission—in the clouds,
By which he gull'd me of a twelvemonth's hope,
Liv'd at free cost, and fed me upon love.
At length I sent my man of valour packing,

And a grave son of Physic fill'd his place:
My house now seem'd an hospital of Lazars,
And the vile beggar mangled without mercy,
A very hangman bath'd in human gore.
My soldier was a prince compar'd to this,
For his were merry fibs; this son of death
Turn'd every thing he touch'd into a corpse.
When Fortune, who had yet good store of spite,
Now coupled me to a most learn'd Philosopher;
Plenty of beard he had, a cloak withal,
Enough to spare of each, and moral maxims
More than I could digest, but money—none;
His sect abhorr'd it; 'twas a thing proscrib'd
By his philosophy, an evil root,
And when I ask'd him for a taste, 'twas poison;
Still I demanded it, and for the reason
That he so slightly priz'd it—all in vain—
I could not wring a drachma from his clutches—
Defend me, Heaven! from all philosophers!

SOTADES.

Sotades was a native Athenian, an elegant writer, and in great favour with the theatre. I shall present the reader with one of his fragments, which will be a strong contrast to the foregoing one, and which seems to prove, amongst many other instances, how much the grave and sentimental comedy now began to be in fashion with the Athenians.

Is there a man just, honest, nobly born?—
Malice shall hunt him down. Does wealth attend him?
Trouble is hard behind—Conscience direct?—
Beggary is at his heels: is he an Artist?—
Farewell repose! An equal upright Judge?—
Report shall blast his virtues: is he strong?—
Sickness shall sap his strength; account that day,
Which brings no new mischance, a day of rest;
For what is man? what matter is he made of?
How born? what is he, and what shall he be?
What an unnatural parent is this world,
To foster none but villains, and destroy

All, who are benefactors to mankind!
What was the fate of Socrates?—A prison,
A dose of poison; tried, condemn'd and kill'd:
How died Diogenes? As a dog dies,
With a raw morsel in his hungry throat:
Alas for Æschylus! musing he walk'd,
The soaring eagle dropt a tortoise down,
And crush'd that brain where Tragedy had birth:
A paltry grape-stone choak'd the Athenian Bee:
Mastiffs of Thrace devour'd Euripides,
And god-like Homer, woe the while! was starv'd—
Thus life, blind life, teems with perpetual woes.

There is a melancholy grandeur in these sentiments, with a simplicity of expression, which prove to us that these authors occasionally digressed from the gay spirit of comedy into passages not only of the most serious, but sublimest cast: and I am persuaded this specimen of the poet Sotades, notwithstanding the disadvantages of translation, will strike the reader as an instance in point. Where but one fragment is to be found of a writer's works, and that one of so elevated a character, must it not impress the mind with a deep regret, to think how many noble strains of poety, how many elegant and brilliant turns of wit these compositions would have furnished, had they come down to us entire? and, may I not flatter myself, that as many as feel this regret will look with candour upon these attempts?

STRATON.

This poet supples us with the names of two comedies, and the small bequest of one fragment; it is however an acceptable one, being interesting as recounting part of a dialogue, which to a certain degree gives some display of character, and also as being of a facetious, comic cast, in the character of

familiar life. The speaker is some master of a family, who is complaining to his companion in the scene of the whimsical, conceited humour of his cook:—

I've harbour'd a He-Sphinx and not a Cook,
For by the Gods he talk'd to me in riddles
And coin'd new words that pose me to interpret.
No sooner had he enter'd on his office,
Than, eyeing me from head to foot, he cries—
'How many mortals hast thou bid to supper?'
Mortals! quoth I, what tell you me of mortals?
Let Jove decide on their mortality;
You're crazy sure! none by that name are bidden.
'No Table-Usher: no one to officiate
As Master of the Courses?'—No such person;
Moschion and Niceratus and Philinus,
These are my guests and friends, and amongst these
You'll find no table-decker as I take it.
'Gods! is it possible?' cried he: Most certain,
I patiently replied; he swell'd and huff'd,
As if forsooth I had done him heinous wrong,
And robb'd him of his proper dignity;
Ridiculous conceit!—'What offering mak'st thou
To Erysichthon?' he demanded: None—
'Shall not the wide-horn'd ox be fell'd?' cries he;
I sacrifice no ox—'Nor yet a wether?'
Not I, by Jove; a simple sheep perhaps:
'And what's a wether but a sheep?' cries he.
I'm a plain man, my friend, and therefore speak
Plain language: 'What! I speak as Homer does;
And sure a cook may use like privilege,
And more than a blind poet.'—Not with me;
I'll have no kitchen Homers in my house!
So pray discharge yourself!—This said, we parted.

NUMBER CXLVIII.

THEOPHILUS.

THE fragments of this poet supply me with a passage upon the fertile subject of love, which is of very lively cast, and, in a miscellaneous collection like this, certainly deserves to be received as one of the beauties of the Greek stage.

> If love be folly, as the schools would prove,
> The man must lose his wits who falls in love;
> Deny him love, you doom the wretch to death,
> And then it follows he must lose his breath.
> Good sooth! there is a young and dainty maid
> I dearly love, a minstrel she by trade;
> What then? must I defer to pedant rule,
> And own that love transforms me to a fool?
> Not I, so help me! By the Gods I swear,
> The nymph I love is fairest of the fair!
> Wise, witty, dearer to her poet's sight,
> Than piles of money on an author's night;
> Must I not love her, then? Let the dull sot,
> Who made the law, obey it! I will not.

We have the names of seven comedies ascribed to this author.

TIMOCLES.

Of this name we have two comic poets upon record, one of whom was an Athenian born, and to him Suidas ascribes six comedies; of the other's birth-place we have no account, but of his plays we have eleven titles, and the fragments of both are

quoted indiscriminately: amongst these I have selected one, which is so far matter of curiosity, as it gives some description of the illustrious orator Demosthenes—

> Bid me say any thing rather than this;
> But on this theme Demosthenes himself
> Shall sooner check the torrent of his speech
> Than I——Demosthenes! that angry orator,
> That bold Briareus, whose tremendous throat,
> Charg'd to the teeth with battering-rams and spears,
> Beats down opposers; brief in speech was he,
> But, crost in argument, his threat'ning eyes
> Flash'd fire, whilst thunder vollied from his lips.

