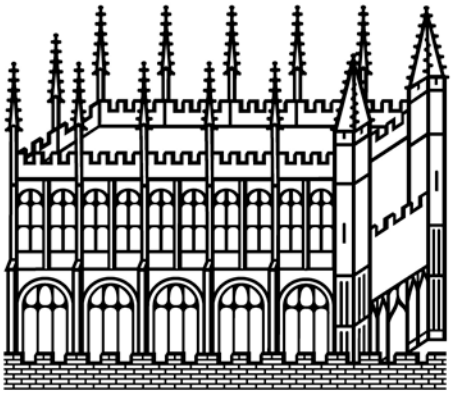

A NOTE

ON THE

SUPPRESSION OF MEMOIRS

ANNOUNCED BY THE AUTHOR

IN JUNE, 1825;

CONTAINING NUMEROUS STRICTURES ON COTEMPORARY PUBLIC CHARACTERS.

BY

SIR EGERTON BRYDGES, BART.

ETC., ETC.

PARIS,

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The Reader is requested not to assume, without examination, that this Note consists of light matter. If it extends only to four sheets, it traverses a large field of remark. It may be said to *ramble:* but it is hoped that the associations will be found to be natural, and not unjust. Something of severity will perhaps be ascribed to them; and many will add, something of spleen. Several of the opinions will be so unpalatable in the present state of society, that the author is quite prepared to expect a great deal of opposition and ill-will in those quarters. He protests against the main points of what he has here said of *Lord Byron* being charged as a repetition of that

which he has said on former occasions. In this NOTE, his character, not as a poet, but as a practical patriot, is attempted to be brought forward in its due strength!

What it is useful to give to the Public, and what is mere idle expence of type, ink, and paper, requires a nicer discrimination than the generality of readers will attend to. Rectitude of opinion goes far in the constitute of human happiness; and still more certainly,—of human morality:—even in matters of taste, rectitude of judgment is highly essential to the graces, and perhaps to the enjoyments, of life. These can only be kept in their right course by the superintendance and influence of frank and independent minds, capable of solid observation, and always on the watch. The Public Press was never so dangerous as it is at present, because its productions are now written only to flatter popular prejudices and passions;—not to correct them. I consider him who lives by prostituting his mind for lucre, to be far

more criminal, more base, and more contemptible than the unhappy female who sells her person for a subsistence!

Authorship is become a mere piece of dull mechanism: a man of very mean talents and acquirements may become a very successful book-writer, by making himself the vehicle of certain party or sectarian doctrines: or by putting together vulgar stories suited to feeble intellects. But that is strictly true, which I think *Mason* somewhere records *Gray* to have said, that "*to be a good writer not only requires high talents, but the very best of those talents.*"

It is not necessary that the substance of what is said, should not have been said before: —that is scarcely possible in moral truths:— if it has not been said before, the chances are that it is *not* a truth. But it is necessary that it should be said—not from *memory*—but from conviction resulting from the operations of the author's *own* mind. Nor is this all:—it is

necessary that it should be said clearly and forcibly; and that the matter or subject should be important in itself.

The result of all the conflicting statements, arguments, criticisms and judgments of all the modern Journals and Reviews is, to blow up all fixed opinions into the air, to be scattered about like autumn leaves in a whirlwind. All influence of Genius and master-minds has passed away. The multitude hug themselves, in crying out: "*see—it is all idle boast! the opinions of these intellectual boasters are not a whit better than our own!*"

It is quite impossible that any Review can be honest, which is *anonymous*. If the name of the author were subscribed to an article of criticism, the purpose for which it was written would be seen at once! Every severe article in the fashionable Journals would have been defeated of its effect, if the writer's name had been known. At present, I never hear a literary opinion uttered in any company, which

is not taken from one of the Reviews. I am myself firmly persuaded, that no inconsiderable portion of articles in all the modern Reviews come within the penalties of the *law of libels!** Lord Byron had opportunities to obtain verdicts over and over again.

As to the present state of society, with regard to its classes, of which I shall probably be accused of having spoken with a bigoted severity, the gambling mania of Joint-Stock Companies, which raged during the last winter, has begun at length to open the eyes of the most supine to the prevailing corruptions which strike at the stability of all property, and all permanent institutions! Nor are the joint-stock societies for spreading, what is called knowledge, but which is in fact *poison*, one atom less dangerous!

There is at present a stultification in the whole working of English affairs, which *must*

* See the case of *Buckingham versus Banks*, last Term.

be suicidal! Of these, not the least have been the *Foreign Loans!* Perhaps no Minister could have prevented them! Yet I think that nothing would have been more easy, than to put such obstacles in their way, as would have checked them almost to annihilation! But I warn Ministry to bev are how they run mad with what are called the enlightened principles of the modern philosophy of commerce and money! It will be seen ere long that they are a little too eager and too rapid in some of their movements; and that Mr. RICARDO is not always quite so good a guide as they have taken him to be!*

As to Aristocracy, I protest against being understood to defend it on any other principle than the general good of society. Where it can be proved to trench on *that* principle, let it be limited, or proscribed! I do freely admit

* I believe that in every case in which he has differed from *Adam Smith* he is wrong:—not that Adam Smith is *always* right!

that its true principles are at present grossly outraged in England; and that the aristocracy of *money* is the worst in the world; and that rank and title bought with new wealth is quite intolerable!—Perhaps, however, the aristocracy of *false Genius* is as bad; or even worse! But I recollect myself;—my *advertisement* to what is itself only an advertisement, is already too long!

PARIS, *Sept.* 20, 1825.

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AND LEADING TOPICS.

A NOTE

ON THE SUPPRESSION

OF

MEMOIRS LATELY ANNOUNCED.

Aug. 14, 1825.

About two months ago, I announced the immediate appearance of a small volume, entitled *Fragments of Memoirs of my own Time*, as a slender portion of a laborious work then in progress. To prevent useless enquiry, I thus declare that this volume is withdrawn. The sheets were prepared, and a fortnight would have carried it through the press: at the moment that it was ready, a few words in a correspondence with England made me hesitate,—and hesitation as to a project with me almost always ends in abandonment.

I do not think that the reasons, which operated on me, ought to have deterred me;—but the energy which is suffered to cool—and—still more, which is blighted, —with me—returns no more.

The task was bold, and perhaps perilous;—but I should not, as some persons feared, or pretended to fear, have trenched upon the limits of delicacy. Of my living cotemporaries I should have spoken with candour, though not without discrimination: of the dead I should have spoken with the calmness, frankness, and impartiality of historical truth.

It has been supposed, from the manner in which the announcement was worded, that I should have dealt

with a class of living characters, with which my taste and my habits give me no communication. With the gossip of the petty butterflies of fashion, and the ordinary societies and amusements of daily life, I have no intercourse; and therefore should be a very unskilful, as well as unwilling relator of them. It is of the national character—of the distinctions of society as they operate on the morals and essential actions and opinions of life, that I should have attempted to enter into the delineations.

My sybilline leaves, written with the energy of immediate impulse, are already scattered;—if not lost:—and never now will they see the light.—Checked hope and energy turn to disgust;—and I cannot bear even to cast my eyes upon them. I shall probably write others in a returning humour;—but they will be very different.

I do not mean to complain of criticism: there has been enough of it, of late, bestowed upon me in such a tone as to give me at least as much pleasure as pain: and I cannot feel that all the severe parts are just. But this little pamphlet will not allow space enough to permit me to enter into the discussion of them.

I have, perhaps, peculiar notions as to the due purposes of literature:—at least peculiar, when compared with the fashion of thinking, which commenced with the present century, and is now almost universal—in England. My confidence in the principles I have adopted arises from the sanction of the agreeing voice of the admitted sages of all former times and countries.

A specimen of one of the last of the old school has come again under my consideration within these few days in the collected *Works of Mrs. Barbauld*, published by Miss Aikin, (her niece). Mrs. Barbauld was nearly on the completion of her 82d year—for she was born 20th June, 1743, and died 9th March, 1825. Her Poems were first published in 1773, at the age of 30;—so that she continued in the career of authorship for 52 years:—not indeed like Mrs. Elizabeth Carter—some of whose excellent poems appeared in the Gentle-

man's Magazine—I think in 1735, her 16th year—and who lived in full possession of her faculties till Jan. 1806, when she had completed her 86th year—so that she survived her earliest publications for 71 years.

With the poems of both these excellent women, and truly polished authors, I was conversant from childhood;—and such has been the uniformity of my taste, that I think of them now, exactly as I thought at the age of fifteen. Their fame may have been slow; and perhaps not extensive,—but it is *ære perennius!*—Mrs. Barbauld's taste was congenial to Mrs. Carter's;—and it is clear to me that her poems were formed on the model of her predecessor. They have something more of delicacy; but they are surely less vigorous. It is in *song-writing* only that she excels her. I know nothing in its kind, equal to her *first* song:

"Come here, fond youth, whoe'er thou be."

Neither of these poets belong to the first or second class: because both were deficient in the higher powers of imagination. By this I mean something very different from mere figurative language, and what petty critics call *the flowers of poetry*. When the inexhaustible Author of Waverley embodies his pictures of old national manners in invented characters, engaged in a series of interesting incidents, he displays the best qualities of grand poetical invention. Frivolous invention, exercised in the tricks of language, is worse than useless. Nothing is valuable but the thought;—and that, when true and forcible, will commonly bring proper language with it.

I do not deny that the literature of the age which closed with the eighteenth century had sunk into too much tameness. I speak of those who at the French Revolution had already closed, or were closing their career;—not of the youthful tribe who soon afterwards, and before the year 1800, commenced it.—But tameness is better than false strength—than extravagance and distortion!

Genius and literature can only be estimated by com-

parison. How can they, who read no publications but those of the current day, judge of the merits of the works which preceded them? It is part of a *system* to hold forth, that the world is in a *progressive* state of *perfectibility*: and therefore, that the praise of what has been done by the former generations must be founded on *prejudice*, and inveterate habit! How often, when I appeal to old authorities against the present, am I surveyed with placid and ineffable contempt by the modern illuminati, who cry—"*Ah! we do not blame you!—it is natural—and perhaps amiable—to stick by your early impressions, however incorrect!*" They assume in their blindness that the impressions are incorrect, with as much certainty as if they had "proof of holy writ!"——

The misfortune is that literature now acts by *combinations*: individual strength or wisdom can do nothing. It is exactly as it is in the House of Commons: *there* the most extraordinarily qualified individual who ever had a seat within the walls of St. Stephen's chapel would be a cypher in point of power, if he acted not in conjunction with an organised party. He could carry no measure; could secure no attendance; nor could engage a single listening ear to that, to which no party discipline ordered its adherents to attend.

The press is now exactly in the same state. Every literary journal is carried on to forward the purposes of a party: nothing is judged by its intrinsic and individual character: and no book is bought or read, except as fashion, or intrigue, or faction dictates. Critics suppress, distort, or disguise their opinions, to secure the favour of their employers, till they lose all discrimination; and cease to have opinions. Publishers always protest that they are under contract not to interfere with the judgments of the editors of their journals. Who can believe them? It may be true in the letter: it cannot be *virtually* true! An editor must surely know that he would soon meet the "*cold blank looks*" of his employer, if he spoke slightly of a work, in which that employer had embarked a large sum! In twenty

years I can hardly recollect an impartial article of criticism in any of the popular journals.

I know not why I should not descend from generals to a few particulars, though I must admit that I shall begin with what is partly conjectural.

I take up *Mr. Mitford*, the historian of Greece—a veteran, now, I believe, in his 81st or 82d year.

It is impossible that men of taste can have but one opinion of his language: it is full of all sorts of faults: —inelegant—crude—harsh—unvernacular—affected—and pedantic.

All his admitted industry and learning—in paths now almost cultivated by himself alone—could not for many years overcome these mighty obstacles to the perusal of his useful works. The critics, who wanted a subject to play with, were sufficiently pungent upon him:—and they, whose adulatory politics, servile minds, and regard to men of a certain station in society, instilled into them every inclination to be favourable to him—could not refrain from betraying their disgust at least to his style!—

But lo! a sudden change has within a short period taken place in a leading review. Mr. Mitford has been held up, as an oracle, and a model of composition, as well as of great learning, and sound thought!

If the last number of the *Westminster Review* may be believed—the secret is now out:—Mr. Mitford is himself the principal critic in the *Quarterly Review* on subjects of Grecian History, and the topics connected with it. Certainly it is a little strange, that they, who write in such a phraseology as that in which Mr. Mitford has always written, should be among those who sit in judgment on the polite literature of the age! I do not guess, that any one will set up Mr. Mitford for a man of genius: I assume that he is learned. I once knew him a little:—he had nothing in his conversation which betrayed talent. He was then colonel of a regiment of militia. Thirty eventful years have passed since that slight intercourse. He must forgive me for speaking thus freely of him: I never experienced his friendship:

I know not, that I owe any thing to his enmity. He was an intimate in my brother's house. Of those connected with him, I forbear to speak:—they are topics of grave history, and weighty constitutional principle.

There has appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine for July*, 1825, (in which there is unproportionally more polite literature than in any other magazine*) a character of the late Editor of the Quarterly Review, as a critic. My own opinion I reserve, through delicacy, to a future opportunity: I have long formed one—partly founded on personal observation and experience—which is exceedingly decided. And I have drawn up from long and mature examination a statement, endeavouring to shew wherein the difference between this review and the Edinburgh—independent of politics—seems to lie! —The difference is very essential—so far as regards both literature and personalities. — In politics, my opinions have hitherto approached nearer those of the *Quarterly*; but I cannot approve the manner in which it treats them;—the system of selection it has adopted;—nor the diplomatic sort of management and finesse, with which the whole publication has always been conducted. I must say that the warfare of the Edinburgh is more frank, open, and simple;—and that it behaves with more straight-forwardness to its own party.

In point of mere erudition, I suppose there is no one who will deny that the present age has greatly degraded. It is pretended, that it has improved in philosophy and reason. I can perceive no colour for this pretension. Even in *political economy*, which is supposed to be almost a new science—and which is perhaps newer than any other—the advances are not such as are assumed. Whoever reads the works of *Charles Davenant*, now more than 130 years old, will be con-

* I shall be accused of partiality in praising the *Old Monthly Magazine*, but most unquestionably it has produced several very able and well-written articles in its late numbers.

vinced of this. Most of the new variations from the doctrines of *Adam Smith* are in fact but variations from right to wrong. I cannot subscribe to the superiority of *Ricardo*. He is a greater favourite than *Malthus*, because his doctrines favour the interest of the money-getters, and money-changers, who now rule not merely the Stock-Exchange, and the London marts—but the people, and even the Government!

The uses and abuses of the press have been discussed so often, that nothing new can be said upon the subject: and it is vain to speak the truth in the present state of public opinion, and public interests; because it is too unpalatable to be received; for the public will now receive nothing which does not flatter its preconceived notions or passions. It reads only to be confirmed in its errors;—not to be taught. It is assumed that the press is the vehicle of reason:—and that reason must make its way. I cannot refrain from asserting that this is a strange misconception of the imperfect character of the human intellect, such as it is among the generality of mankind, who have not leisure to give up their whole time to intellectual pursuits. Even men of great learning are often deficient in sound reason and judgment!

The misfortune of the Edinburgh Review is, that almost all its articles are *pleadings:* they are, for the most part, very ably done;—but they take only one side of a question. They are *ex parte* arguments. Sometimes they are written with extraordinary facility and clearness: but they will not often bear a second reading; they want compression, and novelty of matter. In fact, they have a great deal of the same sort of merit as Pitt's speeches possessed.—The Scotch have a sort of philosophical manner of saying the most common-place things, which imposes on the generality of readers.

Among the ablest and most admired articles are those on Poetical works: but in analysing them, I have always found that much of the charm was fled: like

the flake of snow falling on the river, so beautifully expressed in *Tam O'Shanter*,

—"A moment seen, then melts for ever."

There is more sterling matter in one of the better pages of Johnson's Lives, in his *Cowley*—his *Milton*—his *Dryden*—his *Pope*—than in all these thin-spun, though eloquent, sheets or volumes, put together.—Some of the latter articles are especially *washy*, such as that on Campbell's unlucky *Theodoric!* In that article there is not even ease:—all is strained; and all barren labour. The reason is obvious: the writer was criticising in a contrary direction to his opinion.

The opinion formed of a book, when it is first published, is very seldom the opinion entertained of it after a lapse of twenty or thirty years. I remember when Gibbon's Autobiography was first published, by Lord Sheffield, about 1796, it was generally considered to be a failure, whatever the reviews might say (for I forget what they said). I thought otherwise: I considered it a curious, instructive, and important piece of biography. I saw its defects: they were the defects of the man, not of the work:—it was too cold, artificial, affected, and monotonous; it wanted eloquence, depth of feeling, and imagination. But its serenity and good humour; its pure and steady love of literature; its erudition; its research; and its extent of views, were all delightful. What is the present value of it? Is it not generally held in high respect and esteem? Is it not cited by the best authors among standard authorities?

I have often been struck with the fate which followed Horace Walpole, Lord Orford, to his grave! He had been, perhaps, the most fashionable author of his day. The public curiosity was keenly alive to all he wrote: he had rather an unreasonable sway over the public mind: his wit, and bon-mots were deemed irresistible;—and a spark of his ridicule directed at a cotemporary, was sure to degrade him; while his com-

mendation was often alone sufficient to lift a work into fame. I remember two striking instances of this; but I forbear to point them out, as one of the authors is still living, and would by no means admit such an origin to the celebrity of his earliest work. I do not insinuate that this influence enjoyed by Lord O. was unmerited. He was a man not merely of a very quick and acute taste, and very extensive and curious literature;—but I feel an unalterable conviction that he was a man of very decided genius:—genius rather sparkling, than profound—but still positive genius,—witness the inventive powers of his *Castle of Otranto*. I conversed with him in his old age—two years before he died—an octogenarian;—and his conversation was exactly like his writings. Death commonly consecrates a popular author; and they who have been partially praised in their lives, have flowers lavished in superabundance on the insensible grave! It was otherwise with Lord O. His opinions, his authority, and his genius became all at once bye-words of contempt with those who followed him in literary sway. I am not in the secret: I know not whence this arose; but unquestionably it arose from some personal or political faction.

It has at length died away; and now the literary public seem once more willing to assign to this accomplished and ingenious man his true place. His *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors* is full of ingenuity and amusement, though it is not profound. But take it as a *Catalogue;* and where will its like be met? The *Anecdotes of Painting* are as entertaining as a romance; and as beautiful as taste can make them. And in what *Letters* will so many lively and interesting minutiæ of history and anecdote be found, as in those of this author?

It would be easy to point out defects in his character;—and littlenesses which put him below the objects of pure admiration. He wanted both grandeur of thought, and moral pathos. He was vain and selfish; had many objects of petty ambition; and,

however liberal he affected to be in his political opinions, had some of the silly airs of a false aristocracy,—from which I believe his bluff, coarse, and strong-minded father was entirely free.

