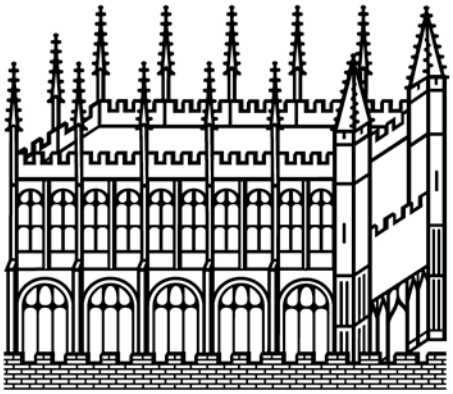

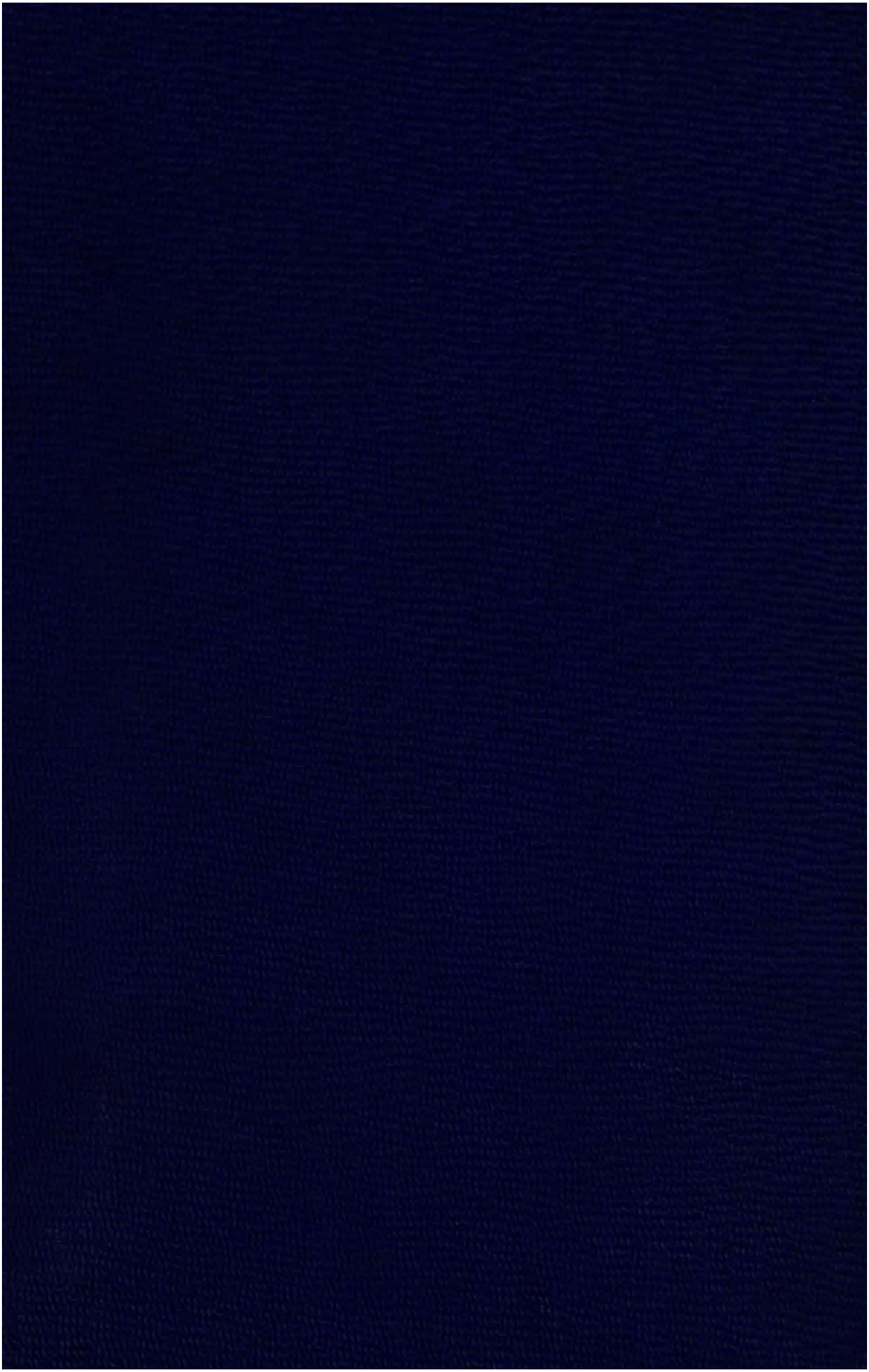

READINGS IN CRABBE.

"TALES OF THE HALL."

LONDON: BERNARD QUARITCH.
1882.

INTRODUCTION.

"TALES OF THE HALL," says the Poet's son and biographer, occupied his father during the years 1817, 1818, and were published by John Murray in the following year under the present title, which he suggested, instead of that of "Remembrances," which had been originally proposed.

The plan and nature of the work is thus described by the author himself in a letter written to his old friend, Mary Leadbetter, and dated October 30, 1817 :

"I know not how to describe the new, and probably (most probably) the last work I shall publish. Though a village is the scene of meeting between my two principal characters, and gives occasion to other characters and relations in general, yet I no more describe the manners of village inhabitants. My people are of superior classes, though not the most elevated; and, with a few exceptions, are of educated and cultivated minds and habits. I do not know, on a general view, whether my tragic or lighter Tales, etc., are most in number. Of those equally well executed, the tragic will, I suppose, make the greater impression; but I know not that it requires more attention."

"The plan of the work," says Jeffrey, in a succinct, if not quite exact, epitome—"for it has more of plan and unity than any of Mr. Crabbe's former productions—is abundantly simple. Two brothers, both past middle age, meet together for the first time since their infancy, in the Hall of their native parish, which the elder and richer had purchased as a place of retirement for his declining age; and there tell each other their own history, and then that of their guests, neighbours, and acquaintances. The senior is much the richer, and a bachelor—having been a little distasted with the sex by the unlucky result of a very extravagant passion. He is, moreover, rather too reserved, and somewhat Toryish, though with an excellent heart and a powerful understanding. The younger is very sensible also, but more open, social, and talkative; a happy husband and father, with a tendency to Whiggism, and some notion of reform, and a disposition to think well both of men and women. The visit lasts two or three weeks in autumn; and the Tales are told in the after-dinner *têtes-à-têtes* that take place in that time between the worthy brothers over their bottle.

"The married man, however, wearies at length for his wife and children; and his brother lets him go with more coldness than he had expected. He goes with him a stage on the way; and, inviting him to turn aside a little to look at a new purchase he had made of a sweet farm with a neat mansion, he finds his wife and children comfortably settled there, and all ready to receive them; and speedily discovers that he is, by his brother's bounty, the proprietor of a fair domain within a morning's ride of the Hall, where they may discuss politics, and tell tales any afternoon they may think proper."—*Edinburgh Review*, 1819.

The Scene has also changed with Drama and Dramatis Personæ: no longer now the squalid purlieus of old, inhabited by paupers and ruffians, with the sea on one side, and as barren a heath on the other; in place of that, a village with its tidy homestead and well-to-do tenant, scattered about an ancient Hall, in a well-

wooded, well-watered, well-cultivated country, within easy reach of a thriving country town, and

"West of the waves, and just beyond the sound,"

of that old familiar sea, which (with all its sad associations) the Poet never liked to leave far behind him.

When he wrote the letter above quoted (two years before the publication of his book) he knew not whether his tragic exceeded the lighter stories in quantity, though he supposed they would leave the deeper impression on the reader. In the completed work I find the tragic stories fewer in number, and, to my thinking, assuredly not more impressive than such as are composed of that mingled yarn of grave and gay of which the kind of life he treats of is, I suppose, generally made up. "Nature's sternest Painter" may have mellowed with a prosperous old age, and from a comfortable grand-climacteric, liked to contemplate and represent a brighter aspect of humanity than his earlier life afforded him. Anyhow, he has here selected a subject whose character and circumstance require a lighter touch and shadow less dark than such as he formerly delineated.

Those who now tell their own as well as their neighbours' stories are much of the Poet's own age as well as condition of life, and look back (as he may have looked) with what Sir Walter Scott calls a kind of humorous retrospect over their own lives, cheerfully extending to others the same kindly indulgence which they solicit for themselves. The book, if I mistake not, deals rather with the follies than with the vices of men, with the comedy rather than the tragedy of life. Assuredly there

is scarce anything of that brutal or sordid villainy,* of which one has more than enough in the Poet's earlier work. And even the more sombre subjects of the book are relieved by the colloquial intercourse of the narrators, which twines about every story, and, letting in occasional glimpses of the country round, encircles them all with something of dramatic unity and interest; insomuch that of all the Poet's works this one alone does not leave a more or less melancholy impression upon me; and, as I am myself more than old enough to love the sunny side of the wall, is on that account, I do not say the best, but certainly that which best I like, of all his numerous offspring.

Such, however, is not the case, I think, with Crabbe's few readers, who, like Lord Byron, chiefly remember him by the sterner realities of his earlier work. Nay, quite recently Mr. Leslie Stephen, in that one of his admirable essays which analyses the Poet's peculiar genius says:

"The more humorous portions of these performances may be briefly dismissed. Crabbe possessed the faculty, but not in any eminent degree; his tramp is a little heavy, and one must remember that Mr. Tovell and his like were of the race who require to have a joke driven into their heads by a sledge-hammer. Sometimes, indeed, we come upon a sketch which may help to explain Miss Austen's admiration. There is an old maid devoted to china, and rejoicing in stuffed parrots and puppies, who mighe have been another Emma Woodhouse; and a Parson who might have suited the Eltons admirably."

* I think, only one story of the baser sort—"Gretna Green"—a capital, if not agreeable, little drama in which all the characters defeat themselves by the very means they take to deceive others.

The spinster of the stuffed parrot indicates, I suppose, the heroine of "Procrastination" in another series of tales. But Miss Austen, I think, might also have admired another, although more sensible, spinster in these, who tells of her girlish and only love while living with the grandmother who maintained her gentility in the little town she lived in at the cost of such little economies as "would scarce a parrot keep;" and the story of the romantic friend who, having proved the vanity of human bliss by the supposed death of a young lover, has devoted herself to his memory; insomuch that as she is one fine autumnal day protesting in her garden that, were he to be restored to her in all his youthful beauty, she would renounce the real rather than surrender the ideal Hero awaiting her elsewhere—behold him advancing toward her in the person of a prosperous, portly merchant, who reclaims, and, after some little hesitation on her part, retains her hand.

There is also an old Bachelor whom Miss Austen might have liked to hear recounting the matrimonial attempts which have resulted in the full enjoyment of single blessedness; his father's sarcastic indifference to the first, and the haughty defiance of the mother of the girl he first loved. And when the young lady's untimely death has settled that question, his own indifference to the bride his own mother has provided for him. And when that scheme has failed, and yet another after that, and the Bachelor feels himself secure in the consciousness of more than middle life having come upon him, his being captivated—and jilted—by a country Miss, toward whom he is so imperceptibly drawn at her father's house that

"Time after time the maid went out and in,
Ere love was yet beginning to begin;
The first awakening proof, the early doubt,
Rose from observing she went in and out."

Then there is a fair Widow, who, after wearing out one husband with her ruinous tantrums, finds herself all the happier for being denied them by a second. And when he too is dead, and the probationary year of mourning scarce expired, her scarce ambiguous refusal (followed by acceptance) of a third suitor, for whom she is now so gracefully wearing her weeds as to invite a fourth.

If "Love's Delay" be of a graver complexion, is there not some even graceful comedy in "Love's Natural Death;" some broad comedy—too true to be farce—in "William Bailey's" old housekeeper; and up and down the book surely many passages of gayer or graver humour; such as the Squire's satire on his own house and farm; his brother's account of the Vicar, whose daughter he married; the gallery of portraits in the "Cathedral Walk," besides many a shrewd remark so tersely put that I should call them epigram did not Mr. Stephen think the Poet incapable of such; others so covertly implied as to remind one of old John Murray's remark on Mr. Crabbe's conversation—that he said uncommon things in so common a way as to escape notice; though assuredly not the notice of so shrewd an observer as Mr. Stephen if he cared to listen, or to read.

Nevertheless, with all my own partiality for this book, I must acknowledge that, while it shares with the Poet's other works in his characteristic disregard of form and diction—of all indeed that is now called "Art"—it is yet more chargeable with diffuseness, and even with some

inconsistency of character and circumstance, for which the large canvas he had taken to work on, and perhaps some weariness in filling it up,* may be in some measure accountable. So that, for one reason or another, but very few of Crabbe's few readers care to encounter the book. And hence this attempt of mine to entice them to it by an abstract, omitting some of the stories, retrenching others, either by excision of some parts, or the reduction of others into as concise prose as would comprehend the substance of much prosaic verse.

Not a very satisfactory sort of medley in any such

* A Journal that he kept in 1817 shows that *some* part of the book was composed, not in the leisurely quiet of his country Parsonage, or the fields around it, but at the self-imposed rate of thirty lines a day, in the intervals between the déjeûners, dinners, and soirées of a London season, in which, "seeing much that was new," he says: "I was perhaps something of a novelty myself"—was, in fact, the new lion in fashion.

"*July* 5.—My thirty lines done, but not very well, I fear. Thirty daily is the self-engagement.

"*July* 8.—Thirty lines to-day, but not yesterday. Must work up.

"*July* 10.—Make up my thirty lines for yesterday and to-day.

"*Sunday, July* 15 (after a sermon at St. James's, in which the preacher thought proper to apologize for a severity which he had not used). Write some lines in the solitude of Somerset House, not fifty yards from the Thames on one side, and the Strand on the other; but as quiet as the sands of Arabia."

Then leaving London for his Trowbridge home, and staying by the way at the house of a friend near Wycombe—

"*July* 23.—A vile engagement to an Oratorio at the church by I know not how many noisy people, women as well as men. Luckily, I sat where I could write unobserved, and wrote forty lines, only interrupted by a song of Mrs. Brand (Bland?)—a hymn, I believe. It was less doleful than the rest."

case; I know not if more or less so where verse and prose are often so near akin. I see, too, that in some cases they are too patchily intermingled. But I have tried, though not always successfully, to keep them distinct, and to let the Poet run on by himself whenever in his better vein; in two cases—that of the "Widow" and "Love's Natural Death"—without any interruption of my own, though not without large deductions from the author in the former story.

On the other hand, more than as many other stories have shrunk under my hands into seeming disproportion with the Prologue by which the Poet introduces them; insomuch as they might almost as well have been cancelled were it not for carrying their introduction away with them.

And such alterations have occasionally necessitated a change in some initial article or particle connecting two originally separated paragraphs; of which I subjoin a list, as also of a few that have inadvertently crept into the text from the margin of my copy; all, I thought, crossed out before going to press.† For any poetaster

* As "Richard's Jealousy," "Sir Owen Dale's Revenge," the "Cathedral Walk," in which the Poet's diffuse treatment seemed to me scarcely compensated by the interest of the story.

† Page 28. "Sounds *too* delight us."
,, 36. "Neither after-time *nor* adventure," etc.
,, 40. "And some sad story *appertained* to each."
,, 41. "Nor had a husband for *her only* son."
,, 42. "Her will self-govern'd, and *un*task'd."
,, 46. "Rolled o'er *her* body as she lay," etc.
,, 56. (Prose.) "Two ladies *walking* arm in arm," etc.
,, 75. "When time and reason our *affliction* heal."
,, 76. "*I will* be brief," etc.

can amend many a careless expression which blemishes a passage that none but a poet could indite.

I have occasionally transposed the original text, especially when I thought to make the narrative run clearer by so doing. For in that respect, whether from lack or laxity of constructive skill, Crabbe is apt to wander and lose himself and his reader. This was shown especially in some prose novels, which at one time he tried his hand on, and (his son tells us), under good advice, committed to the fire.

I have replaced in the text some readings from the Poet's original MS. quoted in his son's standard edition, several of which appeared to me fresher, terser, and (as so often the case) more apt than the second thought afterward adopted.*

Page 76. "*Thinkst thou* that meekness, self," etc.
,, 87. "Begins to exert *her* salutary influence."
,, 92. "We *judge*, the heroic men of whom we read."
,, 93. "*But what* could urge me at a day so late."
,, 96. "Then fairly *gave* the secret of her heart."
,, 108. "Or mine had been my *gentle* Mattie now."
,, 116. "I had some pity and I *sought* the price."
,, 133. "Would make such faces and *assume* such looks."
,, 214. "*Told him he* pardon'd, though he blamed such rage."
,, 218. "He entered softly."

* A curious instance occurs in that fair Widow's story, when the original

"Would you believe it, Richard, that fair she
Has had three husbands—I repeat it, three!"

is supplanted by the very enigmatical couplet:

"Would you believe it, Richard? that fair dame
Has thrice resign'd and reassumed her name."

Mr. Stephen has said—and surely said well—that, with all its short-and long-comings, Crabbe's better work leaves its mark on the reader's mind and memory as only the work of genius can, while so many a more splendid vision of the fancy slips away, leaving scarce a wrack behind. If this abiding impression result (as perhaps in the case of Richardson or Wordsworth) from being as it were, soaked in through the longer process by which the man's peculiar genius works, any abridgement, whether of omission or epitome, will diminish from the effect of the whole. But, on the other hand, it may serve, as I have said, to attract a reader to an original which, as appears in this case, scarce anybody now cares to venture upon in its integrity.

I feel bound to make all apology for thus dealing with a Poet whose works are ignored, even if his name be known, by the readers and writers of the present generation. "Pope in worsted stockings" he once was called; and those stockings, it must be admitted, often down at heel, and begrimed by many a visit among the dreary resorts of "*pauvre et triste humanité.*" And if Pope, in his silken court suit, scarcely finds admittance to the modern Parnassus, how shall Crabbe with his homely gear and awkwarder gait? Why had he not kept to level prose, more suitable, some think, to the subject he treats of, and to his own genius? As to subject, Pope, who said that Man was man's proper study, treated of finer folks indeed, but not a whit more or less than men and women, nor the more lifelike for the compliment or satire with which he set them off. And, for the manner, he and Horace in his Epistles and Satires, and the comedy-writers of Greece, Rome,

Spain, and France, availed themselves of Verse, through which (and especially when clinched with rhyme) the condensed expression, according to Montaigne, rings out as breath through a trumpet. I do not say that Comedy (whose Dramatic form Crabbe never aimed at) was in any wise his special vocation, though its shrewder —not to say, saturnine—element runs through all except his earliest work, and somewhat of its lighter humour is revealed in his last. And, if Verse has been the chosen organ of Comedy proper, it assuredly cannot be less suitable for the expression of those more serious passions of which this Poet most generally treats, and which are nowhere more absolutely developed than amid the classes of men with which he had been so largely interested. And whatever one may think Crabbe makes of it, verse was the mode of utterance to which his genius led him from first to last (his attempt at prose having failed); and if we are to have him at all, we must take him in his own way.

Is he then, whatever shape he may take, worth making room for in our overcrowded heads and libraries? If the verdict of such critics as Jeffrey and Wilson be set down to contemporary partiality or inferior "culture," there is Miss Austen, who is now so great an authority in the representation of genteel humanity, so unaccountably smitten with Crabbe in his worsted hose that she is said to have pleasantly declared he was the only man whom she would care to marry.* If Sir Walter

* I will add what, in his lately published "Reminiscences," Mr. Mozley tells us, that Crabbe was a favourite with no less shrewd a reader of Humanity than Cardinal Newman.

Scott and Byron are but unæsthetic judges of the Poet, there is Wordsworth, who was sufficiently exclusive in admitting any to the sacred brotherhood in which he still reigns, and far too honest to make any exception out of compliment to anyone on any occasion—he did, nevertheless, thus write to the Poet's son and biographer in 1834 :* "Any testimony to the merit of your revered father's works would, I feel, be superfluous, if not impertinent. They will last, from their combined merits as poetry and truth, full as long as anything that has been expressed in verse since they first made their appearance"—a period which, be it noted, includes all Wordsworth's own volumes except "Yarrow Revisited," "The Prelude," and "The ~~Brothers~~." And Wordsworth's living successor to the laurel no less participates with him in his appreciation of their forgotten brother. Almost the last time I met him he was quoting from memory that fine passage in "Delay has Danger," where the late autumn landscape seems to borrow from the conscience-stricken lover who gazes on it the gloom which it reflects upon him; and in the course of further conversation on the subject, Mr. Tennyson added, "Crabbe has a world of his own;" by virtue of that original genius, I suppose, which is said to entitle, and carry, the possessor to what we call Immortality.

* See Vol. II., p. 84, of the complete Edition, 1834.

Bordeaux.

TALES OF THE HALL.

THE BROTHERS' MEETING.

THE brothers met who many a year had past
Since their last meeting, and that seem'd their last;

As it was indeed their first and only one, and very many years ago. The brothers are really *half*-brothers, born of one mother, after a long interval, to a first and second husband; the first, an English gentleman, of small but independent estate; the second, an Irish officer, of none.

George, the elder brother—and his father's heir—is of a sensitive, proud and solitary disposition; and when

His father early lost, his mother tried
To live without him, liked it not, and—sigh'd;
She still was young, and felt that she could share
A lover's passion, and a husband's care;
Yet pass'd twelve years before her son was told,
To his surprise, 'Your father you behold.'

But he beheld not with his mother's eye
The new relation, and would not comply ;
But all obedience, all connection spurn'd,
And fled their home, where he no more return'd.

He takes refuge in the house of an uncle, a thrifty London banker, by whom he is kindly received, and thus admonished :

'That Irish beggar, whom your mother took,
Does you this good, he sends you to your book ;
Yet love not books beyond their proper worth,
But when they fit you for the world, go forth :
They are like beauties, and may blessings prove,
When we with caution study them, or love ;
But when to either we our souls devote,
We grow unfitted for that world, and dote.'

Accordingly he goes to a public school ; but, as much disgusted with the boys there as with the Irish beggar at home, is put under the care of a private tutor, of so amiable a temper, and of so studious a turn, that he draws his pupil into the very dotage which the banker had warned him against. Insomuch that when his education is finished, the lad, liking neither his uncle's business nor what little he has seen of the world, withdraws into the country to live on his own little inheritance, at his own pleasure, in solitude, reading, and reverie.

One day, while thus sequestered, he casually encounters a young lady of such ideal beauty as he had hitherto figured to himself in the heroines of romance : is fortunate enough to prove his chivalry by rescuing her from a somewhat imaginary danger, and is rewarded by smiles and thanks which devote him to her service and worship for ever. She disappears, however, as suddenly as she

came, after that one interview; he knows not, cannot find out, who, nor whither, in spite of all inquiry in the neighbourhood, and several years' travel abroad. At length, wearied and hopeless, but not yet disenchanted, he returns to his uncle, takes to business by way of dissipating his love, and accidentally lights on her whom he had so long and vainly sought, in a quarter, and in a condition, which at once breaks the spell for ever.

And now, at last disenchanted of love, he applies himself so doggedly to the desk, that he begins to like the business he had begun with despising—nay, after many years of service, to feel the love of money creeping over the ruin of a nobler passion. Becoming alarmed at this symptom of that 'cold frenzy' of avarice incident to old age, and conscious that life has other and better purpose to fulfil than doting over a perished love, or adding more to more than sufficient wealth, he resolves to retire before it is too late; and so,

The vision passed, and of the truth possest,
His passions wearied and disposed to rest,
He yet had will and power a place to choose,
Where Hope might sleep, and terminate her views.

He chose his native village, and the hill
He climb'd a boy had its attraction still;
With that small brook beneath, where he would stand,
And stooping fill the hollow of his hand
To quench th' impatient thirst—then stop awhile
To see the sun upon the waters smile,
In that sweet weariness, when long denied,
We drink and view the fountain that supplied.
The oaks yet flourish'd in that fertile ground,
Where still the church with lofty tower was found;

And still that Hall, a first, a favourite view,
But not the elms that form'd its avenue ;
They fell ere George arrived, or yet had stood,
For he in reverence held the living wood ;
From age to age they fill'd a growing space,
But hid the mansion they were meant to grace.

It was an ancient, venerable hall,
And once surrounded by a moat and wall ;
A part was added by a squire of taste,
Who, while unvalued acres ran to waste,
Made spacious rooms, whence he could look about,
And mark improvements as they rose without :
He filled the moat, he took the wall away,
He thinned the park, and bade the view be gay :
The scene was rich, but he who should behold
Its worth was poor, and so the whole was sold.

Just then our hero from his desk retired,
And made the purchase that his heart desired—
The Hall of Binning—his delight a boy,
That gave his fancy in her flight employ ;
Here, from his father's modest home he gazed,
Its grandeur charmed him, and its height amazed :
Work of past ages ; and the brick-built place
Where he resided was in much disgrace.
Young was he then, and little did he know
What years on care and diligence bestow ;
Now young no more, retired to views well known,
He finds that object of his awe his own ;
The Hall at Binning !—how he loves the gloom
That sun-excluding window gives the room ;

Those broad brown stairs on which he loves to tread ;
Those beams within ; without, that length of lead,
On which the names of wanton boys appear,
Who died old men, and left memorials here ;
Carvings of feet and hands, and knots and flowers,
The fruits of busy minds in idle hours.