To one of the poets, of the name of Timocles, but to which I know not, we are also indebted for a complimentary allusion to the powers of Tragedy; it is the only instance of the sort which the Greek comedy now furnishes, and I am gratified by the discovery, not only for the intrinsic merit of the passage, but for the handsome tribute which it pays to the moral uses of the tragic drama.

> Nay, my good friend, but hear me! I confess
> Man is the child of sorrow, and this world,
> In which we breathe, hath cares enough to plague us,
> But it hath means withal to soothe these cares,
> And he, who meditates on other's woes,
> Shall in that meditation lose his own:
> Call, then, the tragic poet to your aid,
> Hear him, and take instruction from the stage;
> Let Telephus appear; behold a prince,
> A spectacle of poverty and pain,
> Wretched in both.—And what if you are poor?
> Are you a demi-god?—are you the son
> Of Hercules? begone! complain no more.
> Doth your mind struggle with distracting thoughts?
> Do your wits wander? are you mad? Alas!
> So was Alcmæon, whilst the world ador'd
> His father as their God. Your eyes are dim;
> What then? the eyes of Œdipus were dark,

Totally dark. You mourn a son? he 's dead;
Turn to the tale of Niobe for comfort,
And match your loss with her's. You 're lame of foot;
Compare it with the foot of Philoctetes,
And make no more complaint. But you are old,
Old and unfortunate; consult Oëneus;
Hear what a king endur'd, and learn content,
Sum up your miseries, number up your sighs,
The tragic stage shall give you tear for tear,
And wash out all afflictions but its own.

With the poet Xenarchus, author of eight dramas, I conclude my catalogue of the writers of The Middle Comedy; one short but spirited apostrophe I collect from this poet, and I offer it in its naturalized state, as a small remembrance of my zeal to catch at every relique of his shipwrecked muse.

Ah, faithless women! when you swear
I register your oaths in air.

I have now produced a list of comic poets, thirty-two in number, who were celebrated writers for the Athenian stage within the period we have been reviewing, and in these translations the reader has before him every thing that time has spared of their productions, except a few short and insignificant sentences, which had nothing to recommend them: the imperfect anecdotes here given of the several authors may be thought to contain very little interesting matter, but it has been no slight task to collect even these, and I am persuaded that my search has left nothing behind, which can give any further elucidation to the subject; if I were as secure of not having trespassed upon the public patience, through too much diligence and minuteness, I should dismiss my anxiety.

The period of The Middle Comedy was of short duration, and thirty-two comic authors are no inconsiderable number to have flourished within that æra; yet we may well suppose others, and probably many others, did exist within the time, of whom no memorial whatever now survives: most of these names, which I have now for the first time brought together, will, I dare say, be new, even to my learned readers, for not many men of a studious turn, and fewer still of classical taste, will dedicate their time to those dry and deterring books, in which these scattered reliques were deposited, and on which they have hitherto depended for their almost desperate chance of being rescued from extinction. I mention this not ostentatiously, as taking credit on the score of industry and discovery, but hoping that the labour of the task will be some apology on my behalf to such of my readers, if any such to my sorrow shall be found, who, having purchased these volumes with an eye to amusement only, may have been tired by the perusal of these papers, or, not caring to peruse them, have been cashiered of the just proportions of a volume.

To the candour of all those monthly publications, which are concerned in the review of new books, I profess myself to be very highly indebted; that they have admitted and commended the sincere and moral motives of my undertaking is above measure gratifying to me; in this particular I know I have a just claim to their good report, because they cannot credit me for more real love to mankind and more cordial zeal for their social interests, than I truly have at heart, but for my success as an author, which has so much exceeded my expectations, I cannot deceive myself so far as to ascribe it wholly to my own merits, when I must know how great a

share of it was the natural result of their recommending me to the world.

As I have not found any hints in these Reviews, nor in the reports which have come home to me, that have tended to discourage me in the prosecution of these researches into the characters and remains of the Greek dramatists, I have gone on with ardour, and shall go on, if life is granted me, to the end; the writers, therefore, of The New Comedy, will come next under my review, and as we descend in time, we shall increase in matter; the celebrated names of Menander, Philemon, Diphilus, Apollodorus, and some few besides, are not wholly left without record; every fragment that bears their stamp has been accounted so venerable, that some of the greatest scholars of modern times have thought it an office of honour to be employed in the collection of them; none of these, however, have found their way into our language, and as I flatter myself these of The Middle Comedy have risen upon their predecessors, I hope what is next to follow, will not baulk the climax: my best care and fidelity shall be applied to the translations of such as I shall select for the purpose, and as I have generally found the simplicity of their style and sentiment accord best to the easy metre of our old English dramatists, I shall mostly endeavour to clothe them in the dress of those days, when Jonson, Fletcher, and Massinger, supported the stage. To these I shall probably add some selections from Aristophanes, which I would not insert in their place, being aware that extracts upon a large scale, would comparatively have extinguished their contemporaries, when set beside them upon a very contracted one.

Upon the whole, it will be my ambition to give to the world what has never yet been attempted, a

complete collection of the beauties of the Greek stage in our own language from the remains of more than fitfy comic poets.

NUMBER CXLIX.

NOTHING now remains for completing the literary annals of Greece, according to the plan I have proceeded upon, but to give some account of the drama, within that period of time, which commences with the death of Alexander of Macedon, and concludes with that of Menander, or at most extends to a very few years beyond it, when the curtain may figuratively be said to have dropt upon all the glories of the Athenian stage.

This, though the last, is yet a brilliant æra, for now flourished Menander, Philemon, Diphilus, Apollodorus, Philippides, Posidippus; poets no less celebrated for the luxuriancy, than for the elegance of their genius, all writers of The New Comedy; which, if it had not all the wit and fire of the old satirical drama, produced in times of greater public freedom, is generally reputed to have been far superior to it in delicacy, regularity, and decorum. All attacks upon living characters ceased with what is properly denominated The Old Comedy; the writers of The Middle Class contented themselves with venting their raillery upon the works of their dramatic predecessors; the persons and politics of their contemporaries were safe; whereas neither the

highest station, nor the brightest talents were any sure protection from the unrestrained invectives of the comic muse in her earliest sallies.