I have strong reasons for concluding that GRAY thought Walpole had no heart! and he never would place confidence in him, after their first quarrel, though the wound was outwardly healed. Gray died of the gout, partly hereditary, and partly brought on by the spleen of early family misfortunes, and of a lonely, neglected, mortified life. He lived in the dull apartments of a small college, amid petty cabals and tasteless mathematicians, little cherished, and little noticed. His autumnal tours infused a little temporary life into him: but college habits, morbid native delicacy, and native shyness, each of them strengthened by his solitary studies, crossed those tours with many occasional disgusts. He was both timid and fastidious, even to disease. His heart was benevolent, moral, and virtuous; and his feelings exquisite, profound, and sublime. Added to his classical and splendid genius, he was a man of powerful reason, strong sense, deep sagacity, and accurate knowledge of mankind. His scholarship was perfect, because, while it was pre-eminently minute and exact, it was inspired by the very highest degree of poetical taste. It was not so laborious, so abstruse, and quite so abundant as Milton's; but it was more refined and exact. Milton's latin poetry was good; but Gray's was inimitable. Milton neither has written, nor could have written such an ode as Gray's Alcaic *on the Grande Chartreuse*. I can find nothing in all the eleven interesting volumes of the *Poemata Italorum* * at all equal to that ode.

* Printed at Florence, 1719—now a very scarce work, even in Italy. I could find but one copy at Florence 1820, 1821. Molini had it not, and it had seldom passed through his hands. I met with a copy *intonsus*, after eighteen months' search. Not one could I find at Rome and Naples; yet Rome is a copious mart for good books, at moderate prices.

Tom Warton was a very rich and elegant scholar: but he had not the very fine tact of Gray. He wanted both Gray's depth and penetration, and his fiery enthusiasm: and still more, he wanted Gray's unfailing force of moral pathos, and sublime conscience. But he was an amiable and enviable man: to *his* tranquil temper and easy habits a college life was all enjoyment: he had a love of society,—perhaps somewhat below him: coarseness did not offend his smiling humour; and his humour made him please and be pleased. The Oxonians loved Tom Warton, though the pompous and empty dignitary sometimes looked down with stupid scorn on the careless and unassuming poet. His rural descriptions and his Gothic imagery will secure lasting fame to his poetry. And as to the *History* of his beloved art, it is one of the most instructive books of our language. How barren and tasteless is every other work on that domestic subject compared with his!

I do not think quite so well of his brother's *Essay on Pope*:—it is superficial; and wants originality: but still it is amusing and elegant; and such as no scholar of the present day could produce.

It was the fashion to give the palm to this elder brother:—it was his superficiality and lightness which made him more popular, than the weighty and more curious pages of one who joined the original and extensive researches of an historian and antiquary to the charms of an elegant, just, and beautiful writer. To such pages, so loaded, a reader must bring apprehensiveness, attention, and knowledge. I remember when the flimsy, coxcombical pages of *Cumberland* were far more popular than those of Tom Warton! Perhaps they are so still!

Cumberland's *life*, though much admired, was a most insipid and misleading piece of biography. He was quick, and of a most fertile memory: his talents were a thin soil that threw up a rapid, but slight and tasteless vegetation: yet not without the aid of borrowed seed, and much artificial manure. His vanity was to connect himself with the loftier aristocracy;

and to assume the airs of a high-born and high-bred gentleman. A man may be equal to the highest in birth, talents, accomplishments, and manners: yet if he does not equal them in titles and wealth, he is a fool and a *servilé*, to live much among them. His pride is best preserved by his own surly and defensive independence.

"Not therefore humble he who seeks retreat!
Pride guides his steps; and bids him shun the great!"

The highest-born man in Europe, if untitled, cannot be protected from the slights of the stupid and base in the presence of a new Duke, whose ancestors an hundred years ago had scarcely quitted the plough of the little parish, where *to be born and die* was all the history they afforded for five centuries! But if a lawyer of yesterday, bred in a clerk's office, gets by the most odious and time-serving corruptions, a coronet on his carriage, he thinks himself changed into imperial essence, and will not allow that he breathes common air with those who are not admitted to the peerage! The very laws which bind others, are, it seems, nothing to them: statutes are to give way:—the landmarks of the Constitution are to be laid prostrate:—all in respect to the etherial essence of the new-gained coronet! To be sure, the doctrine is quite new: never in the most aristocratical, or most tory times, was it ventured to be uttered before! *

Beattie was a good man; and had a few notes of fine poetry: but they were soon exhausted; and his invention was very barren. He had not a great mind: he was, in truth, something of a *servilé*! his scholarship was far from being of an high order: he wanted energy and originality; and I think that, as a prose-writer, he too generally approached to dulness. His

* This is no exaggeration. Such doctrines, to the full extent, were lately uttered in the Lords! Yet the pretended lovers of the constitution, the all-watchful Liberals, passed it over without notice.

Letters are amusing and amiable; but they are feeble, and sometimes almost affected: he felt himself uneasy in polite society; and was always on the stretch. His domestic misfortunes had broken his spirits and destroyed the energy of his genius. His criticisms are worth but little: they are laboured; yet not happy, or just, or new.

We cannot recur to criticism a second time, unless it be frank and sincere. A few bold, spirited, natural touches are worth volumes of high-wrought plausibilities!—*Mrs. Barbauld's Letters* are dull—very dull:—but some momentary burst of animosity, political, religious, or literary, roused her from her usual state of candid tranquillity; and with what a severe and powerful discrimination has she drawn the character of JOHNSON! * It is ingenious; and the strokes electrify, because they are aimed in good earnest! Yet, after all—with all these faults—admitting them to their full extent, he will remain a giant in our literature,—and even among our moral characters! Genius need not dread the touch of the spear of truth and talent:—it is the false and poisonous arrow, forged by malice, corruption and artifice, that embitters and harms, though it cannot destroy! What have all the envenomed and furious attacks which party hatred directed against BURKE done to cloud his resistless splendour?

The effect of the French Revolution was almost as violent upon literature, as upon Governments. Something of the same machinery and devices was adopted: one of the first objects was to get possession of the press in all its branches: the scheme was carried into almost every department of Letters:—and especially poetry, ethics, history, biography, and travels. No one was allowed to enjoy any literary fame, who was not of the *liberal* party: and very many were forced into notice, solely on that ground. This was the real source of the violent and extravagant changes which took place in

* See it answered *postea*.

the character of English poetry at that time: and was the true secret of the fame of several poets, who are still popular. The politics of most of those, whose works are now most in demand, are too well known, to require to be particularized. I am aware of the *Great* Instance, which will be brought against me, but there is nothing, which has not its exceptions—and it would be easy in this case to account for the exception!

It will be urged, that there were always critical journals on both sides. But defence is not so easy as attack; and a counter-scheme is never so vigorous as that which gave birth to it. There have been various other minor causes of comparative inefficiency on this side. There was an *imperium in imperio:* a division of power and meddling: a partial influence of the *Admiralty* and *Treasury*—and the sinister influence of certain *coteries*, aristocratical, literary and commercial. The *Liberals* went upon a broader, grander, and more generous scale. The *Aristocrats* gave way to private passions and prejudices: they sacrificed some of their friends to secret cabal; they "damned with faint praise," and mortified, insulted, and silenced by insidious and untenable defences. As far as literature was concerned, its own taste and feeling emanated from a very minor sort of school. I do not speak this of the ostensible editor; but of many, who were behind the curtain—very pretty writers of domestic verses; or young men puffed up with the fame of having written good school and college exercises. Occasional articles, powerfully written, would of course be drawn from aid so far sought, and so widely connected. But scarcely a Number has ever appeared, in which some secret and treacherous personalities are not discoverable by a keen and intelligent eye.

The two sides are very often both wrong in the discussion of a subject: but it does not follow that the reader will be wise enough to find out the truth which lies *between* them! This system has embittered literature; has encouraged the mob in its insolence to intellectual pursuits; has confirmed the professional

and commercial classes in their own offensive self-sufficiency; and has nipped the sensitive genius of many a beautiful spirit in the bud!

A previous attempt had been made on the part of governments and ancient institutions, in the *British Critic:* but as it was supposed to be mainly ecclesiastical, and under the influence of the established church, its power was not very extensive: and it wanted more of the vigour and freedom of character which the tone of the times called for. One of the editors is still living: a learned and ingenious Archdeacon:—another, well known in his day, who left behind him for publication, strange posthumous memoirs—full of idle and inaccurate tattle—was in no degree qualified to be a sound and deep judge of literature. But this work had some able contributions, and a few beautiful articles.—It was at any rate a *Review of Books*—not a set of political, and legal, and commercial dissertations!

The *Monthly Review*, always characterized by presbyterian dulness, is now duller than ever. It has passed into the hands of other proprietors; and it is time that it should improve!

The old journals of France and Leipsic of the 17th century, were more fairly done: certainly with more learning, and, it appears to me, with more sound ability. They were not so piquant: but epigrammatic point is not the best merit of composition, nor the greatest proof of genius. The misfortune of the present day is, that the public taste dictates instead of being directed; and that, as literature is become a mercenary profession, authors write only for sale and lucre. He, who writes for money, can seldom write what he thinks. People buy books, not to learn,—but to be flattered:—they reject whatever contradicts their own notions.* Nothing would astonish more than a dis-

* All this has been ably dwelt upon in the early Numbers of the Westminster Review: a Journal in which it would not have been expected to be found.

closure of the secrets of the *concoction* of a single Number of a popular Review. The man in the mask, whose supercilious judgment, while thus concealed, is so terrible, would instantly lose all the influence of his decision.

An author has no chance against a popular Review, because it is mechanically dispersed every where, and read by every one,—read, as newspapers are read,—to qualify a man to join in the conversation of society: its circulation is multiplied at least thirty-fold beyond the average sale of separate publications;—and a single copy on the table of a large reading-room affords perusal to hundreds. It is, moreover, addressed to popular prejudices; and takes advantage of all the favourite principles of thinking in daily life. This is the direct reverse of the spirit in which literature conducted itself, till about thirty-five years ago. The change will be admitted; but it will be said, that it is a change for the better!—*There rests the question!* It requires some boldness to deny it, in defiance of popular clamour. *Ecclesiasticus* says, that "*wisdom cometh of much leisure*," etc.—but this will not be held authority.

They, who have passed much of their lives among literary men in London, have a great technical advantage in the production of works which find a sale, or acquire notice;—but little, I suspect, which gives their performances a permanent value. Genius alone can give long life; even deep learning may be distilled, till the original is left in the state of a *caput mortuum*, or rather *corpus mortuum*.

Great poets have often spent their days alone, remote from the Capital, and from the society of authors—witness, *Gray*, *Cowper*, *Burns*:—and *Milton* seems to have mixed scarce at all with cotemporary wits.

I remember one of the most singular characters of his age, who died about two years ago, having passed his 80th year. I mean *William Combe*, whose satirical poems, *The Diaboliad*, *The First of April*, etc.

attracted universal notice, about the year 1778. They were productions of personal and fashionable attack; and, as far as I can recollect, (for at least forty years have elapsed since I have seen them), they were written with great vigour. The history of this poet's life would furnish a series of the most extraordinary and romantic incidents;—many of which have been related to me on the best authority;—but which yet, (so very singular as they are) I cannot venture to relate on the mere force of a very treacherous memory.

I am assured that Combe left ample MS. memoirs, which were intended to be consigned after his death to a literary friend, who could have done him ample justice; but which were missing after his decease, and are not yet forthcoming. The anonymous works he wrote for the booksellers, would form a stupendous and incredible list, if completed. Latterly his powers were somewhat flattened by age. At this crisis he wrote *Dr. Syntax's Tour*, of which he gave me a copy. He was the author of the letters of *Thomas, second Lord Lyttelton*, which were so long believed to be genuine, and which excited such strong and general interest for several years. I am told that his average gains by authorship were about 800*l.* a year. He inherited about 10,000*l.* from an uncle, in the city, which enabled him to live splendidly in the circles of high fashion, for about two years—perhaps about the year 1772, or 1773—when he entirely disappeared—till at length he was discovered in the ranks of a regiment of the line in an inn, at Derby, by George Steevens, an old crony, to whom he long denied himself; but who persevered in rescuing him from his degraded situation. He then came to London, and made authorship a profession. A quarrel with the late Lord Hertford was the cause of his principal satires—his heroine was an old *Countess Dowager of Home*. I remember distinctly the great impression these satires made, when I was a boy; and how many of the severest passages were on every one's lips. He had been educated, I think, at Eton; and

the two years he spent in fashionable society, enabled him to penetrate and be familiar with the interior of high life. He had extraordinary rapidity of apprehension, and acuteness of understanding. His adversity had still sharpened his wit; and he had seen mankind in situations where their heartlessness could be tried and brought to view. He had lived long enough out of the world—at least of the highest ranks—to have some coarseness of accent, when I conversed with him—but he had two delightful attractions:—he was manly and unaffected. He was then perhaps 77;—but he did not look more than 65. He was of a middle size—muscular—and of a countenance rather rough and heavy,—than elegant, brilliant, or intellectual. His poetry belonged to the inferior class: for satire is surely of a very secondary order:—but it was vigorous, manly, and full of point and knowledge of character. The style was good, and the versification flowing. He had belonged to a generation which was gone by; and was little known to modern authors.

When, about the year 1789 or 1790, Dr. Darwin, at an advanced age, brought out a portion of his *Botanic Garden*, every one was dazzled, and continued dazzled for a year or two, with the splendour of its mechanism, for the verses were really no more than splendid mechanism. He had been a giant in a little society of literati at Lichfield and Derby, to which Miss Seward belonged: and this lady commenced her *public* career in poetry many years before him; and I cannot doubt that she had had the aid of his corrections and improvements. At length, one of them certainly purloined long passages from the other. Amid conflicting testimony I will not pronounce which was the pilferer. Most assuredly a long passage appeared in the *Botanic Garden*, which had been printed many years before; and to which Miss Seward had subscribed her name. If the lines were really *Darwin's*, and sent forth in another name, by permission—it was mean and dishonourable to resume them; yet this is what I suspect to have been the truth of the case.

Miss Seward's compositions were ruined by affectation, turgid attempts, and a corrupt, tawdry taste. There are very powerful and splendid patches in her poems. Her vanity often stultified her; and she had strong passion; but little genuine, tender, and just feeling. Her imagery was sometimes vivid and picturesque, for her fancy was powerful; but I think she had but little true poetical imagination. She had her short day; and was a favourite at a crisis of barrenness, from about 1779 to 1783: the public then grew satiated with her false brilliance, and she recovered no more. The simplicity and unpretending richness of COWPER put an end to all laboured and swelling descriptions.

When I first began to read poetry, the school of POPE was not entirely extinct; though he had been dead thirty years. The generation before me had been brought up in admiration of him; and they could not in old age learn new lessons. Joseph Warton was considered by them as a dangerous preacher of unorthodox dogmas; a rebel to good sense and sound composition; and a favourer of wild whims and gothic extravagance! GRAY and COLLINS were yet too modern to be considered by them as settled British classics;—and gravely and deeply to admire them was deemed the mere unripened taste of boyish presumption. I have lived long enough to find the names of Gray and Collins held as sacred as the name of Pope was then held!

It is curious to read with what hatred and contempt cotemporary authors often speak of each other: and then in a few years to see them placed side by side on a shelf, as standard writers, whose merits none can dispute! Johnson and Gray had a mutual dislike and ill opinion of each other: and how fierce and rude was the contest between WARBURTON and LOWTH! yet how venerated in literature are now the names of both!

In recurring to the new publication of Mrs. *Barbauld's Works*, I find an admirable Essay on *Prejudice*, formerly printed in the Monthly Magazine, but which I now peruse for the first time. It is clearly,

concisely, beautifully, and vigorously written; and is quite unanswerable. It is more especially wise and virtuous considering the school in which the authoress was educated, and passed her life. I am reluctant to enter on this ground, because the present *brochure* will not allow room to deal with it. But I will indulge in a few desultory remarks.

This subject connects itself with the whole character of modern literature, and the prevailing colours of public opinion. It is the hinge on which the whole mechanism of the matter conveyed by the press now turns. The whole battle is directed against what is called *Prejudice*. It is true that a distorted and partial meaning is given to that word:—it is understood only in a *bad* sense:—but it is the *bad name* which is to do the mischief. The sophistry and trick consists in the assumption, that a prejudice is necessarily wrong.

A prejudice is not necessarily, of itself, either wrong or right. It may be one or the other. The proof therefore that it is a *prejudice* is not a just ground of condemnation. Before it be condemned, it ought to be demonstrated to be *wrong*: now the chances are not a little in favour of prejudices being *right!* If they are wrong, there is no doubt that they ought to be discarded.

Prejudices are conclusions adopted on the authority of others before reason can operate, or without the exercise of reason, or contrary to reason. Now, the opinion which has been adopted on the united talent and experience of successive ages has surely the best chance of being correct.

The answer commonly urged is, that this goes to apply to a new age that which was only proper to the circumstances of ages gone by. I consider this answer to be not more satisfactory than that of the ignorant old farmer, who, failing in his crops from unskilful management, replies to an adviser, who points out to him the success of his neighbour's field on the other side of the hedge, growing out of a different mode of cultivation,—"Ah! that may do very well for neighbour

Young; but 'twont do in my land!" as if the laws of vegetation were not the same in lands of the same native quality!

The character of human nature does not differ: times and circumstances do not differ in essentials: moral and political truth is the same in all ages. I do not say that no changes and ameliorations are requisite: I do not say that no abuses grow up, and ought to be corrected. I do not say that power is always right; or that it does not require jealous and extreme watchfulness.

I believe, for instance, that in the laws of England there still exist numerous provisions which were only fitted to the circumstances of the times, and which ought to be abolished. The prejudice in favour of these should be abandoned,—not because it is a prejudice,—but because it is an *irrational* and *bad* prejudice. But presumptions ought always to be taken in favour of what has been long established;—and latent reasons, even against appearances, to be supposed, till the contrary is clearly proved. This *contrary may* in many cases be proved; but it requires profound, long-exercised, patient, and honest talent.

I hate bigotry as much as any man; and scorn mere authority, without the shew of reason upon due examination. But the rage for *novelty* is not only dangerous but detestable. To call every opinion derived from past times, or from others of more experience, higher ability, or maturer age, a prejudice—meaning, a *false* prejudice,—is either contemptible folly and ignorance, or unprincipled design and artifice!

I will not now enter on the discussion of the comments, which it is the prevailing fashion to make on the histories which develop the acts and characters of past ages. To think that there was any merit, or wisdom, or true liberty in them, comes under the denunciation of a *prejudice*!