Here George had found, yet scarcely hoped to find,
Companions meet, minds fitted to his mind ;
Here, late and loth, the worthy rector came,
From College dinners and a Fellow's fame ;
Yet, here when fixed, was happy to behold
So near a neighbour in a friend so old :
Boys on one form they parted, now to meet
In equal state, their 'Worships' on one seat.

Hither a sage physician came, and plann'd,
With books his guides, improvements on his land ;
Here were a sister-pair, who seemed to live
With more respect than affluence can give ;
Their minds by sorrows, by misfortunes tried,
Were vex'd and heal'd, were pain'd and purified.
More yet appear'd, of whom, as we proceed—
Ah ! yield not yet to languor !—you shall read.

Here day by day, withdrawn from busy life,
No child to wake him, to engage no wife,
When friends were absent, not to books inclined,
He found a sadness steal upon his mind ;
Sighing, the works of former lords to see,
'I follow them, but who will follow me ?'

These reflections naturally lead his memory back to his younger brother Richard, the one other son of that same mother from whom he himself had fled when she gave her hand to that same 'Irish beggar' as his uncle had called him, but who really was an Irish soldier of a decay'd house whose hereditary economy he carefully kept up.

To do the captain justice, she might share
What of her jointure his affairs could spare :
Irish he was in his profusion—true,
But he was Irish in affection too ;
And though he spent her wealth and made her grieve,
He always said 'my dear,' and 'with your leave.'

This gentleman, after spending most of his wife's money, as well as all his own, dies, leaving her this little Richard to provide for. This duty she religiously fulfils, so far as her scanty means admit ; and after living to see him of age and spirit to begin the battle of life, herself sinks to rest.

Richard begins his career by going to sea, to which his early associations with the seaport his mother resided in naturally inclined him. He afterward exchanges the sailor's for the soldier's life ; and, after encountering and escaping from many perils by sea and land, is almost slain by a fever ; which, however, leads to a different result. He has returned to England, and hearing, he says, of a quiet country home, where he might recover his shattered strength,

In a neat cottage, by the sweetest stream
That ever warbled in a poet's dream—
There to fair walks, fresh meadows, and clear skies
I fled, as fly the weary and the wise.

This neat cottage is the dwelling of an old clergyman, with one of whose daughters the invalid naturally falls in love, marries, and, instead of dying himself, becomes father of a numerous family; and just while his brother George's thoughts are turning from afar to him, he himself is thinking, as he looks around his table:

'Who shall their guardian and protector be?
I have a brother—well, and so has he!'

The brothers, we have seen, had met only once before and long ago, when (we are told),

Some legal cause required
That meet they should, but neither this desired:
George, a recluse, with mind engaged, was one
Who did no business, with whom none was done;
Richard, a boy, a lively boy, was told
Of his half-brother, haughty, stern, and cold;
So, when they met, a distant cold salute
Was of a long-expected day the fruit;
The rest by proxies managed, each withdrew,
Vex'd by the business and the brother too.

And now at last, after so many years' separation, and with fortunes and habits so dissimilar, they are to meet once more, by George's desire, at George's ancient Hall; doubtful of the experiment on either side—but most so on Richard's, who is now on his road to the Hall, uncertain, as he rides along, of the upshot of the meeting.

'How shall I now my unknown way explore,
He proud and rich—I very proud and poor?
Perhaps my friend a dubious speech mistook,
And George may meet me with a stranger's look—

'How stands the case? My brother's friend and mine
Met at an inn, and set them down to dine:
When having settled all their own affairs,
And kindly canvass'd such as were not theirs,
Just as my friend was going to retire,
"Stay!—you will see the brother of our squire,"
Said his companion; "be his friend, and tell
The captain that his brother loves him well,
And when he has no better thing in view,
Will be rejoiced to see him. Now, adieu!"

'Well! here I am; and, brother, take you heed,
I am not come to flatter you and feed;
You shall no soother, fawner, hearer find,
I will not brush your coat, nor smooth your mind;
I will not hear your tales the whole day long,
Nor swear you're right if I believe you wrong:
I will not earn my dinner when I dine,
By taking all your sentiments for mine;
Nor watch the guiding motions of your eye,
Before I venture question or reply—
Yet son of that dear mother could I meet—
But lo! the mansion—'tis a fine old seat!'

The brothers met, with both too much at heart
To be observant of each other's part;

'Brother, I'm glad,' was all that George could say,
Then stretch'd his hand, and turn'd his head away;
Richard, meantime, made some attempts to speak,
Strong in his purpose, in his trial weak.

At length affection, like a risen tide,
Stood still, and then seem'd slowly to subside ;
Each on the other's looks had power to dwell,
And brother brother greeted passing well.

CHARACTER OF THE BROTHERS.

At length the brothers met no longer tried
By those strong feelings that in time subside;
Not fluent yet their language, but the eye
And action spoke both question and reply;
Till the heart rested, and could calmly feel,
Till the shook compass felt the settling steel;
Till playful smiles on graver converse broke,
And either speaker less abruptly spoke.

They differ'd much; yet might observers trace
Likeness of features both in mind and face;
Unlike had been their life, unlike the fruits
Of different tempers, studies, and pursuits;
Nay, in such varying scenes the men had moved,
'Twas passing strange that aught alike they loved:
But all distinction now was thrown apart,
While these strong feelings ruled in either heart.

George loved to think; but as he late began
To muse on all the grander thoughts of man,
He took a solemn and a serious view
Of his religion, and he found it true:

He then proceeded, not so much intent,
But still in earnest, and to church he went :
Although they found some difference in their creed,
He and his pastor cordially agreed ;
Convinced that they who would the truth obtain
By disputation, find their efforts vain ;
The church he view'd as liberal minds will view,
And there he fix'd his principles and pew.

He loved the cause of freedom, but reproved
All who with wild and boyish ardour loved ;
Those who believed they never could be free,
Except when fighting for their liberty ;
Who by their very clamour and complaint
Invite coercion or inforce restraint.
He thought a trust so great, so good a cause,
Was only to be kept by guarding laws ;
The public good must be a private care,
None all they would may have, but all a share :
So we must freedom with restraint enjoy,
What crowds possess they will, uncheck'd, destroy.*
So thought our squire, nor wish'd the guards t' appear
So strong, that safety might be bought too dear.

* So another Tory in the Posthumous Volume says, with a graceful illustration which few might look for in the '*stern*' old Poet ;

> Man upon man depends, and, break the chain,
> He soon returns to savage life again.
> As of fair virgins, dancing in a round,
> Each binds another, and herself is bound,
> On either hand a social tribe he sees,
> By these assisted, and assisting these,
> While to the general welfare all belong,
> The high in power, the low in number strong.

He chose the company of men of sense,
But could with wit in moderate share dispense;
He wish'd in social ease his friends to meet,
When still he thought the female accent sweet;
Well from the ancient, better from the young,
He loved the lispings of the mother tongue.

He ate and drank, as much as men who think
Of life's best pleasures, ought to eat or drink;
Men purely temperate might have taken less,
But still he loved indulgence, not excess;
Nor would alone the grants of fortune taste,
But shared the wealth he judged it crime to waste,
And thus obtain'd the sure reward of care;
For none can spend like him who learns to spare.

Time, thought, and trouble made the man appear—
By nature shrewd—sarcastic and severe;
Still he was one whom those who fully knew
Esteem'd and trusted, one correct and true;
All on his word with surety might depend,
Kind as a man, and faithful as a friend.
But him the many know not, knew not cause
In their new squire for censure or applause;
Ask them, 'Who dwelt within that lofty wall?'
And they would say, 'The gentleman was tall;
Look'd old when follow'd, but alert when met,
And had some vigour in his movements yet;
He stoops, but not as one infirm; and wears
Dress that becomes his station and his years.'

Such was the man who from the world return'd,
Nor friend nor foe; he prized it not nor spurn'd;

But came and sat him in his village down,
Safe from its smiles, and careless of its frown :
He, fairly looking into life's account,
Saw frowns and favours were of like amount ;
And viewing all—his perils, prospects, purse—
He said, 'Content ! 'tis well it is no worse.'

Through ways more rough had fortune Richard led,
The world he traversed was the book he read ;
Hence clashing notions and opinions strange
Lodged in his mind ; all liable to change.

He heard the preacher by the highway side,
The Church's teacher, and the Meeting's guide ;
And mixing all their matters in his brain,
Distill'd a something he could ill explain ;
But still it served him for his daily use,
And kept his lively passions from abuse ;
For he believed, and held in reverence high,
The truth so dear to man—'Not all shall die.'
The minor portions of his creed hung loose,
For time to shapen and a whole produce.

He spake of freedom as a nation's cause,
And loved, like George, our liberty and laws ;
But had more youthful ardour to be free,
And stronger fears for injured liberty ;
And though he fought with all a Briton's zeal,
He felt for France as Freedom's children feel ;
Went far with her in what she thought reform,
And hail'd the revolutionary storm.

Yet would not *here*, where there was least to win,
And most to lose, the doubtful work begin ;
But look'd on change with some religious fear,
And cried, with filial dread, 'Ah ! come not here !'

His friends he chose not as the thoughtful choose,
Long to deliberate was, he judged, to lose ;
Frankly he join'd the free, nor suffer'd pride
Or doubt to part them, whom their fate allied ;
With handsome figure, and with manly air,
He pleased the sex, who all to him were fair ;
With filial love he look'd on forms decay'd,
And admiration's debt to beauty paid.

So pleasures came (not purchased first or plann'd),
But the chance pleasures which the poor command ;
They came but seldom, they remain'd not long,
Nor gave him time to question : 'Are they wrong ?'
But from the sordid vice, the mean, the base,
He stood aloof—death frown'd not like disgrace.

Ease leads to habit, as success to ease,
He lives by rule who lives himself to please ;
For change is trouble, and a man of wealth
Consults his quiet as he guards his health.
And habit now on George had sovereign power,
His actions all had their accustom'd hour :
At the fix'd time he slept, he walk'd, he read,
Or sought his grounds, his gruel, and his bed ;
For every season he with caution dress'd,
And morn and eve had the appropriate vest ;

He talk'd of early mists, and night's cold air,
And in one spot was fix'd his worship's chair.

But not a custom yet on Richard's mind
Had force, or him to certain modes confined ;
To him no joy such frequent visits paid,
That Habit by its beaten track was made :
He was not one who at his ease could say,
'We'll live to-morrow as we lived to-day ;'
But he and his were as the ravens fed,
As the day came it brought the daily bread.

SCHOOLS, AND SCHOOL-FELLOWS.

SUCH are the two brothers, who had met but once before, and parted in disaffection and distrust;

But now they met when time had calm'd the mind,
Both wish'd for kindness, and it made them kind.

And by-and-by comes George's old friend and school-fellow, the rector, 'social and shrewd,' who (I suppose) had carried the message which brought the two brothers together, and who now comes to set them at ease with one another. The bell rings for dinner, during which their talk is little, and on any casual topic that comes to hand. And, after dinner, over the wine and walnuts, the same chance leads squire and rector to the days when they were school-fellows together. Not happy days to George as we have seen, who now begins inveighing against the brutality both of master and boy in that 'little wicked world,' as he calls the school in general, and theirs in particular:

'You saw,' said George, 'in that still-hated school
How the meek suffer, how the haughty rule;
There soft, ingenuous, gentle minds endure
Ills that ease, time, and friendship fail to cure:

And he proceeds to argue that the evil passions of that little world, the school, will but expand in that larger school, the world. The rector, however, maintains that discipline and good instruction will do much to check the growth of some; nay, that in default of any better motive, the world itself, with many a hard knock, will subdue and turn to good account even such stubborn and despotic spirits as were the plague and terror of the school. And of this he mentions one signal instance familiar to them both:

'Sir Hector Blane, the champion of the school,
Was very blockhead, but was form'd for rule:
Learn he could not; he said he could not learn,
But he profess'd it gave him no concern:
Books were his horror, dinner his delight,
And his amusement to shake hands and fight;
Argue he could not, but in case of doubt,
Or disputation, fairly box'd it out:
This was his logic, and his arm so strong,
His cause prevail'd, and he was never wrong.
But so obtuse—you must have seen his look,
Desponding, angry, puzzled o'er his book.
"Come, six times five?" th' impatient teacher cried;
In vain the pupil shut his eyes, and sigh'd.
"Try, six times count your fingers;" how he stands!—
"Your fingers, idiot!"—"What, of both my hands?'

'With parts like these his father felt assured,
In busy times a ship might be procured;
He too was pleased to be so early freed,
He now could fight, and he in time might read.
So he has fought, and in his country's cause
Has gain'd him glory, and our hearts' applause.

No more the blustering boy a school defies,
We see the hero from the tyrant rise,
And in the captain's worth the student's dulness dies.'
'Be all allow'd;' replied the Squire, 'I give
Praise to his actions; may their glory live!
Nay, I will hear him in his riper age
Fight his good ship, and with the foe engage;
Nor will I quit him when the cowards fly,
Although, like them, I dread his energy.

'But still, my friend, that ancient spirit reigns,
His powers support the credit of his brains,
Insisting ever that he must be right,
And for his reasons still prepared to fight.
Let him a judge of England's prowess be,
And all her floating terrors on the sea;
But when he sits in judgment, and decrees
What men should rule us, and what books should please,
And thus the merit of a critic gains,
Only for blowing out a Frenchman's brains—
I must demur, and in my mind retrace
The accountant Hector, and his rueful face.
But on he blunders! thinking he is wise,
Who has much strength, no matter where it lies.'

Having disposed of the bully, George, after a little silence, turns to one of quite an opposite character—a character, indeed, not unlike his own, shy, sensitive, and studious, whom some nobleman, in a fit of benevolence, took from his mother's cottage, and sent to the school they were at. 'I yet remember,' says he—

'I yet remember how the idlers ran
To see the carriage of the godlike man,

When pride restrain'd me; yet I thought the deed
Was noble, too,—and how did it succeed?'

Jacques answer'd not till he had backward cast
His view, and dwelt upon the evil past;
And Richard now from his abstraction broke,
Listening attentive as the Rector spoke.

'The boy was gentle, modest, civil, kind,
But not for bustling through the world design'd;
Reserved in manner, with a little gloom,
Apt to retire, but never to assume;
With care he studied, and with some success;
His patience great, but his acquirements less.
Yet when he heard that Charles would not excel,
His lordship answer'd, with a smile, "'Tis well;
Let him proceed, and do the best he can,
I want no pedant, but a useful man."

'The speech was heard, and praise was amply dealt,
His lordship felt it, and he said he felt—
"It is delightful," he observed, "to raise
And foster merit—it is more than praise."

'Five years at school th' industrious boy had past,
"And what," was whisper'd, "will be done at last?"
My lord was troubled, for he did not mean
To have his bounty watch'd and overseen;
The deed was pleasant while the praise was new,
But none the progress would with wonder view:
It was a debt contracted; he who pays
A debt is just, but must not look for praise:

The boy is taken from his mother's side,
And he who took him must be now his guide.
But this, alas! instead of bringing fame,
A tax, a trouble, to my lord became.

'"The boy is dull, you say—why then by trade,
By law, by physic, nothing can be made;
If a small living—mine are both too large—
And then the college is a cursed charge—
Let him to sea."

'As meekly as a saint
Charles humbly begged to stay at home and—paint.
"Yes! pay some dauber, that this stubborn fool
May grind his colours, and may boast '*his school!*'"

'Resolved and firm, though dreading to offend,
Charles pleaded "Genius" with his noble friend;
Then to the world appeal'd my lord, and cried,
"Whatever happens—*I* am justified."

'Now Charles his bread by daily labours sought,
And this his solace, "So Correggio wrought."
He drew and painted, and some praise obtain'd
For care and pains; but little more was gain'd:
His daily tasks he called a waste of mind,
Vex'd at his fate, and angry with mankind:
"Thus have the blind to merit ever done,
And Genius mourn'd for each neglected son."

'Years pass'd away, and where he lived, and how,
Was then unknown—indeed, we know not now;
But once at twilight, walking up and down,
In a poor alley of the mighty town,

Where, in her narrow courts and garrets, hide
The grieving sons of Genius, Want, and Pride,
I met him musing: sadness I could trace,
And conquer'd Hope's meek anguish in his face.
See him I must: but I with ease address'd,
And neither pity nor surprise express'd;
I strove both grief and pleasure to restrain,
But yet I saw that I was giving pain.
He said, with quick'ning pace, as loth to hold
A longer converse, that "the day was cold,
That he was well, that I had scarcely light
To aid my steps," and bade me then good-night.

'I saw him next where he had lately come,
A silent pauper in a crowded room;
Hither it seemed the fainting man was brought,
Found without food—it was no longer sought:
For his employers knew not whom they paid,
Nor where to seek him whom they wish'd to aid.

'Here brought, some kind attendant he address'd,
And sought some trifles which he yet possess'd;
A better coat, less pieced; some linen neat,
Not whole; and papers, many a valued sheet;
Designs and drawings; these, at his desire,
Were placed before him at the chamber fire,
And while th' admiring people stood to gaze,
He, one by one, committed to the blaze,
Smiling in spleen; but one he held awhile,
And gave it to the flames, and could not smile.

'Once more I saw him, when his spirits fail'd,
And my desire to aid him then prevailed;

He show'd a softer feeling in his eye,
And watch'd my looks, and own'd the sympathy.
'Twas now the calm of wearied pride ; so long
As he had strength was his resentment strong,
But in such place, with strangers all around,
And they such strangers, something to have found—
One link, however slender, of the chain
That held him where he could not long remain ;
The one sole interest !—No, he could not now
Retain his anger ; Nature knew not how ;
And so there came a softness to his mind,
And he forgave the usage of mankind.
His cold long fingers now were press'd to mine,
And his faint smile of kinder thoughts gave sign ;
His lips moved often as he tried to lend
His words their sound, and softly whisper'd " Friend!"
Not without comfort in the thought express'd
By that calm look with which he sank to rest.'

' The man,' said George, ' you see, through life retain'd
The boy's defects : his virtues too remain'd.

' But where are now those minds so light and gay,
So forced on study, so intent on play,
Swept, by the world's rude blasts, from hope's dear views
away ?
Some grieved for long neglect in earlier times,
Some sad from frailties, some lamenting crimes;
Thinking, with sorrow, on the season lent
For noble purpose, and in trifling spent ;
And now, at last, when they in earnest view
The nothings done—what work they find to do !

Where is that virtue which the generous boy
Felt, and resolved that nothing should destroy?
He who with noble indignation glow'd
When vice had triumph? who his tear bestow'd
On injured merit? he who would possess
Power, but to aid the children of distress!
Who has such joy in generous actions shown,
And so sincere, they might be call'd his own;
Knight, hero, patriot, martyr! on whose tongue,
And potent arm, a nation's welfare hung—
Where now this virtue's fervour, spirit, zeal?
Who felt so warmly, has he ceased to feel?
Or are these feelings varied? has the knight,
Virtue's own champion, now refused to fight?
Is the deliverer turn'd th' oppressor now?
Has the reformer dropt the dangerous vow?
Or has the patriot's bosom lost its heat,
And forced him, shivering, to a snug retreat?
Is such the grievous lapse of human pride!
Is such the victory of the worth untried!'*

And, as an instance of this decline of virtue with advance of life, George refers to one Harry Bland, who, when a boy, fled from his widow'd father's house when a mistress came to preside in it; and, in after years, when himself wedded to one—

'Mild as the morn of summer, firm as truth,
And grac'd with wisdom in the bloom of youth,'

became the infatuated paramour of his tenant's wife.

* 'BRAVO!'—the brief, but (as all who knew him know) emphatic comment made on these last lines by my brave old friend George Crabbe, Vicar of Bredfield, when looking over his father's poems, which he had edited twenty years before.

'How is it, men, when they in judgment sit
On the same fault, now censure, now acquit?
Is it not thus, that *here* we view the sin,
And *there* the powerful cause that drew us in?
In judging others we can see too well
Their grievous fall, but not how grieved they fell;
Judging ourselves, we to our minds recall,
Not how we fell, but how we grieved to fall.

'Or could this man, so vex'd in early time,
By this strong feeling for his father's crime,
Who to the parent's sin was barely just,
And mix'd with filial fear the man's disgust;
Could he, without some strong delusion, quit
The path of duty, and to shame submit?
Cast off the virtue he so highly prized,
And be the very creature he despised?
There goes he, not unseen, so strong the will,
And blind the wish, that bear him to the mill;
There he degraded sits, and strives to please
The miller's children, laughing at his knees;
And little Dorcas, now familiar grown,
Talks of her rich papa, and of her own;
While the rough husband, yielding to the pay
That buys his absence, growling stalks away.

''Tis said th' offending man will sometimes sigh,
And say, "My God, in what a dream am I?
I will awake:" but as the day proceeds,
The weaken'd mind the day's indulgence needs;
Hating himself at every step he takes,
His mind approves the virtue he forsakes,

And yet forsakes her. O ! how sharp the pain,
Our vice, ourselves, our habits to disdain ;
To go where never yet in peace we went,
To feel our hearts can bleed, yet not relent ;
To sigh, yet not recede ; to grieve, yet not repent !'

THE MORNING WALK.

'BROTHER,' said George, 'when I beheld you last—
The time how distant !— Well ! the time is past—
I had not then these comforts you behold,
Things that amuse us when we're getting old :
These pictures now—experienced men will say
They're genuine all, and so perhaps they may ;
They cost the money, *that* I'm sure is true,
And, therefore, Richard, I will say it too.

'Music you find ; for hither ladies come ;
They make infernal uproar in the room :
I bear it—Why ? because I must expect
To pay for honour, or to find neglect.
For, as attractions from our persons fly,
Our purses, Richard, must the want supply ;
Yet would it vex me could the triflers know
That they can shut out comfort or bestow.

'But see this room : here, Richard, you will find
Books for all palates, food for every mind ;
This readers term the ever-new delight,
And so it is, if minds have appetite :

Mine once was craving; great my joy, indeed,
Had I possess'd such food when I could feed;
When at the call of every new-born wish
I could have keenly relished every dish.
Now, Richard, now, I stalk around and look
Upon the dress and title of a book,
Try half a page, and then can taste no more,
But the dull volume to its place restore;
Begin a second slowly to peruse,
Then cast it by, and look about for news.
The news itself grows dull in long debates;
I skip, and see what the conclusion states;
And many a speech, with zeal and study made
Cold and resisting spirits to persuade,
Is lost on mine; alone, we cease to feel
What crowds admire, and wonder at their zeal.

'But how the day? No fairer will it be?
Walk you? Alas! 'tis requisite for me—
Nay, let me not prescribe—my friends and guests are free.'

It was a fair and mild autumnal sky,
And earth's ripe treasures met th' admiring eye;
The wet and heavy grass, where feet had stray'd,
Not yet erect, the wanderer's way betray'd;
Showers of the night had swell'd the deep'ning rill,
The morning breeze had urged the quick'ning mill:
Long yellow leaves, from osiers strew'd around,
Choked the small stream, and hush'd the feeble sound;
While the dead foliage dropt from loftier trees
Our Squire beheld not with his wonted ease,

But to his own reflections made reply,
And said aloud, 'Yes! doubtless we must die.'

'We must,' said Richard; 'and we would not live
To feel what dotage and decay will give;
But we yet taste whatever we behold,
The morn is lovely, though the air is cold:
There is delicious quiet in the scene,
At once so rich, so varied, so serene;
Sounds to delight us,—each discordant tone
Thus mingled please, that fail to please alone;
This hollow wind, this rustling of the brook,
The farm-yard noise, the woodman at yon oak.'

'No doubt,' said George; 'the country has its charms—
My farm behold! the model for all farms!
Look at that land—you find not there a weed,
We grub the roots, and suffer none to seed.
To land like this no botanist will come,
To seek the precious ware he hides at home,
Pressing the leaves and flowers with effort nice,
As if they came from herbs in Paradise;
Let them their favourites with my neighbours see;
They have no—what?—no *habitat* with me.'

They walk'd along through mead and shaded wood,
And stubble-ground, where late abundance stood,
And in the vale, where winter waters glide,
O'er pasture stretching up the mountain side.
'See! that unrivalled flock! they, they alone
Have the vast body on the slender bone;

They are the village boast, the country's theme ;
Fleece of such staple ! flesh in such esteem !'

Richard gave praise, but not in rapturous style ;
He chose his words, and spoke them with a smile :
' Brother,' said he, ' and if I take you right,
I am full glad—these things are your delight ;
I see you proud, but,'—speaking half aside—
' Is, now, the pleasure equal to the pride ?'

A transient flush on George's face appear'd,
Cloudy he look'd, and then his looks were cleared :
' So says my bailiff : sometimes I have tried
To catch the joy, but nature has denied ;
It will not be—the mind has had a store
Laid up for life, and will admit no more :
Worn out in trials, and about to die,
In vain to these we for amusement fly ;
We farm, we garden, we our poor employ,
And much command, though little we enjoy ;
Or, if ambitious, we employ our pen,
We plant a desert or we drain a fen ;
And—here, behold my medal !—this will show
What men may merit when they nothing know.'

' Yet reason here,' said Richard, ' joins with pride :'—
' I did not ask th' alliance,' George replied—
' I grant it true, such trifle may induce
A dull, proud man to wake and be of use ;
But where th' affections have been deeply tried,
With other food that mind must be supplied :
'Tis not in trees or medals to impart
The powerful medicine for an aching heart ;

The agitation dies, but there is still
The backward spirit, the resisting will.
Man takes his body to a country seat,
But minds, dear Richard, have their own retreat;
Oft when the feet are pacing o'er the green
The mind is gone where never grass was seen,
And never thinks of hill, or vale, or plain,
Till want of rest creates a sense of pain,
That calls that wandering mind, and brings it home again.