The poets under our present review were not, however, so closely circumscribed, as to be afraid of indulging their talent for ridicule and satire upon topics of a general nature; without a latitude like this comedy could hardly have existed; but this was not all, for amongst their fragments some are to be found, which advance sentiments and opinions so directly in the teeth of the popular religion, that we cannot but admire at the extraordinary toleration of their pagan audiences. Justin quotes a passage from Menander's comedy of *The Charioteer*, in which an old mendicant is introduced carrying about a painted figure of the Great Mother of the Gods, after the manner of the present Popish Rosaries, and begging a boon as usual on those occasions; the person addressed for his subscription, contemptuously replies, 'I have no relish for such deities as stroll about with an old beggar-woman from door to door, nor for that painted cloth you have the impudence to thrust into my presence: let me tell you, woman, if your Mother of the Gods was good for any thing, she would keep to her own station, and take charge of none but those, who merit her protection by their piety and devotion.' This rebuff is of a piece with the surly answer of the cynic Antisthenes, recorded by Clemens Alexandrinus, when, being teazed by these mendicants, the philosopher replied—'Let the Gods provide for their own mother; I am not bound to maintain her.' In another fragment, quoted both by Clemens and Eusebius, Menander breaks forth into a bolder rhapsody, which breathes the spirit and nearly the very words of the Hebrew prophets: a person, in what drama does not appear, addresses his compa-

nion in the scene to this effect—' If any man, O Pamphilus, thinks that God will be well pleased with the sacrifice of multitudes of oxen or of goats, or of any other victims; or by robing his images in cloth of gold and purple, and decking them out with ivory and emeralds; that man deceives himself, and his imaginations are vain; let him rather study to conciliate God's favour by doing good to all men; let him abstain from violation and adultery; let him not commit theft or murder through the lust of money; nay, covet not, O Pamphilus, so much even as the thread of another's needle, for God is ever present, and his eye is upon thee.' This will serve in the place of many more passages which might be adduced, to prove that the comic poets of this period were not only bold declaimers against the vice and immorality of the age they lived in, but that they ventured upon truths and doctrines in religion, totally irreconcileable to the popular superstition and idolatries of the heathen world.

It was on the new comedy of the Greeks, that the Roman writers in general founded theirs, and this they seem to have accomplished by the servile vehicle of translation: it is said that Terence alone translated all Menander's plays, and these by the lowest account amounted to eighty; some authorities more than double them, an improbable number to have been composed by a poet who died at the age of fifty, or very little after.

Quin et longa dies delebit scripta Menandri,
Et quandoque levis carmina pulvis erunt.

T. FABER.

Menander was born at Athens, the son of Diopythus and Hegistrata: he was educated in the

school of Theophrastus the peripatetic, Aristotle's successor: at the early age of twenty he began to write for the stage, and his passions seem to have been no less forward and impetuous than his genius; his attachment to the fair sex, and especially to his mistress Glycera, is upon record, and was vehement in the extreme; several of his epistles to that celebrated courtesan, written in a very ardent style, were collected and made public after his decease: the celebrity of his muse, and the brilliancy of his wit, were probably his chief recommendations to that lady's favour; for it should seem that nature had not been very partial to his external, besides which he squinted most egregiously, and was of a temper extremely irascible. If we were to take his character as a writer from no other authorities but of the fragments, we should form a very different idea from that of Pliny, who says he was *omnis luxuriæ interpres*, and this even Plutarch, his avowed panegyrist, is candid enough to admit. Ovid also says—

> The gay Menander charms each youthful heart,
> And Love in every fable claims a part.

However this may be, the remains, which have come down to us, bear the stamp of an austere and gloomy muse rather than of a wanton and voluptuous one; but these it must be owned prove little; Terence is supposed to have copied all his comedies from Menander, except the Phormio and the Hecyra, and he gives us the best insight into the character of his elegant original.

All Greece seems to have joined in lamenting the premature loss of this celebrated poet, who unfortunately perished as he was bathing in the Piræan harbour, to which Ovid alludes in his Ibis (591),

> *Comicus ut liquidis periit, dum nabat, in undis.*

This happened in Olymp. CXXII. his first comedy, entitled Orge, was performed in Olymp. CXV. which gives him something less than thirty years for the production of more than one hundred plays, and if we take the former account of his beginning to write for the stage at the age of twenty, it will agree with what we have before said respecting the age at which he died.

Fatal as was the Piræan sea to the person of this lamented poet, posterity has more cause to execrate that barbarous gulf, which has swallowed up his works; nor his alone, but those of above two hundred other eminent dramatic poets, whose labours are totally lost and extinguished. We have some lines of Callimachus upon the death of Menander, who was one amongst many of his poetic survivors, that paid the tribute of their ingenious sorrow to his memory: nor poets only, but princes bewailed his loss, particularly Ptolemy the son of Lagus, who loved and favoured him very greatly, and maintained a friendly correspondence with him till his death; some of Menander's letters to this prince were published with those addressed to his beloved Glycera.

Though many great authorities concur in placing Menander decidedly at the head of all the comic writers of his time, yet his contemporaries must have been of a different opinion, or else his rivals were more popular with their judges, for out of one hundred and five comedies, which Apollodorus ascribes to him, he tells us that he obtained only eight prizes, and that Philemon in particular triumphed over him in the suffrages of the theatre very frequently. If these decisions were so glaringly unjust and partial as we are taught to believe they were, we have some sort of apology for the sarcastic question put to his successful competitor, when upon

meeting him he said—'Do you not blush, Philemon, when you prevail over me?' This anecdote, however, at best only proves that Menander rated his own merits very highly, and that, if they were unjustly treated by those, who decided for Philemon, he laid the blame upon the wrong person, and betrayed a very irritable temper upon the occasion.

We have a collection of Menander's fragments, and the titles of seventy-three comedies; the fragments consist only of short sentences, and do not give us the spirit and character of the dialogue, much less of any one entire scene; for though Hertelius has gone further than Grotius and Le Clerc in arranging them under distinct topics, and has brought into one view every passage of a correspondent sort, still it is a mere disjointed medley, interesting only to the curious, but affording little edification to the generality of readers. Many of them, however, are to be respected for their moral sentiments, some are of a very elevated cast, and others, more in number than I could wish, of a gloomy, acrimonious, and morose quality.