Thus it is with literature. The journals are to *follow* the popular judgment,—because to impose the weight of high opinion on them would be to operate by *preju-*

dice!!—Yet it is impossible that they, who are not at leisure to pursue general truths,—who are tied down to the trammels of particular professions or occupations, should be able, by the operations of their own minds, to form correct judgments on the great topics of intellect!—As far as our own judgment goes, we can only decide from the position in which we are placed: and that position very often necessarily commands only a partial and imperfect view.* Forty years ago the popular reader had no better taste than he has now;—but he then took the authority of more cultivated and more happily-gifted minds.

The Edinburgh Review is at present supposed to advocate the politics of the party called *The Whigs*.—but it exhibits many occasional anomalies. Mr. Brougham, whose hand I think I often trace in it, is any thing rather than a Whig!—The Whigs have been an useful party in the state; but they have a good deal changed their position. It appears to me, that they have not, of late, played their game with entire discretion. They have not taken the right points of Opposition; and they have made themselves accomplices in those from which they should have shrunk. They have great families among them; but I think that the great families have wanted energy, talent, or sagacity. Many highly unconstitutional measures have been suffered to pass totally unopposed by *them*! They set themselves against the Crown;—but I cannot say that they often enough set themselves in *favour* of the true liberties of the *people!* They happen to consist of persons whose own habits are the most *aristocratical* of any in the nation:—they have the largest estates;—and are for the most part among the older of the present nobility, which are now almost a new race.

As to old *Tory* families of nobility, scarce any remain. The Beauforts, Rutlands, and Clintons may be considered among the old;—and they are certainly Tories. We have a Tory lord who publicly states that

* This is admirably illustrated by Mrs. Barbauld.

a Peer is of so high a condition that he is privileged out of the laws that bind others:—but *he* is certainly not an *old* peer, though he is an *old* man! I can almost remember him in a somewhat humble station of life, which I doubt if he had not very lately quitted when I first was entered at Cambridge. And all this rise he has effected without talent or education! He is a man of the most supreme dulness whom I ever encountered.

There are families which cannot be said to have had any fixed *political* principles; their principles have been those of contrivance and private intrigue, to acquire place, rank, and family aggrandizement. It would be offensive to name them, though their origin and history begin to be a good deal forgotten, and the believing public begin to consider them old and illustrious. Families of this cast are almost always haughty, reserved, and self-sufficient; believing in their own exclusive dignity, and persuading themselves that they belong to a different cast.

When King James I. came to the throne, he created a few peers, to whom half promises had been made by Queen Elizabeth. From that time he paid no regard to the old historic families;—and many obscure, secondary, or doubtful families were elevated to the Upper House—probably because they could command ready money, and paid large douceurs to the monarch's needy and corrupt favourites. Some of them have, at different periods, made some figure in our annals since that time: such as the Nottinghams, the Villierses, the Cavendishes, the witty Lord Chesterfield, etc.

The Civil Wars, the Restoration, the Revolution, the accession of Queen Anne, the memorable year 1711, and the accession of the House of Hanover, all opened new doors to the peerage. At the accession of the late king the ministry were rather sparing and select in their dispensation of peerages. Then came in the Grosvenors and Vernons by force of property and of ancient *provincial* (not historical) origin—and Lord Egmont, a man of indefatigable intrigue, great vanity, great ambition,

and some talent, after having struggled vainly all his life for the boon, obtained his object. The famous *Bubb Dodington*, another political adventurer — of great wealth,—said to have been son of an apothecary in a provincial town in the West — did the same. He was a most profligate and shameless public character, yet a great self-deceiver: a man of strong ability and great acquirement; — but not a genius: a man of literature, and familiar with all the noble sentiments of classical literature:—yet a mean and fawning *servilé*, with the wealth to be independent, great, and the master of those around him! What a paltry prize to sacrifice a long life for! — and to enjoy it, after all, not more, I think, than a few months and a year; — when death came, and displaced the pitiful coronet from his head to his coffin!

Lord North did not make many peers;—and some of those whom he made were very sorry ones! Then came Mr. Pitt, who inundated the Lords' House! and by such measures totally changed the character of the constitution! The great landed independent country-gentleman has now almost ceased to exist. All are uneasy; all are looking for a peerage, either at present, or when their party comes in. And then the peers from Scotland and Ireland have totally changed the proportion originally engaged for those two kingdoms. In one single consideration this is a very important affair. The lords act as a court of judicature in cases of appeal. It is true they have no *original* jurisdiction over causes: that is quite settled by all great authorities and decisions: but even here, by a sort of side wind, and unopposed, unexamined custom, they are in the habit of exercising what is tantamount in effect to original jurisdiction in one very important class of cases. It is true that it is only done in the shape of *Reference* and *Advice;* but it often operates as fatally on a subject's rights as if it was a judicial decision. But I have already discussed this in a separate *treatise,* and shall not repeat it here. I have indeed seen two immense folio volumes of what are called a *Report of a Lords'*

Committee on this subject: but after examining several times this crude and indigested chaos, I could not extract a single intelligible position or argument from it. Some of the materials may be useful to a particular class of antiquaries; but certainly not to establish the doctrines which there seems to be an endeavour to build upon them, by the manner in which they are put forth. It is quite certain, and not at all disrespectful to assert, that the Resolution of a Lords' Committee cannot be stronger than an *Act of Parliament!*

The nobility of England, and the various distinctions of it, are *very* little understood upon the Continent. A new Irish peer carries as good a port, and as much respect, as the most ancient English. I will not say (as many are in the habit of saying, with some plausibility), that the old nobility are worn out!

The reader may perhaps be surprised to hear that the oldest English peerage now possessed by inheritance in the *male line* is only of the date of 1442, (21 Hen. 6.) But he will not be surprised to hear that it is that of *Talbot Earl of Shrewsbury*. The second is less guessed: it is of *Lord Stourton*, 1448. And of the same date is the Barony of *Abergavenny* (a barony by tenure), so far as it came *by blood* to the *Neviles*. It must be observed, that not only the ancestors of the *Neviles* and *Talbots*, but also of the *Clintons, Berkeleys*, and *Hastingses*, were peers in the male line before the death of Henry III. (1272)—but the baronies have passed away into the female line: and the *Greys* (of *Stamford*), *Cliffords*, and *Courtenays* are of the same early date; but they are younger branches: and in two of them the earlier honours have been long since forfeited. Then comes the *Dukedom of Norfolk*, 1483, and *Earldom of Derby*, 1486. Then the order stands thus:—

*Talbot Earl of Shrewsbury.
*Stourton Lord Stourton.
Nevile Lord Abergavenny.
*Howard Duke of Norfolk.
5. Stanley Earl of Derby.

Somerset Lord Herbert of Ragland, 1506.
Berkeley Lord Berkeley, 1507.
Manners Earl of Rutland, 1525.
Hastings Earl of Huntingdon, 1529.
10. Powlett Lord St. John of Basing, 1529.
Russell Lord Russell, 1539.
Seymour Duke of Somerset, 1547.
Devereux, Viscount Hereford, 1550.
Herbert Lord Herbert, 1551.
15. Howard Lord Effingham, 1554.
Brydges Lord Chandos,* 1554.
St. John Lord St. John, 1559.
Sackville† Lord Buckhurst, 1567.
West Lord Delawarr, 1570.
Cecil Lord Burleigh, 1570.
21. Clinton Earl of Lincoln, 1572.

* A late list of the peerage has called this peerage *extinct.* It becomes, therefore, an imperious necessity to name it here. A peerage granted by letters patent is a common-law right; and no man can be divested of it but by attainder, act of parliament, *due process of law*, or legal trial in course of *judicature.* All this has not only been solemnly decided by the courts, over and over again, but stands secured, *totidem verbis*, in a series of statutes from *Magna Charta* to the celebrated statute which passed the *Bill of Rights*, temp. Charles I. (See *Hume.*) To talk of extinction, therefore, would be insult, if it should not have proceeded from inadvertence.

It would be as degrading as it would be tiresome to say more on the present occasion.

The question is here put beyond the power of any man to controvert it, who knows the laws and constitution of England: and if he does not know them, he has not a pretence to give an opinion, or make an assertion on the subject.

† The old Sackville property of Kent and Sussex, of which a part had been many centuries in the family, has at length passed away into the female line, by the death of the Duchess dowager of Dorset, Aug. 1825. The male line of this old Norman family is recorded in the pages of *Ordericus Vitalis.*

Thus it is that they whose peerages of the *male line* are of a date prior to the death of Queen Elizabeth, are only *twenty-one*.

I believe that these families form any thing rather than a *set*, or *two* or *three* sets!!! The new families are they which are most busy and most anxious to take the lead in what is called the *fashionable* world, and to distinguish themselves by such paltry means! Even to lead the fashion requires a great deal of exertion and fatigue; though it is exertion and intrigue very ill spent! The richest person from the Stock Exchange will, by a little perseverance, and after pocketing a few airs and insults at the outset, be sure to beat at last by mere weight of purse!

I have rarely seen haughty and offensive airs among the nobility, except among the utterly new nobility; and who are not only new nobles, but persons of very low birth and alliances, and who had obtained their peerage by means either corrupt, or at least unconnected with merit. It is known that among the proudest of the modern nobles are those, whose predecessors not long ago bought their honours, and whose delight therefore is to busy themselves in shutting the door upon the rights of others!

During the time which a discussion of a claim of peerage before the lords, in which I was interested, was prolonged, above 70 new peerages were poured into the lords—and no small portion of those who were living at the commencement of the case died before the conclusion; while new bishops took their seats on deaths, sometimes twice over. Suppose judges in courts of law should change once or twice over during the progress of a cause—what would be the consequence? or rather, suppose juries should do so—how could the latter come to a verdict on that part of the evidence at which they had not been present? There is not in the world so inconvenient and so ill-constituted a tribunal for the trial of facts, as a Committee of Lords—adjourning from day to day—week to week—and year to year—and at every meeting changing their members!

It is an entire subversion of the spirit, as well as the letter, of the Constitution! It has not any one of the qualities or properties which forms the protection derived from a jury!

The largest landed properties in England are understood to be those of the Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Northumberland, the Duke of Rutland, the Duke of Portland, the Marquis of Stafford, and Lord Fitzwilliam, etc. I do not attempt to class them exactly according to their degrees. The two first are well known to have come principally * out of the harvest of the Reformation—the third and fourth are principally ancient feudal property. The others are accumulations of marriage and alliances. The mass of the Rutland and Northumberland manors dates either from the Conqueror's grant, or from the twelfth century. A great part of the Stafford was the well-merited fruit of the late Duke of Bridgewater's magnificent application of his patriotic mind to the project of canals, operating on a noble estate. The grand feature of this fine property was formed out of the great inheritance of the Stanleys Earls of Derby, whose co-heiress was married to John Egerton, 1st Earl of Bridgewater; when it seems as if Lord Chancellor Egerton, the Earl's father, vested a portion of his own acquired riches in purchasing portions from the other co-heirs of Stanley.† The Stanleys had inherited the great feudal property of the *Stranges*. I believe that the husbands of the other two co-heirs—Lady Chandos and the Countess of Hunt-

* But the Duke of Devonshire has also the great Irish property made by Richard Boyle, the first Earl of Corke: and the *Newcastle* branch of the *Cavendish* property enriches the *Duke of Portland.*

† I have often heard the amount of the rental of the late Duke, when he succeeded to the property, but not with sufficient accuracy to venture to name it. The Duke expended his whole revenue, and all the money he could borrow, for the greater part of his life, in carrying on this magnificent canal project.—See *Dupin's* Eulogy.

ingdon—were not in a condition to purchase. At that time neither of those families was rich.

Lord Grosvenor has a large property, but it is an entirely new one—derived from his paternal grandmother, who brought the land about Grosvenor Square, which has eventually turned out such a mine of wealth. The Blenheim estate was principally crown and parliamentary grants, *temp.* Queen Anne; but it is now somewhat shorn.

Old Burleigh made a fine property out of his places, in spite of Queen Elizabeth's penuriousness — but his son, the first Earl of Exeter, complained bitterly of poverty.

Lord Thanet has the old feudal property of the Cliffords, Earls of Cumberland.

Foreigners do not easily apprehend the nature of English rank ; and the distinctions of cast, which used to exist in England, they cannot of course be aware of, because they are now extinct in England itself. I can remember them in *some* force, though not perhaps in their full force. Our diplomacy is now filled in a different manner from that of former times :— if great talent and experience is substituted for rank and fortune, more perhaps is gained than lost; but this happens only in a few rare instances ! New men and weak men love to have about them newer men, and weaker men, than themselves. Since former barriers are thrown down, they who push the most, and who have no pride to deter them from hawking themselves about by the aid of introductions (always to be had by those who will ask for them), make the most way, the most noise, and receive the most favour. A family suddenly grown rich cannot do better than come abroad: they will be received by as much company as they can desire. And as to those Countesses and Marchionesses, whose bloom has been a little touched by the sharp air of London, they may come forth again in double lustre under the *very best* patronage of English society abroad ! — the patronage of rank and correct conduct

and sanctity; and all else that can ensure them notice and civility!

This is all which I shall say at present of English society abroad: two months ago I had written much more, but it is committed to the flames. I prefer writing of literature, though literature also has its follies, its absurdities, its affectations, and its vices. I have seen tourists, and politicians, and philosophers, and poets, and novelists:—those who can write very laughable and witty prose-descriptions, and those whose poetry is as glittering as a spangled pavement, or a lady's court-dress of diamonds: those who can touch the heart, that loves to be sentimental, with gentle and unfatiguing tears—and those who can tickle the ill-natured ears of the day by epigrammatic jokes on the writings of old women of a former age, however wise and eloquent,—because they have not survived to adopt the petty taste of the dandy coteries of rank and office, who write for a certain widely-patronized Review! Critics, forgetful of the family friendship of a former generation, and insensible to merits, in which the soundest sense, the deepest penetration, and the noblest tone of pure morality is united to the clearest, most vigorous, and most perfect style: in which there is all the strength of Johnson without his pomp; and all his lucidness of ratiocination, without any of his bigotry or spleen:—Critics endeavouring to blight, by a mean and pitiful affectation of contempt, the circulation among popular readers of a *Series of Letters*, which possess every sort of sound attraction: the genuine and confidential correspondence of a long life, full of wisdom, instruction, learning, and eloquence:—in which there is nothing temporary, nothing trifling; but where the whole is the matured result of a mind most extraordinarily gifted by nature, and perfected by study:—in which the matter and the manner are equally excellent! I have seen the popular writer of the Northern Continent, whose frankness and warmth of heart, and unaffected manners, give a stamp to the merits of his widely-circulating works;—a man whose freedom from envy and rivalry, whose sincerity

and strength of feeling give a weight and test of value to his sentiments which they will never lose,—because it proves that they come from the heart.

Lord Byron, who had always led a manly and rough life, was in the habit of expressing some indignant impatience at the fastidious complaints and disgusts of occasional inaccommodations experienced by the few literary friends who visited him from London, and who were in the habit of daily luxuriating themselves at the tables and drawing-rooms of rich Earls and finical Duchesses—in the excess of all the artificial habits of that corrupt and overgrown capital! Lord Byron could sleep, wrapped in his rough great coat, on the hard boards of a deck, while the wind and waves were roaring round him on every side; and could subsist on a crust, and a glass of water! The mighty bard led the life, as he wrote the strains, of a true poet! But I have said of *him* in other places, as much at least as the poisoned public will hear!—It would be difficult to persuade me, that he who is a coxcomb in his manners, and artificial in his habits of life, could write good poetry!—It may be said, that Gray was so;—but with him it was, (such as it was, and it was a fault,) merely upon the surface: he led an independent life; and would never mix with the silliness of fashion.—Sir Walter Scott—the great living genius—is a man of easy, careless manners; and takes life, and society, as it comes.—Wordsworth is a man of great plainness, and manly disdain of fashionable life, and those whom the thoughtless multitude, with all their clamours for equality, consider to be *the great*, and as such the objects of envy and extorted respect. Simplicity, and integrity of mental and moral constitution and habit, are among *Wordsworth's* characteristics. All his writings also are full of profound and anxious thought.

I was acquainted with Bloomfield, the Farmer's Boy. Simplicity of mind and heart was his great beauty: he had not a cross of affectation or vanity. He was shy, timid, and had, I think, too little confidence in himself.

He was not a *great* genius: but he was an unquestionable genius: he had *poetical invention;* and some of his tales have peculiar, original, and even exquisite merit in their class. He wanted elevation and strength; and the original materials of his fancy tended too much to the colloquial and homely. He died under the immediate pressure of poverty, which the public ought not to have suffered. The stamina of life were in him probably not adapted to great age; for he had not the appearance of a strong and healthy frame: but death was hastened by anxiety and mortification. Poets are not very well fitted to be long-lived. It may seem as if one was playing on words to say that, of the literary classes, *Antiquaries* commonly live the longest:—it arises probably from a constantly amusing, but unwearying, inexhausting occupation. There are occupations of the mind which prolong life: there are others which wear it out. I remember talking to Sir Gilbert Blane about the age of Sir Joseph Banks: "*it is the activity of his mind,*" said he, "*which keeps him alive.*"

And this leads to the expression of deep regret for the fate of a friend, at whose table this conversation occurred:—the late *Sir Alexander Boswell:* he was a man of very lively mind—of considerable talents—some genius—an abundance of mingled and irregular wit and humour. I knew the father also—Johnson's friend—and I think the son had the stronger mind—and certainly the manlier and more decided character. Sir Alexander had scarcely laid his younger brother, *James*, in the grave, when an unmerited fate closed a life, of which he was then in the full vigour of enjoyment. So much for the venom of bitter and hateful politics!! *James Boswell* destroyed his health and weakened his faculties by the excess of his social habits; by the delights of the hospitable table:—but he was a man overflowing with vivacity and drollery of mind and manner;—and had probably better abilities, and more originality of mind, as well as more acquired knowledge than his brother. Well-read persons remember what Gray said of the father's *Corsica;* but the *Life of*

Johnson exhibits not merely a very extraordinary memory, but extraordinary quickness and clearness of apprehension. Mrs. Barbauld however did not approve this work; she says, "we are reading in idle moments, or rather dipping into *Boswell's Life of Johnson*. It is like going to Ranelagh: you meet all your acquaintance; but it is a base and a mean thing to bring thus every idle word into judgment—the judgment of the public."

Mrs. Barbauld goes on to give her own character of Dr. Johnson;—and it is the only severe one she has given. She says:

"Johnson, I think, was far from a great character; he was continually sinning against his conscience, and then afraid of going to hell for it. A christian, and a man of the town; a philosopher, and a bigot; acknowledging life to be miserable, and making it more miserable through the fear of death; professing great distaste to the country, and neglecting the urbanity of towns; a jacobite, and pensioned; acknowledged to be a giant in literature, and yet we do not trace him, as we do Locke, or Rousseau, or Voltaire, in his influence on the opinions of the times. We cannot say Johnson first opened this vein of thought; led the way to this discovery or this train of thinking. For his style, he was original, and there we can track his imitators. In short, he seems to be one of those who have shone in the *belles lettres*, rather than what he is held out by many to be, an original and deep genius in investigation."