'But now farewell! to thee will I resign
Woods, walks, and valleys! take them till we dine.'

RICHARD'S BOYHOOD.

The Brothers dined, and with that plenteous fare
That seldom fails to dissipate our care,
At least the lighter kind ; and oft prevails
When reason, duty, nay, when kindness fails.

There is now no lack of kindness, however, on either side ; and George lays on himself the blame of its having lacked between them so long. He knew that their mother, from whom he had alienated himself, was but ill able to bring up the son of her second marriage ; had heard that Richard was suffered to run almost wild among the people of the place she lived in ; and he now asks him, however late in the day, for some account of his childhood, and of his other rough apprenticeship by sea and land, which has resulted in the complete man who now sits beside him.

'Left by that father, who was known to few,
And to that mother, who has not her due

Of honest fame,' said Richard, 'our retreat
Was a small cottage, for our station meet,
On Barford Downs : that mother, fond and poor,
There taught some truths, and bade me seek for more,
Such as our village-school and books a few
Supplied ; but such I cared not to pursue.
I sought the town, and to the ocean gave
My mind and thoughts, as restless as the wave :
Where crowds assembled, I was sure to run,
Hear what was said, and muse on what was done ;
Attentive listening in the moving scene,
And often wondering what the men could mean.
When ships at sea made signals of their need,
I watch'd on shore the sailors, and their speed ;
Mix'd in their act, nor rested till I knew
Why they were call'd, and what they were to do.
No ships were wreck'd upon that fatal beach,
But I could give the luckless tale of each ;
Eager I look'd, till I beheld a face
Of one disposed to paint their dismal case ;
Who gave the sad survivors' doleful tale,
From the first brushing of the mighty gale
Until they struck ; and, suffering in their fate,
I long'd the more they should its horrors state.

'To me the wives of seamen loved to tell
What storms endanger'd men esteem'd so well;
There were fond girls, who took me to their side
To tell the story how their lovers died ;
They praised my tender heart, and bade me prove
Both kind and constant when I came to love.

With pain my mother would my tales receive,
And say "My Richard, do not learn to grieve."

'I sought the men return'd from regions cold,
The frozen straits, where icy mountains roll'd;
Some I could win to tell me serious tales
Of boats uplifted by enormous whales;
Or, when harpoon'd, how swiftly through the sea
The wounded monsters with the cordage flee.
They told of days where many go to one
Such days as ours; and how a larger sun,
Red, but not flaming, roll'd, with motion slow,
On the world's edge, and never dropt below.

'I often rambled to the noisy quay,
Strange sounds to hear, and business strange to me;
Seamen and carmen, and I know not who,
A lewd, amphibious, rude, contentious crew—
Confused as bees appear about their hive,
Yet all alert to keep their work alive.*

'The open shops of craftsmen caught my eye,
And there my questions met the kind reply:
Men, when alone, will teach; but, in a crowd,
The child is silent, or the man is proud;

* There is a fine touch added to this in an account of a manufacturer and his men in the Posthumous Volume.

> 'He had a sturdy multitude to guide,
> Who now his spirit, now his temper, tried:
> Men who by labour live, and day by day,
> Work, weave, and spin their active lives away;
> Like bees, industrious, they for others strive,
> With, now and then, some murmuring in the hive.'

But, by themselves, there is attention paid
To a mild boy, so forward, yet afraid.

'I made me interest at the inn's fireside,
Amid the scenes to bolder boys denied;
For I had patrons there, and I was one,
They judged, who noticed nothing that was done.
"A quiet lad!" would my protector say;
"To him, now, this is better than his play:
Boys are as men: some active, shrewd, and keen,
They look about if aught is to be seen;
And some, like Richard here, have not a mind
That takes a notice—but the lad is kind."

'I loved in summer on the heath to walk,
And seek the shepherd—shepherds love to talk:
His superstition was of ranker kind,
And he with tales of wonder stored my mind;
Wonders that he in many a lonely eve
Had seen himself, and therefore must believe.
His boy, his Joe, he said, from duty ran,
Took to the sea, and grew a fearless man:
"On yonder knoll—the sheep were in the fold—
His Spirit pass'd me, shivering-like and cold;
I felt a fluttering, but I knew not how,
And heard him utter like a whisper, '*Now!*'—
Soon came a letter from a friend—to tell
That he had fallen, and the time he fell."

'I loved to walk where none had walk'd before,
About the rocks that ran along the shore;

Or far beyond the sight of men to stray,
And take my pleasure when I lost my way.
Even to the smugglers' hut the rocks between,
I have, adventurous in my wandering, been :
Poor, pious Martha served the lawless tribe,
And could their merits and their faults describe ;
Adding her thoughts : " I talk, my child, to you,
Who little think of what such wretches do."

' But now *thy* walk,—this soft autumnal gloom
Bids no delay—at night I will resume
My subject, showing, not how I improved
In my strange school, but what the things I loved,
My first-born friendships, ties by forms uncheck'd,
And all that boys acquire whom men neglect.'

RICHARD'S STORY OF RUTH.

ACCORDINGLY, when the brothers meet again over the fire at night, Richard, after duly waiting till the Squire asks him for some more of his boyish recollections, will tell him of one which neither after-time or adventure could obliterate from his memory.

'South in the port, and eastward in the street,
Rose a small dwelling, my beloved retreat,
Where lived a pair, then old; the sons had fled
The home they fill'd: a part of them were dead;
Married a part; while some at sea remain'd;
And stillness in the seaman's mansion reign'd;
Lord of some petty craft, by night and day
The man had fish'd each fathom of the bay.

'My friend the matron woo'd me, quickly won,
To fill the station of an absent son;
She grieved to say her parents could neglect
Her education—'twas a sore defect;
She, who had ever such a vast delight
To learn, and now could neither read nor write!
But hear she could, and from our stores I took,—
Librarian meet!—at her desire, our book.

Full twenty volumes—I would not exceed
The modest truth—were there for me to read ;
These a long shelf contain'd, and they were found
Books truly speaking, volumes fairly bound ;
The rest,—for some of other kinds remain'd,
And these a board beneath the shelf contain'd,—
Had their deficiencies in part ; they lack'd
One side or both, or were no longer back'd ;
But now became degraded from their place,
And were but pamphlets of a bulkier race.
Yet had we pamphlets, an inviting store,
From sixpence downwards—nay, a part were more ;
A piece of Wingate—thanks for all we have !
What we of figures needed, fully gave ;
Culpepper, new in numbers, cost but thrice
The ancient volume's unassuming price,
But told what planet o'er each herb had power,
And how to take it in the lucky hour.

'History we had—wars, treasons, treaties, crimes,
From Julius Cæsar to the present times ;
Questions and answers, teaching what to ask,
And what reply,—a kind, laborious task ;
A scholar's book it was, who, giving, swore
It held the whole he wish'd to know—and more.

'And we had poets, hymns and songs divine ;
The most we read not, but allow'd them fine.

'Our tracts were many—on the boldest themes—
We had our metaphysics, spirits, dreams,
Visions and warnings, and portentous sights
Seen, though but dimly, in the doleful nights,

When the good wife her wintry vigil keeps,
And thinks alone of him at sea, and weeps.

'Add to all these our works in single sheets,
That our Cassandras sing about the streets :
These, as I read, the grave good man would say,
"Nay, Hannah !" and she answer'd "What is Nay ?
What is there, pray, so hurtful in a song ?
It is our fancy only makes it wrong ;
His purer mind no evil thoughts alarm,
And innocence protects him like a charm."
Then would the matron, when the song had past,
And her laugh over, ask a hymn at last.'

Notwithstanding, however, the good woman's habitual gaiety, Richard, boy as he is, has occasionally noticed intervals of silent abstraction, as of one withdrawing herself into the contemplation of some secret sorrow. Indeed, she has more than once spoken of the common troubles of life which weigh so heavily on others, but, with her,

'Which pass away like shadows o'er the plain
From flying clouds, and leave all fair again—
"O, these are nothing—*they* will never heed
Such idle contests who have bled indeed,
And bear the wound unclosed—"'

And one day, when something they have read, or recounted, leads that way, she reveals the hidden wound—'the grand disease of life,' from which she secretly suffers.

'"Dear child, I show you sins and suffering strange ;
But you, like Adam, must for knowledge change

That blissful ignorance: remember, then,
What now you feel should be a check on men;
For then your passions no debate allow,
And therefore lay up resolution now.

'"'Tis not enough, that, when you can persuade
A maid to love, you know there's promise made;
'Tis not enough, that you design to keep
That promise made, nor leave your lass to weep:
For *he* had truth with love; but love in youth
Does wrong, that cannot be repaired by truth.

'"Ruth, I may tell—too oft had she been told—
Was tall and fair, and comely to behold;
Gentle and simple, in her native place
Not one compared with her in form or face;
She was not merry, but she gave our hearth
A cheerful spirit that was more than mirth.

'"There was a sailor boy, and people said
He was, as man, a likeness of the maid;
But not in this—for he was ever glad,
While Ruth was apprehensive, mild, and sad;
To her alone were his attentions paid,
And they became the bachelor and maid.

'"He wish'd to marry, but so prudent we
And worldly wise, we said it could not be:
They took the counsel,—may be they approved,—
But still they grieved and waited, hoped and loved.

'"Now, my young friend, when of such state I speak
As one of danger, you will be to seek;

You know not, Richard, where the danger lies
In loving hearts, kind words, and speaking eyes ;
For lovers speak their wishes with their looks
As plainly, love, as you can read your books.
Then, too, the meetings and the partings, all
The playful quarrels in which lovers fall,
Serve to one end—each lover is a child,
Quick to resent and to be reconciled ;
And that brings kindness—and what kindness brings
I cannot tell you :—these were trying things—
They were as children, and they fell at length ;
The trial, doubtless, was beyond their strength.
And though the day was fixed, and now drew on,
I could perceive my daughter's peace was gone ;
She could not bear the bold and laughing eye
That gazed on her—reproach she could not fly ;
Her grief she would not show, her shame could not deny.
For some with many virtues come to shame,
And some that lose them all preserve their name.

'"Fix'd was the day ; but ere that day appear'd,
A frightful rumour through the place was heard ;
War, who had slept awhile, awaked once more,
And gangs came pressing till they swept the shore :
Our youth was seized and quickly sent away,
Nor would the wretches for his marriage stay.
There were wives, maids, and mothers on the beach,
And some sad story to be told by each ;
On the vile ship they turn'd their earnest view,
Not one last look allow'd,—not one adieu !
They saw the men on deck, but none distinctly knew.

And there *she* stayed, regardless of each eye,
With but one hope, a fervent hope to die :
Nor cared she now for kindness—all beheld
Her, who invited none, and none repell'd ;
For there are griefs, my child, that sufferers hide,
And there are griefs that men display with pride ;
But there are other griefs that so we feel,
We care not to display them nor conceal.

' " A single day had Thomas stay'd on shore
He might have wedded, and we ask'd no more ;
And that stern man, who forced the lad away,
Might have attended, and have graced the day ;
But that he would not !—Child, there's none regard
What you and I conceive so cruel-hard :
There is compassion, I believe ; but still
One wants the power to help, and one the will,
And so from war to war the wrongs remain,
While Reason pleads, and Misery sighs in vain.

' " Thus my poor Ruth was wretched and undone,
Nor had a husband for her infant son,
Nor had he father ; hope she did awhile,
And would not weep, although she could not smile ;
Till news was brought us that the youth was slain,
And then, I think, she never smiled again :
Or if she did, it was but to express
A feeling far, indeed, from happiness !
Something that her bewilder'd mind conceived,
When she informed us that she never grieved,
But was right merry—then her head was wild,
And grief had gained possession of my child.

Yet, though bewildered for a time, and prone
To ramble much and speak aloud, alone;
Yet did she all that duty ever ask'd,
And more, her will self-govern'd and self-task'd:
With meekness bearing all reproach, all joy
To her was lost; she wept upon her boy.

'"There was a Teacher, where my husband went—
Sent, as he told the people—what he meant
You cannot understand, but—he was *sent:*
This man from Meeting came, and strove to win
Her mind to peace by drawing off the sin,
Or what it was, that, working in her breast,
Robb'd it of comfort, confidence and rest.
He came and reason'd, and she seem'd to feel
The pains he took—her griefs began to heal;
She ever answer'd kindly when he spoke,
And always thank'd him for the pains he took.
So, after three long years, and all the while
Wrapt up in grief, she blest us with a smile,
And spoke in comfort; but she mixed no more
With younger persons, as she did before.

'"Still Ruth was pretty; in her person neat;
So thought the Teacher, when they chanc'd to meet;
He was a weaver by his worldly trade,
But powerful work in the assemblies made;
People came leagues to town to hear him sift
The holy text,—he had the grace and gift;
Widows and maidens flock'd to hear his voice;
Of either kind he might have had his choice;—

But he had chosen—we had seen how shy
The girl was getting, my good man and I;
That when the weaver came, she kept with us,
Where he his points and doctrines might discuss;
But in our bit of garden, or the room
We call our parlour, there he must not come.
This might he take for woman's art, and cried,
'Spouse of my heart, I must not be denied!'—
Fearless he spoke, and I had hope to see
My girl a wife—but this was not to be.

'"My husband, thinking of his worldly store,
And not, frail man, enduring to be poor,
Seeing his friend would for his child provide,
And hers—he grieved to have the man denied;
For Ruth, when press'd, rejected him, and grew
To her old sorrow, as if that were new.
I gently blamed her, for I knew how hard
It is to force affection and regard.

'"O! much she begg'd him to forbear, to stand
Her soul's kind friend, and not to ask her hand:
She could not love him.—'Love me!' he replied,
'The love you mean is love unsanctified;'
He did not court her, he would have her know,
For that poor love that will on beauty grow;
No! he would take her as the prophet took
One of the harlots in the holy book;
And then he looked so ugly and severe
And yet so fond!—she could not hide her fear.

'"But still her father lent his cruel aid
To the man's hope, and she was more afraid:

He said, no more she should his table share,
But be the parish or the Teacher's care.
'Three days I give you ; see that all be right
On Monday-morning—this is Thursday-night.'

'"I see her now ; and, she that was so meek,
It was a chance that she had power to speak,
Now spoke in earnest—'Father! I obey,
And will remember the appointed day!'

'"Then came the man : she talked with him apart,
And, I believe, laid open all her heart ;
But all in vain—she said to me in tears,
'Mother! that man is not what he appears :
He talks of heaven, and let him, if he will,
But he has earthly purpose to fulfil ;
Upon my knees I begged him to resign
The hand he asks—he said, 'It shall be mine!
What! did the holy men of Scripture deign
To hear a woman when she said "refrain"?
Of whom they chose they took them wives, and these
Made it their study and their wish to please.
The women then were faithful and afraid,
As Sarah Abraham, they their lords obey'd ;
And so she styled him ; 'tis in later days
Of foolish love that we our women praise,
Fall on the knee, and raise the suppliant hand,
And court the favour that we might command.'

'"But we had two days' peace ; a second time,
Sighing, she said, 'Shall I commit the crime,
And now untempted? Can the form or rite
Make me a wife in my Creator's sight?

Can I the words without a meaning say?
Can I pronounce "love," "honour," or "obey"?
And if I cannot, shall I dare to wed,
And go an harlot to a loathéd bed?'

'"She left her infant on the Sunday morn,
A creature doom'd to shame! in sorrow born;
She came not home to share our humble meal,
Her father thinking what his child would feel
From his hard sentence—still she came not home;
The night grew dark, and yet she was not come;
The east wind roar'd, the sea return'd the sound,
And the rain fell as if the world were drown'd.
There were no lights without, and my good man,
To kindness frighten'd, with a groan began
To talk of Ruth, and pray; and then he took
The Bible down, and read the holy book;
For he had learning: and when that was done
We sat in silence—'Whither could we run?'
We said, and then rush'd frighten'd from the door,
For we could bear our own conceit no more.
We call'd on neighbours—there she had not been;
We met some wanderers—ours they had not seen:
We hurried o'er the beach, both north and south,
Then join'd, and wander'd to our haven's mouth,
Where rush'd the falling waters wildly out—
I scarcely heard the good man's fearful shout,
Who saw a something on the billow ride,
And—'Heaven have mercy on our sins!' he cried,
'It is my child!'—and to the present hour
So he believes: and spirits have the power.

'"And she was gone! the waters wide and deep
Roll'd o'er the body as she lay asleep;
She heard no more the angry waves and wind,
She heard no more the threat'ning of mankind;
Wrapt in dark weeds, the refuse of the storm,
To the hard rock was borne her comely form!

'"For she was seen within the sea to wade,
By one at distance, when she first had pray'd;
Then to a rock within the hither shoal
Softly and with a fearful step she stole;
Then, when she gain'd it, on the top she stood
A moment still—and dropt into the flood!
The man cried loudly, but he cried in vain,—
She heard not then—she never heard again!
She had—pray Heav'n she had!—that world in sight,
Where frailty mercy finds, and wrong has right;
But, sure, in this her portion such has been,
Well had it still remain'd a world unseen."'

RICHARD'S WOOING.

'THIS, then,' says the Squire, after hearing thus much, and some more, of his brother's experiences—

'This, then, dear Richard, was the way you took
To gain instruction—thine a curious book,
Containing much of both the false and true;
But thou hast read it, and with profit too.'

But George must know something further yet. He knows, indeed, that his brother first went to sea; and the newspapers, if none else, had told him of after-honours in the Peninsula. But he wants to know (what newspapers had not told him) how, after such a roving life, he came to settle down into the sober, sensible, and married man he now is. And Richard will tell him that also. He had been returned invalided home; but, young and careless of spirit as he was, neglected his body, till at length—

'A fever seized it, of that dangerous kind,
That, while it taints the blood, infects the mind;
I traced her flight as Reason slowly fled,
And her last act assured me Hope was dead.
But Reason err'd, and when she came again
To aid the senses and direct the brain,

She found a body weak, but well disposed
For life's enjoyments—and the grave was closed.

'Now, my dear brother, when the languid frame
Has this repose, and when the blood is tame,
Yet strength increasing, and when every hour
Gives some increase of pleasure and of power;
When every sense partakes of fresh delight,
And every object wakes an appetite—

'Think of me thus disposed, and think me then
Retired from crowded streets and busy men,
In a neat cottage, by the sweetest stream
That ever warbled in a poet's dream;
Where loving pairs had no observers near,
And, fearing not themselves, had none to fear;
There to fair walks, fresh meadows, and clear skies,
I fled, as flee the weary and the wise,

'My host was kind, intelligent, and mild,
Careless and shrewd, yet simple as the child;
For of the wisdom of the world his share
And mine were equal—neither had to spare;
Else—with his daughters, beautiful and poor—
He would have kept a sailor from his door.
Two then were present, who adorn'd his home,
But ever speaking of a third to come;
Cheerful they were, not too reserved or free;
I loved them both, and never wish'd them three.

'The Vicar's self, still further to describe,
Was of a simple, but a studious tribe;
He from the world was distant, not retired,
Nor of it much possess'd, nor much desired:

Grave in his purpose, cheerful in his eye,
And with a look of frank benignity.
He much of nature, not of man had seen,
Yet his remarks were often shrewd and keen ;
Taught not by books t' approve or to condemn,
He gained but little that he knew from them ;
But men and beasts, and all that lived or moved,
Were books to him ; he studied them and loved.
He knew the plants in mountain, wood, or mead ;
He knew the worms that on the foliage feed ;
Knew the small tribes that 'scape the careless eye,
The plant's disease that breeds the embryo-fly ;
And the small creatures who on bark or bough
Enjoy their changes, changed we know not how ;
But now th' imperfect being scarcely moves,
And now takes wing and seeks the sky it loves.'

Such, says Richard, was the good old, and now widowed, clergyman, and such his two daughters ; with all of whom he could have lived on in undisturbed content, had not that third daughter, Matilda, come and disquieted him with a deeper emotion. She is very religious, as well as fair, and thinks (as her father has thought) that Richard's creed wants somewhat of repair. It is but a friendly interest she takes in him, as they both believe at first ;

' My soul, dear girl, she made her constant care ;
But never whispered to my heart, " Beware !" '

Nor to her own neither ; and both are in love while believing their hearts quite otherwise occupied. ' But, asks George, at this point of the story,

'Saw not her father?'

'Yes; but saw no more
Than he had seen without a fear before:
He had subsisted by the church and plough,
And saw no cause for apprehension now;
We, too, could live: he thought not passion wrong,
But only wonder'd we delay'd so long.

'O! days remember'd well! remember'd all!
The bitter-sweet, the honey and the gall;
Those garden rambles in the silent night,
Those trees so shady, and that moon so bright;
That thickset alley by the arbour closed,
That woodbine seat where we at last reposed;
And then the hopes that came and then were gone,
Quick as the clouds beneath the moon past on.

'You smile; remember, I was weak and low,
And fear'd the passion as I felt it grow:
Will she, I said, to one so poor attend,
Without a prospect, and without a friend?
I dared not ask her—till a rival came,
But hid the secret, slow-consuming flame.

'Can you not, brother, on adventures past
A thought, as on a lively prospect, cast?
On days of dear remembrance! days that seem,
When past—nay, even when present, like a dream—
These white and blesséd days, that softly shine
On few, nor oft on them—have they been thine?
Such days have been—A day of days was one
When, rising gaily with the rising sun,

I took my way to join a happy few,
Known not to me, but whom Matilda knew,
To whom she went a guest, and message sent,
"Come thou to us—" and as a guest I went.

'There are two ways to Brandon—by the heath
Above the cliff, or on the sand beneath,
Where the small pebbles, wetted by the wave,
To the new day reflected lustre gave.
At first above the rocks I made my way,
Delighted looking at the spacious bay,
And the large fleet that to the northward steer'd
Full sail, that glorious in my view appear'd.
For there are times when we do not obey
The master-passion—when we yet delay—
When absence, soon to end, we yet prolong,
And dally with our wish although so strong.

'High beat my heart when to the house I came,
And when the ready servant gave my name—

But when he enters the room where the company are already assembled, all his joyous anticipations are dashed. For yonder is Matilda, indeed, but seeming absorbed in conversation with a young officer. This young coxcomb (as Richard thinks him) he had seen in company with his lady before, and then more free and familiar than became a common guest. And now here he is grinning at her ear as if the self-conscious master of the situation. Matilda indeed welcomes her lover with a smile of perhaps tender regard, but then turns to her officer, who—egregious coxcomb!—goes on simpering and smiling, till Richard can endure no longer. Stranger as he is to the company, he makes his way through them to the guilty couple, and

begins to make himself disagreeable for the purpose of raising a quarrel. Politeness, however, on the coxcomb's part, repels insult, while Richard thinks he sees the woman's terror pleading in Matilda's eyes; but she goes on talking, laughing—Richard thinks, flirting—

'O! I did think she had a guileless heart,
Without deceit, capriciousness, or art;
And yet a stranger, with a coat of red,
Has, by an hour's attention, turn'd her head!'

But the company now prepare for an excursion on the neighbouring lake; she takes the young soldier's arm to the shore, sits beside him in the boat, making room for Richard beside them—O, very kind!—and Richard is just on the point of exploding with jealous passion, when, as they land again, and the coxcomb takes his leave, Richard hears Matilda sending her love to *his wife*, an old schoolfellow of hers, to whom Richard had seen her writing sheets of foolscap.

After all, the 'handsome coxcomb' is not quite such a coxcomb; nay, when one comes to look at him impartially, his smile is not that of vanity, but of good-humour. And Matilda! the wrong'd, angelic Matilda! Can she—ought she—wronged as she is—to forgive her splenetic and injurious lover? He will, at any rate, throw himself in all self-abasement on her mercy the first moment he can find her alone. That, however, is not so easy; the company has indeed dispersed about the borders of the lake in parties of two or three, who are constantly crossing and accosting one another. Nor can Richard find his opportunity till they have finally departed on their several ways home, and Matilda, and he along with her, to hers—through shady lanes, under a shining moon—*that* much he can recollect; but for all the rest, and for many days after—

'Nor where we walk'd, or how our friends we met,
Or what their wonder—I am wondering yet;
For he who nothing heeds has nothing to forget.
All thought, yet thinking nothing—all delight
In everything, but nothing in my sight;
Ready to aid all beings, I would go
The world around to succour human woe;
Yet am so largely happy, that it seems
There are no woes, and sorrows are but dreams!'

THE SQUIRE'S STORY.

GEORGE, after thanking Richard for his love-story, asks him (though he must well know the contrary) whether it was but one of several transient passions, like those preliminary attacks of—the gout, before settling into a serious and life-long matrimony. Yea, of the gout, he insists, in answer to Richard's indignant apostrophe—

'Yea, and correctly; teasing ere they come,
They then confine their victim to his home:
In both are previous feints and false attacks,
Both place the grieving patient on their racks;
They both are ours, with all they bring, for life,
'Tis not in us t' expel or gout or wife;
On man a kind of dignity they shed,
A sort of gloomy pomp about his bed:
Then if he leaves them, go where'er he will,
They have a claim upon his body still;
Nay, when they quit him, as they sometimes do,
What is there left t' enjoy or to pursue?'

Well, Richard's 'gout' has never quitted him, and he devoutly prays, never will, so long as he has life in him.