Ancient authorities are nevertheless so loud in the praise of Menander, that we cannot doubt of his excellence. Quintilian, after applauding him for his peculiar address in preserving the manners and distinctions proper to every character he introduces on his scene, adds in general terms, 'that he eclipses every writer of his class, and by the superior brilliancy of his genius throws them all into shade.' He condemns the perverted judgement of his contemporaries for affecting to prefer Philemon on so many occasions; and C. J. Cæsar, whilst he is passing a compliment upon Terence, styles him only *dimidiatum Menandrum.* Dion Chrysostom recommends him as a model for all who study to excel in oratory, 'and let none of our wise men

reprehend me,' he adds, 'for preferring Menander to the old comic poets, inasmuch as his art in delineating the various manners and graces is more to be esteemed than all the force and vehemence of the ancient drama.' There is so much classical elegance in the lines, which T. Faber has prefixed to his edition of Terence, particularly in the introductory stanza, and this is withal so apposite to the subject in hand, that I shall conclude this paper by transcribing it.

Sacrum Menandri pectus
Aura jam reliquerat,
Vagulaque animula
Elysias penetrarat oras:
Tum dolore percitæ,
Virgineasque
Suffusæ lacrymis genas,
Huc et illuc cursitarunt
Perque lucos, perque montes,
Perque vallium sinus,
Cursitarunt Gratiæ,
Querentes sibi
Queis nova sedibus
Templa ponere possent.

NUMBER CL.

Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.
VIRG. ÆN. i. 118.

THE various authors, who have contributed to the collection of Menander's remains, seem to have extracted from him, as if by general agreement, litle else but the most unfavourable delineations of the human character: so far from finding those facetious and sprightly sallies to be expected from a comic writer, those voluptuous descriptions, which Pliny alludes to, or any fragments of the love scenes Ovid tells us he so abounded in, we meet a melancholy display of the miseries, the enormities, the repinings of mankind.

What can be more gloomy and misanthropic than the following strain of discontent, extracted by Eustathius!

'Suppose some God should say,'—"Die when thou wilt,
Mortal, expect another life on earth;
And for that life make choice of all creation
What thou wilt be; dog, sheep, goat, man, or horse;
For live again thou must; it is thy fate:
Chuse only in what form; there thou art free—"
So help me, Crato, I would fairly answer—
Let me be all things, any thing but man!—
He only of all creatures feels affliction:
The generous horse is valued for his worth,
And dog by merit is preferr'd to dog;
The warrior cock is pamper'd for his courage,
And awes the baser brood—But what is man?
Truth, virtue, valour, how do they avail him?

Of this word's good the first and greatest share
Is flattery's prize; the informer takes the next,
And bare-fac'd knavery garbles what is left.
I 'd rather be an ass than what I am,
And see these villains lord it o'er their betters.'

Another fragment presents itself of the same cast, but coloured a little nearer to the hue of comedy—

All creatures are more blest in their condition,
And in their natures worthier than man.
Look at yon ass !—a sorry beast, you'll say,
And such in truth he is—poor, hapless thing!
Yet these his sufferings spring not from himself,
For all that nature gave him he enjoys.
Whilst we, besides our necessary ills,
Make ourselves sorrows of our own begetting;
If a man sneeze, we 're sad—for that 's ill luck;
If he traduce us, we run mad with rage;
A dream, a vapour, throws us into terrors,
And let the night-owl hoot we melt with fear:
Anxieties, opinions, laws, ambition,
All these are torments we may thank ourselves for.

The reader will observe that these are specimens of a general disgust against mankind, and of discontent with the common lot of human life; as such they can class with the humour of no other character but that of an absolute misanthrope, a kind of Timon: for general invective differs widely from that which is pointed against any particular vice or folly, and in fact can hardly be considered as falling within the province of comedy in any case.

If Menander hath been justly celebrated for his faithful pictures of the living manners of the age he wrote in, we cannot but receive a gloomy impression from the dark and dismal tints in which these sketches are cast; and though the age we live in hath follies and failings enough still to feel the

comic poet's appetite for satire, we may console ourselves in the comparison of our own time with his, provided the stage is to be regarded as a faithful mirror in both instances. It is not, however, improbable, but the writers of The New Comedy might fall with more severity upon general vices, to revenge themselves for the restrictions they were subjected to with respect to personalities: add to this, that as far as the early Christian writers were concerned in selecting these passages, it may well be supposed they would naturally take the most moral and sententious from amongst the comedies they quoted, and such as afforded grave and useful remarks upon life, harmonizing with their own doctrines and instructions. More especially it is to be supposed, that they would eagerly catch at any of those passages which exhibit purer and more worthy notions of the being and providence of God, than the vulgar herd of Heathens were known to entertain: of this cast is the following contemptuous ridicule upon the Pagan ceremony of lustration:

If your complaints were serious, 'twould be well
You sought a serious cure, but for weak minds
Weak med'cines may suffice—Go, call around you
The women with their purifying water;
Drug it with salt and lentils, and then take
A treble sprinkling from the holy mess:
Now search your heart; if that reproach you not,
Then, and then only, you are truly pure.

EX FAMULO MATRIS IDEÆ.

I am sorry to remark, that amongst all the fragments of this poet not one has been preserved, that is stampt with even the slightest commendation of the fair sex: on the contrary, I find abundance of invective, chiefly against marriage and married wo-

men, often coarse, and always bitter. I will venture to say, if there was a single woman in all Athens, who merited one good word, it is one more than the strictest scrutiny can discover in his remains. Mark how he rails!—

> If such the sex, was not the sentence just,
> That rivetted Prometheus to his rock?—
> —Why, for what crime?—A spark, a little spark;
> But, oh ye gods! how infinite the mischief—
> That little spark gave being to a woman,
> And let in a new race of plagues to curse us.
> Where is the man that weds? shew me the wretch:
> Woe to his lot!—Insatiable desires,
> His nuptial bed defil'd, poisonings and plots,
> And maladies untold—these are the fruits
> Of marriage, these the blessings of a wife.