There is some point in this criticism, but it is more sharp than just. What good man does not sin against his conscience, and then feel regret for it? What opposition is there between a christian, and a man of the town? What inconsistency is there in weariness of life, with fear of the state which may succeed it? We do not prefer the country to the town for the purpose of indulging discourtesy and rudeness; nor the town to the country because we love gentleness of temper and manner. Why should a man refuse a

fairly-earned pension from a government whose measures he had supported, because he thought the title of its ancestors not so good as that of those whom they had displaced. He had not supported their politics against those whose title he had in early life espoused; but against those who were in principle and act the unqualified enemies to that title! Why had he not as much influence on the times as Locke, Rousseau, and Voltaire? Because he was more a moralist than a politician: because he sought to propagate truth—not novelty; and because his writings could not be used to serve the purposes of parties and factions! As to opening *new* trains of thought,—there are no *discoveries* to be made in *morals:* though there are in philosophy. Then as to his powers and merits being confined to the *belles lettres:* it is quite novel, to hear the name of *genius* confined to the investigations of *science!*—If so, what becomes of Shakespeare and Milton—or what becomes of Addison?—

This character is an instance of that perversion of ability, into which the most candid writers sometimes fall, when under the influence of a little spleen: and how easy it is to give a point to censure, which, though fallacious, is sure, before it is examined, to make a strong impression!

Mrs. Barbauld, indeed, is not very happy in her characters. She has entirely mistaken the character of Mrs. Montagu.* She says, "with all her advantages she seems not to have been happy?"—Now no one led a happier life than Mrs. Montagu. Her spirits were lively, and her temper eminently serene and good-humoured. She was a general favourite; her manners were in the highest degree attractive; her talents for conversation were universally admitted to be of the first brilliance: she was visited, courted, flattered, pursued: she was intimate with all that was eminent for genius and literature, as well as rank. To be admitted to her table or her drawing-room, was deemed

* Vol. 2, page 139.

a proud distinction: and *there* was assembled all that was splendid in accomplished aristocracy, or untitled talent and literature.* Mrs. Montagu was not only endowed by nature with a sagacity, an imagination, a command of language very rarely equalled; but she passed a life of eighty years, in all the best, as well as the most varied society of England, in which her singular gifts had the most perfect and constant opportunity of enriching, exercising, and improving themselves; and she had a fund of humour and ridicule, which enabled her to seize and paint characters with unerring certainty, and resistless effect. But her extreme good-nature curbed the sportive sallies of her wit. They who have lived with her—(and I can resort to good and certain authority)—say, she was never seen out of humour. Yet this is the person whom Mrs. Barbauld has pronounced not happy. She had her little foibles:—she was too fond of ostentation; of the world; and the world's ways! † She loved greatness a little too much; but she was never haughty or disobliging, to the humblest.

Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Carter, the two most extraordinary women of their age, were early intimate. They both of them belonged to Kent, though the former was born at York. Mrs. Carter was born at Deal, (of which town her father was minister,) in 1719. Mrs. Montagu was born in 1720. Her father's mansion was at *Horton*, about five miles from Hythe—where five-and-twenty years ago I frequented the old mansion;

* Why has Mr. Montagu published so very few of her immense masses of letters; and these not the best, but positively the worst? In no other series would there be found so many delightful literary notices; so many brilliant delineations of character; so many registers of the progress and conversational opinions of the highest orders of authors —of Burke, Johnson, Lord Lyttelton, Lord Bath, Horace Walpole, etc. etc. It is but an ill return to his aunt's memory for the fortune and name she bestowed upon him.

† In this respect, no two near relations were ever so unlike as she and her brother Lord Rokeby.

placed in a noble park:—but now, alas, the park is wasted, and the mansion tumbling rapidly into the most mournful ruins. Mrs. Carter's residence, on the sea shore of Deal, has a better fate; and is still inhabited and cherished by her nephew!

There is something of a generous virtue in religiously preserving the abodes of genius. Voltaire's chateau is yet sacredly guarded. It is owned and inhabited by *Mr. de Budé*, the descendant of the learned Greek scholar of that name—the friend of Erasmus.

I walked, in 1819, with strange emotion, through the rooms at *Coppet*, so lately inhabited by Madame de Stael:—*there* stood the table at which she constantly wrote:—*there* hung the little shelves of books which she used! In front, was the broad and tumbling lake which Lord Byron delighted to cross from Coligny,—when it was most tempestuous—to visit her! He was a glorious spirit,—however mighty were his faults—and has immortalized by his presence every spot on which he resided! To think of him, gives an impulse of fire to the dulness of life; and peoples the scenes of existence with adventure, variety, and hope!

It has been said that Lord Byron was a temporary meteor: but his compositions *must* live, while the language lives: they are made up of vitality. I know many, who have been great favourites, but will *not* live! Many of the club of wits, who attempted to drive out Pitt, in 1784, will *not* live. Who now remembers the *Rolliad?* I recollect the editor, Dr. French Lawrence, (elder brother of the present Archbishop of Cashell.) He was a very able man; but a little too ambitious and affected in his style of poetry. He has written some beautiful *sonnets,* which are little known. They are printed in the *Poetical Register*, or some other collection, about twenty years back. He promised a life of his friend, Burke, which he never lived to execute. He was a Bristol man; and educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where the present Chief Justice of the King's Bench was three or four years his junior.

Who now reads *The Pursuits of Literature?* What mysteries were once made about the author of that poem? I cannot doubt that *Mr. Mathias*, whom I saw at Naples about four years ago, wrote it. I will in frankness confess, that the poetry is not much to my taste; and though some of the notes are amusing and ingenious, a great part of them are more ambitious than sound. The first author on whom I set my eyes at Cambridge, five-and-forty years ago, was MATHIAS, then busy with his *Runic Odes*, and his *Rowley*. I think he was a warm *Rowleian*, which did not shew much literary penetration. Tom Warton had at that time written his beautiful and decisive pamphlet on the subject. But the great Rowley advocate was Dr. Glyn, a wit, and an eccentric physician, a fellow of King's, —then of great celebrity,—now forgotten. He worked himself into a *mania* on the subject. No man acquainted with the ancient English idiom can read a page of Rowley's poems, without feeling a positive certainty that the composition is modern.

Another question of literary mystery has been again started in the present year. The public is once more assailed on the subject of the *Letters of Junius*. I have not yet seen Mr. Coventry's new volume on this subject: —but I will venture to give my present opinion even in face of what I understand to be its object. *A priori*, I cannot believe Lord Sackville to have been the author of *Junius*. Among my reasons are these: *Cumberland*, who was familiar with him, and whose competence to form a correct judgment on such a question cannot be doubted, says, (if my memory does not fail me) that this nobleman had not cultivated literature; and had no taste for it. It may be answered, that knowledge of politics does not imply a knowledge of other parts of literature. But it is not the matter, it is at least as much the polished and artificial style, by which these letters are characterised. The epigrammatic point, the extreme and finished terseness, is a still more striking feature than the keenness of the satire, or the ingenuity of the argument. There are some styles of

eloquence, which may be attained by the force of nature;—there are others which require not only great artificial skill, but long and habitual *practice*. He who wrote as Junius wrote, had certainly employed much of his life in literary composition. No coincidence of opinions, no congeniality of resentment, can with me get over this fundamental objection to the belief that Lord Sackville could be the author of these letters.

But these are not the only ones. I have not the letters at hand; and my memory will not enable me to point out particulars: but my impression is, that much of the politics will not agree with the life and character of Lord Sackville. It is understood, that the only family of politicians, never censured, are the *Grenvilles*. There was nothing in Lord Sackville's connexions and history, to account for this:—nor, in my opinion, not tending to produce the reverse.

Among all the persons hitherto named, the author to whom I would ascribe these letters, is *Richard Glover*, the author of *Leonidas*. None of these objections apply to *him*. It is said that this ingenious man was in the confidence of the *Grenvilles*: to which it has been haughtily answered, that the GRENVILLES would never trust their state secrets to a man of the condition of Richard Glover! Really, this is not a little ridiculous!! I can hardly think that Lord Grenville could ever have held out such unaccountably aristocratic and unstatesmanlike language! Very many arguments are in favour of Glover's right:—I have yet heard not one against it:—to every other claimant there are insurmountable objections. Glover's talents were equal to it; but it is said, that he had not the same terseness of style. I am not sure of *that*:—but of course he would not write private memoirs with the same laboured compression, as letters put forth with so much anxiety and effort.

Vanity would have induced many men to have at last disclosed the secret: of all the supposed authors, Glover had in this respect the least impulse to do so. He had already, rightly or wrongly, received the homage of a

great Epic poet. If Lord Grenville really knows any thing of the matter, the time is now arrived when he may safely tell it. Glover's son is dead; and no near relations of the family remain to be affected by it. I protest against the inference that I admire Glover's poetry, (which I could never read,) or that I think there is the wonderful genius and force in the letters of Junius which is commonly ascribed to them. They are full of intense malignity, and many false points; many inaccurate contrasts; and many sophistical conclusions. They are most in the manner of *Horne Tooke:* but *he* was one of the severest objects of their attack. What must have been the *tact* and skill in *style*, (not to say matter and tone of mind,) of those stupid people who could ascribe them to *Burke?*

There must have been something accidental in the strength of curiosity and interest regarding Junius, which has been kept alive to this day. Much perhaps is to be ascribed to the non-removal of the veil, which still leaves room for the play of conjecture. There is little of essential and permanent truth in them;—little which can form the materials of history.

The puppets which fill up the mass of an administration, the rubbish which fills up the interstices of the wall, do not last long enough to be re-used as ingredients in composing the pages of the great historian. It was a crisis of little men. No man, whom nature had not endowed with great talents, stands prominent in future national annals merely in right of his office. Who cares for Dudley, Earl of Leicester; or Villiers, Duke of Buckingham; or Arlington; or Pelham; or Percival? Harley, a man of moderate abilities, has been somewhat more consecrated by one of the noblest pieces of Pope's poetry.

With the exception of Leicester, Queen Elizabeth did not employ one minister, or state officer, or in military capacities, who was not either a man of genius, or of eminent talent: for the great talents of Burleigh, and his son Sir Robert Cecil, cannot be doubted. Lord Buckhurst, (Sackville) was, next to Spenser, the greatest poet

of his day; and what is more, he was partly Spenser's model in allegoric imagery; and sometimes his superior in sublimity.

I have mentioned Pope. I have not seen *Mr. Bowles's* pamphlets in defence of the judgment he has pronounced on the poet; but I protest against the manner in which that controversy is conducted in the *Quarterly Review*. If we estimate Pope by his *Eloisa to Abelard*, few will be entitled to stand above him. If we judge from the general tone of his intellect, feelings, and the major part of his poems, he belongs to a subordinate class. It is vain to talk about *finish* and *execution:* finish and execution cannot change the essence of the thought, imagination, and sentiment.—Without *invented* incidents, either sublime, or pathetic, or beautiful—and at the same time true to nature—there can be no pure and genuine poetry! One is sick of hearing idle stuff about the mere flowery poetry of figurative language—about similes and metaphors, and oriental gaudiness. This is the poetry of the milliner and the dress-maker: one does not wonder therefore that young ladies die with raptures at it! The plainest passages of *Milton's* poetry are the most excellent;—and so they are of *Dante's!*

In the generality of modern novels, as well as of modern poetry, there is scarcely any invention:—Sir Walter Scott's invention is inexhaustible; and of the true kind, because it is the invention of character and incidents, placed in new combinations. Mrs. Smith was an inventor of great beauty, and great truth. *Celestina* in the Hebrides, and *Geraldine* in the old manor house in Herefordshire, are exquisite; and then her poetry is, of its kind, touched with inimitable pathos, melody, and grace. Yet—shame to the age—Mrs. Smith begins to be forgotten!

It is one of those inconsistencies which we encounter in the whims of the world, that even in France, under the return of the old dynasty, Voltaire, the great apostle of Revolution, seems to be in as much demand as ever; and large editions of his interminable volumes still continue to be printed both in magnificent forms

and for the pocket. I know not if his English disciple, LORD CHESTERFIELD, is equally called for:—a man, whose profligacy and shameless inconsistency of principles can never be encountered without disgust.

Lord Chesterfield's selfishness blinded the acuteness of his understanding; and his contemptuous opinion of the sagacity of mankind made him hazard the most obvious contradictions, to gain a momentary applause. He says of his friend, Lord Scarborough, that "*he had not the least pride of birth and rank—that common narrow notion of little minds; that wretched mistaken succedaneum of merit; but he was jealous to anxiety of his character, as all men are, who deserve a good one.*" Now from whom does this proscription of the pride of *birth and rank* come? From him whose whole system is built on skill in the manners and formularies of fashion and high life! Who contended, that all virtue lay in outward appearance;—in the polish of the surface! Who encouraged hypocrisy and artifice; and thought that there was no immorality, but in awkwardness and rudeness! Who contended that all Johnson's genius, and wisdom, and learning, and moral eloquence, were worthless, if his person was uncouth, his address vulgar, and his behaviour at the table or in the drawing-room coarse and unconformable to the customs of high life! Whose whole life was spent in the setting up the model of a man of fashion; and who, not content to practise it himself, deliberately reduced it into a written system; and openly inculcated that the only crimes which he could not forgive in his son, were those which offended against this system! Who not merely wrote thus, but shewed his sincerity by acting upon it:—who hated, and used cruelly his son, and turned him into bitter ridicule, because his careless and natural manners made him neglect some of those *pettitesses* of apeish mode, which he had taught as the *golden* rules of life.

Perhaps the father's offended vanity has instilled into the world a false idea of this son's character. He was a young man of distinguished talents; eminent for his

quickness and classical attainments at Westminster school—and much beloved by his friends and acquaintance for his frank and naïve character*—a sort of *bonhommie* approaching to a simplicity which was attractive to the good, and the manly—but which was hateful to his factitious and heartless father.†

Walter Harte, the poet, was the son's tutor. Lord Chesterfield himself had, of course, made this choice. Yet he ridicules this tutor's unfitness, on the allegation of unpolished manners, want of knowledge of the world, and recluse scholastic habits. Harte's genius and erudition appear not to have operated the least towards the favourable opinion of this titled coxcomb of literature!

What is the sort of aristocracy which this noble author would have had? Or would he have had none at all? He certainly would not have had Dr. Johnson ennobled on account of his genius and substantial merits—because, on his principles, Johnson's outward manner utterly disqualified him! Were riches to be the qualification? the *manners* of a jew broker, or a contractor, would probably exhibit a bar equally insuperable!

Perhaps it will be contended that all which this *admired* author meant was, the necessity of *personal merit* as well as *birth*—and that *merit* and *polished manners* were synonymous in *his* mind! I will leave him then to rest on that defence, if it will avail him: and go to the question of aristocracy or nobility itself.

It is a difficult question, if examined with profundity and impartiality. No doubt it is liable to great abuses, and has a strong tendency to great abuses. It is admitted that there must be inequalities in the rank and station of mankind, if property be allowed. And where is the country in the world in which it has *not*

* His son Philip Dormer Stanhope died in the *Rue de la* Paix, at Paris, in July, 1825.

† I learn this from one of his schoolfellows.

existed; or which can go on without giving security to it, or confirming its inheritability? But the arts and exertions, by which wealth is procured, are, too often, not the most honourable, most virtuous, or most innocent. It is not till the taint of these arts is worn out, and a more liberal spirit introduced, by a cast of independent descents, that the superiority becomes mellowed and safe to others.* I consider, therefore, a *true* aristocracy to be a wholesome and even necessary counterpoise to the selfishness and insolence of new wealth.

I know that the common opinion is the reverse of this. "This or that family," they cry, "is become very rich; therefore give them rank and title!" Now riches are always powerful enough by themselves in the eyes of the base world: they do not want collateral aid, to give them dominion. But it will be urged, that a poor aristocracy will for this very reason be soon overturned, and trod underfoot by untitled wealth refused its due weight in society; and that this is one of the dangers to which France, from its present state, is evidently exposed.—I admit it.—It is a great, and I fear inevitable danger! Yet I know not how, under the circumstances which had befallen the nation, it could have been prevented! Yet I see no reason, why, in Great Britain, birth and riches might not have been united in the *mass* of the peerage. A few ancient titles would have necessarily descended without an adequate inheritance of property.

Whether these principles be right or wrong, certain it is that not the smallest regard has been paid to them since the commencement of Mr. Pitt's administration, in 1784. Men were made peers who were very useful and respectable as country gentlemen, but who had no shadow of claim or pretence to be elevated to the peerage in England:—(still much less regard was paid

* I have the high authority of Bacon for this train of opinions, however whimsical and far fetched it may appear to many.

in creations to the Irish peerage, which has ended in their ascent to the English house in very many cases.) —These evils never close with the first false step: —but are always progressive—*et acquirunt vires eundo!*

It seems as if successive ministers had *volunteered* to bring upon the country the great evil to which Aristocracy was liable—and which in *England* might easily have been avoided—a poor and unillustrious peerage! at the same time it is in England, of all other countries, the most dangerous—because in England it comes in conflict with the greatest quantity of new and powerful wealth!

At one time every diplomatic man, who had done no more than his duty in some mission, every general and admiral who had not failed in the command of a battle, every lawyer promoted to the chiefship of secondary courts—was made a peer. At least seventeen lawyers, sixteen military, and fourteen naval men, with seven or eight diplomatists, have been promoted to the House of Lords in my time, with 16 Scotch peers—and 31 Irish peers—Total, 102. What occasion to make peers of Chief Justices of the Common Pleas? Why every Irish Chancellor, who might be elevated to the woolsack of that kingdom, because he was found unfit for the office he before held? Many of these new peers will necessarily leave small properties to be inherited with their new titles.

Is it asked, if professional and official merit ought not to be rewarded? How were they formerly rewarded? Queen Elizabeth did not make peers of Sir Henry and Sir Philip Sydney, Sir Walter Raleigh, or Sir Robert Cecil! The chances are that a peerage of historic lustre, and wide-spread alliances, will even keep up its wealth, when its numbers are small:—it cannot do so when it is so numerous as to be every where promiscuously connected with low families; and when all respect for it is gone.

It seems to me, that in the discharge of its political and judicial functions as a grand branch of the Consti-

tution, a great portion of its benefit is gone, by having become too numerous.

The question of *inheritable* merit remains to be noticed. We undoubtedly very often see the expectation glaringly falsified. But then no person of common sense ever supposed that the good effect would be universal: —that it would change our imperfect nature!—There will be wickedness and folly in every station:—and the stupid and the bad will take advantage of assumed counterbalances to indulge the more freely in their absurdities and their vices. Instances may be named of persons who have taken advantage of the lustre of birth to commit irregularities, which they would not otherwise have ventured: and feeble intellects sometimes assume to themselves an importance in right of these borrowed advantages, ill-measured and offensive:—but they are not very common; and the world repays them with sufficient sharpness! These abuses can form no rational argument against the uses of aristocracy, unless they are powerful enough to overbalance them.