Not only in consideration of that outward beauty, which his wife still retains; but of those yet more precious and imperishable graces of the soul, which continue to make her dearer to him as life goes on. 'Has she not,' he says,

'Has she not soothed me, sick—enrich'd me, poor,
And banish'd death and misery from my door?
Has she not cherish'd every moment's bliss,
And made an Eden of a world like this?
When Care would strive with us his watch to keep,
Has she not sung the snarling fiend to sleep?
And when Distress has look'd us in the face,
Has she not told him, "Thou art not Disgrace?"'

It is now the Squire's turn to look grave; Richard has indeed told him of a foolish fit of jealousy which ended in a lasting love. But what is that as compared to his own madness, which has ended in the cheerless solitude which Richard found him in when he came to cheer it up? But if he must requite his brother's confidence—as indeed he should—

'What if I tell thee of a waste of time,
That on my spirit presses as a crime,
Wilt thou despise me?—I, who, soaring, fell
So late to rise—Hear then the tale I tell;
Who tells what thou shalt hear, esteems his hearer well.'

He invites his brother to follow him back to the time when, after quitting his studious tutor and thrifty uncle, he had retired into the solitary country, to dream at his own will and pleasure; a time when

'The lover's frenzy fired the poet's pen,'

in rhapsodies addressed to some heroine, who, as yet, existed only in the imaginary world which he had created and peopled for himself. For, says he,

'I built me castles wondrous rich and rare,
Few castle-builders could with me compare ;
The hall, the palace, rose at my command,
And these I fill'd with objects great and grand.
Virtues sublime, that nowhere else would live,
Glory and pomp that I alone could give :
Trophies and thrones by matchless valour gain'd,
Faith unreproved, and chastity unstain'd ;
With all that soothes the sense and charms the soul,
Came at my call, and were in my control.

'To dream these dreams I chose a woody scene,
My guardian-shade, the world and me between ;
A green enclosure, where beside its bound
A thorny fence beset its beauties round,
Save where some creature's force had made a way
For me to pass, and in my kingdom stray :
Here then I stray'd, then sat me down to call,
Just as I will'd, my shadowy subjects all !

'With all these flights and fancies, then so dear,
I reach'd the birthday of my twentieth year ;
And in the evening of a day in June
Was singing—as I sang—some heavenly tune
(My native tone, indeed, was harsh and hoarse,
But he who feels such powers can sing of course) :'

when, suddenly, he perceives, on the other side of his 'leafy screen,' two ladies, arm in arm, but one of form, feature, and demeanour that bespake the nobler race—

indeed, nothing less than one of the ideal heroines his imagination had conceived. He stands awhile, in mute admiration behind the leafy veil ; when, as suddenly, both ladies shriek aloud, alarmed by some 'uncivil kine,' who stand threatening them with hoof and horn, while Susan, the dairymaid, is gossiping with Daniel by a distant stile. George at once breaks through the hedge, waves the two ladies to a place of safety, and himself faces the cattle, prepared, like Sir Guy, for encounter; till Susan, coming up to the rescue, drives them before her peaceably away. Then, when the danger is past his Gloriana rewards her deliverer with a smile and a word that made him her slave, and vanishes almost as mysteriously as she came—*how*, he scarcely knows, and *whither* he never could ascertain, though he inquired of every living soul, gentle or simple, about the place. Not only there, nor about England, only, he says—

'I cross'd the seas, I went where strangers go,
And gazed on crowds as one who dreads a foe,
Or seeks a friend ; and when I sought in vain,
Fled to fresh crowds, and hoped and gazed again.

'O ! my dear Richard, what a waste of time
Gave I not thus to lunacy sublime !
What days, months, years (to useful purpose lost)
Has not this dire infatuation cost !
Yet let me own that, as my soul it drew
From reason's path, it shunn'd dishonour's too ;
It made my taste refined, my feelings nice,
And placed an Angel in the way of vice.

'My thrifty uncle, now return'd,* began
To stir within me what remain'd of man ;

* *I* being now returned from my vain pursuit.

My powerful frenzy painted to the life,
And ask'd me if I took a dream to wife?
Debate ensued, and so affection wrought,
That he to save me from destruction sought:
To him destruction, the most awful curse
Of misery's children, was—an empty purse!
He his own books approved, and thought the pen
A useful instrument for trading men;
But judged a quill was never to be slit
Except to make it for a merchant fit.
He, when informed how men of taste could write,
Look'd on his ledger with supreme delight;
Then would he laugh, and, with insulting joy,
Tell me aloud, "*That's* poetry, my boy!
Sir, when a man composes in this style,
What is to him a critic's frown or smile?
What is the puppy's censure or applause
To the good man who on his banker draws,
Buys an estate, and writes upon the grounds,
Pay to A. B. an hundred thousand pounds!"

'Some months I suffered thus, compell'd to sit
And hear a wealthy kinsman aim at wit;
Yet there was something in his nature good,
And he had feeling for the tie of blood:
Till, not contented, not in discontent,
As my good uncle counsell'd, on I went;
Conscious of youth's great error—nay, the crime
Of manhood now—a dreary waste of time;
Conscious of that account which I must give
How life had past with me—I strove to live.

'Had I, like others, my first hope attain'd,
I must, at least, a certainty have gain'd;
Had I, like others, lost the hope of youth,
Another hope had promised greater truth.
But I in baseless hopes, and groundless views,
Was fated time, and peace, and health to lose,
Impell'd to seek, for ever doom'd to fail,
Is——I distress you—let me end my tale.

'Something one day occurr'd about a bill
That was not drawn with true mercantile skill,
And I was ask'd and authorised to go
To seek the firm of Clutterbuck and Co.;*
Their hour was past—but when I urged the case,
There was a youth who named a second place;
Where, on occasions of important kind,
I might the man of occupation find.

'The house was good, but not so pure and clean
As some suburban villas I had seen;
His room I saw, and must acknowledge, there
Were not the signs of cleanliness or care:
Yet men, I knew, of meditation deep,
Love not their maidens should their studies sweep;
A female servant, void of female grace,
Loose in attire, proceeded to the place;

* Might not George have spoken in character, and defied parody, had he put it in some such way as this?

'And I was sent to set it right with—O,
Romantic Title!—Clutterbuck and Co.'

Six lines after this, I have ventured to substitute 'suburban villas' for an equivocal expression which those who like may look for in the original.

She stared intrusive on my slender frame,
And boldly ask'd my business and my name.

'I gave them both; and, left to be amused,
Well as I might the parlour I perused.
The shutters half unclosed, the curtains fell
Half down, and made the room half visible:
Late as it was, the little parlour bore
Some tell-tale tokens of the night before;
There were strange sights and scents about the room,
Of food high season'd, and of strong perfume;
Two unmatch'd sofas ample rents display'd,
Carpet and curtains were alike decay'd;
A large old mirror, with once-gilded frame,
Reflected prints that I forbear to name;
The cinders yet were sleeping in the grate,
Warm from the fire continued large and late;
The chairs in haste seem'd whirl'd about the room,
As when the sons of riot hurry home,
And leave the troubled place to solitude and gloom.

'All this, for I had ample time, I saw,
And prudence question'd—should we not withdraw?
No! but a lady's voice was heard to call
On my attention—and she had it all;
For lo! she enters, speaking ere in sight,
"Monsieur! I shall not want the chair to-night"—

'I cannot paint her—something I had seen
So pale and slim, and tawdry and unclean;
With haggard looks, of vice and woe the prey,
Laughing in languor, miserably gay:
Her face, where face appear'd, was amply spread,

By art's coarse pencil, with ill-chosen red,
The flower's fictitious bloom, the blushing of the dead!
But yet 'tis *She*—the same and not the same—
Who to my bower a heavenly being came;
Who waked my soul's first thought of real bliss,
Whom long I sought, and now—to find her this!
She gave her hand; which, as I lightly press'd,
The cold but ardent grasp my soul oppress'd;
The ruin'd girl disturb'd me, and my eyes
Look'd, I conceive, both sorrow and surprise.

'I spoke my business—"He," she answer'd, "comes
And lodges here—he has the backward rooms—
He now is absent, and—but O! the night
When you preserved me in that horrid fright!
A thousand, thousand times, asleep, awake,
I thought of what you ventured for my sake."

'She spoke—and o'er the practised features threw
The looks that reason charm, and strength subdue.

'"Come, my dear friend, discard that look of care,
All things were made to be, as all things are;
All to seek pleasure as the end design'd,
The only good in matter or in mind;
So was I taught by one, who gave me all
That my experienced heart can wisdom call.
O! we have both about the world been toss'd,
Thy gain I know not—I, they cry, am lost;
So let the wise ones talk; they talk in vain,
And are mistaken both in loss and gain."

'And then she sang, and changed from grave to gay,
Till all reproach and anger died away.

'And then she moved my pity; for she wept,
And told her miseries till resentment slept,
With features graven on my soul, with sighs
Seen but not heard, with soft imploring eyes,
And voice that needed not, but had the aid
Of powerful words to soften and persuade.

'"O! I repent me of the past; and sure
Grief and repentance make the bosom pure;
Yet meet thee not with clean and single heart,
As on the day we met—and but to part!
Ere I had drank the cup that to my lip
Was held, and press'd till I was forced to sip;
I drank indeed, but never ceased to hate—
It poison'd, but could not intoxicate.
To excuse my fall I plead not love's excess,
But a weak orphan's need and loneliness;
I had no parent upon earth—no door
Was oped to me—young, innocent, and poor,
Vain and resentful—You could witness then
That I was precious in the eyes of men;
So, made by them a goddess, and denied
Respect and notice by the women's pride;
Here scorn'd, there worshipp'd—will it strange appear,
Allured and driven, that I settled here?
Yet loved it not; and never have I pass'd
One day, and wish'd another like the last.

'"Is it not written, He, who came to save
Sinners, the sins of deepest dye forgave?
That He His mercy to the sufferers dealt,
And pardon'd error when the ill was felt?

Yes ! I would hope, there is an eye that reads
What is within, and sees the heart that bleeds——
But who on earth will one so lost deplore,
And who will help that lost one to restore ?
Who will on trust the sigh of grief receive ;
And—all things warring with belief—believe ?"

'Soften'd, I said—" Be mine the hand and heart,
If with your world you will consent to part."

'She would—she tried——Alas ! she did not know
How deeply rooted evil habits grow :
She felt the truth upon her spirits press,
But wanted ease, indulgence, show, excess,
Voluptuous banquets, pleasures—not refined,
But such as soothe to sleep th' opposing mind—
She look'd for idle vice the time to kill,
And subtle, strong apologies for ill ;
Pleasures that brought disgust yet brought relief,
And minds she hated help'd to war with grief.'

'Thus then she perish'd ?'—

'Nay—but thus she proved
Slave to the vices that she never loved :
But while she thus her better thoughts opposed,
And woo'd the world, the world's deceptions closed.
I had long lost her ; but I sought in vain
To banish pity :—still she gave me pain,
Still I desired to aid her—to direct,
And wish'd the world that won her to reject.
Nor wish'd in vain—there came, at length, request
That I would see a wretch with grief oppress'd,

By guilt affrighted—and I saw her laid
Where never worldly joy a visit paid :
That world receding fast ! the world to come
Conceal'd in terror, ignorance, and gloom !
The wants I saw I could supply with ease,
But there were wants of other kind than these ;
Th' awakening thought, the hope-inspiring view—
The doctrines awful, grand, alarming, true—
Still I could something offer, and could send
For other aid—a more important friend,
To save in that sad hour the drooping prey,
And from its victim drive despair away.
All decent comfort round the sick were seen ;
The female helpers quiet, sober, clean ;
Her kind physician with a smile appear'd,
And zealous love the pious friend endear'd :
While I, with mix'd sensations, could inquire,
Hast thou one wish, one unfulfill'd desire ?

' Yes—there was yet a female friend—an old
And grieving nurse—to whom it should be told—
If I would tell—that she—her child—had fail'd,
And turn'd from Truth—but Truth at length prevail'd.

' Still as I went came other change—the frame
And features wasted, and yet slowly came
The end ; and so inaudible the breath,
And still the breathing, we exclaim'd—'tis Death !
When—as it came—or did my fancy trace
That lively, lovely flushing o'er the face,
Bringing back all that my young heart impress'd—
It came— and went !—She sigh'd, and was at rest !

'Twas in that chamber, Richard, I began
To think more deeply of the end of man:
Was it to jostle all his fellows by,
To run before them, and say, "Here am I,
Fall down, and worship?"—Was it, life throughout,
With circumspection keen to hunt about
As spaniels for their game, where might be found
Abundance more for coffers that abound?
Or was it life's enjoyments to prefer,
Like this poor girl, and then to die like her?
No! He, who gave the faculties, design'd
Another use for the immortal mind:
There is a state in which it will appear
With all the good and ill contracted here;
With gain and loss, improvement and defect;
And then, my soul! what hast thou to expect
For talents laid aside, life's waste, and time's neglect?

'Home I return'd, with spirits in that state
Of vacant woe, I strive not to relate,
Nor how, deprived of all her hope and strength,
My soul turn'd feebly to the world at length.
I travell'd then till health again resumed
Its former seat—I must not say re-bloom'd;
Patient and dull I grew; my uncle's praise
Was largely dealt me on my better days;
A love of money—other love at rest—
Came creeping on, and settled in my breast;
The force of habit held me to the oar,
Till I could relish what I scorn'd before.
I now could talk and scheme with *men of sense*,
Who deal for millions, and who sigh for pence;

And grew so like them, that I heard with joy
Old Blueskin said I was a pretty boy.
'But I was sick, and sickness brought disgust;
My peace I could not to my profits trust:
Again some views of brighter kind appear'd,
My heart was humbled, and my mind was clear'd;
I felt those helps that souls diseased restore,
And that cold frenzy, Avarice, raged no more.
From dreams of boundless wealth I then arose;
This place, the scene of infant bliss, I chose,
And here I find relief, and here I seek repose.

'Yet much is lost, and not yet much is found,
But what remains, I would believe, is sound;
That first wild passion, that last mean desire,
Are felt no more; but holier hopes require
A mind prepared and steady—my reform
Has fears like his, who, suffering in a storm,
Is on a rich but unknown country cast,
The future fearing, while he feels the past;
But whose more cheerful mind, with hope imbued,
Sees through receding clouds the rising good.'

THE SISTERS.

THE morning shone in cloudless beauty bright ;
Richard his letters read with much delight ;
George from his pillow rose in happy tone,
His bosom's lord sat lightly on his throne :
They read the morning news—they saw the sky
Inviting call'd them, and the earth was dry.

'The day invites us, brother,' said the Squire ;
'Come, and I'll show thee something to admire :
We still may beauty in our prospects trace ;
If not, we have them both in mind and face.

'Brother, there dwell, yon northern hill below,
Two favourite maidens, whom 'tis good to know ;
Young, but experienced ; dwellers in a cot,
Where they sustain and dignify their lot ;
The best good girls in all our world below—
O ! you must know them—Come ! and you shall know.'

This said, the brothers hasten'd on their way,
With all the foretaste of a pleasant day :
The morning purpose in the mind had fix'd
The leading thought, and that with others mix'd.

'How well it is,' said George, 'when we possess
The strength that bears us up in our distress;
And need not the resources of our pride
Our fall from greatness, and our wants, to hide;
But have the spirit and the wish to show,
We know our wants as well as others know.

''Tis true, the rapid turns of fortune's wheel
Make even the virtuous and the humble feel:
They for a time must suffer, and but few
Can bear their sorrows and our pity too.
Hence all these small expedients, day by day,
Are used to hide the evils they betray:
When, if our pity chances to be seen,
The wounded pride retorts, with anger keen,
And man's insulted grief takes refuge in his spleen.

'When Timon's board contains a single dish,
Timon talks much of market-men and fish,
Forgetful servants, and th' infernal cook,
Who always spoil'd whate'er she undertook.

'But say, it tries us from our height to fall,
Yet is not life itself a trial all?
And not a virtue in the bosom lives,
That gives such ready pay as patience gives;
That pure submission to the ruling mind,
Fix'd, but not forced; obedient, but not blind;
The will of Heaven to make her own she tries,
Or makes her own to Heaven a sacrifice.

'And is there aught on earth so rich or rare,
Whose pleasures may with virtue's pains compare?

This fruit of patience, this the pure delight,
That 'tis a trial in her Judge's sight ;
Her part still striving duty to sustain,
Not spurning pleasure, not defying pain ;
Never in triumph till her race be won,
And never fainting till her work be done.'

With thoughts like these they reach'd the village brook,
And saw a lady sitting with her book ;
And so engaged she heard not, till the men
Were at her side, nor was she frighten'd then ;
But to her friend, the Squire, his smile return'd,
Through which the latent sadness he discern'd.
The stranger-brother at the cottage door
Was now admitted, and was strange no more ;
Then of an absent sister he was told,
Whom they were not at present to behold ;
Something was said of nerves, and that disease,
Whose varying powers on mind and body seize,
Enfeebling both !—Here chose they to remain
One hour in peace, and then return'd again.

And, before 'Good-night,' the Squire, at his brother's request, relates the story of the 'Two Sisters.'

They were left orphan, sufficiently provided by fortune to be independent ;
'Not rich, compared with some who dwelt around ;
Not poor, for want they neither fear'd nor found ;'
but far more liberally endow'd by nature, both in body and mind. They are indeed the 'sister beauties,' of the town they live in ; yet with a difference :

'Like Saul's famed daughters were the lovely twain,
As Micah, Lucy ; and as Merab, Jane :
For this was tall, with free commanding air,
And that was mild, and delicate, and fair.'

And as in person, so in character; Lucy, almost as simple in her tastes as when a child, she was contented with

'A lamb, a bird, a garden, or a brook ;'

and, now as when a child, with the Bible ever at her side, the first thing to meet her eyes in a morning, and the last they looked upon at night :

Jane, of haughtier temper and more ambitious tastes, whether for society, amusements, and books ; fond of poetry, romance, and satire ; and, while as firmly grounded in Bible faith as her sister, not unapt to wander into speculation beyond.

On the whole, one might have said, as was generally felt by those who knew them, that Lucy, the elder sister, was more to be loved, and Jane to be admired.

And, accordingly, each had her favourite friend ; and, moreover, each her favoured lover. Lucy's, a prudent youth of a mercantile turn, who will only invest in a wife as cautiously as in any other speculation.

'The younger sister first engaged his view,
But with her beauty he her spirit knew ;
Her face he much admired, "But, put the case,"
Said he, "I marry, what is then a face?
"At first it pleases to have drawn the lot ;
He then forgets it, but his wife does not ;
Jane too," he judged, "would be reserved and nice,
And many lovers had enchanced her price."

'Thus thinking much, but hiding what he thought,
The prudent lover Lucy's favour sought,
And he succeeded ; true, her sister found
His placid face too ruddy and too round ;
But Lucy found him to his mother kind,
And saw the Christian meekness in his mind ;
His voice was soft, his temper mild and sweet,
His mind was easy, and his person neat.'

Jane's admirer, as might be expected, is quite of another type : a handsome young officer, not notorious for gallantry, but with a certain freedom of speech and manner which alarms Lucy on her sister's behalf, as much as the want of any such 'spirit' had provoked Jane's ridicule with regard to her future brother-in-law. But wherefore any such alarm ?

'"What fears my sister ?" said the partial fair,
For Lucy fear'd—"Why tell me to beware ?
His is a spirit generous, free, and kind ;
And all his flaws seen floating in his mind.
A little boldness in his speech—What then ?
It is the failing of these generous men :
A little vanity—but—O ! my dear,
They all would show it, were they all sincere."'

But notwithstanding all these diversities of temper and taste in the two sisters,
'They loved each other with the warmth of youth,
With ardour, candour, tenderness, and truth ;
And though their pleasures were not just the same,
Yet both were pleased whenever one became.'

And thus loving and beloved, the two fair sisters dwell together, 'like two queen-myrtles,' growing side by side, says the poet, till suddenly blighted by an evil wind from without.

There is a certain grand house in the town, loftier, larger, and more sumptuous than any there, surrounded by gardens rich in flowers, and flanked by conservatories and hot-houses,

'Bright on whose glass the sloping sunbeams shone,
And brought the summer of all climates on.'

And the master of all this is a certain speculative banker, who invites all his neighbours to share in his fortune by investing in such canal, factory, and roadway, as shall not only enrich themselves, but make a capital of their country town. Yes, as he told them,

'*He* insured the crop,
So each would give him but a seed to drop.
The thriven farmer, who had lived to spare,
Became an object of especial care;
He took the frugal tradesman by the hand,
And wish'd him joy of what he might command;
And the industrious servant, who had laid
His saving by, it was his joy to aid.
Large talk, and hints of some productive plan
Half-named, won all his hearers to a man;
Uncertain projects drew them wondering on,
And avarice listen'd till distrust was gone.'

Of course the two fair sisters are not to escape the net which gathers in much smaller fry. Accordingly the banker first sends his foolish, but still half-reluctant wife, to pay them a preliminary visit, during which she may take occasion to enlarge on her husband's wealth, on his

generous desire that others should partake of it—but more especially some favoured few, for whom—indeed she is half-jealous of them !—he reserves advantages that she herself might solicit in vain.

And, by-and-by, the banker himself follows her in full blow :

'As if he and prosperity for life
Were wed, and he was showing off his wife,'

and had but a minute to show her off in. And, from that time, at the sisters' cottage are to be seen the banker's carriages and horses, for Lucy to drive in, and for Jane to ride ; and, for both of them, peaches, nectarines and grapes from the hothouse, and from the conservatory such rare flowers, as he modestly said,

'He took upon him shame
That he could purchase what he could not name.'

'Jane laugh'd at all their visits and parade,
And call'd it friendship in a hothouse made ;
A style of friendship suited to his taste,
Brought on and ripen'd, like his grapes, in haste ;
She saw the wants that wealth in vain would hide,
And all the tricks and littleness of pride ;
On all the wealth would creep the vulgar stain,
And grandeur strove to look itself in vain.

'Lucy perceived—but she replied, "Why heed
Such small defects ?—they're very kind indeed !"
Yet was she vex'd to have such favours shown,
And they returning nothing of their own ;
Jane smiled, and begg'd her sister to believe—
"We give at least as much as we receive."

'Alas! and more; they gave their ears and eyes,
His splendour oft-times took them by surprise;
And if in Jane appear'd a meaning smile,
She gazed, admired, and paid respect the while;
And Lucy's prudence, though it was alarm'd,
Was by the splendour of the banker charm'd;
What was her paltry thousand pounds to him,
Who would expend five thousand on a whim?
And then the portion of his wife was known—
But not that she reserved it for her own.'

And so things go on all rose-colour for awhile; the banker ever smiling; his wife and darlings ever in and out of the sisters' cottage; carriage, conservatory, and hot-house still at their command. Under all which, however, rumour has arisen—though not as yet to the sisters' ears—of something wrong in that Belmont Place, from which all this benevolent luxury exhales;

''Twas told—the servants who had met to thank
Their lord for placing money in his bank—
Their kind free master, who such wages gave,
And then increased whatever they could save—
They, who had heard they should their savings lose,
Were weeping, swearing, drinking, at the news;
And still the more they drank, the more they wept,
And swore, and rail'd, and threaten'd, till they slept.

'The morning truth confirm'd the evening dread;
The bank was broken, and the banker fled;
But left a promise that his friends should have,
To the last shilling—what his fortunes gave.

'The evil tidings reached the Sister-pair,
And one like Sorrow look'd, and one Despair.

'"The odious villain!" Jane in wrath began;
In pity Lucy, "The unhappy man!
When time and reason our affection heal,
How will the author of our sufferings feel?"

'"And let him feel, my sister—let the woes
That he creates be death to his repose!
Wretch! when our life was glad, our prospects gay,
With savage hand to sweep them all away!
And he must know it—know when he beguiled
His easy victims—how the villain smiled!"'—

And she launches out into such a denunciation as makes it no wonder that—

'Lucy sigh'd,
And, waiting softer times, no more replied.'

And what of their two lovers when they hear all this bad news? Lucy's prudent swain had always lamented, he says, that she had not told him of her investment till after it was made: when nothing to be done but make the best of it. But what is she to do now? Not only shorn of all the luxuries her false friends had supplied her with, but of her own little fortune scarce enough left for a bare subsistence! What is she to do? And what is *he* to do? "If she really felt her loss, and felt what a sacrifice he would make by holding to his engagement"—

'He said—and went with purpose, he believ'd
Of generous nature—so is man deceived.'

He is surprised to find Lucy much as usual, with very little trace of the disaster which had overwhelmed her. After a little silence and hesitation, he begins with: 'A

very bad business, very bad—worse than people yet know; at best a sorry composition that will leave them but a tithe of what they had invested'—What does she think Jane's lover will do? Well, he is rich, and would not feel the loss; but, to my way of thinking, the right thing is to feel, and still abide by the sacri fice.'

And here he pauses, somewhat taken aback by seeing no symptom, first of fear, then of triumphant gratitude in Lucy's face. Quite the contrary. At last she answers him with simple dignity. Had he returned to her with the frank, unconditional affection he had hitherto professed, she would have re-welcomed him with all she ever felt; would have bidden him think the matter well over, and, should he still remain in the same mind when the first emotion had subsided, she would have accepted him, not only with love but with gratitude. But when he begins with intimating what a sacrifice he is prepared to make—to speak of his engagement as a debt, not of love, but of honour, which, if he tells her of now, he will surely remind her of hereafter—'Think you,' she asks him—

'"Think you that meekness' self would condescend
To take the husband when she scorns the friend?
Forgive the frankness, and rejoice for life,
You are not burden'd with so poor a wife.
Go! and be happy." With a foolish look
That a dull school-boy fixes on his book
That he resigns, with mingled shame and joy—
So Barlow went, confounded like the boy.'