The poet, who can thus lend his wit to libel the greatest blessing of life, may well be ingenious in depreciating life itself—

> The lot of all most fortunate is his,
> Who having staid just long enough on earth
> To feast his sight with this fair face of nature,
> Sun, sea, and clouds, and Heaven's bright starry fires,
> Drops without pain into an early grave.
> For what is life, the longest life of man,
> But the same scene repeated o'er and o'er?
> A few more ling'ring days to be consum'd
> In throngs and crowds, with sharpers, knaves, and thieves;
> From such the speediest riddance is the best.

Having given some passages from this poet, where he speaks in the character of a misanthropist, it is but justice to exhibit him as a moralist: if the following fragment suggests no new ideas upon the subject of *Envy*, it will at least serve to convince us,

that mankind in all ages have thought alike upon that despicable passion—

> Thou seem'st to me, young man, not to perceive
> That every thing contains within itself
> The seeds and sources of its own corruption:
> The cankering rust corrodes the brightest steel:
> The moth frets out your garment, and the worm
> Eats its slow way into the solid oak;
> But Envy, of all evil things the worst,
> The same to-day, to-morrow, and for ever,
> Saps and consumes the heart in which it lurks.

In the fragment next ensuing, an old man is reproved for the vice of covetousness; there is a delicacy in the manner of it, that well becomes both the age and condition of the speaker, for he is a youth, and son to the character whom he addresses; this fragment is extracted from the comedy entitled Dyscolus (the Churl) which Plautus is said to have translated and performed under its original title: but of this only a few fragments remain in our volume of that poet; probably the father herein addressed is the person who gives the name to the comedy.—

> Weak is the vanity that boasts of riches,
> For they are fleeting things; were they not such,
> Could they be yours to all succeeding time,
> 'T were wise to let none share in the possession.
> But if whate'er you have is held of fortune,
> And not of right inherent, why, my father,
> Why with such niggard jealousy engross
> What the next hour may ravish from your grasp,
> And cast into some worthless favourite's lap?
> Snatch then the swift occasion while 'tis yours;
> Put this unstable boon to noble uses;
> Foster the wants of men, impart your wealth,
> And purchase friends; 'twill be more lasting treasure,
> And, when misfortune comes, your best resource.

There is another fragment of a more comic sort, which is a relique of The Minstrel, pointed at the same vice—

Ne'er trust me, Phanias, but I thought till now,
That you rich fellows had the knack of sleeping
A good sound nap, that held you for the night,
And not like us poor rogues, who toss and turn,
Sighing, *Ah me!* and grumbling at our duns:
But now, I find, in spite of all your money,
You rest no better than your needy neighbours,
And sorrow is the common lot of all.

We are indebted to Plutarch for a very respectable fragment of his favourite poet; he quotes it for the consolatory advice it contains, and addresses it to Apollonius; I give it to my readers as one of the most valuable specimens of its author.

If you, O Trophimus, and you alone
Of all your mother's sons, have Nature's charter
For privilege of pleasures uncontrol'd,
With full exemption from the strokes of Fortune,
And that some god hath ratified the grant,
You then with cause may vent your loud reproach,
For he hath broke your charter and betray'd you:
But if you live and breathe the common air
On the same terms as we do, then I tell you,
And tell it in the tragic poet's words—
Of your philosophy you make no use,
If you give place to accidental evils—
The sum of which philosophy is this—
You are a man, and therefore Fortune's sport,
This hour exalted and the next abas'd:
You are a man, and, tho' by nature weak,
By nature arrogant, climbing to heights
That mock your reach, and crush you in the fall:
Nor was the blessing you have lost the best
Of all life's blessings, nor is your misfortune
The worst of its afflictions; therefore, Trophimus,
Make it not such by overstrain'd complaints,
But to your disappointment suit your sorrow.

The lines in Italics quoted from Shakspeare's Julius Cæsar, not only correspond with the exact meaning of the original, but are also apposite as a quotation from a tragic poet; Menander himself having applied the words of some one of the writers of tragedy, probably Euripides.

Amongst the smaller fragments there are several good apothegms, some brief moral maxims well expressed, and though not many of those witty points, which are so frequent in Aristophanes, yet there are some specimens of the *vis comica*, which have a very ingenious turn of words in their own tongue; but generally such passages elude translation.— This quaint confession from the mouth of an old miser is of that sort.—'I own I am rich, abominably rich; all the world accuses me of being a very warm old fellow, but not a soul alive can slander me so far as to say I am a happy one.'—The following scrap once belonged to the Thrasyleon:

> You say not always wisely, *Know thyself!*
> Know others, ofttimes is the better maxim.

A strong moral truth told with epigrammatic neatness strikes me in this pointed remark—

> Of all bad things, with which mankind are curst,
> Their own bad tempers surely are the worst.

I could not pass over a short but touching apostrophe quoted from the comedy of The Olynthian—

> What pity 'tis, when happy Nature rears
> A noble pile, that Fortune should o'erthrow it!

I shall conclude with a fragment of the declamatory sort, not as offering any novelty either in the senti-

ment or expression, but simply for the sake of contrasting it with other specimens—

> If you would know of what frail stuff you 're made,
> Go to the tombs of the illustrious Dead ;
> There rest the bones of Kings, there Tyrants rot ;
> There sleep the Rich, the Noble, and the Wise ;
> There Pride, Ambition, Beauty's fairest form,
> All dust alike, compound one common mass :
> Reflect on these, and in them see yourself.

I now take leave of Menander, the most renowned of the writers of the latter comedy, and if my readers shall remark, that the fragments of a poet so eminent in his time, offer nothing which has not been said over and over again by poets of our own, I hope it will serve to strengthen their conviction, that frequently there shall be a coincidence of sentiment and expression between authors without communication ; for it will hardly be supposed that plagiarisms have been committed upon these fragments, and much less upon others of more obscurity, which I have in former papers introduced into our language.

In short I should be happy, if any thing I have now done, or may hereafter do, shall serve to mitigate the zeal of critics for detecting their contemporaries in pretended pilferings and misdemeanours, where the *letter* of the law may perhaps appear against them, but the *spirit* of it, if interpreted with candour, condemns them not. I would call upon them, as Terence did upon his audience, to reflect that men in all ages will think and speak alike—

> *Nullum est jam dictum, quod non dictum sit prius :*
> *Quare æquum est vos cognoscere atque ignoscere,*
> *Quæ veteres factitárunt, si faciunt novi.*
>
> PROL. AD. EUN. 41.