I hear it exclaimed, "We do not object to aristocracy:—but pour the ranks of new wealth into the aristocracy, to induce them to make a common cause in its support!"—I answer—it will not do! I say, as was said in James the First's time of a proposed match between *Cecil's* son and Northumberland's daughter—*Their bloods will not mingle in a bowl together!*—The new wealth will soon be all at the top!

I do not absolutely insist, as they do in Germany and Spain, on the *sixteen* quarters;*—because, on

* This expression is not perfectly understood in England. It is not, according to the vulgar apprehension, a right to quarter 16 coats of arms: but a descent of unmingled gentry on all sides, up to the *great great great* grandfathers and grandmothers, in which generation the number is 16; viz. two grandfathers and two grandmothers; in the generation above, four of each; in the third generation, eight of

this system, one unequal match would destroy the pedigree.

A regard to birth has been found to exist at all times in every country of the world; it may therefore be taken to be a part of our nature. It is assumed, that there is more energy and more exercised intellect in those who have been the fabricators of their own fortune:—it may be so—but that does not necessarily include more virtue: and then, if these qualities be not transmissible, why are they to be possessed by the son of the new man—who will therefore have his father's meanness of birth without his merit?

What are the advantages ascribed to an hereditary over an elective monarchy? That it tends to quiet; and to allay the spirit of endless competition and contention. Is not this equally true of a well-arranged, carefully-conferred aristocracy? But it requires frugal, incorrupt, impartial, intelligent, yet generous dispensation:—not to suffer a candidate to found pretensions on mere descent, however distinguished; nor to be awed or influenced by mere riches, however threatening or powerful!

Notwithstanding the general outcry on the emptiness of birth, no one really feels it empty. No one is really offended at the elevation of those who have the charm of historic lustre, unless they are *personally* objectionable!

There will and must be distinctions in society, as long as there is inequality of property, of talent, and of personal exertion: the wisdom of political institutions is, as far as aristocracy is concerned, to regulate and soften them in the least offensive manner. Pitt paid no attention to this: he considered them as baubles, which were the cheapest means of paying those whose services he wanted. If the insolence of rank

each, which forms the 16 quarters. All the continental works of genealogy, in the first half of the 17th century, have tables of this sort.

could be softened by the present fashion of decrying birth, it would be a great good: but it is in no degree softened: it is far more intolerant and insulting than ever. It arises probably in part from the soreness of the upstart titles, who, conscious of being where they ought not to be, endeavour to retain their place by affected haughtiness. Foreigners cannot comprehend the nature of our classifications and demarcations in society:—no Englishman, when asked, can point out to them any principle. I have heard sensible English continually complain of the capricious usage which they receive. I have heard persons variously circumstanced —some of fair families, and fortunes—others not despicable—some even of distinguished blood—cry, "We are kept in a perpetual state of uncertainty and irritation:—if we could perceive any rule, any intelligible line of conduct, however objectionable, set up, and acted upon, we should know what to expect, and prepare for,—whether it be birth, or rank, or riches, or talent, or place—or manners:—but we find them all outraged, mixed, and disregarded, just as suits the whim of this or that person who has gained any momentary ascendancy;—and yet we are insulted and reproached with the want of any one which we may want, as if it was an indispensible *sine quâ non!*" "What a low vulgar fellow is such an one!" they exclaim; "I cannot bear to have him of my party!" Perhaps it is answered, "You are much mistaken: he is not only a man of elegant manners, but very well descended! and really, my good friend, were your charge true, it makes me smile to hear such objections from you, whose party the other day was half-made up of certain people of notoriously base origin—of coarse manners—and blemished characters!" What is the reply?—"O dear, we must do as the world does—birth you know is all a humbug after all: those people give very good dinners, and very good assemblies; and what have we to do with any thing else! Besides, you rogue—do not you know that they have the ear of Lord and Lady ——, and there will be no more countenance

in that quarter if we are not civil to them! And what a pretty thing for us that would be, if it should be said, that the *Rollestons* of *Rolleston Mount* were not seen at Lady ——'s assemblies! And let me observe, my good friend, the thing would not end here: if once a touch of this kind takes place, it spreads like the expanding and multiplying circles caused by a stone cast into a smooth water. Lady —— is not content to withhold her own card: she goes round to her chief friends, and says: 'My dear Lady —— or Mrs. ——, I have a favour to beg of you: imperious circumstances have prevented me from inviting the *Rollestons* of *Rolleston Mount* to my next assembly! Now I understand that you also will have a large party next week! May I ask you not to send them a card: the contrast would otherwise make me so *odious!*'"

Wise-acres and optimists will urge that it was always so; and that folly, caprice, and fashion always went in league. I do not admit this: I do not admit that one age is exactly like another. Forty years ago, people knew their station better;—and families of moderate station, and unassuming spirits, were not held up to contempt for not being seen at fashionable assemblies—when others of their own class were equally excluded! —Now mere impudence and vulgar intrigue carries the day without a check!—Each formerly knew his own station; and each in that station was respected, if his conduct did not forfeit esteem. It is true, that if it were possible to abolish all artificial distinctions, and pure personal merit could take its proper degree of precedence in society, it would be an admirable amelioration in the state of human life. But we know that it cannot be;—that humanity is too imperfect for this! Do we get a step nearer to it by throwing down the ancient substitutes? The distinctions set up will be far more odious than those which are cast away! In former ages there was a profligate Lord Rochester, Duke of Buckingham, Duke of Wharton, Thomas Lord Lyttelton, who abused their rank to plunge into all sorts of extravagance and dissoluteness! Has folly, absurdity, or

vice become less fashionable, less a mode of distinction, since fashion has not been confined to birth and rank?

In abandoning the regard to birth, have they who are called people of the world set up a better criterion? Do they hold genius, or virtue, or amiable conduct in higher estimation than formerly? Is even the State better served because it is not served by the same class of men?—In the House of Commons this disregard is positively lamentable, in its powerful effect on the minds of the people. The whole language of debates is utterly changed: there ought to be a perfect freedom of speech; but it should be a *decorous freedom!* There are men still there, whose oratory is perfectly classical and refined—such as *Canning's:*—and I must do *Mr. Peel* the justice to testify, that, though not equally imaginative and splendid, he is equally decorous! I cannot approve of an appeal to the violence of popular prejudices and passions, clothed in their own language!

It is the fashion to call these opinions unphilosophical. This censure implies a somewhat narrow conception of *philosophy*. Since the popular critics applied this charge to *Burke*, it need not much offend. If philosophy, when applied to politics, be wisdom, and sound knowledge of the human heart, and of human action resulting from experienced reflection and sagacity, then every page of Burke abounds with the most admirable philosophy. Mankind will never be mere reasoners, for all that the modern philosophers may urge;—nor ought they to be! They will not be an inch the nearer virtue or justice, or sound tests of merit, by abolishing regard to rank, and birth, and hereditary distinction! They will only open and facilitate the road for the more unopposed and more rapid career of vulgar intrigue, corruption, and dishonesty! There will not be fewer or less immoral fools of fashion: but they will be more cunning, more gross, more sensual, and more deceitful!

It is said that talents or virtues are not hereditary.—

Not universally, it is true: — but they often are so — witness the *Pitts, Foxes, Yorkes,* etc. It was at any rate an happy motto—taken by *Lord Rodney,* whose arms were *three eagles,* on his promotion to the peerage for a great naval victory:

"*Non generant aquilæ columbas.*"

The great families of England have for some years abandoned their strong holds. They have fallen into the *pit** prepared for them! As long ago as the reign of Henry VII. this scheme was commenced — not indeed to favour the people — but to augment the power of the crown.—Queen Elizabeth persevered in it. The Stuarts, through corruption, feebleness, and favouritism—went the other way. The Revolution of King William again strengthened the aristocratical branch. Queen Anne a little weakened it by the urgency of a political crisis, when twelve lords — not of the first condition—were poured into the Upper House at once. The mistresses of George II. caused a sensible deterioration. Subsequent ministers, till the dismissal of Lord North, were frugal; *but not choice!* The East India Bill of 1784—the War—and the Irish Union, have done the mischief!

It is often insinuated that all this is but a senseless sort of complaint; — that it is a necessary result from what is called the due and beneficial march of human affairs; —that it comes from the augmentation of commercial wealth, and the increasing prosperity of the country! —— I suspect that all this is a delusion!—If it were so, the landed rental would keep pace with this march!—But Mr. Pitt took it into his head, that there was no real value, except in what are called (after Adam Smith) the *productive labourers* of the nation. He thought, therefore, that in taxation there was no harm in loading *idle* capitalists. The fundholders he dared not touch: all the real weight of taxation therefore fell on the landholders — especially those resident on their estates.—The pressure of the *Assessed Taxes*

* I mean no pun.

has absolutely ruined, and driven away half the country-gentlemen of England:—and when they came to live in towns, the relics of their fortune were spent in rivalry with country bankers and shopkeepers!

The difference in the power of money up to the close of Lord North's administration—even during all the apparent gloominess of affairs at the crisis of the American war—was far more than seems to be understood. It will not be believed, when I say that I remember country gentlemen at that time, who, upon 1,500l. a-year, kept a large establishment in the country;—an handsome table;—and spent the winter months in a good house in London;—and this without contracting debts.

I remember noblemen living splendidly—with every sort of old-fashioned parade,—on an income which is now deemed (however falsely) scarcely adequate to the expenditure of the moderate class of gentry.—I make allowances for the vulgar exaggeration on the subject of figures:—in which fools think they shew their own high notions by talking of *thousands* as they ought to talk of *hundreds!** Rents were stationary from about the year 1700, or earlier, till 1787 or 1788. Soon after the beginning of the present century, they had nearly trebled; but they have fallen back!

To return to the peerage of England; the total number is now 318:—and 172 of them have been conferred since Mr. Pitt commenced his administration in 1784.—In that time the number extinct is only 42:—increase 130—which is an increase equal to more than *two-fifths*:—besides the 28 representative peers of Ireland;—and the addition of these doubles the size of the House of Lords within a fraction.

The greatest objection which strikes me is the vast

* About 90 years ago, a private act of parliament, now in my possession, passed, dividing the largest estate then held by an individual in Kent, into three portions, among three co-heirs; the rental of each share is specified. The third did not exceed 3000l. a year. I think it was only 2400l.

preponderance of lawyers and placemen. I do not object to a Lord Chancellor, and Chief Justice of the King's Bench: the two chiefs, presiding over the courts of equity and law, ought to be there. But it is lamentable to have men of another description—men, too, who perhaps may not have received a regular and liberal education; and who, therefore, view objects in a narrow, ungenerous, unscholarlike, unphilosophical spirit.

It should be observed, that 78 of the 172 peerages were conferred either in the interval of Mr. Pitt's retirement, or since his death: so that he is only answerable for 94.—His administrations lasted about eighteen or nineteen years out of the forty-one and an half, from January, 1784. *His* increase was at the rate of five a-year: those of other ministers not quite equal to four. The immense influx has been from *Ireland* and *Scotland*.

At the Coronation of George IV. *fifteen* peers were created: of these, *three* were country-gentlemen—*Liddel*—*Cholmondeley*—and *Forester*. In 1814 and 1815, *nine* were created: among these there was no country-gentleman. In 1806, *fourteen* were created: among these were *three* country-gentlemen; *Anson*, *Crewe*, and *Lygon*. In 1801, *eleven* were created: among these there was no country-gentleman. In 1797, *fourteen* were created: among these were *four* country-gentlemen; *Wodehouse*, *Rushout*, *Powys*, and *Lister*. In 1796, *fifteen* were created: among these were *six* country-gentlemen; *Rous*, *Calthorpe*, *Basset*, *Lascelles*, *Campbell*, and *Rolle*. In 1794, *ten* were created: among these were *five* country-gentlemen; *Bridgeman*, *Peachey*, *Pundas*, *Curzon*, and *Pelham*. In 1790, *six* were created: of these there was only *one* country-gentleman—*Lascelles*. In 1785, *eight* were created: of these, *five* were country-gentlemen; *Egerton* of Heaton,* *Cocks*, *Parker*, *Hill*, and *Dutton*. Total, 26 country-gentlemen. I do not deny that a large portion

* Baronet, the eldest branch. The *Bridgewater* family, though ennobled 180 years before, were a younger branch.

of these were among the prime gentry; and that several of them had large estates. But there were many men of much better descent among the gentry, with the exception of three or four. *Eight* of them were not of the *male* line of the respective names which they bore. *Fourteen* are military peerages, and *eleven* naval: *five* only officers of state;—*eight* diplomatic.

On the Continent, where the Noblesse is principally *titular*, an imperfect conception is entertained of the British peerage. By the new Charter in France, a Chamber of Peers exists there also: but *ex necessitate rei*, produced by the results of the revolutionary proscriptions and forfeitures, it has many essential differences of composition; and, consequently, of moral and political weight. The mass of landed property possessed by the British peerage is still very great. Perhaps something near a third have small estates; these therefore greatly reduce the amount of the average rental. If we deduct these, it would be difficult to name an average which would gain assent. The vulgar unchastised ideas of riches and income are so extravagant, that they ascribe a rental of twenty or thirty thousand pounds a year to men who have not a *thousand acres* in the world! Throwing in the ten or twelve immense estates of our richest peers, I can hardly suppose the average of the two-thirds would reach fifteen thousand pounds a year;—I suspect not twelve thousand!

We must bring the test of facts and experience to correct the absurd notions entertained on this subject. Not two years ago, the *Culford* estates in Suffolk, of the late *Marquis Cornwallis*, consisting of upwards of eleven thousand acres, numerous manors, and a noble mansion, were advertised for sale;—and the vendors themselves only put the annual value at seven thousand pounds a-year. Now I appeal to all men of business, if an estate of this size often occurs.* Part of it *might*

* About 25 years ago, Dr. Beeke, now Dean of Bristol, who was Lord Bexley's tutor, and had great access to

be Suffolk sands: I am sure that about Culford, the soil was deep, though it might be too wet.

We hear of private men of new families, who are said to have come into immense property; and are cited as giving proof of it by the rate of their expenditure. But these are commonly men who have their capital at command; and live on this capital for a few years, till the whole is spent. In this way, 100,000l. or 150,000l. will make a great shew for a short period: yet it would not buy a rental of more than 3,000l. or 4,000l. a-year. About forty-two years ago, the late Marquis of Lansdowne said that an English nobleman might live as handsomely and generously as became his rank, for 5,000l. a-year. From the time that Mr. Pitt's financial operations began, the case became very different.

There is on record the amount of a vast estate in the time of Charles I., which, according to my experience, is very surprising. It is that of *William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle*, given by the Duchess, in the curious Memoir which she published of the *Duke's life*. The rental amounts to *twenty-two thousand pounds a-year.*—Now it is supposed that, to bring this to the value of the present day, it must at least be multiplied by eight,—and this would bring it to 178,000l. a-year!

I can, however, on the contrary, mention, from the positive evidence of deeds, estates of 500 or 600 acres, which, in the year 1790, were sold for little more than the actual sum numerically for which they had been bought, *temp.* Char. I.—and this, without any thing of local or accidental circumstances to account for it.

It is observable, that the estates of new men, however large they may be supposed to be, seldom go down to the third generation. Even when the purchaser dies, the property almost always comes to the hammer. The

official documents, published a most instructive and ingenious pamphlet on the Income tax, in which he endeavoured to set right the loose and stupid opinions entertained of individual wealth.

estates of Barwell, Sir Thomas Rumbold, Sir *Francis* Sykes, Paul Benfield, and an hundred others might be named. The predictions of the downfall of those who fed on *abbey-lands* have been not a little falsified: no estates have kept so full, and lasted so long, as those of *Russell* and *Cavendish!*

All the common conversation of mixed society is necessarily loose; but there is no subject on which there is so little precision and approximation to the truth, as on the amount of private fortunes, and the extent of rentals. Every thing is seen through a monstrous magnifying-glass; and every one seems to think that his own familiarity with wealth will be estimated by the light manner in which he talks of thousands and tens of thousands. If it be asked, "is such an one rich?" —"Oh no"—it is answered—"a mere competence for a country-gentleman—about ten or twelve thousand pounds a-year!"

I have heard it remarked, that we often meet with persons of genius, of wit, of talents, of learning, of accomplishments, of taste—but rarely with persons of sound, intelligent, sagacious sense; of those quiet, chastised, correct, sagacious, yet natural and lively conceptions and judgments, which gratify without fatiguing the hearer; which are all serenity of light; which win their way imperceptibly, and produce assent without a struggle. Almost all conversation is the eruption of ambition and vanity: that is said which the talker supposes will recommend him;—not what he thinks; but he seldom has a judgment sufficiently rational and experienced to make a good choice.

People, for the most part, talk as authors generally write books, merely to gain notice—unless the similitude to authors be now changed, inasmuch as authors now write principally for money;—and that is far meaner than the vain desire of distinction.—To write for money* *must* debase the mind: because then an

* Every one knows that the price paid Milton for his *Paradise Lost* was fifteen pounds, and that only contingent

author becomes a slave to the opinions of the mob, and to the popular taste. Now, if wisdom be the result of high talents highly and continually exercised in the pursuit of general truths, the opinions and taste of the mob cannot be right.

John Langhorne first drew the notice to *Collins's Odes* by an article in the Monthly Review, about ten years after the poet's death; and twenty years after the publication of these exquisite poems. At this time, all the rage was for *Churchill's* coarse and libellous Satires. I think there is no doubt that Gray owed some images in his *Elegy* to Collins's *Ode to Evening*—an ode which, in its class, has never been equalled. Collins was one of those divine spirits which are all essence of poetry.

And surely nothing, which has ever been said eloquently and discriminately in praise of genuine and high poetry, can be too enthusiastic. It is its business to carry us into a visionary and more beautiful world; —according with our desires rather than with our experience. I endeavour to impress the necessity of this *inventive* quality in all the criticisms I write; and I am reproached that I am only inculcating what every one knows and admits. But, if it is so known and admitted, why are not the poetical works, which now come forth, tried by it; and why is not judgment pronounced accordingly? I find nothing of this in the major part of our popular poetry; I find no great and affecting truths embodied and set forth in an interesting and natural fiction; I find no noble and unaffected characters in conflict upon the tempestuous sea of life! I find, instead, a glittering simile, or tinsel metaphor; a puling, sickly sentiment; or a passionate and burning tear! all brought out in the most polished forms of fashionable slang! golden goods, no doubt; — and of great demand in the market! So once were *Du Bartas* and *Marino*, and a thousand more, now forgotten!

on the sale of 4500 copies. The original contract has just been found, and printed. See *Lit. Gaz. of 20th Aug.* 1825.