Jane, however indignant at the insult offered to her sister, is not surprised at it from a fellow whose love of money, she always said, would have disgraced a Jew, and

whom *her* generous lover, like herself, only just tolerated for her sister's sake.

And how does her generous lover requite her confidence?

'Twill be brief: I have no heart to dwell
On crimes they almost feel who paint them well.'

He comes at length, makes visit after visit, each longer and later, and more familiar than the last, with, as yet (from delicacy, she thinks), no word of marriage; and, at last, when he does name it, only to insinuate how love may prosper better without. With lightning flashing from her eyes she scares him from her presence, and then, as if herself thunder-stricken, falls senseless to the ground.

'Now, from that day has Lucy laid aside
Her proper cares, to be her sister's guide,
Guard, and protector. At their uncle's farm
They pass'd the period of their first alarm,
But soon retired, nor was he grieved to learn
They made their own affairs their own concern.

'I knew not then their worth; and, had I known,
Could not the kindness of a friend have shown;
For men they dreaded; they a dwelling sought,
And there the children of the village taught;
There, firm and patient, Lucy still depends
Upon her efforts, not upon her friends;
She is with persevering strength endued,
And can be cheerful—for she will be good.

'Jane too will strive the daily tasks to share,
That so employment may contend with care;

Not power, but will, she shows, and looks about
On her small people, who come in and out ;
And seems of what they need, or she can do, in doubt.
There sits the chubby crew on seats around,
While she, all rueful at the sight and sound,
Shrinks from the free approaches of the tribe,
Whom she attempts lamenting to describe.
With stains the idlers gather'd in their way,
The compound stains of mud, and mould, and clay,
With hair uncomb'd, grimed face and piteous look,
Each heavy student takes the odious book,
And on the lady casts a glance of fear,
Who draws the garment close as he comes near.
She then for Lucy's mild forbearance tries,
And from her pupils turns her brilliant eyes,
Making new efforts, and with some success,
To pay attention while the students guess ;
Who to the gentler mistress fain would glide,
And dread their station at "the Lady's" side.

'Such is their fate—there is a friendly few
Whom they receive, and there is chance for you ;
Their school, and something gather'd from the wreck
Of that bad bank, keeps poverty in check ;
And true respect, and high regard, are theirs,
The children's profit, and the parent's prayers.

'With Lucy rests the one peculiar care,
That few must see, and none with her may share ;
For her sad sister needs the care of love
That will direct her, that will not reprove,
But waits to warn : for Jane will walk alone,
Will sing in low and melancholy tone ;

Will read or write, or to her plants will run,
To shun her friends—alas ! her thoughts to shun.

'Wrapt in such thoughts, she feels her mind astray,
But knows 'tis true, that she has lost her way ;
For Lucy's smile will check the sudden flight,
And one kind look let in the wonted light.

'Fits of long silence she endures, then talks
Too much—with too much ardour, as she walks ;
At times there is upon her features seen,
What moves suspicion—she is too serene ;
Absent at times she will her mother call,
And cry at mid-day, "Then Good-night to all !"

'Long wrapt in silence, she will then assume
An air of business, and shake off her gloom ;
Then cry exulting, "O ! it must succeed,
There are ten thousand readers—all men read :
There are my writings—you shall never spend
Your precious moments to so poor an end—
You weep ; there's something I have said amiss,
And vex'd my sister—What a world is this !
And how I wander !—Where has fancy run ?
Is there no poem ? Have I nothing done ?
Still, be not frighten'd ; it is but a dream ;
I am not lost, bewilder'd though I seem."

Then her own songs to some soft tune she sings,
And laughs, and calls them melancholy things.

I.

'"Let me not have this gloomy view
About my room, around my bed;
But morning roses, wet with dew,
To cool my burning brows instead;
As flow'rs that once in Eden grew,
Let them their fragrant spirits shed,
And every day the sweets renew,
Till I, a fading flower, am dead.

II.

'"I'll have my grave beneath a hill,
Where only Lucy's self shall know:
Where runs the pure pellucid rill
Upon its gravelly bed below;
There violets on the borders blow,
And insects their soft light display,
Till, as the morning sunbeams glow,
The cold phosphoric fires decay.

III.

'"That is the grave to Lucy shown,
The soil a pure and silver sand,
The green cold moss above it grown,
Unpluck'd of all but maiden hand:
There will the lark—the lamb, in sport,
In air—on earth—securely play,

And Lucy to my grave resort,
  As innocent, but not so gay.
Raise not a turf, nor set a stone,
  That man a maiden's grave may trace,
But thou, my Lucy, come alone,
  And let affection find the place."'

THE OLD BACHELOR.

SAVE their kind friend the rector, Richard yet
Had not a favourite of his brother met;
Now at the Hall that welcome guest appear'd,
By trust, by trials, and by time endear'd;
Of him the grateful Squire his love profess'd,
And full regard—'He was of friends the best;
Yet not to him alone this good I owe,
This social pleasure that our friends bestow;
The sex, that wrought in earlier life my woes,
With loss of time, who murder'd my repose,
Now to my joys administer, nor vex
Me more; and now I venerate the sex;
And boast the friendship of a spinster kind,
Cheerful and pleasant, to her fate resign'd;
Then by her side my bachelor I place,
And hold them honours to the human race.

Yet these are they in tale and song display'd,
The peevish man, and the repining maid;

Creatures made up of misery and spite,
Who taste no pleasures, except those they blight ;
From whom th' affrighten'd niece and nephew fly—
Fear'd while they live, and useless till they die.

Not such as these are the two friends whom, as we have just heard, the Squire delights in placing together at his table, but whom, as it happens, he now introduces separately to his brother. And, first, his old Bachelor—a gentleman of agreeable aspect, polite, but easy manners, and still sprightly humour, who one evening when mutual confidence has expanded under the united influence of a good dinner, good wine and congenial company, is led on to tell his friends of those matrimonial aspirations which ended in the single blessedness he now enjoys.

He is the son of a country gentleman, whom inveterate Whiggism, and some rivalry in Game, have alienated from a neighbouring Tory squire. The children, however, of either party are so little influenced by this parental animosity that the Whig squire's son—this same old bachelor—woos, and wins, the heart of the Tory's daughter ; and he now proceeds to describe how he appealed—first to his own father, a sarcastic gentleman of the old school, who is the tyrant of his family ; and, after him, to his sweetheart's Tory mother, who is the tyrant of hers, and, indeed, the chief promoter of the feud between both houses.

'First I began my father's heart to move,
By boldly saying "We are born to love ;"*

* Might one not venture to read,
'By saying, "Should we not our neighbour love ?"'
as being probably the text referred to by the poet, and the general proposition under which the bachelor advances to his particular 'point.'

My father answer'd, with an air of ease,
" Well ! very well ! be loving if you please !
Except a man insults us or offends,
In my opinion we should all be friends."

'This gain'd me nothing ; little would accrue
From clearing points so useless though so true ;
But with some pains I brought him to confess,
That to forgive our wrongs is to redress.

' " It might be so," he answer'd, yet with doubt,
That it might not, " But what is this about ?"
I dared not speak directly, but I strove
To keep my subjects, harmony and love.

' Coolly my father look'd, and much enjoy'd
The broken eloquence his eye destroy'd ;
Yet less confused, and more resolved at last,
With bolder effort to my point I pass'd.

' My father's look was one I seldom saw,
It gave no pleasure, nor created awe ;
It was the kind of cool contemptuous smile
Of witty persons, overcharged with bile ;
At first he spoke not, nor, at last, to me :

' " Well, now, and what if such a thing could be ?
What, if the boy should his addresses pay
To the tall girl, would that old Tory say ?
I have no hatred to the dog—but, still,
It was some pleasure when I used him ill ;
This I must lose if we should brethren be—
Yet may be not, for brethren disagree—

The fool is right—there is no bar in life
Against their marriage—let her be his wife.
Well, sir, you hear me !"—Never man complied,
And left a beggar so dissatisfied ;
Though all was granted, yet was grace refused ;
I felt as one indulged and yet abused,
And yet, although provoked, not unamused.
I had prepared my answer to his rage,
With his contempt I thought not to engage :
I, like a hero, would my castle storm,
And meet the giant in his proper form ;
Then, conquering him, would set my princess free ;
This would a trial and a triumph be :
When lo ! a sneering menial brings the keys,
And cries in scorn, " Come, enter, if you please ;
You'll find the lady sitting on her bed,
And 'tis expected that you woo and wed."

' Yet not so easy was my conquest found ;
I met with trouble ere with triumph crown'd.
Triumph, alas !—My father little thought,
A king at home, how other minds are wrought.
True, his meek neighbour was a gentle squire,
And had a soul averse from wrath and ire ;
He answer'd frankly, when to him I went,
" I give you little, sir, in my consent :"
But that meek man was destined to obey
A sovereign lady's unremitted sway ;
Who bore no partial, no divided rule,
All were obedient pupils in her school.

She had religious zeal, both strong and sour,
That gave an active sternness to her power ;
But few could please her, she herself was one
By whom that deed was very seldom done.

'Yes! I have now the tigress in my eye—
When I had ceased and waited her reply,
A pause ensued, and then she slowly rose,
With bitter smile predictive of my woes ;
A look she saw was plainly understood——

'"Admire my daughter! Sir, you're very good.
The girl is decent, take her all in all—
Genteel, we hope—perhaps a thought too tall ;
A daughter's portion hers—you'll think her fortune small.
Perhaps her uncles, in a cause so good,
Would do a little for their flesh and blood ;
We are not ill allied—and say we make
Her portion decent—whither would you take?
Is there some cottage on your father's ground,
Where may a dwelling for the girl be found?
Or a small farm—your mother understands
How to make useful such a pair of hands.
'"But this we drop at present, if you please,
We shall have leisure for such things as these ;
They will be proper ere you fix the day
For the poor girl to honour and obey ;
At present therefore we may put an end
To our discourse—Good-morrow to you, friend!"
Then, with a solemn curtesy and profound,

Her laughing eye she lifted from the ground,
And left me lost in thought, and gazing idly round.

'Still we had hope, and, growing bold in time,
I would engage her father in our crime;
But he refused, for though he wish'd us well
He said, "He must not make his house a hell;"
And sure the meaning look that I convey'd
Did not inform him that the hell was made.'

This imperious lady, however, falls ill, and prefers, while yet alive, to yield her sanction to a marriage which she knows will be solemnised without it after her death. But a sterner authority than herself interposes to forbid the banns. The young lady falls ill and dies; and the poor bachelor devotes himself for many years to sorrow which he dare not dwell on, and which he apologises to the company for being not yet able entirely to suppress.

In the meanwhile his caustic father dies; and his mother, having recovered, the sense and spirit which had been hidden under his tyranny, now begins to exert salutary influence over her son.

'"Much time is lost," she said, "but yet my son
May, in the race of life, have much to run;
When I am gone, thy life to thee will seem
Lonely and sad, a melancholy dream;
Get thee a wife—I will not say to love,
But one a friend in thy distress to prove;
One who will kindly help thee to sustain
Thy spirit's burden in its hours of pain.
Say, will you marry?"—I in haste replied,
"And who would be the self-devoted bride?

There is a melancholy power that reigns
Tyrant within me—who would bear his chains,
And hear them clicking every wretched hour,
With will to aid me, but without the power?
But if such one were found with easy mind,
Who would not ask for raptures——I'm resign'd."

"'Tis quite enough," my gentle mother cried,
"We leave the raptures, and will find the bride."

'There was a lady near us, quite discreet,
Whom in our visits 'twas our chance to meet,
One grave and civil, who had no desire
That men should praise her beauties, or admire;
She in our walks would sometimes take my arm,
But had no foolish fluttering or alarm;
My mother praised her, and with so much skill,
She gave a certain bias to my will;
But calm indeed our courtship; I profess'd
A due regard—my mother did the rest;
Who soon declared that we should love, and grow
As fond a couple as the world could show;
And talk'd of boys and girls with so much glee
That I began to wish the thing could be.

'Still when the day that soon would come was named
I felt a cold fit, and was half ashamed;
But we too far proceeded to revoke,
And had been much too serious for a joke:
I shook away the fear that man annoys,
And thought a little of the girls and boys.

'A week remain'd—for seven succeeding days
Nor man nor woman might control my ways;
For seven dear nights I might to rest retire
At my own time, and none the cause require;
For seven blest days I might go in and out,
And none demand, "Sir, what are you about?"

'Thus while I thought, I utter'd, as men sing
In under-voice, reciting "With this ring,"
That when the hour should come, I might not dread
These, or the words that follow'd, "I thee wed."

'Such was my state of mind, exulting now
And then depress'd—I cannot tell you how—
When a poor lady, whom her friends could send
On any message, a convenient friend,
Whose heart indeed was marble, but whose face
Assumed a look adapted to the case;
Enter'd my room, commissioned to assuage
What was foreseen, my sorrow and my rage.

'It seem'd the lady whom I could prefer,
And could my much-loved freedom lose for her,
Had bold attempts, but not successful, made,
The heart of some rich cousin to invade;
Who, half resisting, half complying, kept
A cautious distance, and the business slept.

'This prudent swain his own importance knew,
And swore to part the now affianced two:
Fill'd with insidious purpose, forth he went,
Profess'd his love, and woo'd her to consent:

" Ah ! were it true !" she sigh'd ; he boldly swore
His love sincere—and mine was sought no more.

' All this the witch at dreadful length reveal'd,
And begg'd me calmly to my fate to yield :
Much pains she took engagements old to state,
And hoped to hear me curse my cruel fate ;
In my calm feelings she beheld disguise,
And told of some strange wildness in my eyes.
But there was nothing in the eye amiss,
And the heart calmly bore a stroke like this.

' Not so my mother ; though of gentle kind,
She could no mercy for the creature find.

' " Vile plot !" she said.—" But, madam, if they plot,
And you would have revenge, disturb them not."

' " What can we do, my son ?"—" Consult our ease,
And do just nothing, madam, if you please."

' " What will be said ?"—" We need not that discuss ;
Our friends and neighbours will do that for us."

' " The world will blame us sure, if we be still."—
" And if we stir, you may be sure it will."

' " Do you so lightly, son, your loss sustain ?"—
" Nay, my dear madam, but I count it gain."

' " Not to such loss your father had agreed."—
" No, for my father's had been loss indeed."

' With gracious smile my mother gave assent,
And let th' affair slip by with much content.'

'Six years had pass'd, and forty ere the six,
When Time began to play his usual tricks :
The locks once comely in a virgin's sight,
Locks of pure brown, display'd th' encroaching white ;
The blood once fervid now to cool began,
And Time's strong pressure to subdue the man.
I rode or walk'd as I was wont before,
But now the bounding spirit was no more ;
A moderate pace would now my body heat,
A walk of moderate length distress my feet ;
I show'd my stranger-guest those hills sublime,
But said, "The view is poor, we need not climb."
At a friend's mansion I began to dread
The cold neat parlour, and the gay glazed bed ;
At home I felt a more decided taste,
And must have all things in my order placed ;
I ceased to hunt, my horses pleased me less,
My dinner more ; I learn'd to play at chess ;
I took my dog and gun, but saw the brute
Was disappointed that I did not shoot ;
My morning walks I now could bear to lose,
And bless'd the shower that gave me not to choose.
In fact, I felt a languor stealing on ;
The active arm, the agile hand were gone ;
Small daily actions into habits grew,
And new dislike to forms and fashions new :
I loved my trees in order to dispose,
I number'd peaches, look'd how stocks arose,
Told the same story oft—in short, began to prose.

'My books were changed ; I now preferr'd the truth
To the light reading of unsettled youth ;

Novels grew tedious, but by choice or chance,
I still had interest in the wild romance.
There is an age, we know, when tales of love
Form the sweet pabulum our hearts approve;
Then as we read we feel, and are indeed,
We think, the heroic men of whom we read.
But in our after life these fancies fail,
We cannot be the heroes of the tale;
The parts that Cliffords, Mordaunts, Bevilles, play,
We cannot—cannot be so smart and gay.

'But all the mighty deeds and matchless powers
Of errant knights we never fancied ours;
Nothing reminds us in the magic page
Of old romance of our declining age;
If once our fancy mighty dragons slew,
This is no more than fancy now can do.
But when the heroes of a novel come,
Conquer'd and conquering, to a drawing-room,
We no more feel the vanity that sees
Within ourselves what we admire in these,
And so we leave the modern tale to fly
From realm to realm with Tristram or Sir Guy.'

While indulging in these mediæval visions, the bachelor falls in with a lady of similar age and taste; and, after some further acquaintance, and perhaps at his mother's suggestion, offers her his hand, and is accepted. Nothing is said of such sublunary matter as 'settlements:' perhaps not much of celestial love. Nay, he confesses that his sorrow for an illness which his mother falls into was somewhat alleviated by the excuse it affords for delaying his own marriage.

'Still, all was kindness, and at morn and eve
I made a visit, talk'd, and took my leave'—

till, one unlucky day, he makes one visit too much, discovers that his lady's roses, and lilies, and locks, are due to the perfumer's shop, and takes his leave of her as a lover for ever.

'But,' said the squire, 'did thus your courtship cease?
Resign'd your mistress her betroth'd in peace?'—

'Yes; and had sense her feelings to restrain,
Nor ask'd me once my conduct to explain;
Friend to the last, I left her with regret—
Nay, leave her not, for we are neighbours yet.

'These views extinct, I travell'd, not with taste,
But so that time ran wickedly to waste;
Bridges and churches, towers and halls, I saw,
Maids and Madonnas, and could sketch and draw:
Yes, I had made a book, but that my pride
In the not making was more gratified.

'I now was sixty, but could walk and eat;
My food was pleasant, and my slumbers sweet;
What then could urge me at a day so late
To think of women?—my unlucky fate!
It was not sudden; I had no alarms,
But was attack'd when resting on my arms;
Like the poor soldier—when the battle raged
The man escaped, though twice or thrice engaged,
But when it ended, in a quiet spot
He fell, the victim of a random-shot.

'With my good friend the Vicar oft I spent
The evening hours in quiet, as I meant;
A pleasant, sturdy disputant was he,
Who had a daughter—such the Fates decree,
To prove how weak is man—poor yielding man, like me.

'Time after time the maid went out and in,
Ere love was yet beginning to begin;
The first awakening proof, the early doubt,
Rose from observing she went in and out.
My friend, though careless, seem'd my mind to explore,
"Why do you look so often at the door?"
I then was cautious, but it did no good,
For *she*, at least, my meaning understood.

'I must confess, this creature in her mind
Nor face had beauty that a man would blind;
If she were tried for breaking human hearts,
Men would acquit her—she had not the arts.
Yet without art, at first without design,
She soon became the arbitress of mine;
Without pretensions—nay, without pretence,
But by a native strange intelligence
Women possess when they behold a man
Whom they can tease, and are assured they can.

'Though much she knew, yet nothing could she prove;
I had not yet confess'd the crime of love.
But in an hour when guardian-angels sleep,
I fail'd the secret of my soul to keep;
And then I saw the triumph in those eyes
That spoke—"Ay, now you are indeed my prize"—

I almost thought I saw compassion too,
For all the cruel things she meant to do.

'She spoke with kindness—thought the honour high,
And knew not how to give a fit reply ;
She could not, would not, dared not, must not deem
Such language proof of ought but my esteem ;
I who had seen so many and so much—
It was an honour—she would deem it such—
Our different years, indeed, would put an end
To other views—but still—her father's friend—

'Thus saying nothing, all she meant to say,
She play'd the part the sex delights to play ;
Now by some act of kindness giving scope
To the new workings of excited hope,
Then by an air of something like disdain,
But scarcely seen, repelling it again ;
Then for a season, neither cold nor kind,
She kept a sort of balance in the mind,
And, as his pole a dancer on the rope,
The equal poise on both sides kept me up.

'Is it not strange that man can fairly view
Pursuit like this, and yet his point pursue ?
While he the folly fairly will confess,
And even feel the danger of success ?
But so it is ; and nought the Circes care
How ill their victims with their poison fare,
When thus they trifle, and with quiet soul
Mix their ingredients in the maddening bowl.
Their high regard, the softness of their air,
The pitying grief that saddens at a prayer,'

Their grave petitions for the peace of mind
That they determine you shall never find,
And all their vain amazement that a man
Like you should love—they wonder how you can !

'For months the idler play'd her wicked part,
Then fairly own'd the secret of her heart.
"She hoped"—I now the smiling gipsy view—
"Her father's friend would be her lover's too,
Young Henry Gale"—"But why delay so long?"
"She could not tell—she fear'd it might be wrong,
But I was good"—I knew not I was weak,
And spoke as love directed me to speak.

'When in my arms their boy and girl I take,
I feel a fondness for the mother's sake ;
But though the dears some softening thoughts excite,
I have no wishes for the father's right.

'Now all is quiet, and the mind sustains
Its proper comforts, its befitting pains ;
The heart reposes ; it has had its share
Of love, as much as it could fairly bear,
And what is left in life, that now demands its care?

'For O ! my friends, if this were all indeed,
Could we believe that nothing would succeed ;
If all were but this daily dose of life,
Without a care or comfort, child or wife ;
These walks for health with nothing more in view,
This doing nothing, and with labour too ;
This frequent asking when 'tis time to dine,
This daily dosing o'er the news and wine ;

This age's riddle, when each day appears
So very long, so very short the years ;
What then were life, whose virtues, trials, woes,
Would sleep th' eternal sleep, and there [the scene] would
close !

'This cannot be—but why has Time a pace
That seems unequal in our mortal race ?
Quick is that pace in early life, but slow,
Tedious and heavy as we older grow.
But yet, though slow, the movements are alike,
And with no force upon the memory strike,
And therefore tedious as we find them all,
They leave us nothing we to view recall ;
But days that we so dull and heavy knew
Are now as moments passing in review,
And hence arises ancient men's report,
That days are tedious, and yet years are short.'

THE SPINSTER.

THE old Bachelor has left the brothers to entertain one another; the Rector also being absent for awhile. And one evening Richard bethinks him of that worthy Spinster whom his brother loved to place side by side with him whose story they have just heard, and would fain have her's by way of companion picture to it. The Brothers do not, of course, ask it from her lips as from the Bachelor's—nor indeed need they. She had previously told some of the particulars to her friend the Squire, which he had himself drawn up in a narrative of his own; and he knows himself to be justified in communicating it to one as nice of honour and delicate in feeling as himself. So he now takes the manuscript from its repository, and, occasionally (as we imagine) looking up over his spectacles as he goes on, begins it with this preface:

'Thou wilt attend to this good spinster's life,
And grieve and wonder she is not a wife;
But if we judge by either words or looks,
Her mode of life, her morals, or her books,

Her pure devotion, unaffected sense,
Her placid air, her mild benevolence,
Her gay good humour, and her manners free,
She is as happy as a maid can be ;
If as a wife, I know not, and decline
Question like this, till I can judge of thine.'

' " My father dying, to my mother left
An infant charge, of all things else bereft ;
Poor, but experienced in the world, she knew
What others did, and judged what she could do ;
Beauty she justly weigh'd, was never blind
To her own interest, and she read mankind.
She view'd my person with approving glance,
And judged the way my fortune to advance ;
Taught me betimes that person to improve,
And make a lawful merchandise of love.
I was not one, a Miss, who might presume
Now to be crazed by mirth, now sunk in gloom,
Nor to be fretful, vapourish, or give way
To spleen and anger, as the wealthy may ;
But I must *please ;* and all I felt of pride,
Contempt, and hatred, I must cast aside.

' " Have not one friend,' my mother cried,—' not one ;
That bane of our romantic idlers shun ;
Suppose her true, can she afford you aid ?
Suppose her false your purpose is betray'd ;
Like pence in children's pockets secrets lie
In female bosoms—they must burn or fly.

And then in dubious points, and matters nice,
How can you profit by a child's advice?
While you are writing on from post to post,
Your hour is over and a man is lost.
Think nothing of it; to yourself be true,
And keep life's first great business full in view."'

And with these and sundry other such directions—as, for instance, not to read or write much, which only frightens away fools, and fills a girl's head with fine feelings she cannot afford to entertain—the mother prepares her child to inveigle the first 'eligible' man she may with all the arts and blandishments she can practise, only taking care never to compromise her reputation. For, as she tells her,

'"Few have power to blind
The keen-eyed world, and none to make it kind."'

It is calculated that such beauty, youth, and innocence, discreetly exercised, will be most likely to attract some elderly gentleman sufficiently well off to be an eligible investment. Three such accordingly present themselves in turn: the first, affecting the rattle of a youthful rake; the second, the sobriety of a reformed one; and the third, a free-thinker, professing to regard rakishness or reform indifferently as a matter of taste or convenience. These three successively nibble at the bait which is thrown to them; but, whether by their own mal-address, or that of those who angle for them, successively escape.