NUMBER CLI.

Habent tamen alii quoque Comici, si cum venia legantur, quædam, quæ possis decerpere : et præcipue Philemon, *qui, ut pravis sui temporis judiciis Menandro sæpe prælatus est, ita consensu tamen omnium meruit credi secundus.* QUINTIL. LIB. X. 1.

THERE is not amongst all the Greek dramatic poets a more amiable character than Philemon : he was a Syracusan by Suidas's account, but Strabo says he was born in Solæ, a city of Cilicia : he was some years elder than Menander, and no unworthy rival of that poet, though more frequently successful in his competitions with him than the critics in general seem to think he deserved to be : of this we can form little or no judgement; they who had access to the works of both authors, had the best materials to decide upon. Apuleius, however, speaks rather doubtingly in the comparison, for he says of Philemon that he was *fortasse impar ;* to which he subjoins, that 'though his frequent triumphs over Menander are not reputable to insist upon, yet there are to be found in him many witty strokes, plots ingeniously disposed, discoveries strikingly brought to light, characters well adapted to their parts, sentiments that accord with human life :—*Joca non infra soccum, seria non usque cothurnum,* viz. 'Jests that do not degrade the sock, gravity that does not intrench upon the buskin.'

Philemon lived to the extraordinary age of one hundred and one years, in which time he composed ninety comedies; a competent collection it must be

owned, though not to be compared to the bulk of Menander's productions, who in half the time wrote more in number, and with a rapidity, for which we have his own word—'for when I have once determined upon the plot, says he, I consider the work as finished.' The longevity of Philemon was the result of great temperance and a placid frame of mind: frugal to a degree that subjected him to the charge of avarice, he never weakened his faculties and constitution by excess, and as he summed up all his wishes in one rational and moderate petition to Heaven, which throws a most favourable light upon his character, it is with pleasure I record it. 'I pray for health in the first place: in the next for success in my undertakings; thirdly, for a cheerful heart; and lastly, to be out of debt to all mankind.' This temperate petition seems to have been granted in all particulars, he was blessed with a long and healthful life; he was successful in his undertakings to a degree, which posterity seems to think above his merits, and he triumphed over all his competitors, more perhaps through the suavity of his manners than from any actual superiority of his talents: that he was of a gay and happy spirit there is every reason to believe, and his economy secured to him that independent competency, which put him in possession of the final object of his wishes. As he lived in constant serenity of mind, so he died without pain of body; for having called together a number of his friends to the reading of a play, which he had newly finished, and sitting, as was the custom in that serene climate, under the open canopy of Heaven, an unforeseen fall of rain broke up the company just when the old man had got into his third act in the very warmest interests of his fable: his hearers, disappointed by this unlucky check to their

entertainment, interceded with him for the remainder on the day following, to which he readily assented; and a great company being then assembled, whom the fame of the rehearsal had brought together, they sate a considerable time in eager expectation of the poet, till wearied out with waiting, and unable to account for his impunctuality, some of his intimates were dispatched in quest of him, who, having entered his house and made their way to his chamber, found the old man dead on his couch, in his usual meditating posture, his features placid, and composed, and with every symptom that indicated a death without pain or struggle.

This is Apuleius's account, but Ælian embellishes the story with a vision, in which he pretends that nine fair damsels appeared to Philemon, and upon his accosting them as they were going out of the door, demanding why they should leave him, they told him it was because it was not permitted to man to hold converve with the Immortals: upon waking from his trance or vision, Philemon related it to his page, and then getting up, returned to his studies, and put the last hand to the comedy he was employed upon: 'That done,' says Ælian, 'he stretched himself on his couch and quietly expired.' From this silly anecdote he draws an inference, which without his help the world had probably discovered, viz. 'That Philemon truly was in favour with the Muses.'

Valerius Maximus varies from both these authors in his account of the death of this aged poet; he tells us Philemon was suffocated by a sudden fit of laughter upon seeing an ass, who had found his way into the house, devour a plate of figs, which his page had provided for him; that he called out to the boy to drive away the ass, but when this order was not

executed, before the animal had emptied the plate, he bade his page pour out a goblet of wine and present it to the plunderer, to complete his entertainment; tickled with the pleasantry of this conceit, and no less with the grotesque attitude and adventure of the animal, Philemon was seized with a fit of laughing, and in that fit expired.

The fragments of Philemon are in general of a sentimental, tender cast, and though they enfore sound and strict morality, yet no one instance occurs of that gloomy misanthropy, that harsh and dogmatising spirit, which too often marks the maxims of his more illustrious rival. The following specimen will illustrate what I assert—it is clear that our poet has Æschylus in his eye.

All are not just, because they do no wrong,
But he who will not wrong me when he may,
He is the truly Just. I praise not them,
Who in their petty dealings pilfer not;
But him whose conscience spurns a secret fraud,
When he might plunder, and defy surprise:
His be the praise, who looking down with scorn
On the false judgement of the partial herd,
Consults his own clear heart, and boldly dares
To be, not to be thought, an honest Man.

I flatter myself the reader will be pleased with the following animated apostrophe, which is a fragment of The Ignifer—

Now by the gods, it is not in the power
Of painting, or of sculpture, to express
Aught so divine as the fair form of Truth!
The creatures of their art may catch the eye,
But her sweet nature captivates the soul.

I shall next produce a passage from The Pyrrhus, which breathes so soft and placid a spirit, and so

perfectly harmonizes with the amiable character of the poet I am reviewing, that it is with pleasure I present it to my readers—

Philosophers consume much time and pains
To seek the Sovereign Good, nor is there one
Who yet hath struck upon it: Virtue some,
And Prudence some contend for, whilst the knot
Grows harder by their struggle to untie it.
I, a mere clown, in turning up the soil
Have dug the secret forth—All gracious Jove!
'Tis Peace, most lovely and of all belov'd:
Peace is the bounteous Goddess, who bestows
Weddings and holidays, and joyous feasts,
Relations, friends, health, plenty, social comforts,
And pleasures which alone make life a blessing.