It may be said, that Miss Seward proved by her *Louisa,* that a novel in verse is but a bad thing.—Why? because all Miss Seward's ideas of excellence lay in a florid style;—not in bold invention of grand and natural characters! Our old histories are full of incidents and hints for the most beautiful fiction. But perhaps the difficulty of filling them up is anticipated: it is easy to put together extravagant and improbable combinations; but to pursue the course of nature in her grand and affecting features is quite a different task! To depend, not on surprise, but on force, is that for which few are qualified!—Knowledge, experience, wisdom, must unite with a rich imagination, and a familiarity with all the deeper and finer movements of the heart. A glowing morality of bosom and conscience; an emulation of the magnificent desires, and profound regrets, that alternately rule the loftier endowments of our nature; an habit of forming into shape, and putting into action, the possibilities of grand and propitious or tremendously afflicting circumstances of some extraordinary fate, are the fountains of poetry!

27th August, 1825.

It was not till yesterday that Major Parry's *Last Days of Lord Byron* have come into my hands. I have this morning finished the perusal of them. In many important respects this volume furnishes information and proof of a very extraordinary nature. However highly I thought of Lord Byron before—and I have been severely blamed in many quarters for the alledged extravagance of my praises—I now contemplate him with still less qualified admiration. To appreciate Parry's testimony to the public virtues of his hero, we must keep in mind the quarter whence it comes. It is the evidence of a mere practical man, who was under no influence from the lustre of Lord Byron's

poetical genius. It may be said to come from a *partizan:* but critical minds can distinguish between mere assertion, and that which bears intrinsic marks of truth.

In addition to all the interesting traits of Lord Byron, which the author communicates, the intelligence regarding Greece is full of weighty matter. Nor is the exposure of pretended patriots, and of money-jobbing committees, assuming the mark of public spirit and of a love of the liberties of mankind, less convincing, and less useful. The pitiful schemes of political quackery are here developed and broadly displayed in action: and the false media through which characters are conveyed to the world; the chicanery with which the critical journals are made the instruments of party and personal misrepresentation and resentment, are here made intelligible by such distinct instances, in persons and measures to which the public attention is naturally and easily drawn,—that the most prejudiced will not be able to deny their force.

He, whose writings are adorned by sentiments of grand patriotism, has scarce ever had the opportunity and power, if he has had the sincere will, to confirm them by his actions. Lord Byron had the almost unexampled glory of both. His views in favour of Greece were as practically wise, as they were enlarged and sublime: and the purity of his motives, his total freedom from all selfish and private objects, can no longer be questioned even by the most base and most malignant. No other man would have persevered as he did, under such discouragements, privations, sufferings, and dangers.

The test of criticism to which Lord Byron has been exposed, is very singular. None of the common allowances which candour makes for others, have been made for *him;* his private morals have been criminated with a severity quite unlike the usual modes of judging mankind. There must have been some secret source of this inappeasible malevolence: it cannot have arisen out of the actual and open facts of his life. I am aware of

all that may be said in favour of what is called decency:—that Lord Byron was not content to disregard some of the great moral and religious duties: that he made them subjects of his defiance and ridicule! When I examine the characters of the mass of those who repeat these charges, when I trace them to the lips from whence they spring, I become sure that they are neither sincere nor consistent; and that they are the mere colour for hatred generated by other motives.

It appears demonstrably from Parry's book, as I had before anticipated from various traits previously known to me, that one of Lord Byron's most prominent antipathies was *hypocrisy*. This hatred took early hold of his understanding as well as of his passions: and as it was his nature to be direct and violent, it may be admitted that he sometimes carried it too far; and that in his eagerness to expose deception and pretence, he occasionally tore away too much of the veil from life, and laid naked the deformities of nature too rudely. There are some images with which to betray a continued familiarity, does certainly argue a defect of moral taste. So it was, that for some reason or other, either of early associations, or native composition, Lord Byron was assuredly *coarse!* I have undertaken to speak frankly; and on this point I must not conceal my opinion. Parry says, that he loved, and excelled in, *slang*. I had observed it before. This memorialist mentions it as a proof of his wonderful knowledge of life;—and perhaps it is so: but it is knowledge in which he had better not have shewn himself apt. It is impossible sometimes not to smile at its drollery and wit, as exhibited in *Don Juan*;—but it also led him into those offensive passages in *Don Juan* which are its great blot, and which would damn for ever any inferior work;—and yet, strange and bold as the assertion may seem, make the inimitable beauties of the nobler parts still more transcendently brilliant. What is the total amount of the passages which ought to have been expunged, I am not at this moment prepared to state: but I suspect it is not very large;—and I would spare many passages

which are commonly condemned; as not merely pardonable, but usefully satirical.

In proof of *coarseness*, I am told, on the direct authority of those who have read them, that the *destroyed memoirs* were written in the coarsest style, and such as ought not to have seen the light.

A selfish indulgence of his own fierce passions, regardless of the consequences to others, is among the heavy charges made against Lord Byron. The latter days at least of the noble poet's life are a triumphant answer to this cruel attribute. During his expedition to Greece, *self* was always most heroically sacrificed;—the safety and happiness of others, won by danger, watching, sacrifice of fortune,—and, at last, of life itself, was his only regard, and the tenor, course, and end of his actions!

If we put his splendid genius aside, if we give to the winds and waves all the magnificent memorials of poetical happiness, which he had written,—let us only take the last three or four months of his life, as related by Parry, an eye-witness, and a mere practical, sensible, matter-of-fact man—incapable, in all respects, of inventing, or exaggerating;—and what is the result? The picture of an hero of the rarest magnanimity and lustre—illuminated by as rare wisdom—as considerate as grand—led on by the purest zeal for the independence and happiness of a suffering people;—magnificent in his conceptions; sagacious and accurate in his details; sparing of blood; anxious to preserve the lives even of the enemy; outwardly stern; inwardly melting with sensibility; kind to those about him; thwarted by treachery, yet forbearing; deserted, and left in the breach, where he foresaw death, yet scorning to withdraw; defrauded, yet still forgiving, and unabated in his zeal for the cause in which he had embarked; living on a crust, in a wretched apartment, in a wretched unwholesome town; yet spending tens of thousands of his private fortune in a cause which was entitled to draw on public funds, withheld from him through the violent intrigues of the basest treachery!

Shewing by the corporeal maladies under which he sunk, even in the vigour of life, how deep had been his internal anguish and self denial; and dying, partly for want of medical skill, while the last exhalations that quivered on his lips were those of fondness for a wife who refused to be reconciled to him, and for a child who had been withheld from his embraces!

If this be a true portrait of the last four months of Lord Byron's life, is it not sufficiently meritorious to immortalize any man? Its veracity does not depend solely on the credit due to the narration of Mr. Parry. If the stated facts are false, Colonel Stanhope and the Greek committee can refute them: admit the facts, and the conclusions cannot be resisted. We now know one of the poisoned sources whence the attacks on Lord Byron's memory in the Public and Critical Journals came!

In this public capacity Lord Byron displayed a sublimity of virtue and patriotic views, which cannot be clouded or questioned. With the private faults of him, whose great public virtues are acknowledged, it is commonly agreed that we have nothing to do. But let us combine them in Lord Byron's case;—and ought not the former to be the index to the true character of the more doubtful parts of the latter? In private life, Lord Byron is accused of having been reckless of the happiness of others!—It is impossible! no man can change his nature at once: scrutinize Parry's relation of facts of Lord Byron's kindness to foes as well as to companions, and dependents at *Missolonghi;* consider the proofs he exhibits of deep and unaffected sensibility;—and he, who can then say that Lord Byron wanted benevolence and excess of tender feeling, is one too obtuse or too malignant to be argued with!

Considering the turn which the attacks on the injured poet have taken; considering the stories which have been circulated about him, and the broad unsparing terms which have been used, it is a difficult thing to defend him without seeming to betray a relaxation of moral principle, and to admit, if not justify, a disre-

gard to those boundaries between virtue and vice, to which a perpetual and vigilant attention is necessary for the welfare of society. Whatever irregularities Lord Byron, in the impetuosity of youthful inexperience, committed, he committed in the face of open day. He had something like Rousseau's insanity, of desiring to appear worse than he was! He had something *like* the *vanity* of shewing himself to the world in the character of a *rake*—a *reprobate*—and a *devil!* Yet I cannot satisfy myself that it was *strictly* vanity! —It was partly defiance: partly violence of passions, which no early instruction had taught him to curb. But Parry utterly mistakes in ascribing his self-indulgences to the early luxuries of life; and to his having been dandled in all the selfish gratifications of dissolving aristocracy. Lord Byron's boyhood was the reverse of this; and there is no part of his character which is seen more clearly in its causes than that which arose from the mortifications and embitterments of a childhood past in neglect and obscurity, uncongenial to his high birth, future station, and native pride. It was this which, when he entered the school of Harrow, threw all that spleen and gloom on his spirit and his intellect, which so united to form at once the clouds and splendour of his genius!

I believe nothing therefore of Lord Byron's viciousness of heart. I admit that open and unblushing irregularities might have as mischievous an effect on the public as if they proceeded from such radical vice. I arrived at Geneva 7th September, 1818, about eighteen months after Lord Byron had quitted it. I learned there nothing which could be authenticated against him, unless irregular hours, love of solitude, and eccentric habits. He received Bysshe Shelley* and his wife

* The manner in which the *Quarterly Review* criticised the works of *Shelley* and *Leigh Hunt*, taking that crooked opportunity to criminate Lord Byron in a most mysterious and utterly unfounded manner, is a forcible illustration of what I have said in a former page.

under his hospitable roof at Coligny, if that was a crime:—and as to female society, let it be remembered, that Lady Byron quitted *him!*—not he, *her!*

As to the world,—the poet had sufficient reason to be discontented with it: it had not been kind or just to him. Whatever were the disputes between Lady Byron and him—(and it cannot fairly be omitted that all the *known* facts tend one way—and ought to be believed till counter-statements of credibility are made)—the public had no right to take the part they did; and to pursue the afflicted sufferer with their relentless clamours and atrocious fables! Organized parties were against him: there was nothing which could be called a party for him! The whole bands of Methodists—not one body—but numerous, powerful, and almost irresistible bodies—opened in full cry upon him!—The spirit of all his poetry, as well as character, was especially opposed to them, their principles, their systems, and their modes of action!—The ladies naturally joined the enemy's columns; and, if a tenth of the stories* circulated had been true, they were right!

It was the temper of Lord Byron—perhaps his fault—perhaps his misfortune—to persevere in a real vice, in proportion as he was persecuted for it—and, more than this, even to encourage and exaggerate the belief of calumnies he abhorred and disdained.

This is a singular inconsistency: but it did not end here. All this was the temper, the habit, the passion—of one—whose very heart was consumed by the intense desire of glorious distinction and honourable fame! Where he was encouraged in a great course of action; where his principles and his aims were duly appre-

* A Frenchman related to me a story he had heard of Lord B.'s mode of tormenting his wife, too ridiculous to be repeated; and asked me in the most serious manner if it was not true?—I smiled: he told me an English Lady of distinction had communicated it to him as an undoubted fact within her own knowledge. I grew at last indignant: but I perceived that I could not shake his faith in the story.

ciated, there was no exertion, no sacrifice, which he would not make to deserve what was expected of him! Parry bears witness to this in his unwavering resolution to remain at Missolonghi, when death,—and when he seems to have had a clear presentiment that death—was the certain consequence!

From the age of *twelve* till this my *sixty-third* year, I have been accustomed to study—(above all other works)—books of biography:—and especially and most intensely those in which the secret feelings and movements of the heart are laid open. But I have never read any character, in which purity of public conduct and grandeur of motive is more unequivocally displayed, than in every trait which Lord Byron exhibited at Missolonghi regarding the affairs of Greece.

It may be said that he a little overcalculated his means, and the power of individual patriotism, by embarking in such an expedition without a better knowledge of the people, their characters, and resources. I am not sure, if all the assistance promised him from England had been duly performed, that this scheme of liberation was within the cards. But I cannot admit that a proper sagacity ought necessarily to have foreseen the course afterwards held by the Greek Committee: When they embarked their capital, success became a matter of *interest* to them.* Lord Byron could not rationally have anticipated, that a cause so taken up, and in which large sums were embarked, would have been sacrificed to make Greece a mere stage to play off Jeremy Bentham's theories of government, and Colonel Stanhope's plans of printing presses, newspapers, and Lancasterian schools. He could not have supposed, that where every thing must necessarily depend on united effort, all sorts of division were to be

* Perhaps it will be retorted, that they had long *since* had the prudence to get rid of *their own* shares. It is not necessary to *schemers* that shares should *long* continue at a *premium*; they are not such fools as to omit getting *out*, as quick as they came *in*!*

created, and every thing was to be paralyzed, rather than miss the chance of forwarding these paltry, dirty, worse than nonsensical schemes: that any thing of such utter stultification should have been encouraged and patronised at home, as the practices of those who sought out Greece as the loop-hole, whence they might insult and calumniate, out of private passion, not only the Holy Alliance—(as it is called)—but our own Government in the Ionian Islands, at the moment when the only possible chance of establishing the independence of Greece depended on soothing and neutralizing the Cabinets of Europe—and more especially in avoiding to provoke power so very near to them as the Ionian Government. It is so utterly impossible that any agitator of such a plan could be so blind to its mischievous consequences to the cause in which he professed to have embarked, that I cannot see how he could conceal from himself the consciousness of the leading motive for the line he was pursuing. The *Committee*, at any rate, were not within the influence of the fumes of private passion and personal ambition!

On Lord Byron's death, I foresaw that the English press would teem with misrepresentations of him: I said—*the cowards will now come forward to insult the dead lion!* But I knew too little of what had been going on in Greece, to look to it from that quarter! I read the articles in the *Magazines*, *Reviews*, etc. and clearly perceived a *snake in the grass!* but I knew not its exact position. There was a game to play sufficiently obvious considering the circumstances of the parties. The public were enough inclined to believe *a priori* that the poet could not be much of a *practical statesman!* that he loved to make a noise—loved his own passions and his own whims—and that after all he was a tyrant and a despot—and, however he might profess liberal principles of politics by way of adding attractions to a popular poem—that he was in heart nothing but a prejudiced and bigoted *aristocrat!!!*

Out therefore came the various portraits, memorials, anecdotes, comments,--all sounding upon this chord,

"He was but the proud noble"—"he never forgot that he was Lord Byron"—"he had been spoiled by education and fashion"—"he had no solid and enlightened views of policy"—"he had no powers of argument and reasoning"—"he did not see things with a philosophical mind:"—"he was against a free press,"—"against education,"—"in short, he wished to keep the Greeks just as much slaves as before—only to be ruled by himself, instead of being ruled by the Grand Turk!"

"Ah!" cry the mob of readers, "now the truth comes out: we were sure a man with a coronet could never really love freedom!" "Ah!" cry the tories, "this is glorious, to have the fellow unmasked at last!" "Ah!" cry the methodists, rubbing their hands in triumph, "see how he is given up by the liberals, who we were afraid would have held fast by him! Don't you observe how it comes from the Greek party themselves! this is excellent! *there* lay our danger: we had some reason to fear that his connection with the Greek cause would have rendered this unholy poet unassailable!"—"Ah!" cried the gossiping lovers of detraction, "I enjoy this;—I enjoy it with all my heart! see what it is to hear an unvarnished story! this comes from those who knew the man! *He* for the people indeed! *he* a patriot! *he* an hero! why, he had no philosophic ideas of liberty; his head was only full of high-sounding scraps of poetry; he laughed at Jeremy Bentham; and did all he could to shut out knowledge from the people; and to bully Colonel Stanhope, till the Colonel, with as much firmness as temper, lowered his crest, by telling him he was in heart no better himself than a *Turk!*"

But what if all these things came from the Greek Committee themselves, by their secretaries, their authors, their travellers, their missionaries, and their Benthamites!—So goes the world:—or at least so goes the present literary world. He, who is not connected with some of these media of conveying his opinions, is now shut out from any influence on the opinions of

society: one or other of these bodies have got possession of all purchasers. Every reader attaches himself to one or other of them; and that body makes demands on him, equal to the whole which he can expend in reading. Every reader is a dottrel to his party:—he is its absolute mechanical and unresisting slave.

How often do we take up books, which are said to have a great sale: we look at them: we persevere sufficiently to see their nature and quality: we cry, "how is it possible that this book, which has not a single literary merit of any kind, can have been successful? It is dull, trite, vulgar, unskilfully put together, made up of matter trifling in itself—and grossly inaccurate into the bargain!" Then we come to this conclusion: "it must therefore contain something, though we have not hit upon it, which forwards the view of *some party!*"

It is often urged, that though ex-parte productions might mislead, yet the freedom of the press, by forcing forward the other side, elicits the truth. I perceive no such effect: the mass of the people only read on their own side of the question. But if they do read on both sides, and it makes any impression at all on them, the effect is confusion, and an utter abandonment of *any* fixed opinion. The conflicting opinions of the numerous reviews now published do not set up those whom others have unjustly thrown down; but have produced a general disesteem to authors; have involved them in one common neglect,—the good and the bad;—and have made them adopt an opinion gratifying to their own self-regard, that there is no such thing as definite and certain excellence in literary composition; and that with a little management one man has as good a chance of being exalted into the fame of a poet, or a moralist, as another.

It has been already observed that all the prejudices and passions of the world were enrolled against Lord Byron. It will then perhaps be asked, how, consistently with my principles, his poetry could be received with such eagerness, and command such an unexampled

sale?—It requires some very nice distinctions and qualifications, to account for it. If the better parts of Lord Byron's poetry had been the cause of this popularity, the case would go far to overturn my theory. But I contend, confidently, that they were not so. Lord Byron's first poetical success had in a great degree an adventitious foundation. The *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* had little other merit than its justice,—the admitted provocation—its courage —its personalities—and the attack on men, who had given great offence, but to whom others hitherto submitted through fear. It was indeed the satire of a vigorous mind; and this made a double impression, when it came from a young nobleman immersed in dissipation; and whom his attackers had represented as a feeble coxcomb! Then, after an interval of two years, — and those years spent in foreign travel through countries little frequented by English tourists —in which a spirit of romantic adventure had already gained for it a sort of celebrity, which had set public curiosity a tip-toe,—came the two first cantos of Childe Harold, brought into the world by *Mr. Murray*, with all the management and skill of publication for which he is so remarkable—not in broad puffs, like *Mr. Colbourne*—but insinuating, mysterious, sagacious, and piquant—aided by a popular review—and hailed by the nods and smiles of its *not-often-smiling* editor! The train was laid—the poem came out—the flame caught in a moment!

There are fine passages in these cantos;—and especially such as one would not have expected from the supposed habits and reported character of Lord Byron. But surely a great portion of these two cantos, if examined by positive and not relative standards, is not much above mediocrity.

The success however of this poem served to plunge Lord Byron entirely, for two or three years, into what is *called* the fashionable world of London! Success and encouragement were necessary to open and fan into flame this wonderful man's deep-buried genius: but

not exactly such success: for it at least brought as much evil as good. Next came two or three poems, generated in the hot-bed of corrupt literature:—the *Giaour*—the *Bride of Abydos*—*Parisina*, etc.—in which there were a few splendid patches—but against which I must protest even as efforts of genius! In the *Corsair* the poet began for the first time to feel himself at home; and to know his own strength!