And now the mother, wearied of vainly seeking to marry her daughter, resolves on sending her back to the nursery, and finding a husband for herself. She is now forty-five years old, has passed her life in the decorous round of visitation, card-playing, and gossip of a country town; since widowhood has dressed be-

comingly, taken a compliment with graceful indifference; and eaten, drunk, and slept without any ailment whatever. But now she finds her nerves are disordered; she must call in a plausible young Scotch doctor named Mackey, who has just settled in the neighbourhood, and who is surprised to find his invalid always elegantly attired, to receive him in finery which her neighbours had looked on as ordered for her daughter. Up to this time she had been wont to appear

' " To these unequal marriages severe;
Her thoughts of such with energy she told,
And was repulsive, dignified, and cold;
But now, like monarchs weary of a throne,
She would no longer reign—at least alone.

' " She gave her pulse, and with a manner sweet,
Wish'd him to feel how kindly they could beat;
And 'tis a thing quite wonderful to tell
How soon he understood them, and how well.

' " Now, when she married, I from home was sent,
With Grandmamma to keep perpetual Lent;
For she would take me on conditions cheap,
For what we scarcely could a parrot keep:
A trifle added to the daily fare
Would feed a maiden who must learn to spare.

' " Poor Grandmamma among the gentry dwelt
Of a small town, and all the honour felt;
Shrinking from all approaches to disgrace
That might be mark'd in so genteel a place;

Where every daily deed, as soon as done,
Ran through the town as fast as it could run :—
At dinners what appear'd—at cards who lost or won.

' " We had a little maid, some four feet high,
Who was employ'd our household stores to buy ;
For she would weary every man in trade,
And tease t' assent whom she could not persuade.
Methinks I see her, with her pigmy light,
Precede her mistress in a moonless night,
From the small lantern throwing through the street
The dimm'd effulgence at her lady's feet ;
What time she went to prove her well-known skill
With rival friends at their beloved quadrille.

' " ' And how's your pain?' inquired the little maid,
For that was asking if with luck she play'd ;
And this she answer'd as the cards decreed,
' O Biddy ! ask not—very bad indeed ;'
Or, in more cheerful tone, from spirit light,
' Why, thank you, Biddy, pretty well to-night.'

' " The good old lady often thought me vain,
And of my dress would tenderly complain ;
But liked my taste in food of every kind,
As from all grossness, like her own, refined.
Yet when she hinted that on herbs and bread
Girls of my age and spirit should be fed,
Whate'er my age had borne, my flesh and blood,
Spirit and strength, the interdict withstood ;

She sometimes watch'd the morsel with a frown,
And sigh'd to see, but let it still go down.

'"Our butcher's bill, to me a monstrous sum,
Was such, that summon'd, he forbore to come:
Proud man was he, and when the bill was paid,
He put the money in his bag and play'd,
Jerking it up, and catching it again,
And poising in his hand in pure disdain;
While the good lady, awed by man so proud,
And yet disposed to have her claims allow'd,
Balanced between humility and pride,
Stood a fallen empress at the butcher's side,
Praising his meat as delicate and nice——
'Yes, madam, yes! if people pay the price.'

'"So lived the lady, and so murmur'd I,
In all the grief of pride and poverty:
Our good appearance through the town was known;
Hunger and thirst were matters of our own.

'"There was a youth from college, just the one
I judged mamma would value as a son;
He was to me good, handsome, learn'd, genteel,
I cannot now what then I thought reveal;
Yet scarcely can I throw a smile on things
So painful, but that Time his comfort brings,
Or rather throws oblivion on the mind;
For we are more forgetful than resign'd.

We both were young, had heard of love and read,
And could see nothing in the thing to dread,
But like a simple pair our time employ'd
In pleasant views to be in time enjoy'd;
We talk'd of glebe and garden, tithe and rent,
And how a fancied income should be spent;
What friends, what social parties we should see,
And live with what genteel economy;
In fact we gave our hearts as children give,
And thought of living as our neighbours live.
When Frederick came, the kind old lady smiled
To see the youth so taken with her child;
A nice young man, who came with unsoil'd feet
In her best room, and neither drank nor eat—
Alas! he planted in a vacant breast
The hopes and fears that robb'd it of its rest.

'"Now when assured ourselves that all was well,
'Twas right our friends of these designs to tell;
For this we parted.—Grandmamma, amazed,
Upon her child with fond compassion gazed;
Then pious tears appear'd, but not a word
In aid of weeping till she cried 'Good Lord!'
She then, with hurried motion sought the stairs,
And calling Biddy, bade her come to prayers.

'"To my Mamma I wrote in just the way
I felt, and said what dreaming lasses say;
How handsome Frederick was, by all confess'd,
How well he look'd, how very well he dress'd;
With learning much, that would for both provide,
His mother's darling, and his father's pride;

And then, 'He loves me more than mind can guess,
Than heart conceive or eloquence express.'

'"No letter came a doubtful mind to ease,
And, what was worse, no Frederick came to please;
To college gone—so thought our little maid—
But not to see me!—I was much afraid;
I walk'd the garden round, and deeply sigh'd—
When grandmamma grew faint—and dropp'd—and died!

'"Strange people came; they search'd the house around,
And, vulgar wretches! sold whate'er they found:
The secret hoards that in the drawers were kept,
The silver toys that with the tokens slept,
The precious beads, the corals with their bells,
That lay secure, lock'd up in secret cells;
The costly silk, the tabby, the brocade,
The very garment for the wedding made,
Were brought to sale, with many a jest thereon!
'Going—a bridal dress—for——Going!—Gone!'
That ring, dear pledge of early love and true,
That to the wedded finger almost grew,
Was sold for six-and-tenpence to a Jew!

'"Great was the fancied worth; but ah! how small
The sum thus made, and yet how valued all!
But all that to the shameful service went
Just paid the bills, the burial, and the rent;
And I and Biddy, poor deserted maids!
Were turn'd adrift to seek for other aids.

'"Now left by all the world, as I believed,
I wonder'd much that I so little grieved;
Yet I was frighten'd at the painful view
Of shiftless want, and saw not what to do.
In times like this the poor have little dread,
They can but work, and they shall then be fed;
And Biddy cheer'd me with such thoughts as this.
'You'll find the poor have their enjoyments, miss!'
Indeed I saw; for Biddy took me home
To a forsaken hovel's cold and gloom;
She let in air to make the damps retire,
Then placed her sad companion at her fire,
And while my tears in plenteous flow were shed,
With her own hands she placed her proper bed;
She then began her wonted peace to feel,
She bought her wool, and sought her favourite wheel,
That as she turn'd, she sang with sober glee,
'Begone, dull Care! I'll have no more with thee;'
Then turn'd to me, and bade me weep no more,
But try and taste the pleasures of the poor.

'"When dinner came, on table brown and bare
Were placed the humblest forms of earthenware,
With one blue dish, on which our food was placed,
For appetite provided, not for taste:
Yet, as I sate, I found to my surprise
A vulgar kind of inclination rise,
And near my humble friend, and nearer drew,
Tried the strange food, and was partaker too.

'"I walk'd at eve, but not where I was seen,
And thought, with sorrow, 'What can Frederick mean?'

'I must not write,' I said, 'for I am poor'—
And then I wept till I could weep no more.

'"Kind-hearted Biddy tried my griefs to heal,
'This is a nothing to what others feel;
Life has a thousand sorrows worse than this,
A lover lost is not a fortune, miss!
One goes, another comes, and which is best
There is no telling– set your heart at rest.'

'"At night we pray'd—I dare not say a word
Of our devotion, it was so absurd;
While she her angels call'd their peace to shed,
And bless the corners of our little bed.*
All was a dream! I said, is this indeed
To be my life? and thus to lodge and feed,
To pay for what I have, and work for what I need?
Must I be poor? and Frederick, if we meet,
Would not so much as know me in the street?

'"On the third day, while striving with my fate,
And hearing Biddy all its comforts state,
Talking of all her neighbours, all her schemes,
Her stories, merry jests, and warning dreams;
And I was thinking, can the time arrive
When I shall thus be humbled, and survive?—
Then I beheld a horse and handsome gig,
With the good air, tall form, and comely wig

* 'Four corners to my bed,
Two a-foot, and two a-head;
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on.'

Of Doctor Mackey—I in fear began
To say, 'Good heaven, preserve me from the man!'—
But fears ill reason"'—

She had entirely misjudged the doctor, who, under a dry, cold exterior, covered a very kindly heart. He comforts her for her grandmother's death, and for her lover's infidelity, assuring her moreover that

'"But few
Wed the first love, however kind and true;
Something there comes to break the strongest vow,
Or mine had been my bonnie Mattie now."'

Nor does he only comfort, but carries the poor girl away with him to her old and proper home. There he treats her not only as if he were a father, often reproving her sterner parent's heartless indifference but also as a companion and a guide in directing her studies, and turning her mind to the love of wholesome Truth: insomuch, as she says, that by-and-by

'"Life's common burden daily lighter grew;
And even Frederick lessen'd in my view."'

But all the happiness is not destined to last very long. The kind doctor sickens and prematurely dies, leaving half his property to his step-daughter. This bequest revives the mother's spleen; but she now begins to feel something of the infirmity that before she fancied, and needs the care her daughter is able, and very willing, to supply. And now, moreover, finding how much of this life has passed in vanity, the widow begins to make preparation for another.

'"She changed her dress, her church, her priest, her prayer,
Joined a new sect, and sought her comfort there:

Some strange coarse people came, and were so free
In their addresses they offended me ;
But my mamma threw all her pride away—
More humble she as more assuming they.

'"' And what,' they said, as having power, 'are now
The inward conflicts ? do you strive ? and how ?'
'Could we,' they ask'd, 'our best good deeds condemn ?
And did we long to touch the garment's hem ?
And was it so with us ? for so it was with them.'

'" A younger few assumed a softer part,
And tried to shake the fortress of my heart ;
To this my pliant mother lent her aid,
And wish'd the winning of her erring maid.
I was constrain'd her female friends to hear ;
But suffer'd not a bearded convert near,
Though more than one attempted, with their whine,
And 'Sister ! sister ! how that heart of thine ?'

'" But, 'would I hear the preacher and receive
The dropping dew of his discourse at eve ?
The soft, sweet words ?'—"'

Well, she will do that much, and has made up her mind for two mortal hours of 'gifts and graces,' when who should step up into the pulpit to descant upon them but FREDERICK ! He, too, has been snatched as a brand from the burning, and become a shining light among them all. He is quite aware *who* is one of his present congregation that night ; and, on the following day, calls

upon mother and daughter to renew the vows, now of a regenerate and spiritual love.

'"Of his conversion he with triumph spoke,
Before he orders from a bishop took:
Then how his father's anger he had braved;
And, safe himself, his erring neighbours saved.
Me he rejoiced a sister to behold
Among the members of his favourite fold;
He call'd me 'Sister:' show'd me that he knew
What I possess'd; and told what it would do;
He had not sought me; the availing *Call*
Demanded all his love, and had it all;
But, now thus met, it must be Heaven's design—
Indeed, I thought, it never shall be mine.

'"Amazed, the solemn creature heard me vow
That I was not disposed to take him now.
'Then, art thou changed, fair maiden? changed thy heart?'
I answered, 'No; but I perceive *thou* art.'"'

In spite of spiritual physic, however, the widow's health continues to decline, and her daughter resolves on taking her to the sea. Thither accordingly they go, in spite of saintly warning; and, in the genial air of Sidmouth find themselves both the better for change of air and company; the mother resigning herself wholly to her daughter's care, and the daughter finding her own peace in bestowing it. But has she quite conquered all the feelings of her first love? Is she quite sure

'"The enthusiastic man
Had ruin'd what the loving boy began?

Not quite yet; the memory of her first Frederick still occasionally haunts her, especially when she is unoccupied with domestic duties; wandering along the seashore, or sitting up to read, or ruminate at night, alone. Becoming aware of such causes of disquietude, "I found" she says, "my remedy for these;

I suffer'd common things my mind to please,
And common pleasures; seldom walk'd alone,
Nor when the moon upon the waters shone;
But then my candles lit, my window closed,
My needle took, and with my neighbours prosed:
And in one year—nay, ere the end of one—
My labour ended, and my love was done."'

The Mother, after gradually declining, dies; and the Spinster joins household with another maiden lady of much the same age and fortune, and with something of the same story, as her own. She had been early engaged to a younger son, who, being too poor to marry, went to seek a sufficient fortune for himself and her in India. Thence he wrote to her for some while with all a lover's passion; then, all of a sudden, his letters altogether stopped. Ship after ship came home, bearing, not only no letter, but not even any tidings of his existence; and, as his mistress feels assured that he cannot be false, or forgetful, she is, after several years of fruitless expectation, persuaded that he is dead, and dedicates herself to single life thereafter. And thus it is the two spinsters agree to unite their fortunes, and live together in genteel retirement in their cottage by the sea.

'"We were the ladies of the place, and found
Protection and respect the country round;
Our annual present to the priest convey'd
Was kindly taken:—we in comfort pray'd;

There none molested in the crimson pew
The worthy ladies whom the vicar knew :
And we began to think that life might be,
Not happy all, but innocently free."'

Alike as the two ladies are in several respects, they differ in others sufficiently to enliven their harmony by contrast. Martha, our heroine, has, under her kindly step-father's instruction, cultivated her reasoning rather than sentimental faculties ; Priscilla, her companion, just the reverse. Having experienced the vanity of our best affections in this world, she devotes herself to the contemplation of another, where human shall be sublimed into angelic love, unassailable by mortal accident, vicissitude, or death. She has already refused three several adorers since the loss of her first ; and she now declares that if the world had but one monarch, and that one adorned with all the ideal virtues and accomplishments of romance, and that royal paragon at her feet—she would still remain the 'dedicated vestal' of heaven, rather than 'wed the poor realities of life.' A declaration that is soon to be put to proof.

'"There was a day ere yet the autumn closed,
When, ere her wintry wars, the earth reposed,
When from the yellow weed the feathery crown,
Light as the curling smoke, fell slowly down ;
When the winged insect settled in our sight,
And waited wind to recommence her flight ;
When the wide river was a silver sheet,
And on the ocean slept th' unanchor'd fleet ;
When from our garden, as we look'd above,
There was no cloud and nothing seem'd to move ;

Then was my friend in ecstasies—she cried,
'There is, I feel there is, a world beside!
Martha, dear Martha! we shall hear not then
Of hearts distress'd by good or evil men,
But all will constant, tender faithful be—
So had I been, and so had *one* with me—
But in this world the fondest and the best
Are the most tried, most troubled and distress'd—

'"'Nay, were *He* here in all the pride of youth,
With honour, valour, tenderness, and truth,
Entirely mine—yet what could I secure,
Or who one day of comfort could ensure?
No! all is closed on earth, and there is now
Nothing to break th' indissoluble vow;
But in *that* world will be th' abiding bliss,
That pays for every tear and sigh in this.'

'Smiling I ask'd, again to draw the soul
From flight so high, and fancy to control,
"'If this be truth, the lover's happier way
Is distant still to keep the purposed day;
The real bliss would mar the fancied joy,
And marriage all the dream of love destroy.'

'"She softly smiled; and as we gravely talk'd,
We saw a man who up the gravel walk'd,
Not quite erect, nor quite by age depress'd,
A travell'd man, and as a merchant dress'd;
Large chain of gold upon his watch he wore,
Small golden buckles on his feet he bore;
A head of gold his costly cane display'd,
And all about him love of gold betray'd.

This comely man moved onward, and the pair
Of comely maidens met with serious air;
Till one exclaim'd, and wildly look'd around,
'O heav'n, 'tis Paul!' and dropp'd upon the ground;
But she recover'd soon, and you must guess
What then ensued, and how much happiness.*
They parted lovers, both distress'd to part!
They met as neighbours, heal'd, and whole of heart:
She in his absence look'd to heaven for bliss,
He was contented with a world like this;
And she prepared in some new state to meet
The man now seeking for some snug retreat.
He kindly told her he was firm and true,
Nor doubted her, and bade her then adieu.

'"'What shall I do?' the sighing maid began,
'How lost the lover! O, how gross the man!'
'O Martha, sister of my soul! how dies
Each lovely view! for can I truth disguise,
That this is he? No! nothing shall persuade;
This is a man the naughty world has made,
An eating, drinking, buying, bargaining man!—
And can I love him? No! I never can.
What time has done, what trade and travel wrought,
You see! and yet your sorrowing friend is sought;
But can I take him?'—'Take him not,' I cried,
'If so averse—but why so soon decide?'

'"Meantime a daily guest the man appear'd,
Set all his sail, and for his purpose steer'd;

* Meaning, not "*much*," on *her* part, surely; but just "*how* much" on either side, under the circumstances.

Loud and familiar, loving, fierce and free,
He overpower'd her soft timidity ;
Who, weak and vain, and grateful to behold
The man was hers, and hers would be the gold—
Thus sundry motives, more than I can name,
Leagued on his part, and she a wife became.

Husband and wife offer their friend a home with them ; but she knows the danger of such an experiment, and so continues her course of life alone.

All of a sudden she is surprised by a call from—Frederick ! who, after playing out the part of preacher, has become first tragedian of a strolling troop of actors just then on a visit to a neighbouring town. He knocks at her door—makes way to her parlour—throws himself at her feet—tells how he broke away from the brotherhood of saints among whom she last saw him, to the confusion of the male, and despair of the female, part of the community, and has now returned to seek and find her whose memory he had never relinquished from the first ; and now, distinguished as he is in the profession his genius is fitted to shine in, he is willing to forgo it all for her sake—unless, indeed, she will share it with him, as her talent and beauty eminently qualify her to do. Yes, he assures her,

' " He for my sake would hope of fame resign,
And leave the applause of all the world for mine.
His mind was weaken'd ; he would laugh and weep,
And swore profusely I had murder'd sleep,
Had quite unmann'd him, cleft his heart in twain,
And he should never be himself again.

' " He *was* himself ; weak, nervous, kind, and poor.
Ill dress'd and idle, he besieged my door,

Borrow'd—or, worse, made verses on my charms,
And did his best to fill me with alarms.
I had some pity, and I ask'd the price
Of my repose—my hero was not nice ;
'Yet,' said he, bowing, '*do* to study take !
O ! what a Desdemona wouldst thou make !'

And with what he calls 'a loan' she dismisses Frederick for ever from her presence, though not from her charitable protection. She learns that he sinks lower and lower in the world, is refused any support from father or friend, and would sink into beggary, were it not—were it not—

'"For one who pays
A moderate pension for his latter days,
Who, though assured inquiries will offend,
Is ever asking for this 'Unknown friend ;'
'Some partial lady, whom he hopes to find
As to his wants, so to his wishes, kind.'
'Be still,' a cool adviser sometimes writes—
'Nay, but,' says he, 'the gentle maid invites—
Do, let me know the young ! the soft ! the fair'—
'Old man,' 'tis answer'd, 'take thyself to prayer !
Be clean, be sober, to thy priest apply,
And—dead to all around thee—learn to die !'

This is the end of Frederick's story, and would be of the spinster's also, 'but for one light adventure, and a last.'

This is simply that a handsome boy (as she calls him), coming to Sidmouth with his mother, falls in love, as such boys will sometimes do, with the middle-aged, but yet comely, woman ; and receives some very reasonable advice from her in return.

'"We met some ten years after, and he then
Was married, and as cool as married men;
He talk'd of war and taxes, trade and farms,
And thought no more of me, or of my charms.

'"We spoke; and when, alluding to the past,
Something of meaning in my look I cast.
He, who could never thought or wish disguise,
Look'd in my face with trouble and surprise;
To kill reserve, I seized his arm, and cried,
'Know me, my lord?' when laughing, he replied,
Wonder'd again, and look'd upon my face,
And seem'd unwilling marks of time to trace;
But soon I brought him fairly to confess,
That boys in love judge ill of happiness.'

'Love had his day—to graver subjects led,
My will is govern'd, and my mind is fed;
And to more vacant bosoms I resign
The hopes and fears that once affected mine.'

SIR OWEN DALE.

THE worthy Rector has again joined the party he so much enlivens; and his old friend the Squire cannot help bantering him about his long absence. What has he been about all the while? So many in their little parish to be wedded, christened, and buried—all at once? For, to be sure, nothing of all this can be done but under the sanction of priestly monopoly. Or, was it some complicated case on the Bench which needed all his wit and law to unravel for his brother magistrates? or, was it a matter of a more private interest—paying court to some great man in order to add Croft or Cresswell to the Binning Rectory? or, come—one more guess—perhaps to whip in votes for the forthcoming election?

'More private duty called me hence, to pay
My friends respect on a rejoicing day,'
Replied the Rector: 'There is born a son,
Pride of an ancient race, who pray'd for one,
And long desponded. Would you hear the tale—
Ask, and 'tis granted—of Sir Owen Dale?'

The brothers both ask; the elder, having previously heard something of the strange story, and now wishing to hear it in full.'

Thus urg'd, the worthy Rector thought it meet
Some moral truth as preface to repeat.
'O! how the passions, insolent and strong,
Bear our weak minds their rapid course along;
Make us the madness of their will obey;
Then die and leave us to our griefs a prey!

'Sir Owen Dale his fortieth year had seen,
With temper placid, and with mind serene;
Rich; early married to an easy wife,
They led in comfort a domestic life:
He took of his affairs a prudent care,
And was by early habit led to spare.
In fact, the lessons he from prudence took
Were written in his mind, as in a book:
There what to do he read, and what to shun;
And all commanded was with promptness done:
He seem'd without a passion to proceed,
Or one whose passions no correction need;
Placid, not pleased—contented, not employ'd,
He neither time improved, nor life enjoy'd.

'Yet some believ'd those passions only slept,
And were in bounds by early habit kept;
We thought—for I was one—that we espied
Some indications strong of dormant pride;
It was his wish in peace with all to live,
And he could pardon—but could not forgive—
Should these fierce passions—so we reason'd—break
Their long-worn chain, what ravage will they make!

'The wife expired; and great the loss sustain'd,
Though much distress he neither felt nor feign'd;

He loved not warmly ; but the sudden stroke
Deeply and strongly on his habits broke.
He had no child to soothe him, and his farm,
His sports, his speculations, lost their charm.
Then would he read and travel, would frequent
Life's busy scenes, and forth Sir Owen went.
The mind, that now was free, unfix'd, uncheck'd,
Read and observed with wonderful effect;
And still the more he gain'd, the more he long'd
To pay that mind his negligence had wrong'd ;
He felt his pleasures rise as he improved,
And, first enduring, then the labour loved.
Now had Sir Owen feeling ; things of late
Indifferent, he began to love or hate ;
What once could neither good nor ill impart
Now pleased the senses, and now touch'd the heart ;
Prospect and picture struck th' awaken'd sight,
And each new object gave a new delight;
His very person now appear'd refined,
And took some graces from the improving mind.

' Restore him twenty years—restore him ten—
And bright had been his earthly prospect then ;
But much refinement, when it late arrives,
May be the grace, not comfort, of our lives.
For, by the light let in, Sir Owen found
Some of those passions had their chain unbound ;
As from a trance they rose to act their part,
And seize, as due to them, a feeling heart.
Forty and five his years ; and *then* to sigh
For Beauty's favours !—son of Frailty, fly !

'Younger by twenty years, Camilla found
Her face unrivall'd when she smiled or frown'd:
Of all approved; in manner, form, and air,
Made to attract; gay, elegant, and fair:
She had, in beauty's aid, a fair pretence
To cultivated, strong intelligence;
She loved to please; but, like her dangerous sex,
To please the more whom she design'd to vex.
This heard Sir Owen, and he saw it true;
It promised pleasure, promised danger too;
But this he knew not then, or slighted if he knew

'Yet he delay'd, and would by trials prove
That he was safe; would see the signs of love;
Would not address her while a fear remain'd;
But win his way, assured of what he gain'd.

'This saw the lady, not displeased to find
A man at once so cautious and so blind:
"So when my heart is bleeding in his sight,
His love acknowledged will the pains requite;
It is, when conquer'd, he the heart regards—
Well, good Sir Owen! let us play our cards."

'He spake her praise in terms that love affords,
By words select, and looks surpassing words:
Kindly she listen'd, and in turn essay'd
To pay th' applause and amply she repaid.
Let others pray for music—others pray'd
In vain—Sir Owen ask'd, and was obey'd;
Let others, walking, sue that arm to take,
Unmoved she kept it for Sir Owen's sake;

Each small request she granted, and though small,
He thought them pledges of her granting all.

'And now the lover, casting doubt aside,
Confess'd, and, as she paused to answer, cried :
"I must not, cannot, will not, be denied !"*

Camilla listen'd, paused, and look'd surprise,
Fair witch ! exulting in her witcheries !
She turn'd aside her face, withdrew her hand,
And softly said, "Sir, let me understand."

'"Nay, my dear lady ! what can words explain,
If all my looks and actions plead in vain ?
I love "—She show'd a cool respectful air,
And he began to falter in his prayer,
Yet urged her kindness—Kindness she confess'd,
It was Esteem, she felt it, and express'd,
For her dear father's friend ; and was it right
That friend of his—she thought of hers—to slight ?

'This to the wond'ring lover strange and new,
And false appear'd—he would not think it true :
Still he pursued the lovely prize, and still
Heard the cold words, design'd his hopes to kill ;
And still she grew more cool in her replies,
And talk'd of age and improprieties.

'Then to his friends, although it hurt his pride,
And to the lady's, he for aid applied ;
Who kindly woo'd for him, but strongly were denied.

* This triplet is made up of two all but consecutive couplets which rhyme with the same word.

'And now it was those fiercer passions rose,
Urged by his love to murder his repose;'
Shame shook his soul to be deceived so long,
And fierce revenge for such contemptuous wrong.