Stobæus has preserved a fragment of The Ephebus, which is of a mild and plaintive character; though it speaks the language of the deepest sorrow, it speaks at the same time the language of humanity; there is no turbulence, no invective: it is calculated to move our pity, not excite our horror.—

'Tis not on them alone, who tempt the sea,
That the storm breaks, it whelms e'en us, O Laches,
Whether we pace the open colonnade,
Or to the inmost shelter of our house
Shrink from its rage. The sailor for a day,
A night perhaps, is bandied up and down,
And then anon reposes, when the wind
Veers to the wish'd-for point, and wafts him home:
But I know no repose; not one day only,
But every day to the last hour of life
Deeper and deeper I am plung'd in woe.

In all the remains of this engaging author there seems a characteristic gentleness of manners; where he gives advice, it is recommended rather than imposed; his reproofs are softened with such an air

of good-humour, as gives a grace to instruction, and smiles while it corrects: can experience tutor indiscretion in milder terms than these—

> O Cleon, cease to trifle thus with life:
> A mind, so barren of experience,
> Can hoard up naught but misery, believe me.
> The shipwreckt mariner must sink outright,
> Who makes no effort to regain the shore;
> The needy wretch, who never learnt a trade,
> And will not work, must starve—*What then?*—you cry—
> *My riches*—Frail security—*My farms,*
> *My houses, my estate*—Alas! my friend,
> Fortune makes quick despatch, and in a day
> Can strip you bare as beggary itself.
> Grant that you now had piloted your bark
> Into good fortune's haven, anchor'd there,
> And moor'd her safe as caution could devise;
> Yet if the headstrong passions seize the helm
> And turn her out to sea, the stormy gusts
> Shall rise and blow you out of sight of port,
> Never to reach prosperity again—
> *What tell you me? have I not friends to fly to?*
> *I have: and will not those kind friends protect me?*—
> Better it were you shall not need their service,
> And so not make the trial: Much I fear
> Your sinking hand would only grasp a shade.

Many of his maxims and remarks are neatly expressed and ingeniously conceived; they have all a tincture of pleasantry, which, without impairing the morality or good sense they convey, takes off the gloom and solemnity, which the same thoughts, otherwise expressed, might have.

> Two words of nonsense are two words too much;
> Whole volumes of good sense will never tire.
> What multitudes of lines hath Homer wrote!
> Whoever thought he wrote one line too much?

Again—

If what we have we use not, and still covet
What we have not, we are cajol'd by Fortune
Of present bliss, of future by ourselves.

Still to be rich is still to be unhappy;
Still to be envied, hated, and abus'd;
Still to commence new law suits, new vexations:
Still to be carking, still to be collecting,
Only to make your funeral a feast,
And hoard up riches for a thriftless heir:
Let me be light in purse, and light in heart;
Give me small means, but give content withal,
Only preserve me from the law, kind Gods,
And I will thank you for my poverty.

Extremes of fortune are true Wisdom's test,
And he 's of men most wise, who bears them best.

NUMBER CLII.

THE poet Diphilus was a native of Sinope, a city of Pontus, and contemporary with Menander. Clemens Alexandrinus applauds him for his comic wit and humour; Eusebius says the same, and adds a further encomium in respect of the sententious and moral character of his drama. The poet Plautus speaks of him in his Prologue to the Casina, and acknowledges the excellence of the original

upon which he had formed his comedy. He died at Smyrna, a city of Ionia, and was author of one hundred comedies, of which we have a list of two-and-thirty titles, and no inconsiderable collection of fragments: out of these I have selected the following example:—

We have a notable good law at Corinth,
Where, if an idle fellow outruns reason,
Feasting and junketing at furious cost,
The sumptuary proctor calls upon him
And thus begins to sift him.—You live well,
But have you well to live? You squander freely,
Have you the wherewithal? Have you the fund
For these out-goings? If you have, go on!
If you have not, we 'll stop you in good time,
Before you outrun honesty: for he
Who lives we know not how, must live by plunder:
Either he picks a purse or robs a house,
Or is accomplice with some knavish gang,
Or thrusts himself in crowds to play th' informer,
And put his perjur'd evidence to sale:
This, a well-order'd city will not suffer:
Such vermin we expel.—*And you do wisely.*
But what is this to me?—Why, this it is:
Here we behold you every day at work,
Living, forsooth! not as your neighbours live,
But richly, royally, ye gods!—Why man,
We cannot get a fish for love or money,
You swallow the whole produce of the sea:
You 've driven our citizens to browze on cabbage:
A sprig of parsley sets them all a-fighting,
As at the Isthmian games: if hare, or partridge,
Or but a simple thrush comes to the market,
Quick, at a word you snap him: By the gods!
Hunt Athens through, you shall not find a feather
But in your kitchen; and for wine, 'tis gold—
Not to be purchas'd—We may drink the ditches.

Apollodorous Gelous, in the same period with the poets abovementioned, was a writer high in

fame, and author of many comedies, of all which the titles of eight only and some few fragments now remain: it is generally understood that the Phormio and Hecyra of Terence are copied from this poet. Very little has been preserved from the wreck of this author's writings that can tempt me to a translation; a few short specimens, however, according to custom, are submitted—

How sweet were life, how placid and serene,
Were others but as gentle as ourselves:
But if we must consort with apes and monkies
We must be brutes like them—O life of sorrow!

What do you trust to, Father? To your money?
Fortune, indeed, to those who have it not,
Will sometimes give it: but 'tis done in malice,
Merely that she may take it back again.

Athenæus has rescued a little stroke of raillery, which is ludicrous enough—

Go to! make fast your gates with bars and bolts:
But never chamber-door was shut so close,
But cats and cuckold-makers would creep through it.

The following has some point in it, but comes ill into translation, or, more properly speaking, is ill translated—

Youth and old age have their respective humours;
And son by privilege can say to father,
Were you not once as young as I am now?
Not so the father; he cannot demand,
Were you not once as old as I am now?

There is something pleasing in the following natural description of a friendly welcome—

There is a certain hospitable air
In a friend's house, that tells me I am welcome:
The porter opens to me with a smile;
The yard dog wags his tail, the servant runs,
Beats up the cushion, spreads the couch, and says—
Sit down, good Sir! ere I can say I 'm weary.