The great and organized persecution arose out of the domestic misfortunes which drove Lord Byron abroad. His poetical fame was *then* established; and could not be recalled or wiped out. In *that* stage, whatever made him more talked of—for good or for bad—aided the circulation of his works.

The difficulty is, *first* to fix public attention: when once engaged, the force and singularity of Lord Byron's mind, whether approved or not, would never let it relax. It was in *Switzerland* that he began first to sound his genius to its depths. In the beautiful campagne of *Coligny*, overlooking the broad expanse of the Genevan lake, and terminating its view by the *Jura* mountains, he gave himself up to meditation, to self-examination, and to regrets gilded and pierced by the glorious sun of poetical magic. The character of his mind first came fairly out in the THIRD canto of Childe Harold. He spent half his time on the water; and liked it best when it was most tempestuous. It is sufficiently demonstrative that at this time he drew a great deal from the fountain of *Wordsworth's* poetry:* sometimes he almost used his very words. I must confess therefore that the indulgence of future, frequent, I may add ungentlemanly spleen against his master, is not easily to be excused.

The identification of almost all Lord Byron's poems

* Shelley is evidence of the fact. At this time Shelley had gained a strange influence over Lord Byron's mind. Shelley has written two or three short things (*posthumous*), which have a delicate beauty: on the whole his poetry is fantastic, corrupt, and forced.

with his own character has been made a ground of censure, very commonly assented to.—To *me* this is one of their very extraordinary attractions. It gives them a sincerity, a certainty, a vivacity, which scarcely any other poems possess. It is said that he is not like *Shakespeare:* he cannot throw himself into every variety of shape; represent every course of passion; or develop every diversity of thought produced by nature or by circumstances: it is still one and the same gloomy mind throwing forth its gloom and its passions; its hatreds; its scorns; and its raptures!

The remark is mainly true. There is this unity in almost all Lord Byron's best poems:—not, however, in *Don Juan!*—It is not attempted to compare Lord Byron with Shakespeare!—But this unity has its advantages as well as disadvantages. However powerful and rich imagination may be, it can never quite equal the force of actual and personal experience in those who are endowed with the highest degree of feeling, passion, and intellectual splendour!

Nature had endowed Lord Byron with gifts of such singular force, with feelings of such intensity and such splendour, and the chances of life had brought them into full play under circumstances of such extraordinary interest, that I doubt if mere invention could ever have produced any thing equally striking and equally just! The disclosure of the internal movements of such a mind is read with a breathless interest. It has all the brilliance of fiction, and all the solidity of fact! Lord Byron's life was poetry; and his verses are but its *mirror!*

It is a mystery of our nature, that whatever internal feelings violently haunt us, we feel relieved by communicating, and gaining sympathy for them. When those feelings are of a poetical character, and are thus communicated in adequate language, the fruit I believe never fails to be true and standard poetry. This is not contrary to the quality of invention, on which I have always insisted. Those feelings are generally produced by the created presentiments of a visionary mind.

Lord Byron carried it even to an high degree of superstition, as he frankly acknowledged to Parry.

What fatigues me in ordinary poets is their artificial and affected invention: they represent a set of sickly sentiments and images, which are not only different from life; but more insipid than life:—states of mind, which neither themselves, nor any one else ever experienced; and which it would be a degradation, if they did experience. Then we meet with these authors, and find them men of the world, conversant with its modes, favourites in its fashionable societies; pleasant companions, and putting a full value on conformity to its habits.—And why should they not be? What they write is no part of their character: a tone merely assumed;—nothing but a piece of dull and laboured mechanism,—fineer work; and flowers of coloured paper; —and gold-leaf! Pope could see the distinction, when he spoke of *Cowley!*

> "Forgot his Epic, nay his Lyric ART,
> Yet still we love the language of the HEART!"

Nothing can be more true than the lines so often cited from Horace:—

> ——— Mediocribus esse poetis,
> Non Dii, non homines, non concessere columnæ.

Of all dull reading, mediocre poetry is the dullest. I can no longer read even *Akenside:* he is a wordy declaimer;—and so Gray always thought. In all *Shenstone* there is but one elegy worth preserving—the elegy *on* JESSY.—*Goldsmith* has a few good lines in his *Traveller:* but I strongly suspect that they were every one of them those which were furnished by *Johnson*. I never relished *Young's Night Thoughts*,* even in my admiring days; they have much smoke, and little fire.

All Lord Byron's noblest poems have reference to life; only in cases extraordinarily circumstanced,

* I ought to be prejudiced in their favour; for he was a friend of my grandfather.

and of violent and grand excitement :—I mean life as it appeared to Lord Byron—not as it appears to a common mind. And thus I dare to bring his magnificent poem of *Manfred* within this character.—" But," it will be answered, " surely not *Cain;* nor *Heaven and Earth!*" " Yes," I reply, " *Cain*—and *Heaven and Earth!*—but I have not now space to argue the question!"

Lord Byron had an ardent and unextinguishable love of distinction and glory—and that which consecrated this love as a virtue was, that he placed it principally on the merit of cultivated genius—and of public benefits conferred on an enslaved people;—on dedicating to their deliverance his strenuous exertions, his fortune, and his life!

But I must not omit to say, that he did not always hold this high career;—that, to shew the inconsistencies and the weaknesses of human nature, he had also his petty ambitions:—

> " Born with the gifts to win the good and wise,
> Women and fools must praise him, or he dies!"

He could not bear not to be thought a man of the world as well as a poet:* and he delighted to talk slang with coarse and sensual rakes; and contend in audacious speculations with hard-headed free-thinkers.

He was proud of his descent; and he had reason to be proud of it. And here I must correct an erroneous construction which has been given to a passage in my *Letters on Lord Byron, published in July,* 1824. It has been understood that I spoke equivocally of his right to be classed among the old nobility. I meant nothing like such a doubt. Lord Byron was of one of those few families whose male ancestors held the rank of peerage before the close of Henry the *Third's* reign. But that peerage had long expired among females: the male peerage inherited by Lord Byron was created by

* Even so plain and unlettered a man as Parry was struck with this.

Charles I. Now I had long ago ventured to lay down the line of separation between the old and modern nobility at the death of Queen Elizabeth. How, therefore, could I, consistently with myself, call the *peerage*, of which the poet was himself in possession, positively old?—But still he was the male descendant of one of the oldest classes of our nobility. It is not likely that I should mean to degrade persons from whom I descend: for I am proud to shew among my quarterings the arms of an *elder* brother of *Lord Byron's ancestor!*

I have thus been accidentally impelled to give an unproportional length to the discussion of the character of Lord Byron, on which I had already amply treated in other publications; but it must be recollected that other documents have been since laid before the public by different persons who had the opportunity of personal knowledge: and therefore I have thought it desirable to express the opinion I hold subsequent to the appearance of these new lights. It is true that we have still to expect the *Life* by *Moore*, who had many opportunities of judging, peculiar to himself. But the concurrence of testimony, which we already have from various unconnected quarters, can scarcely err.

There was something so very rare in Lord Byron's genius, and in all the circumstances connected with his life, that the subject cannot well be exhausted, nor soon become fatiguing to rational curiosity. As to *Mavrocordato*, the Greek chief on whom he fixed his faith, he seems to have been the best who could have been chosen.*

There are many characteristics of English and French literature extremely unlike: and I have been a little astonished at the popularity of Lord Byron's poetry in France; for I must confess that it seems to me that

* I remember *Mavrocordato* at Geneva, in the winter 1818—1819, when he first escaped from the Turkish power. He was a large handsome man, apparently between forty and fifty; and seemed inclined to mix in Genevan society.

there is no part of literature in which the French so little excel, as in poetry. In historic memoirs and biography, they are always amusing, often beautiful, sometimes profound. I speak of the past ages: their very modern books do not seem to me equally to deserve this praise. The earlier productions, however, of *Madame de Genlis* deserve it.

The *Memoirs of Herself*, of which the fifth and sixth volumes have just appeared, must be read with due allowances for the garrulity of a great age. I confess that they so far disappointed me, when I took up the first volume, that I have not yet had the perseverance to go through them. Yet it is impossible not to be astonished at her industry, her acquirements, the quickness and ingenuity of her talents, the extent of her inquiries, her fertility of incident, and copiousness of observation and reflection, a certain sort of good sense and practical consideration in her theories, and a clearness, vivacity, and elegance of style, which belongs to a former age. But this applies more to her precedent works than to her *Memoirs*, which have struck me as of too slight a texture, and too full of frivolities and ceremonials. Yet there is something amusing, if not satisfactory, in the array of so many literary names: and Madame de Genlis has filled too important a part in the literature of the last fifty years to be dismissed without mature consideration. I reserve therefore my final opinion till I have read the Memoirs more fully, and with more care.* Madame de Genlis's criticism on Madame de Staël is severe, but just. In many of her remarks on the literature of Voltaire's age she shews a pure and classical judgment. The fault, I think, of her genius is, that she wants intensity and profundity; — that she has neither deep feeling nor high imagination. With all her good sense, she has not the art of carrying the

* Two or three anecdotes of the conduct of French Reviewers to Mad. de G. especially of *Mons. Hoffman*, in the *Journal des Débats*, shew that these things are conducted in France exactly as in England.

reader away with her; nor of ensuring his confidence. To create enthusiasts, the writer must be an enthusiast. She prides herself on her *Romance on Petrarch*:—it is a complete failure!—she certainly must have been utterly ignorant of the character of her own powers when she undertook that subject. The French genius, and especially that of Madame de Genlis, has no congeniality with that of Petrarch. A good life of Petrarch is yet a desideratum in literature, notwithstanding all which has been done by *Abbé de Sade** — an amusing book, written by an industrious man, of feeble powers!

Madame de Genlis has been in the habit of writing works, consisting of half history, half fiction. I consider this a very dangerous sort of composition: it is scarcely possible to preserve the due limits in such an union: and if it makes any impression on the reader, it will inevitably confound in his memory what is fact with what is imagined. It is quite a different thing to raise a whole imaginative structure on some obscure and undefined historic fact. Then the slovenly way of putting the word "*historique*" in a note, instead of a particular reference, is detestable. Every thing which is told by historians is not true; we want the *name* of the author, that we may know what credit to give to him; and the *volume* and *page*, that we may verify, if we choose, the citation. Otherwise what check is there in that which the author has the whim to impose on us?

The delineation of character is one of the most attractive, and perhaps one of the most useful faculties of genius. Madame de Genlis sometimes exhibits it; but I doubt if she ever enters into the depths of the heart. She was rather formed to catch the traits of artificial society: she has touched the character of *Madame du Deffand* with a light but admirable hand:—I wish she had entered with more consideration into that of *Rousseau*, instead of telling us two or three petty anecdotes. I have long learned to guard myself against *anecdotes:*

* This book is now scarce in Italy, and I believe not common even in France.

while they seem to let us behind the curtain, they only betray some moment of casual and passing folly,—even if true. And what a temptation do they hold out to distort, paint, exaggerate, and invent?

We have some English authors who partake something of the school of Madame de Genlis: such as *Miss Edgeworth:* but they have not her liveliness, her genius, nor her literature. A trite, dull, moral lesson, taught in the shape of a technical fiction, is time consumed in reading, which, while it is all labour unmixed with pleasure, produces no fruit. Such authors, however, if they will not be read by posterity, have at least a more solid reward—the *money in hand!!* They, who write for lucre, must necessarily write for the dull and ignorant!

It may be said, that he who will bend to the world in nothing; who will obstinately and without qualification follow his own personal tastes, caprices, and whims, who expects that the reader should bring with him all the knowledge of which he himself may be, *perhaps accidentally*, the master; who will take no pains to supply abruptnesses, and open what, if trite to himself, may be new to others, deserves the neglect with which he may be treated: that what is for sale must be fitted for the market: that the wine-merchant could not sell the genuine unmixed produce of the vineyard if he would—because it is not suited to the public palate; and that nine-tenths of the people prefer the marks of the artificer's technical skill to the intrinsic worth of the material!

The nature of a newspaper was always understood, in former days, as clearly distinguished from literary productions: it was addressed to the people; and therefore was, in the very essence of its composition, framed with other views, and in another taste. Now the mass of books is written on the principles on which newspapers alone were formerly written. Newspapers have not risen to the rank of literature; but literature has fallen to the rank of newspapers. I remember once remonstrating with the editor of a country newspaper

—a very clever man—as to the use of a certain trite and inaccurate phraseology, which would have been easily mended: "Sir," said he, "I am aware of it: but we are obliged to use the terms with which our customers are familiar, or we should not sell our Journal!"

I anticipate the answer which will be given me:—"Are not some of the ablest of our popular authors at present principal writers in newspapers, as well as in literary journals?"—I admit it: but this *demonstrates*, not refutes, the justice of my complaints. They must write to *please*, not to *teach!* No one will now be taught: all claim the right to think for themselves. But will not a bad reason prevail more with a dull or ignorant man, than a good one?

There is a bastard sort of philosophy abroad in the world, which tries every thing in life, in politics, in morals, and in literature, by the artificial square of a sort of Scotch reasoning, without due regard to the complicated nature of man's being; to his passions; his imagination; his intuitive tendencies and predilections. The inductions are made from narrow premises, when truth can only be derived from broad ones.

Authors are now of a very different rank in talent and acquirement than formerly: the number of frivolous and charlatanical publications *increases* every year: the number of solid ones *decreases* still more rapidly. Were the subjects of important discussion; were the settled facts, which it is desirable to know,—exhausted, this might be endured with less regret. But it is the contrary: as the world goes on, the fields of enquiry, and the materials to be brought forward, multiply. It is therefore still more to be regretted, that the means should be thus wasted. There are topics enough of solid knowledge and erudition to employ all the presses, and exhaust all the money which can be spared for the purchase of books. Facts well chosen, well argued, well arranged, well expressed, require great talents and great industry.

The duties of literature are sufficiently obvious. Its

business is to bring forth or illustrate important truths, which are new, or not commonly understood. And let it not be supposed that this excludes imagination: it calls from it its highest and best-directed efforts. The public may be amused for a moment by the mere relation of common facts, which have novelty; or the passing application of common opinions to the occurrences of the day: but such *manufactures* are never recurred to. Of all classes of books, there is perhaps most of this in what are called *Travels*, *Tours*, and *Voyages*. They scarcely ever contain a standard sentence;—a sentence which can afterwards be cited. They come for the most part from persons of small talents and acquirements, incapable of curious discrimination or solid observation, who merely see the veriest surface of things with a common and careless eye; and relate in ordinary language, mixed up with patches of tumid pretension furnished by an hired editor, what is equally open to every stranger, even every child of twelve years old, who passes over the same foreign ground—whether posting by voituriers, or by the public diligence. Yet these are favourite books for the moment; and are, many of them, a good deal puffed by the Journals which call themselves Literary. How can it be, that many of these penmen, dubbing themselves authors, can write works really fit for publication? Many of them are stupid by nature; have had a neglected education; have had neither a taste for books, nor an opportunity of consulting them; have been admitted into no society, except what is common to all; and have seen nothing but what every courier sees twenty times in a year. If we should pay no attention to the gossip of these people regarding the common concerns of life occurring at home, how does the act of having travelled over the high roads of France, Switzerland, Italy, or Germany, invest them with new powers?

The truth is, that even a man of great talent, richly cultivated, and of quick observation, learns but little from the mere surface of foreign travel. The first

impression of a place is commonly deceitful. We can form no sound judgment from a residence much shorter than six months, — except as to the mere description of scenery; — and even there, mere novelty sometimes gives undue force. In every country in which I have resided on the Continent, my last impression has been different from my first.

I feel with regard to literature that to which very few will give their assent. It offends the popular prejudice: — a prejudice which all the literary journals of the present century have done their utmost to strengthen. I think that the character of an author should not be lightly taken up; and that it requires native gifts, peculiar both in kind and degree, in addition to acquirements of great labour, skill, and care.

I do not deny that there are some subordinate departments of useful book-making, which may be performed by mere labour, with very moderate talents. But the place due to this class of pioneers is very well understood, and is not the class on whom the dispute turns.

Abilities are common; genius is rare. We meet every day with those who apprehend with quickness, and apply with judgment. This perhaps is sufficient for the due treatment of temporary topics. But it is not sufficient for the production of a standard work. Examine our ablest literary journals by this standard, and see what will be the result. It may be best done by a reference to the tables of matter in the combined indexes of a series of years. I have done so; and could not hesitate in the conclusion to which I came. A general truth, of any novelty, and not borrowed, rarely occurs.

I never yet saw, nor have read, any full and authentic account of any one of great literary genius, who had not intense sensibility, — or who was entire master of himself. Enthusiasm is an indispensable ingredient; — and the spirit will sometimes take possession of persons so gifted! He, therefore, who can absolutely accommodate himself to the petty manners of the world, gives a

proof that he is not a great genius. He may assume the tone of deep pathos in his writings; — but it is all factitious. The great proof of littleness is servility; courting the fashionable, and living with the gay! I always admired Smollet's *Ode to Independence*. It was a burst of genius!

> "Thy spirit, INDEPENDENCE, let me share,
> Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye!" etc.

At any rate, if a man of mean birth and low fortunes lives with rank and title, he cannot live on equal terms; and we know enough of these latter to know that they will require obeisance in return for favour! Even the generous Lord Byron taught people that he would not always bear equality! Gray, who was honourably proud, as well as fastidious, would never expose himself to the insolence of rank. I have seen men, indeed, whom the public has honoured with the name of genius, making themselves the monkeys of new earls and lucky countesses, and, in return, getting their poetry puffed as divine! but it was the divinity of the milliner, the flower-maker, and the jeweller! I have seen men also, who, by the aid of checks written on satin paper dipped in rose-water, and edged with Cupids and weeping Venuses, boasted of being all the rage of upstart coronets, and ambitious, though faded, beauties of fashion! How delightful it must be to live couched and dandled in the very inmost shrine of the most artificial and debilitating luxury—sighing out in the most plaintive and tender voice:—"*I am a patriot: I love the hardy mob;—and would die for the liberties of the people!*"

All those feelings, which go rather to weaken than to strengthen the mind, all those sickly pretensions to sentiment, which are only fit for the effeminate, and the dealers in false and simulated refinement, are worse than the mere hard fruits of the head untouched by the heart. If they have any sort of claim to genius, it is a *bastard* genius, which is entitled to no inheritance;

—and it has all the corruption, without any of the vigour, of bastardy.

It may be said, that the wild flights of what I denominate true genius, have as little solidity, and are as little serviceable to the practical duties of life: nay, that they withdraw, exhaust, and derange the mind.—The charge is not true: they encourage the mightier enterprises of grand spirits: and they sometimes rouse even the sluggish and the dull.