And now begins the story of a revenge only to be accounted for by Sir Owen's very singular character.

His nephew, a young, handsome, and agreeable officer, happens to be staying at his house. One night, over their wine, Sir Owen recounts the story of his wrongs, and engages the young man to assist in revenging them. And thus, He is, by all the art which can set off his natural attractions, to win Camilla's love, and then to fling her off as she had rejected Sir Owen. The young man listens incredulously; but being at last overcome by the earnest entreaties of his uncle, to whose generosity he is indebted, and, moreover, believing that he will not persist in his purpose, even if serious about it now, engages himself, even by an oath, to 'play the fool for him,' he says. He consequently begins the siege, and succeeds in gaining the lady's heart, but, (as his uncle had anticipated) not without the loss of his own. Smitten by remorse at the unworthy part he has engaged to play toward one who confides in him, he confesses all to her. But, instead of lowering, he exalts himself in her already conquered affection by that magnanimous disregard of his own interest in revealing and repudiating his benefactor's treachery. The young man then appeals passionately to his uncle for pity, but none the less is held by his oath to give no quarter where none had been given.

Now it happens that Sir Owen is intimate with one who had suffered much worse from woman's infidelity than himself, and whom he had incited to exact a more terrible revenge. This man is Sir Owen's own steward—Ellis—whose wife had eloped from him with a young gentleman who had come to study farming in his house.

Ellis urged on by his patron's wrath as well as his own, pursues, and finally overtakes the fugitives; and Sir Owen, hearing of his return, rides over to hear the result.

Ellis tells his story. After a long and vain pursuit, he at last found them in such a state of misery, destitution, and remorse as the poet knows but too well how to depict, and which, on beholding, the injured husband already begins to relent. And when the terrified and half-starved seducer supplicates that vengeance may fall on himself alone, who alone is guilty—and not on her who cannot plead for herself—the misery in which he now beholds her, he says, and recollection of departed years,

'"Caused a full burst of salutary tears,
And as I wept at large and thought alone,
I felt my reason re-ascend her throne."

'"My friend!" Sir Owen answer'd, "what became
Of your just anger?—when you saw their shame,
It was your triumph, and you should have shown
Strength, if not joy—their sufferings were their own."

'"Alas, for them! their own in very deed!
And they of mercy had the greater need."

'"Revenge was thine—thou hadst the power, the right;
To give it up was Heaven's own act to slight."

'"Tell me not, sir, of rights, and wrongs, or powers!
I felt it written—Vengeance is not ours!
And what, Sir Owen, will our vengeance do?
It follows us when we our foe pursue,
And, as we strike the blow, it smites the smiter too."

'"But, Ellis, tell me, didst thou thus desire
To heap upon their heads those coals of fire?"

'"If fire to melt, that feeling is confest—
If fire to shame, I let that question rest;
But if aught more the sacred words imply,
I know it not—no commentator I."

'"Then did you freely from your soul forgive?"—

'"Sure as I hope before my Judge to live,
Sure as I trust His mercy to receive,
Sure as His word I honour and believe,
Sure as the Saviour died upon the tree
For all who sin—for that dear wretch and me,—
Whom never more on earth will I forsake or see."

'Sir Owen softly to his bed adjourn'd,
Sir Owen quickly to his home return'd;
And all the way he meditating dwelt
On what this man in his affliction felt;
How he, resenting first, forbore, forgave,
His passion's lord, and not his anger's slave:
And as he rode he seem'd to fear the deed
Should not be done, and urged unwonted speed.'

'He saw his nephew, and with kindness spoke—
"Charles, I repent my purpose, and revoke;
Take her—I'm taught—and would I could repay
The generous teacher. Hear me, and obey:
Bring me the dear coquette, and let me vow
On lips half perjured to be passive now:
Take her, and let me thank the powers divine
She was not stolen when her hand was mine,

Or when her heart—her smiles I must forget,
She my revenge, and cancel either debt."

'Here ends our tale, for who will doubt the bliss
Of ardent lovers in a case like this?
And if Sir Owen's was not half so strong,
It may, perchance, continue twice as long.'

DELAY HAS DANGER.

THREE weeks had pass'd, and Richard rambles now
Far as the dinners of the day allow ;
He rode to Farley Grange and Finley Mere,
That house so ancient, and that lake so clear :
He rode to Ripley through that river gay,
Where in the shallow stream the loaches play,
And stony fragments stay the winding stream,
And gilded pebbles at the bottom gleam.
It is a lovely place, and at the side
Rises a mountain-rock in rugged pride ;
And in that rock are shapes of shells, and forms
Of creatures in all worlds, of nameless worms,
Whose generations lived and died ere man,
A worm of other class, to crawl began.

There is a town call'd Silford, where his steed
Our traveller rested—He the while would feed
His mind by walking to and fro, to meet,
He knew not what adventure, in the street :
A stranger there, but yet a window-view
Gave him a face that he conceived he knew ;

He saw a tall, fair, lovely lady, dress'd
As one whom taste and wealth had jointly bless'd ;
He gazed ; but soon a footman at the door
Thundering, alarm'd her, who was seen no more.

'This was the lady whom her lover bound
In solemn contract, and then proved unsound :
Of this affair I have a clouded view,
And should be glad to have it clear'd by you.'

So Richard spake, and instant George replied,
'I had the story from the injured side,
But when resentment and regret were gone,
And pity (shaded by contempt) came on.

'Frail was the hero of my tale, but still
Was rather drawn by accident than will.
Some without meaning into guilt advance,
From want of guard, from vanity, from chance ;
Man's weakness flies his more immediate pain,
A little respite from his fears to gain ;
And takes the part that he would gladly fly,
If he had strength and courage to deny.

'First be it granted all was duly said
By the fond youth to the believing maid ;
Let us suppose with many a sigh there came
The declaration of the deathless flame ;—
And so her answer—" She was happy then,
Blest in herself, and did not think of men ;
And with such comforts in her present state,
A wish to change it was to tempt her fate ;

That she would not; but yet she would confess
With him she thought her hazard would be less;
Nay, more, she would esteem, she would regard express:
But to be brief—if he could wait and see
In a few years what his desires would be."'—

Henry for years read months, then weeks, nor found
The lady thought his judgment was unsound;
'For months read weeks,' she read it to his praise,
And had some thoughts of changing it to *days*.

And here a short excursion let me make,
A lover tried, I think, for lover's sake;
And teach the meaning in a lady's mind
When you can none in her expressions find:
Words are design'd that meaning to convey,
But often *Yea* is hidden in a *Nay!*
Then, too, when ladies mean to yield at length,
They match their reasons with the lover's strength,
And, kindly cautious, will no force employ
But such as he can baffle or destroy.

A downright *No!* would make a man despair,
Or leave for kinder nymph the cruel fair;
But '*No!* because I'm very happy now,
Because I dread th' irrevocable vow,
Because I fear papa will not approve,
Because I love not—No, I cannot love;
Because you men of Cupid make a jest,
Because——in short, a single life is best'—
A *No!* when back'd by reasons of such force,
Invites approach, and will recede of course.

Ladies, like towns besieged, for honour's sake,
Will some defence, or its appearance, make ;
On first approach there's much resistance made,
And conscious weakness hides in bold parade ;
With lofty looks, and threat'nings stern and proud,
'Come if you dare,' is said in language loud ;
But if th' attack be made with care and skill,
'Come,' says the yielding party, 'if you will ;'
Then each the other's valiant acts approve,
And twine their laurels in a wreath of love.

We now retrace our tale, and forward go—
Thus Henry rightly read Cecilia's No !
His prudent father, who had duly weigh'd,
And well approved the fortune of the maid,
Not much resisted—just enough to show
He knew his power, and would his son should know.

'Harry, I will, while I your bargain make,
That you a journey to our patron take :
I know her guardian ; care will not become
A lad when courting ; as you must be dumb,
You may be absent ; I for you will speak,
And ask what you are not supposed to seek.'

Then came the parting hour, and what arise
When lovers part—expressive looks, and eyes
Tender and tearful—many a fond adieu,
And many a call the sorrow to renew ;
Sighs such as lovers only can explain,
And words that they might undertake in vain.

Cecilia liked it not ; she had in truth,
No mind to part with her enamour'd youth ;
But thought it foolish thus themselves to cheat,
And part for nothing but again to meet.
Fear saw him hunting, leaping, falling—led,
Maim'd and disfigured, groaning to his bed ;
Saw him in perils, duels—dying—dead.

But Prudence answer'd, 'Is not every maid
With equal cause for him she loves afraid ?'
If some fond girl express'd a tender pain
Lest some fair rival should allure her swain,
To such she answer'd, with a look severe,
'Can one you doubt be worthy of your fear ?'

My lord was kind—a month had pass'd away,
And Henry stay'd—he sometimes named a day ;
But still my lord was kind, and Henry still must stay :
His father's words to him were words of fate—
'Wait, 'tis your duty ; tis my pleasure, wait !'

In all his walks, in hilly heath or wood,
Cecilia's form the pensive youth pursued ;
In the grey morning, in the silent noon,
In the soft twilight, by the sober moon,
In those forsaken rooms, in that immense saloon ;
And he, now fond of that seclusion grown,
There reads her letters, and there writes his own.
'Here none approach,' said he, 'to interfere,
But I can think of my Cecilia here !'

But there did come—and how it came to pass
Who shall explain ?—a mild and blue-eyed lass ;

It was the work of accident, no doubt—
The cause unknown—we say, 'As things fall out;'—
At first she saw not Henry; and she ran,
As from a ghost, when she beheld a man.

This 'mild and blue-eyed lass,' named Fanny, is an orphan niece of his lordship's housekeeper, who is wife of his lordship's steward, and Fanny, by his lordship's self, is permitted to live with them at the Hall. But, being a very pretty girl, she is carefully secluded from the eyes of all the younger company, whether master or man, against whom she is warned by her aunt—

'Go not, my Fanny, in their way,' she cried;
'It is not right that virtue should be tried;
And, to be safe, be always at my side.'
She was not always at her side; but still
Observed her precepts, and obey'd her will.

Only sometimes when the grand company are abroad, or assembled in some distant quarter of the house, Fanny will slip out of her aunt's room, and ramble with the lightest step through the long corridors, stopping anon to gaze at bust or portrait by the way, peeping into the state bed-chambers with their velvet hangings—even, half-frightened, into the cedar-smelling chapel; and, as it now chances, into the library, where she sees Henry, from whom she flies as if she had seen a ghost.

But dare she thither once again advance,
And still suppose the man will think it chance?
Nay, yet again, and what has chance to do
With this?—I know not: doubtless Fanny knew.

Now, of the meeting of a modest maid
And sober youth why need we be afraid
And when a girl's amusements are so few
As Fanny's were, what would you have her do?
Reserved herself, a decent youth to find,
And just be civil, sociable, and kind,
And look together at the setting sun,
Then at each other—What the evil done?

Then Fanny took my little lord to play,
And bade him not intrude on Henry's way:
'O, he intrudes not!' said the youth, and grew
Fond of the child, and would amuse him too;
Would make such faces, and put on such looks,
He loved it better than his gayest books.

And now it chanced again the pair, when dark,
Met in their way, when wandering in the park;
Not in the common path, for so they might,
Without a wonder, wander day or night;
But when in pathless ways their chance will bring
A musing pair, we do admire the thing.

Both smiled and parted, but they did not speak—
The smile implied, 'Do tell me what you seek?'
Then took their different ways with erring feet,
And met again, surprised that they could meet;
Then must they speak—and something of the air
Is always ready—''Tis extremely fair.'
And, while they stood admiring their retreat,
Henry found something like a mossy seat;
But Fanny sat not; no, she rather pray'd
That she might leave him, she was so afraid.

'Not, sir, of you ; your goodness I can trust,
But folks are so censorious and unjust,
They make no difference, they pay no regard
To our true meaning, which is very hard—
And very cruel ; great the pain it cost
To lose such pleasure, but it must be lost :
Did people know how free from thought of ill
One's meaning is, their malice would be still.'

At this she wept ; at least, a glittering gem
Shone in each eye, and there was fire in them,
For as they fell, the sparkles, at his feet,
He felt emotions very warm and sweet.

Our lover then believed he must not seem
Cold to the maid who gave him her esteem ;
Not manly this ; Cecilia had heart,
But it was lawful with his time to part ;
It would be wrong in her to take amiss
A virtuous friendship for a girl like this ;
False or disloyal he would never prove,
But kindness here took nothing from his love.
Soldiers to serve a foreign prince are known,
When not on present duty to their own ;
So, though our bosom's queen we still prefer,
We are not always on our knees to her.

The father still commanded ' Wait awhile,'
And the son answer'd in submissive style,
Grieved, but obedient ; and obedience teased
His lady's spirit more than grieving pleased :
And in her letters might be traced reproof,
Distant indeed, but visible enough.

This should the wandering of his heart have stay'd ;
Alas ! the wanderer was the vainer made.
The parties daily met, as by consent,
And yet it always seem'd by accident ;
Till in the nymph the shepherd had been blind
If he had fail'd to see a manner kind,
With that expressive look, that seem'd to say,
'You do not speak, and yet you see you may.'

O ! yes, he saw, and he resolved to fly,
And blamed his heart, unwilling to comply :
Cecilia yet was mistress of his mind,
But oft he wish'd her, like his Fanny, kind ;
Her fondness sooth'd him ; for the man was vain,
And he perceived that he could give her pain.
Cecilia once her honest love avow'd
To make him happy, not to make him proud ;
But she would not, for every asking sigh,
Confess the flame that waked his vanity.
But this poor maiden, every day and hour,
Would, by fresh kindness, feed the growing power ;
And he indulged, vain being ! in the joy,
That he alone could raise it, or destroy.

True, he has wonder'd why the timid maid
Meets him so often, and is not afraid ;
And why that female dragon, fierce and keen,
Has never in their private walks been seen.
This sometimes enter'd Henry's mind, and then,
'Who shall account for women or for men ?'
He said, 'or who their secret thoughts explore ?
Why do I vex me ? I will think no more.'

O ! vain desire of youth, that in the hour
Of strong temptation, when he feels the power,
And knows how daily his desires increase,
Yet will he wait, and sacrifice his peace,
Will trust to chance to free him from the snare,
Of which, long since, his conscience said, beware !
Or look for strange deliverance from that ill,
That he might fly, could he command the will !
How can he freedom from the future seek,
Who feels already that he grows too weak,
And thus refuses to resist, till time
Removes the power, and makes the way for crime !

It was his purpose, every morn he rose,
The dangerous friendship he had made to close ;
It was his torment nightly, ere he slept,
To feel his prudent purpose was not kept.

My lord of late had said, in manner kind,
' My good friend Harry, do not think us blind !'
Something his father wrote that gave him pain :
' I know not, son, if you should yet remain ;
Be cautious, Harry ; favours to procure
We strain a point, but we must first be sure :
Love is a folly—that, indeed, is true—
But something still is to our honour due,
So I must leave the thing to my good lord and you.'

But from Cecilia came remonstrance strong :
' You write too darkly, and you stay too long ;
We hear reports ; and, Henry—mark me well—
I heed not every tale that triflers tell ;

Be you no trifler; dare not to believe
That I am one whom words and vows deceive:
You know your heart, your hazard you will learn,
And this your trial——instantly return.'

Uneasy, anxious, fill'd with self-reproof,
He now resolved to quit his patron's roof;
And then again his vacillating mind
To stay resolved, and that *her* pride should find:
Debating thus, his pen the lover took,
And chose the words of anger and rebuke.

Again, yet once again, the conscious pair
Met, and 'O, speak!' was Fanny's silent prayer;
And, 'I must speak,' said the embarrass'd youth,
'Must save my honour, must confess the truth:
Then I must lose her; but, by slow degrees,
She will regain her peace, and I my ease.'

Thus, every day they lived, and every time
They met, increased his anguish and his crime.

But soon a day, that was their doubts to close,
On the fond maid and thoughtless youth arose.

Within the park, beside the bounding brook,
The social pair their usual ramble took;
And there the steward found them: they could trace
News in his look, and gladness in his face.
He was a man of riches, bluff and big,
With clean brown broad-cloth, and with white cut wig:
He bore a cane of price, with riband tied,
And a fat spaniel waddled at his side:

To every being whom he met he gave
His looks expressive ; civil, gay, or grave,
But condescending all ; and each declared
How much he govern'd, and how well he fared.

The trembling Fanny, as he came in view,
Within the chestnut grove in fear withdrew ;
While Henry wonder'd, not without a fear,
Of that which brought th' important man so near.
Doubt was dispersed by—'My esteem'd young man !'
As he with condescending grace began——
'Though you with youthful frankness nobly trust
Your Fanny's friends, and doubtless think them just ;
Though you have not, with craving soul, applied
To us, and ask'd the fortune of your bride—
An orphan maid——Your patience ! you shall have
Your time to speak, I now attention crave—
Fanny, dear girl ! has in my spouse and me
Friends of a kind we wish our friends to be,
None of the poorest——nay, sir, no reply—
You shall not need——and we are born to die.'

'Sir,' said the youth, his terrors all awake,
'Hear me, I pray, I beg—for mercy's sake !
Would you—your pardon !——'
'Pardon ! good, my friend,
I not alone will pardon, I commend :
Come, sir, your hand ——'
'In mercy, hear me now !'
'I cannot hear you, time will not allow :

You know my station, what on me depends,
For ever needed—but we part as friends;
And here comes one who will the whole explain,
My better self—and we shall meet again.
A little teasing, but she will comply,
And loves her niece too fondly to deny.'

Hurrying she came—'Now what has he confess'd,
Ere I could come to set your heart at rest?
What! he has grieved you! Yet he, too, approves
The thing! but man will tease you if he loves.

'But now for business: tell me, did you think
That we should always at your meetings wink?
Think you, you walk'd unseen? There are who bring
To me all secrets—O, you wicked thing!
Poor Fanny! now I think I see her blush,
All red and rosy, when I beat the bush;
And "Hide your secret," said I, "if you dare!"
So out it came, like an affrighted hare.

'Miss!' said I, gravely; and the trembling maid
Pleased me at heart to see her so afraid;
And then she wept;—now, do remember this,
Never to chide her when she does amiss;
For she is tender as the callow bird,
And cannot bear to have her temper stirr'd—
"Fanny," said I, then whisper'd her the name,
And caused such looks—Yes, yours are just the same!—
But hear my story—we agreed at last
To seek my Lord, and tell him what had pass'd.'

'To tell the Earl?'

'Yes, truly, and why not?
And then together we contrived our plot.'

'Eternal God!'

'Nay, be not so surprised—
In all the matter we were well advised;
We saw my Lord, and Lady Jane was there,
And said to Johnson, "Johnson, take a chair;"
True, we are servants in a certain way,
But in the higher places so are they;
So Johnson bow'd, for that was right and fit,
And had no scruple with the Earl to sit.

'"Let them go on," our gracious Earl began;
"They will go off," said, joking, my good man:
"Well!" said the Countess—she's a lover's friend—
"What if they do, they make the speedier end"——
O! we have watch'd you on from day to day,
"There go the lovers!" we were wont to say—
But why that look?'

'Dear madam, I implore
A single moment!'

'I can give no more:
Here are your letters—"That's a female pen,"
Said I to Fanny—"'Tis his sister's, then,"
Replied the maid.—No! never must you stray;
Or hide your wanderings, if you should, I pray;
I know, at least I fear, the best may err,
But keep the by-walks of your life from her.
Now, mind that none with her divide your heart,
For she would die ere lose the smallest part;

And I rejoice that all has gone so well,
For who th' effect of Johnson's rage can tell?
He had his fears when you began to meet,
But I assured him there was no deceit:
He is a man who kindness will requite,
But, injured once, revenge is his delight;
And he would spend the best of his estates
To ruin, goods and body, them he hates.
Come, read your letters—I must now be gone,
And think of matters that are coming on.'

Henry was lost—his brain confused, his soul
Dismay'd and sunk, his thoughts beyond control;
Borne on by terror, he foreboding read
Cecilia's letter! and his courage fled.

Cecilia much had heard, and told him all
That scandal taught—'A servant at the hall,
Or servant's daughter, in the kitchen bred,
Whose father would not with her mother wed,
Was now his choice! a blushing fool, the toy,
Or the attempted, both of man and boy;
More than suspected, but without the wit
Or the allurements for such creatures fit;
Not virtuous though unfeeling; cold as ice
And yet not chaste; the weeping fool of vice;
Yielding, not tender; feeble, not refined;
Her form insipid, and without a mind.

'Rival!" she spurn'd the word; but let him stay,
Warn'd as he was, beyond the present day,
Whate'er his patron might object to this,
The uncle-butler, or the weeping miss—

Let him, from this, one single day remain,
And then return ! he would, to her, in vain;
There let him then abide, to earn, or crave
Food undeserved, and be with slaves a slave !'

Had reason guided anger, govern'd zeal,
Or chosen words to make a lover feel,
She might have saved him—anger and abuse
Will but defiance and revenge produce.

'Unjust and cruel, insolent and proud !'
He said, indignant, and he spoke aloud ;
'Butler ! and servant ! Gentlest of thy sex,
Thou wouldst not thus a man who loved thee vex.'

And then, that instant, there appear'd the maid,
By his sad looks in her approach dismay'd ;
Such timid sweetness, and so wrong'd, did more
Than all her pleading tenderness before.

In that weak moment, when disdain and pride,
And fear and fondness, drew the man aside,
In that weak moment—'Wilt thou,' he began,
'Be mine ?' and joy o'er all her features ran—
'I will !' she softly whisper'd ; but the roar
Of cannon would not strike his spirit more ;
Ev'n as his lips the lawless contract seal'd,
He felt that conscience lost her seven-fold shield,
And honour fled ; but still he spoke of love,
And all was joy in the consenting dove.

That evening all in fond discourse was spent,
When the sad lover to his chamber went,
To think on what had pass'd, to grieve and to repent.

Early he rose, and look'd with many a sigh
On the red light that fill'd the eastern sky ;
Oft had he stood before, alert and gay,
To hail the glories of the new-born day :
But now dejected, languid, listless, low,
He saw the wind upon the water blow,
And the cold stream curl'd onward as the gale
From the pine-hill blew harshly down the dale.
On the right side the youth a wood survey'd,
With all its dark intensity of shade ;
Far to the left he saw the huts of men,
Half hid in mist, that hung upon the fen ;
Before him swallows, gathering for the sea,
Took their short flights, and twitter'd on the lea ;
And near, the bean-sheaf stood, the harvest done,
And slowly blacken'd in the sickly sun.
All these were sad in nature, or they took
Sadness from him, the likeness of his look,
And of his mind—he ponder'd for a while,
Then met his Fanny with a borrow'd smile.

Five years had pass'd, and what was Henry then ?
The most repining of repenting men ;
With a fond, teasing, anxious wife, afraid
Of all attention to another paid ;
Yet powerless she her husband to amuse,
Lives but t' entreat, implore, resent, accuse ;
Jealous and tender, conscious of defects,
She merits little, and yet much expects ;
On his retirements her complaints intrude,
And fond reproof endears his solitude.

While he her weakness (once her kindness) sees,
And his affections in her languor freeze ;
Regret, uncheck'd by hope, devours his mind,
He feels unhappy, and he grows unkind.

'Fool ! to be taken by a rosy cheek,
And eyes that cease to sparkle or to speak ;
Fool ! for this child my freedom to resign,
When one the glory of her sex was mine !

'What fiend possess'd me when I tamely gave
My forced assent to be an idiot's slave ?
Her beauty vanish'd, what for me remains ?
Th eternal clicking of the galling chains :
Her person truly I may think my own,
Seen without pleasure, without triumph shown :
Doleful she sits, her children at her knees,
And gives up all her feeble powers to please ;
While from this burthen to my soul I hide,
To think what Fate has dealt, and what denied !'

Such was his fate, and he must yet endure
The self-contempt that no self-love can cure :
Some business call'd him to a wealthy town
When unprepared for more than Fortune's frown ;
There at a house he gave his luckless name,
The master absent, and—Cecilia came !
Unhappy man ! he could not, dared not speak,
But look'd around, as if retreat to seek :
This she allow'd not ; but, with brow severe,
Ask'd him his business, sternly bent to hear ;

He had no courage, but he view'd that face
As if some kind returning thought to trace:
In vain; not long he waited, but with air,
That of all grace compell'd him to despair,
She rang the bell—'Attend this person out,
And if he speaks, hear what he comes about—'
Then, with cool courtesy, from the room withdrew,
That seem'd to say, 'Unhappy man, adieu!'

Thus will it be when man permits a vice
First to invade his heart, and then entice;
When wishes vain and undefined arise,
And that weak heart deceive, seduce, surprise;
When evil Fortune works on Folly's side,
And rash Resentment adds a spur to Pride;
Then life's long troubles from those actions come,
In which a moment may decide our doom.

THE NATURAL DEATH OF LOVE.

TWICE in the week came letters, and delight
Beam'd in the eye of Richard at the sight;
Letters of love, all full and running o'er,
The paper fill'd till it could hold no more;
Cross'd with discolour'd ink, the doublings full,
No fear that love should find abundance dull.
Love reads unsated all that love inspires,
When most indulged, indulgence still requires;
Looks what the corners, what the crossings tell,
And lifts each folding for a fond farewell.

George saw and smiled—'To lovers we allow
All this o'erflowing; but a husband thou—
A father too—can time create no change?
Married, and still so foolish?—very strange!