Philippidas, the son of Philocles, was another of this illustrious band of contemporary and rival authors: his extrême sensibility was the cause of his death, for the sudden transport, occasioned by the unexpected success of one of his comedies, put a period to his life; the poet, however, was at this time very aged. Donatus informs us that Philippidas was in the highest favour with Lysimachus, to whom he recommended himself, not by the common modes of flattery, but by his amiable and virtuous qualities; the interest he had with Lysimachus, he ever employed to the most honourable purposes, and thereby disposed him to confer many and great and useful favours upon the people of Athens: so highly did his princely patron esteem this venerable man, that whenever he set out upon any expeditiòn, and chanced upon Philippidas in his way, he accounted it as the happiest prognostic of good fortune.—'What is there,' said Lysimachus to him upon a certain occasion, 'which Philippidas would wish I should impart to him?'—'Any thing,' replied the poet, 'but your secrets.'

Posidippus, with whom I shall conclude, was a Macedonian, born at Cassandria, and the son of

Cyniscus. Abundant testimonies are to be found in the old grammarians of the celebrity of this poet; few fragments of his comedies have descended to us, and the titles only of twelve. He may be reckoned the last of the comic poets, as it was not till three years after the death of Menander that he began to write for the Athenian stage, and posterior to him I know of no author, who has bequeathed even his name to posterity. Here then concludes the history of the Greek stage, below this period it is in vain to search for genius worth recording; Grecian literature and Grecian liberty expired together; a succession of sophists, pædagogues, and grammarians filled the posts of those illustrious wits, whose spirit, fostered by freedom, soared to such heights as left the Roman poets little else except the secondary fame of imitation.

I have now fulfilled what I may be allowed to call my literary engagements; in the course of which I have expended no small pains and attention in dragging from obscurity relics buried in the rubbish of the darker ages, when the whole world seemed to conspire against Genius; when learning had degenerated into sophism, and religion was made a theme of metaphysical subtilty, serving, as it should seem, no other purpose but to puzzle and confound, to inflame the passions and to perplex the head. Then it was, the fathers of the church, in whose hands these authors were, held it a point of conscience to destroy the idols of the stage, as they had already destroyed the idols of the temple, and to bury heathen wit in the same grave with heathen superstition; their poets and their gods were to be exterminated alike. To the

more enlightened taste, or rather perhaps to the lucky partiality, of Chrysostom alone we owe the preservation of Aristophanes. Continually engaged in argumentative and controversial writings, there were some, who occasionally condescended to quote a passage, as it served their purpose, from these proscribed comedies, either to help out their wits or illustrate their meaning: and these scraps and splinters being swept together by some few patient collectors, who had charity enough to work upon the wreck, posterity hath been put into possession of these gleanings of the comic stage of Athens, in addition to the more entire and inestimable remains of Aristophanes. It has been my task, and I believe it is the first of the sort attempted in our language, to avail myself of these friendly guides for making something like a regular detail of the names, characters, and productions, of these lost, but once illustrious poets, and to give to the public such as I conceive to be the best of their fragments in an English translation. This part of my general undertaking being heavier than all the rest to myself, I was much afraid it would have proved so to my readers also; but their candid reception of these papers in particular, and the encouraging voice of my profest reviewers, have banished that anxiety from my mind, and enabled me to proceed with cheerfulness to the end.

There is one part, however, of these papers, in which I conceive I have been misunderstood as having carried my attack against the moral doctrines of Socrates, and of this I am interested to exculpate myself; my subject led me to refer to certain anecdotes unfavourable to his private character, but I studiously marked those passages by observing that there was no design to glance at his moral doctrines, and at the same time quoted the authorities upon

which those anecdotes rest; when any scholar will convince me that these were futile and malicious tales, I will retract all credit in them, and thank him for the conviction: as for the purity of Socrates's doctrines, I never attempted to impeach it; of the purity of his character I must continue to think there is much cause to doubt. The learned Bishop Sherlock, in his fourth discourse, may be referred to upon this subject: he there says, 'that the corrupt example of Socrates was a dead weight upon the purity of his doctrine, and tended to perpetuate superstition in the world.'—Though I am aware that the corrupt example here alluded to respects his religious practice, yet, surely, if the preacher of Christianity was interested to shew the corrupt example of Socrates in this light, the friend of Christianity may be allowed to represent it in another point of view, and by fair authorities to exhibit what the heathens themselves have reported of this famous philosopher, whose moral purity is by some taken merely upon trust, by others designedly extolled to the skies for the sake of opposing character to character, and by an audacious comparison with Christ disparaging the Divinity of the World's Redeemer. I should expect then, that as far as truth and good authorities warrant, I am as free to discuss the private vices and impurities of Socrates, as those of Mahomet, which the learned prelate abovementioned most eloquently displays in his parallel between Christ and that Impostor: the Deist will perhaps be much interested to support his favourite philosopher, and will care little for the prophet: the modern Platonist, who is ingenious to erect a new system of natural religion out of the ruins of heathen idolatry, may be zealous to defend the founder of his faith, and his anger I must submit to incur; but it is not quite so easy

to bear the reproof of friends, from whom I have not deserved it, and in whose service I have drawn that anger upon myself.

As for my defence of Aristophanes against the groundless charge of having taken bribes from the enemies of Socrates, to attack him for the purpose of paving the way to his public trial, that I observe hath been on all hands admitted; for in truth the facts and dates on which it turns, cannot be contested; they are decisive for his exculpation.

Easy as it has been to clear Aristophanes from the charge of conspiring against the life of Socrates, he would be a hardy advocate, who should attempt to defend his personal attack upon that philosopher in his comedy of The Clouds. The outcry has been kept up for so many ages, that now to combat it would be a task indeed; there are so many, who join in it, without having examined into the merits of the case, and an appeal to the practice of the stage in those times, as likewise to the comedy itself, would affect so few amongst the many, who pretend to pronounce upon the offence, that the man, who undertook to soften general prejudices, must undertake to translate The Clouds; and to transfuse the original spirit of such a composition into a modern language would be no easy work.

END OF VOL. XXXIV.

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