I am aware that I have already, on many occasions, endeavoured to enforce this opinion: but it seems to me to be so very important, that it is better to run the chance of being reproached for tautology than to omit it. There is nothing unnatural in the most brilliant, most extraordinary, and most visionary flights of Shakspeare: they may not in all cases be such as reason and experience admit; but they are such as an excited imagination gives credence to:—even the very *Fairy* scenes of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which are all founded on popular superstitions! Great genius therefore is always in earnest: it knows nothing of technical creations; of a poetical world different from a real world; of feelings assumed for poetry, yet inconsistent with life; — of sentiments, delicacies, and refinements, unlike what the author himself, or any one else, has ever felt, yet set up as proper for poetical representation.

Such unmanly delusive affectations bring poetry into contempt, and sink it down into the rank of an art calculated only to mislead. The true poet paints what hard experience will seldom justify; but he paints what a passionate and noble mind, in a state of high intellectual emotion, expects and believes; he describes things, not perhaps as they are, but as they appear to him under the temperament to which he has been raised.

All writers of artificial poetry are cold-blooded, cold-hearted men, who substitute mechanism for inspiration; and who, therefore, always mistake extravagance for grandeur or beauty. It is as much the business of

the poet to be true to nature and actual existences, as it is of the philosopher—

"Awake and faithful to its wonted fires."

But there are those who prefer the painted tints on the fine lady's cheek to the rosy hues of a peasant girl; and the manufactured green of a drawing-room to the verdure of "*odious, odious trees!*"

When I call for high flights of imagination, for delineations of the more beautiful world which the poet creates for himself, for a state of intense feeling not congenial to the coarse habits of common life, I am not, as some will suppose, inconsistent with my own theory; I call for nothing which is contrary to that which I have just insisted on. That which I proscribe is not natural either in society or in solitude: we no more feel, or believe it, when alone, than in the bustle of company: it is a mere pretence, which no more represents what has actual dominion over the mind and heart, than gold leaf represents the solid golden ore. We may "hope, though hope be lost," and believe against reason: but we must not put forth, not only what reason rejects, but what *unforced* imagination never suggests; what the imagination as little confides in as the reason! It is the poet's business to embody all the more magnificent and more affecting phenomena of our intellectual nature: but it is as false in poetry as in science, to *invent* and *miscolour* phænomena! That which cannot be read and approved by the soundest and strongest understanding is not genuine:—if it cannot be read in our most sober moments, in those when we are seeking wisdom, it is not genuine! It will be asked, "How is this consistent with your praise of *Don Juan?*" I answer—"perfectly consistent! *Don Juan* abounds in objectionable passages; but it overflows with knowledge of human life: not only is the imagination exercised, and the heart touched by the interchange of exquisite decriptions and passages of intense feeling, while bursts of innocent humour bring a smile upon the most melancholy face,—but the under-

standing is continually surprised by a collision of fire, throwing forth blazes of the most profound and just remark." It is doubly to be lamented that the immortal poet should have thrown in so much dirty and offensive rubbish, because those are not the parts which have the recommendation even of wit or acuteness.

And here let me speak of one living author, who, because he is one of our greatest poets, has been most abused. I do not agree with *Wordsworth* in *all* his poetical theories, nor in *all* the models which he has created for himself:—but his works are a great study. All the faculties of the mind are exercised in the production of his principal pieces. Intensity and originality of thought characterize him; and the reason as well as the imagination is instructed by the perusal of his compositions. They have the grand ingredient of earnestness, the actual visions of a retired, peculiar, and deeply-meditating imagination: the associations which the poet paints require a long discipline; a studied bent; but they are conformable to its nature; and such as perpetual musing can produce in one of high gifts, high morals, and high attainments. Such emanations from a seer, who has spent his days on the bosom of lakes, amid the inspiring sounds of solitary woods, and high mountains, are like a new spring of living water from the rock, throwing forth freshness and verdure, where all before was trodden and barren.

In all these striking poems my great and most essential principle is primarily exemplified. The poet and the man are always identified. I have not the happiness of more than a very slight personal acquaintance with *Wordsworth:* but, since my residence abroad, some near members of my family have become so intimate with him, as to enable me to bear direct testimony to his qualities in private as well as in public: and these will crown his works, by the weight which they give to his sincerity.

Wordsworth does not run after the Great; ply for the praises of reviews; write down to the taste of the mob for lucre; nor, while he is setting forth the beau-

ties of nature, find enjoyment only in crowded cities, in dinners, drawing-rooms, and theatres! he unites philosophy with poetry; and practises the stern and simple morals which he inculcates!

His *Prefaces* contain a fund of original inquiry into the nature of "*the shadowy tribes of mind;*" and he has executed his own theory with powerful genius. The objection I make is, that his associations are often such as would not "*come unsought!*"—are not the "*involuntary*" strains of which Milton speaks as those with which the Muse "visits him nightly." Mr. Wordsworth admits that the associations can only be the result of deep study, and long discipline of the head and heart. This is more than we can expect of the great body of mankind even in their most virtuous state: and I confess there seem to me *already* existing in the human intellect the traces of associations of sufficient grandeur and beauty, which only want *rousing* and *bringing out!* Still this deep poet's productions form an era in our poetical literature, and demand all the calm consideration which can be given to them. There is a mighty elevation of spirit in the serene silence with which he has borne the ribaldry of coarse and ungenerous criticism!

But I am wandering into wider fields than can be permitted to my purpose. I have been somewhat irritated into the publication of this NOTE; and it has become necessary to shew that I have the command of matter which would have enabled me to *fulfill* what I had *announced*. These pages are made up of free and unborrowed opinions on topics of inquiry neither narrow nor incurious. Trite thoughts, or the disburthenment of a full memory conversant with trifles, may easily supply endless food for the press: but unless I felt a calm conviction, that my running pen, however traduced, does not justly expose itself to the censure of such a character, it should rest untouched by me!

I have dedicated a long and unrewarded life to literature. I began early; and I have gone on through good and through evil report: and have been enabled to do

so, because I loved the pursuit intensely for itself; and not for its worldly advantages. I know that the way to be successful in life is to boast;—and not to be querulous!—Mankind always shun the unfortunate! My opinions are not formed in the fashion of the present day; and I shall have the spirit and the clamorous or intriguing interests of very opposite organized bodies against me: —the tories, the whigs, the liberals, the sectaries, the fashionable poets, the fashionable book-makers, and the fashionable critics! Tremendous associations, who carry every thing by tactics,—and when they cannot succeed by reason, succeed by numbers!

The value of opinions depends on complex causes;—so complex, that we must be more severe and more abstract reasoners than the strongest-headed of mankind ever are, to give our full credence to what is *anonymous*. Much must at last depend on authority and confidence: indeed, almost every sound and deep opinion is mixed up with something of feeling or intuitive sense.

There never was an age in which it was as necessary to be incessantly vigilant against sophistries as at present. The whole public press is employed in promulgating, not matters of conscientious conviction, and sincere disinterested opinion, but matters in which the narrow interests of individuals or parties are set forth under the specious colours of what assumes to be general reasoning. Directories therefore, which are above suspicion, or against which we know where to be guarded, are more than ever wanted. It matters not much in what form an author, who is worthy of being read, conveys his ideas; the essence of what he communicates will bear him out. But, alas! not many authors are worth reading;—not one in one hundred and fifty adds an atom to human knowledge:—but original opinion, if it be just, is knowledge;—and much more important knowledge than a new fact. I have therefore, in this *brochure*, attempted opinions rather than anecdotes; though I know that the latter are much better received by the public. An anecdote

is worth little after it becomes stale, if it ever was worth any thing;—which it seldom has been. Anecdotes are exceedingly deceitful, though they amuse for a moment. There is a prying curiosity in our nature not founded in honourable feelings, which, if it may be excused, cannot be admired. I remember the intense curiosity with which the gossiping and perverted tales in *Madame Piozzi's* Anecdotes of JOHNSON were read on their first publication! How utterly are they now despised and forgotten!

If I should live through the ensuing winter, and be uninterrupted in my literary pursuits, it is my intention to proceed in the *Memoirs* alluded to in the *Announcement* for which this NOTE apologises. But I request that it may be understood that the Memoirs will be rather of *public* than *private* affairs;—sketches of public characters; criticisms on successive objects of literary attention; remarks on changing manners; and comments on political measures: and especially on that dangerous feature of our aristocracy, which Count Ségur (the father), in his *Mémoires*, has well expressed as preceding the French Revolution, p. 25: "*L'ancien usage laissait entre la noblesse et la bourgeoisie un immense intervalle, que les talens seul les plus distingués franchissaient* MOINS EN REALITÉ QU'EN APPARENCE: *il y avait plus de* FAMILIARITÉ *que* D'ÉGALITÉ." This was a great and disgusting feature, which I have long noticed in England;—especially during the six years that I sat in parliament:—a vulgar and unfeeling forwardness on one side;—a *treacherous* civility on the other! I could mention some very ludicrous instances where I happened, (without seeking,) to hear what was said—*aside.*

Much the larger portion of my life has been spent in literary retirement: but for thirteen years, from the age of twenty-seven to that of forty, I was necessitated to take an active part in a claim of peerage, which, during that long period, was procrastinated by the vexatious and dilatory modes of proceeding of a Committee of the Lords' House;—and there I had occasion

to see many public characters,—even to the penetralia; —to see of what talents great functionaries were made —in what manner and by what springs public business was conducted, and private rights were protected; what security there is in statutes; and what is the value of the constituted laws of my country! Above all, I learned to estimate the wisdom of our ancestors in the establishment of the law of trial by JURY! What *is* the law; and where encroachments have been made; and what is the consequence of those encroachments, I shall hereafter have occasion to shew! It is said, that power is strong in England, but that the law is stronger! I am afraid that I shall have occasion to shew that *power* is sometimes in this boasted country stronger than the law! I think that I know enough of the law, and can construe it with sufficient accuracy, not to mistake its provisions, when they are in technical terms which are admitted by an unbroken stream of judicial definitions to have but one precise and fixed meaning!

Whether these, or any other arguments or opinions of mine, will be considered of any weight, it is not for me to indulge any anticipated confidence. I know what I require in *others*, to give authority to opinion; but self-love renders a man an incompetent, because a too partial, estimator of his own powers. I know that weight is only due to the conclusions or sentiments of those who possess *all* the faculties of the mind: that imagination, feeling, native sagacity, reason, judgment, memory, are all necessary:—and that, added to these, there must be an independence of spirit, a disdain of mercenary or interested views, a frankness of temper, and an animating love of just fame. The pen, that is guided by one so endowed, will not write fruitlessly. Idle words will waste and dissolve, like the breath that gave birth to them.

Should this NOTE attract any readers, difference of opinion ought not to bring any condemnation on it. It is by collision that the truth is often elicited. It is only necessary that there should be good faith, and genuine ingredients, in what is thus brought into con-

tact. I am aware that I shall be often thought too severe;—and sometimes, as in the case of Lord Byron, too partial. *Fiat justitia: ruat cœlum!* If it be true, it cannot do harm:—if it be false, let it be confuted!

What I have done, though little noticed by the throng of vulgar readers and fashionable triflers, has gradually and imperceptibly mixed itself with the durable literature of my country. I have contributed to the revival of a taste for its older authors; I have withdrawn several meritorious old poets from oblivion; I have recovered a volume of original poems (never before printed), of William Browne, the favourite pastoral poet of James the First's reign; I have exhibited proofs of the genius of William Herbert Earl of Pembroke, which shew that he deserved the beautiful eulogy bestowed on him by Lord Clarendon; I have cast the truth and the interest of history on the peerage of my country;—I have endeavoured,—(though with too little success),—to expose the false philosophy of gambling Jews:—I have sometimes been visited by the still small voice of genius, virtue, and learning, to cheer me: but I have been left to struggle alone by those who ought to have extended to me an aiding hand;—the mean deserters of their blood, whose offered services I now reject with scorn:—I have been plotted against by treachery, fraud, and corruption;—and I have been persecuted and calumniated by the upstart power of hoary age, where intense malignity continues to increase with years; where prosperity still indurates; and where the breath of the opening grave seems but to fan the petty passions of low-born and mean-tempered youth!

I have seen so much corruption in the management of public affairs,—notwithstanding the boasted vigilance of our constitutional checks; I have had such proof of the underhand and treacherous workings of so many of our public functionaries, not only *little*—(which was to be expected)—but great;—that I am convinced the only peace and safety lies in retreat. I

repress the momentary ambitions that will sometimes return in spite of me; and recall the conviction, that obscure quiet in new and foreign scenes is better than the land of early associations, where so many images bring with them nothing but regrets and resentments. In a country of new nobles and stock-gambling wealth, in a country where distinction, political or literary, is only open to intrigue or noisy audacity;—where, so far as aristocratical power prevails, a few families, raised almost within memory out of the spoils of public plunder, and party manœuvre and faction, domineer,—where almost all its diplomatic functions, great and small, with all their dependencies, are confined to a few families, not of the best talents, or most gracious manners,—in such a country there is not much enjoyment for one who is too proud to crouch; too ardent and open to conceal his opinions; too conscious of his rights to endure a neglect or sarcasm; too indignant at upstart greatness and the insolence of office, to suppress his scorn.

The effect of the *topsy-turvy* of English society in the last forty years is truly provoking, because it is made up of such contrary ingredients. Whether birth, or wealth, or talent, or offices, or character, were the adopted ground of distinction,—so long as it was adhered to, we should know our places. But the pretence is shifted every day; and twenty times in a day. If it be birth or talent, etc. we know where to place Lord —— or Lord ——! but then let them be consistent; and abide by that on which they affect to rely! Among intelligent people it is pretty well settled what constitutes *Birth:* it cannot be cut short in this way or that way, by fanciful lines, to suit a particular pedigree! The insolence of two or three generations of office will not make it. If it could, then would families be entitled *to take advantage of their own wrong!* and having profited by place, gained by corruption, at the public expense, found upon it a new injustice, by insulting those from whom they had already drawn undeserved profits and advancements! It is by a critical

examination of one branch of the minuter details of the history of Europe, especially of France, Flanders, and England, from the commencement of the ninth century, that we must extract those general principles as to the tests of distinctions of *Birth,* which alone, from a certain sort of consent of ages, it is safe to adopt. All the illustrious families of France, Flanders, and England, which have been great by hereditary power and historic lustre, have sprung up in the male line not long after the ages of the reign of the house of Charlemagne; and from all the wide and laborious investigation which I have made, have, with an uniformity which is quite astonishing, so sprung up by the aid of early marriages with Charlemagne's blood. By a set of Tables, which I am carrying through the press, (for private use,) I shall be able to prove this to a demonstration from cotemporary and original historians,* whose authority cannot be disputed. I call on those, who choose to rely on the *airs*—perhaps the *emptiness*—of birth—to abide by it,—or to abandon it! I care not which!—Let them trust to their brilliant and energetic talents; and their highly-cultivated minds, if they will!

It is a misfortune that the English aristocracy have not in general any enlightened knowledge of their own history. Perhaps they may have such a silly book as *Debrett's*† *Peerage* at their fingers' ends: but this is a book exactly calculated to level lustre with obscurity. There *Lord Byron* makes not a greater figure than Lord Callan, Lord Milford, or Lord Eardley.

* I have been enabled to do this by the aid of the Royal Library at Paris, the richest in Europe, to which I have found every sort of accommodation, by the admirable courtesy and intelligence of Mr. Van Praet. This Library is alone sufficient to make Paris a most desirable residence to me.

† Poor Debrett is dead: the Editor who has succeeded him knows nothing of his business. The new edition is full of the grossest blunders—not merely of omission—but of commission.

Of that class of historic families, to which I have alluded as early connected with the blood of Charlemagne, are the *Montmorencies* of *France*. I mention these as an instance which will not be invidious, or questionable. The English *Percys* would be the same, were they of the male line. The *Nevilles*, (Earls of Abergavenny,) are so. Before the eleventh or twelfth century, it is sometimes impossible to connect the link by evidence of positive demonstration: but there is a species of circumstantial historical deduction, which has been especially adopted by *Duchesne*, one of our most authentic and profound genealogists, which approximates in such a manner to certainty, as to leave no doubt in well-endowed and well-exercised minds. I believe that all these conjectural origins have stood the test of two centuries of subsequent enquiry; and that in many cases they have been absolutely confirmed by the subsequent discovery of positive proof.

But I must not end with a subject which the world has been taught to consider frivolous. This NOTE is published as an Apology for the suppression of Memoirs, which I had announced. To give this Note weight, I have pressed into it such matter as I have considered not irrelevant to the subject. It contains a *mélange* of my opinions on the times;—frank at least,—if they should want accuracy or depth! The *rambling* manner, the alleged absence of all plan and method, will be criticised and censured:—but what will not be criticised and censured? Readers now *live* on the food of bitter and poignant criticism! Surely a NOTE, at any rate, may be allowed exemption from much arrangement, or any deeply formed design. The topics which were announced as forming the subject of the *Fragment of Memoirs* now declared to be suppressed, would have excited more interest in general readers, than those on which I have here touched:—but I congratulate myself on having withdrawn them: they were mixed up with opinions of the times and of characters, which, if the force of observation will not permit the judgment to be blind to, a love of quiet may render it prudent to

keep to oneself. The matter of the present Note is mainly literary: the value of the opinions, whether much or little, will be better determined in the sobriety of reflection, than under the first prejudices of the reigning taste of the day.

Paris, 13*th Sept.* 1825.

THE END.

LATELY PUBLISHED BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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1. Letters on the Character and Poetical Genius of Lord Byron.

London, printed for Longman and Co. (July) 1824. One vol. 8vo. 10s. 6d.

2. An Impartial Literary Portrait of Lord Byron.

Paris, printed for A. and W. Galignani, (Feb.) 1825. 12mo. 3 francs.

3. Recollections of Foreign Travel.

London, printed for Longman and Co. (Feb.) 1825, 2 vols. 8vo. 14s.

4. Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum,—originally written by Edw. Philips (Milton's nephew). 3d Edit. with Prefaces, Notes, etc.

Geneva, printed for Cherbuliez, (Oct.) 1824, 1 vol. 8vo. (100 copies only.)

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The impression is limited to 100 copies.

IN PREPARATION, AND TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE FOLLOWING WINTER OR SPRING.

MEMOIRS OF MY OWN TIMES,

AND OF

MY COTEMPORARIES LITERARY AND POLITICAL, FOR FIFTY YEARS, FROM 1775.

By Sir Egerton Brydges, Bart., etc., etc.

London, printed for Harding, Triphook, and Lepard. 2 or 3 vols. 8vo.

N. B. This is the work, of which a prepared Fragment is in this Note announced to be suppressed. The plan has been altered; and from a *private* it has been changed to a *public* Memoir. The characters will be drawn freely, in the lights in which they have appeared to me: and I shall endeavour to trace the fluctuations of society, the changes of property, the decay and extinctions of families, and the influence and consequences of the growing weight of new wealth. The principles and results of Mr. Pitt's two administrations will be more especially investigated.

S. E. B.