'Fortune, dear Richard, is thy friend—a wife
Like thine must soften every care of life,
And all its woes—I know a pair, whose lives
Run in the common track of men and wives;

And half their worth, at least, this pair would give
Could they like thee and thy Matilda live.

'Their pictures taken as the pair I saw
In a late contest, I have tried to draw;
'Tis but a sketch, and at my idle time
I put my couple in the garb of rhyme:
Thou art a critic of the milder sort,
And thou wilt judge with favour my report.

'Love has slow death and sudden: wretches prove
That fate severe—the sudden death of love;
Others there are with whom love dies away
In gradual waste and unperceived decay;
And some with not successless arts will strive
To keep the weak'ning, fluttering flame alive.
But see my verse; in this I try to paint
The passion failing, fading to complaint,
The gathering grief for joys remember'd yet,
The vain remonstrance, and the weak regret.
First speaks the wife in sorrow, she is grieved
T' admit the truth, and would be still deceived.'

HENRY AND EMMA.

E. Well, my good sir, I shall contend no more;
But, O! the vows you made, the oaths you swore——

H. To love you always:—I confess it true;
And do I not? If not, what can I do?
Moreover, think what you yourself profess'd,
And then the subject may for ever rest.

E. Yes, sir, obedience I profess'd ; I know
My debt, and wish to pay you all I owe—
Pay without murmur—but that vow was made
To you, who said it never should be paid.
Now truly tell me why you took such care
To make me err ? I ask'd you not to swear,
But rather hoped you would my mind direct,
And say, when married, what you would expect.

You may remember—it is not so long
Since you affirmed that I could not be wrong ;
I told you then—you recollect, I told
The very truth—*that* humour would not hold ;
Not that I thought, or ever could suppose,
The mighty raptures were so soon to close.

Do you remember how you used to hang
Upon my looks ? your transports when I sang ?
I play'd—you melted into tears ; I moved—
Voice, words, and motion, how you all approved !
You recollect ?

H. Yes, surely ; and then why
The needless truths ? do I the facts deny ?
For this remonstrance I can see no need,
Or this impatience—if *you* do, proceed.

E. O ! that is now so cool, and with a smile
That sharpens insult—I detest the style !
And, now I talk of styles, with what delight
You read my lines—I then, it seems, could write ;
In short, when I was present you could see
But one dear object, and you lived for me.

And now, sir, what your pleasure? Let me dress,
Sing, speak, or write, and you your sense express
Of my poor taste—my words are not correct;
In all I do is failing or defect.
And what can such dissatisfaction prove?
I tell you, Henry, you have ceased to love.

H. I own it not; but if a truth it be,
It is the fault of nature, not of me.
Remember you, my love, the fairy tale,
Where the young pairs are spell-bound in the vale?
When all around them gay or glorious seem'd,
And of bright views and ceaseless joys they dream'd;
Till, melting into truth, the vision fled,
And there came miry roads and thorny ways instead.

Such was our fate, my charmer! we were found
A wandering pair, by roguish Cupid bound;
There was that purple light of love, that bloom,
That ardent passions in their growth assume.
Nor they alone were charming; by that light
All loved of thee grew lovely in my sight;
You went the church-way walk, you reach'd the farm,
And gave the grass and babbling springs a charm;
Crop, whom you rode—sad rider though you be—
Thenceforth was more than Pegasus to me.
Have I not woo'd your snarling cur to bend
To me the paw and greeting of a friend,
And all his surly ugliness forgave,
Because, like me, he was my Emma's slave?
Think you, thus charm'd, I would the spell revoke?
Alas! my love, we married—and it broke!

E. O! sir, this boyish tale is mighty well,
But 'twas your falsehood that destroy'd the spell:
Speak not of nature; 'tis an evil mind
That makes you to accustom'd beauties blind;
You seek the faults yourself, and then complain you find.

H. I sought them not; but, madam, 'tis in vain
The course of love and nature to restrain.
Lo! when the buds expand the leaves are green,
Then the first opening of the flower is seen;
Then comes the honied breath and rosy smile,
That with their sweets the willing sense beguile.
But, as we look, and love, and taste, and praise,
And the fruit grows, the charming flower decays;
Till all is gather'd. Such the opening grace
And dawn of glory in the youthful face;
Then are the charms unfolded to the sight,
Then all is loveliness and all delight;
The nuptial tie succeeds, the genial hour,
And, lo! the falling off of beauty's flower;
So, through all nature is the progress made—
The bud, the bloom, the fruit—and then we fade.

Then sigh no more—we might as well retain
The year's gay prime as bid that love remain,
That fond, delusive, happy, transient spell,
That hides us from a world wherein we dwell.

E. O! much I fear! *I* practised no deceit,
Such as I am I saw you at my feet;
If for a goddess you a girl would take,
'Tis you yourself the disappointment make.

H. And I alone !—O ! Emma, when I pray'd
For grace from thee, transported and afraid,
Now raised to rapture, now to terror doom'd,
Was not the goddess by the girl assumed ?
Did not my Emma use her skill to hide—
Let us be frank—her weakness and her pride ?
Did she not all her sex's arts pursue,
To bring the angel forward to my view ?
Was not the rising anger oft suppress'd ?
Was not the waking passion hush'd to rest ?
And when so mildly sweet you look'd and spoke,
Did not the woman deign to wear a cloak ?
A cloak she wore, or, though not clear my sight,
I might have seen her—Think you not I might ?

E. O ! this is glorious !—while your passion lives,
To the loved maid a robe of grace it gives ;
And then, unjust ! beholds her with surprise
Unrobed, ungracious, when the passion dies.

H. For this, my Emma, I to Heaven appeal,
I felt entirely what I seem'd to feel ;
Thou wert all precious in my sight ; to me
The being angels are supposed to be ;
And am I now of my deception told,
Because I'm doom'd a woman to behold ?

E. Sir ! in few words I would a question ask—
Mean these reproaches that I wore a mask ?
Mean you that I by art or caution tried
To show a virtue, or a fault to hide ?

H. I will obey you—When you seem'd to feel
Those books we read, and praised them with such zeal,

Approving all that certain friends approved,
Was it the pages, or the praise, you loved?
Nay, do not frown—I much rejoiced to find
Such early judgment in such gentle mind;
But since we married, have you deign'd to look
On the grave subjects of one favourite book?

Nay, hear me further—When we viewed that dell,
Where lie those ruins—you must know it well—
When that worn pediment your walk delay'd,
And the stream gushing through the arch decay'd;
When at the venerable pile you stood,
Till the does ventured on our solitude,
Tell me, was all the feeling you express'd
The genuine feeling of my Emma's breast?
Or was it borrow'd? Of that lovely scene
The married Emma has no witness been;
No more beheld that water, falling, flow
Through the green fern which there delights to grow.

Once more permit me——Well, I know, you feel
For suffering men, and would their sufferings heal;
But when at certain huts you chose to call,
At certain seasons, was compassion all?
I there beheld thee, to the wretched dear
As angels to expiring saints appear
When whispering hope—I saw an infant press'd
And hush'd to slumber on my Emma's breast!
Hush'd be each rude suggestion!—Well I know,
With a free hand your bounty you bestow;

And to these objects frequent comforts send,
But still they see not now their pitying friend.

E. O ! precious are you all, and prizes too,
Or could we take such guilty pains for you ?
Believe it not—As long as passion lasts,
A charm about the chosen maid it casts ;
And the poor girl has little more to do
Than just to keep in sight as you pursue.
Chance to a ruin leads her ; you behold,
And straight the angel of her taste is told ;
Chance to a cottage leads you, and you trace
A virtuous pity in the angel's face ;
She reads a work you chance to recommend,
And likes it well—at least, she likes the friend ;
But when it chances this no more is done,
She has not left one virtue—No ! not one !

But be it said, good sir, we use such art,
Is it not done to hold a fickle heart,
And fix a roving eye ?—Is that design
Shameful or wicked that would keep you mine ?
Then when you flatter—in your language praise—
In our own view you must our value raise ;
And must we not, to this mistaken man,
Appear as like his picture as we can ?
If you will call—nay, treat us as—divine,
Must we not something to your thoughts incline ?
If men of sense will worship whom they love,
Think you the idol will the error prove ?
What ! show him all her glory is pretence,
And make an idiot of this man of sense ?

In fact, you make us more than nature makes,
And we, no doubt, consent to your mistakes ;
You will, we know, until the frenzy cools,
Enjoy the transient paradise of fools ;
But, fancy fled, you quit the blissful state,
And truth for ever bars the golden gate.

H. True ! but how ill each other to upbraid,
'Tis not our fault that we no longer stayed ;
No sudden fate our lingering love suppress'd,
It died an easy death, and calmly sank to rest :
To either sex is the delusion lent,
And when it fails us, we should rest content,
'Tis cruel to reproach, when bootless to repent.

E. Then wise the lovers who consent to wait,
And, always lingering, never try the state !
But, hurried on by what they call their pain,
And I their bliss, no longer they refrain ;
To ease that pain, to lose that bliss, they run
To the church magi, and the thing is done ;
A spell is utter'd, and a ring applied,
And forth they walk a bridegroom and a bride,
To find this counter charm, this marriage rite,
Has put their pleasant fallacies to flight !

But tell me, Henry, should we truly strive,
May we not yet the happy dream revive ?

H. Alas ! they say when weakness or when vice
Expels a foolish pair from Paradise,
The guardian power to prayer has no regard,
The knowledge once obtain'd, the gate is barr'd ;

Or, could we enter, we should still repine,
Unless we could the knowledge too resign.

Yet let us calmly view our present fate,
And make a humbler Eden of our state ;
With this advantage, that what now we gain,
Experience gives, and prudence will retain.
What we beheld in Love's perspective glass
Has pass'd away—one sigh ! and let it pass—
It was a blissful vision, and it fled,
And we must get some actual good instead :
Each on the other must in all depend,
The kind adviser, the unfailing friend ;
Through the rough world we must each other aid,
Leading and led, obeying and obey'd.

Nor doubt, my Emma, but in many an hour
Fancy, who sleeps, shall wake with all her power
And we shall pass—though not perhaps remain—
To fairy-land, and feel its charm again.

GRETNA GREEN.

'I MET,' said Richard, when return'd to dine,
'In my excursion, with a friend of mine;
Friend! I mistake—but yet I knew him well,
Ours was the village where he came to dwell;
He was an orphan born to wealth, and then
Placed in the guardian-care of cautious men;
When our good parent, who was kindness all,
Fed and caress'd him when he chose to call;
Two years he there remain'd, then went his way—
I think to school—and him I met to-day.

'I heard his name, or he had pass'd unknown,
And, without scruple, I divulged my own;
His words were civil, but not much express'd—
"Yes! he had heard I was my brother's guest;"
He envied you, he said, your quiet life,
And me a loving and contented wife—"
I was about to speak, when to the right
The road then turn'd, and lo! his house in sight.

'"Adieu!" he said, nor gave a word or sign
Of invitation—"Yonder house is mine;

Your brother's I prefer, if I might choose—
But, my dear sir, you have no time to lose."

'Say, is he poor? or has he fits of spleen?
Or is he melancholy, moped, or mean?
So cold, so distant——I bestow'd some pains
Upon the fever in my Irish veins.'

'Well, Richard, let your native wrath be tamed;
The man has half the evils you have named;
He is not poor, indeed, nor is he free
From all the gloom and care of poverty.'

'But is he married?'—'Hush! the bell, my friend;
That business done, we will to this attend;
And, o'er our wine engaged, and at our ease,
We may discourse of Belwood's miseries;
Not that his sufferings please me—No, indeed;
But I from such am happy to be freed.'

Their speech, of course, to this misfortune led,
A weak young man improvidently wed.

'Weak,' answer'd Richard; 'but we do him wrong
To say that his affection was not strong.'

'That we may doubt,' said George; 'in men so weak
You may in vain the strong affections seek;
They have strong appetites; a fool will eat
As long as food is to his palate sweet;
His rule is not what sober nature needs,
But what the palate covets as he feeds.
Weak boys, indulged by parents just as weak,
Will with much force of their affection speak;

But let mamma th' accustom'd sweets withhold,
And the fond boys grow insolent and cold.

'Weak men profess to love, and while untried
May woo with warmth, and grieve to be denied;
Their sickly love is fed with hopes of joy,
Repulses damp it, and delays destroy.
In better minds, when love possession takes
And meets with peril, he the reason shakes;
But these weak natures, when they love profess,
Never regard their small concerns the less.

'That true and genuine love has Quixote-flights
May be allow'd—in vision it delights;
But in its loftiest flight, its wildest dream,
Has something in it that commands esteem.
But this poor love to no such region soars,
But, Sancho-like, its selfish loss deplores;
Of its own merit and its service speaks,
And full reward for all its duty seeks.'

—'When a rich boy, with all the pride of youth,
Weds a poor beauty, will you doubt his truth?
Such love is tried—it indiscreet may be,
But must be generous'—

'That I do not see.
Just at this time the balance of the mind
Is this or that way by the weights inclined;
In this scale beauty, wealth in that abides,
In dubious balance, till the last subsides.
Things are not poised in just the equal state,
That the ass stands stock-still in the debate;
Though when deciding he may slowly pass
And long for both—the nature of the ass.

'Tis but an impulse that he must obey
When he resigns one bundle of the hay.'

Take your friend Belwood, whom his guardians sent
To Doctor Sidmere—full of dread he went;
'*Doctor*' they call'd him—he was not of us,
And where he was we need not now discuss:
He kept a school, he had a daughter fair,
He said, as angels—say, as women are.

Clara, this beauty, had a figure light,
Her face was handsome, and her eyes were bright;
Her voice was music, not by anger raised;
And sweet her dimple, either pleased or praised;
All round the village was her fame allow'd,
She was its pride, and not a little proud.

The Doctor taught of youth some half a score,
Well-born and wealthy—he would take no more;
His wife, when peevish, told him, 'Yes! and glad'—
It might be so—no more were to be had.
Belwood, it seems, for college was design'd,
But for more study he was not inclined:
He now on manhood verged, at least began
To talk as he supposed became a man.
'Whether he chose the college or the school
Was his own act, and that should no man rule;
He had his reasons for the step he took—
Did they suppose he stay'd to read his book?'

Hopeless, the Doctor said, 'This boy is one
With whom I fear there's nothing to be done.'

His wife replied, who more had guess'd or knew,
'You only mean there's nothing he can do.'
—'What credit can I by the dunce obtain?'—
'Credit? I know not—something you may gain;
'Tis true he has no passion for his books,
But none can closer study Clara's looks.
And who controls him? now his father's gone,
There's not a creature cares about the son;
If he be brought to ask your daughter's hand,
All that he has will be at her command;
And cannot I my pretty Clara rule?
Is not this better than a noisy school?'

The Doctor thought and mused, he felt and fear'd,
Wish'd it to be—then wish'd he had not heard;
But he was angry—*that* at least was right,
And gave him credit in his lady's sight.
Then, milder grown, yet something still severe,
He said, 'Consider, Madam, think and fear;'
But, ere they parted, softening to a smile,
'Farewell!' said he—'I'll think myself awhile.'

James and his Clara had, with many a pause
And many a doubt, infringed the Doctor's laws;
At first with terror, and with eyes turn'd round
On every side for fear they should be found:
In the long passage, and without the gate,
They met, and talk'd of love and his estate;
And still she answer'd kindly as she could,
But still 'I dare not' waited on 'I would.'
Her Jemmy said at length, 'He did not heed
His guardian's anger—What was *he* indeed?

He loved her pretty looks, her eyes of blue,
Her auburn-braid, and lips that shone like dew ;
And did she think her Jemmy stay'd at school
To study Greek ?—What, take him for a fool ?
Not he, by Jove ! for what he had to seek
He would in English ask her, not in Greek ;
Will you be mine ? are all your scruples gone ?
Then let's be off—I've that will take us on.'
'Twas true ; the clerk of an attorney there
Had found a Jew—the Jew supplied the heir.

And so they elope to Gretna ; the lad exulting in the possession of his pretty Clara ; Clara in the possession of an enamoured fool whose fortune will enable her to outshine all the envious misses of her neighbourhood ; mamma in the possession, as she thinks, of authority over Clara, which Clara by no means intends to submit to ; and the Doctor thinking to exculpate himself in the world's eyes from any participation in the elopement he winks at by a show of tardy forgiveness hereafter, and confident of ruling the married man as he had hitherto ruled the boy.

O ! when we thus design we do but spread
Nets for our feet, and to our toils are led :
Those whom we think we rule their views attain,
And we partake the guilt without the gain.

All pass'd that was expected ; all prepared
To share the comfort—What the comfort shared ?

The newly-married couple return from Gretna, and drive up to the bridegroom's house, of which he takes possession at once. For some while he is pleased with his pretty new doll with its blue eyes and auburn hair ;

but when he becomes somewhat tired of her himself, and hears it said abroad, as his guardian told him from the first, that he had bought her much too dear, he determines that, at any rate, she shall not cost him much to keep. And, moreover, when his doll begins trying her hand at making a puppet of him, as she had reckoned on doing—

He grew imperious, insolent, and loud—
His blinded weakness made his folly proud ;
He would be master—she had no pretence
To counsel him, as if he wanted sense ;
He must inform her, she already cost
More than her worth, and more should not be lost ;

and he leaves her alone in his stone-cold hall, with only tatter'd old portraits and stags' antlers for company, while he himself keeps abroad with his dog and gun.

New trial came—The wife conceived it right
To see her parents ; ' So,' he said, ' she might,
If she had any fancy for a jail,
But upon him no creature should prevail ;'
But still concluding, ' if your will be so
That you must see the old ones, do it—go !'

' O ! but to see her parents !'—' Well ! the sight
Might give her pleasure—very like it might,
And she might go ; but, to his house restored,
He would not now be catechised and bored.'

It was her duty ;'—' Well !' said he again,
' There you may go—and there you may remain !'

Meanwhile her parents have heard how matters stand at the Hall, and are quarrelling together on their own

score when not sharing in the spoil which they had anticipated.

Some weeks the Doctor waited, and the while
His lady preach'd in no consoling style.

'Why did you, sir, who know such things so well,
And teach us good, permit them to rebel?
Had you o'erawed and check'd them as you might,
They never would have ventured upon flight—
Had you'——'Out, serpent! did not you begin?
What! introduce, and then upbraid, the sin?
For sin it is, as I too well perceive—
But leave me, woman, to reflection leave;
Then to your closet, and upon your knees
Beg for forgiveness for such sins as these.'

'A moody morning!' with a careless air
Replied the wife—'Why counsel me to prayer?
I think the lord and teacher of a school
Should pray himself, and keep his temper cool.'

Calm grew the husband when the wife was gone—
'The game,' said he, 'is never lost till won;'

Why throw it up while there is yet a card to play? He will go at once, uninvited; will first try persuasion, and if that fail, surely the lout who so lately trembled under his rod when caught stealing his pears, will surely flinch before his eye, when arraigned for carrying off his daughter. So he goes; is received with surly indifference by the young man, who, after the briefest welcome, stalks abroad with his dog and gun, leaving room for neither remonstrance nor intimidation—

So that, between the gracious and the grand,
Nothing succeeded which the Doctor plann'd.

And then comes the daughter, who turns upon him with yet fiercer acrimony than her mother had done. Why did he suffer her to elope and marry a wretch who ceased to care for her in a few weeks; grudged every penny he had to pay for her; bullied her when together; or left her all day long by herself in that old Hall with its stone floors and stags' horns for company.

'Yes left her there—she knew not where he went;
But this she knew, the slight he should repent;
She was not one his daily taunts to bear,
He made the house a hell which he should share.'

'He loves you, child,' the softening father cried;
'He loves himself, and not a soul beside.'
'Time can do much'—'Will time my name restore?'
'Have patience, child!'—'I am a child no more!
Sir, could you bring me comfort, I were cool,
But keep your counsel for your boys at school.'

So the Doctor returns to his discontented and discouraging wife; and the young couple to their daily exasperating encounters, in which, when first her small shot whistles in his ears, he is apt to flinch;

But if he turn'd him in the battle's heat,
And fought in earnest, hers was then defeat;
His strength of oath and curse did little harm,
But there was no resisting strength of arm.

At last, 'the slaves of passion' agree to part; she content to escape on such scanty allowance as can be

wrung from him, and will enable her to subsist independently in a country town, upon whose gossip he relies for intelligence of some misconduct on her part that will authorise him to withdraw that allowance altogether.

And thus all parties—old and young—parents and children, are left taxing one another and themselves with the failure of their own devices.

We find too late by stooping to deceit,
It is ourselves, and not the world, we cheat,
For though we blind it, yet we can but feel
That we have something evil to conceal,
Nor can we by our utmost care be sure
That we can hide the sufferings we endure.

LADY BARBARA.

THE brothers spoke of ghosts—a favourite theme
With those who love to reason or to dream ;
And they, as greater men were wont to do,
Felt strong desire to think the stories true ;
Stories of spirits freed, who came to prove
To spirits bound in flesh that yet they love,
To give them notice of the things below,
Which we must wonder how they came to know,
Or known, would think of coming to relate
To creatures who are tried by unknown fate.

'Warning,' said Richard, 'seems the only thing
That would a spirit on an errand bring ;
To turn a guilty mind from wrong to right
A ghost might come—at least I think it might.'

'But,' said the brother, 'if we here are tried,
A spirit sent would put that law aside ;
It gives to some advantage others need,
Or hurts the sinner should it not succeed :
If from the dead, said Dives, one were sent
To warn my brethren, sure they would repent ;

But Abraham answer'd, if they now reject
The guides they have, no more would have effect;
Their doubts too obstinate for grace would prove,
For wonder hardens hearts it fails to move.

'Suppose a sinner in an hour of gloom,
And let a ghost with all its horrors come;
From lips unmoved let solemn accents flow,
Solemn his gesture be, his motion slow;
Let the waved hand and threatening look impart
Truth to the mind and terror to the heart;
And, when the form is fading to the view,
Let the convicted man cry, "This is true!"

'Alas! how soon would doubts again invade
The willing mind, and sins again persuade!
I saw it—What?—I was awake, but how?
Not as I am, or I should see it now:
It spoke, I think—at least, I thought it spoke—
And look'd alarming—yes, I felt the look.

'But then in sleep those horrid forms arise,
Which the soul sees—and, we suppose, the eyes—
And the soul hears—the senses then thrown by,
She is herself the ear, herself the eye;
A mistress so will free her servile race
For their own tasks, and take herself the place.
In sleep what forms will ductile fancy take,
And what so common as to dream awake?
On others thus do ghostly guests intrude?
Or why am I by such advice pursued?
One out of millions who exist, and why
They know not—cannot know—and such am I;

And shall two beings of two worlds, to meet,
The laws of one, perhaps of both, defeat?
It cannot be—But if some being lives
Who such kind warning to a favourite gives,
Let him these doubts from my dull spirit clear,
And once again, expected guest! appear!
'And if a second time the power complied,
Why then a third, and why a fourth denied?
Why not a warning ghost for ever at our side?

'Ah, foolish being! thou hast truth enough,
Augmented guilt would rise on greater proof;
Blind and imperious passion disbelieves,
Or madly scorns the warning it receives,
Or looks for pardon ere the ill be done,
Because 'tis vain resistless fate to shun;
In spite of ghosts, predestined woes would come,
And warning add new terrors to our doom.

'Yet there are tales that would remove our doubt,
The whisper'd tales that circulate about,
That in some noble mansion take their rise,
And told with secrecy and awe, surprise:
It seems not likely people should advance,
For falsehood's sake, such train of circumstance;
Then the ghosts bear them with a ghost-like grace
That suits the person, character, and place.

'But let us something of the kind recite:
What think you, now, of Lady Barbara's spright?'

'I know not what to think; but I have heard
A ghost, to warn her or advise, appear'd;

And that she sought a friend before she died
To whom she might the awful fact confide,
Who seal'd and secret should the story keep
Till Lady Barbara slept her final sleep,
In that close bed, that never spirit shakes,
Nor ghostly visitor the sleeper wakes.'

'Yes, I can give that story, not so well
As your old woman would the legend tell,
But as the facts are stated; and now hear
How ghosts advise, and widows persevere.'

The Lady Barbara Ratcliffe had been but a year wedded to an amiable nobleman, when his death once more left her her own mistress.

Yet she had beauty to engage the eye,
A widow still in her minority;
Yet she had merit worthy men to gain,
And yet her hand no merit could obtain.
For, though secluded, there were trials made,
When he who soften'd most could not persuade;
Awhile she hearken'd as her swain proposed,
And then his suit with strong refusal closed.

'Thanks, and farewell!—give credit to my word,
That I shall die the widow of my lord;
'Tis my own will, I now prefer the state—
If mine should change, it is the will of fate.'

Such things were spoken, and the hearers cried,
''Tis very strange—perhaps she may be tried.'

In order to avoid all which trial it may be that she quits the gay world of London, and domesticates herself in the house of a country clergyman and his wife, whose poor people she helps to visit abroad, while she assists in the education of the family at home. Among these is a very handsome, high-spirited boy, whom she caresses and helps to spoil; and who already prides himself in being called 'her little man' by the beautiful and high-born dame. For George already, as a boy, began

'To show the pride that was not meant for man;'

and sometimes comes home bleeding from encounters with other boys who have, he thinks, insulted him with his father's name of 'parson.'

But it became the child, his mother cried,
And the kind lady said it was not Pride.

Nor does the parson father, remembering his own boyish days, like to check his boy's spirit, though he suffers sufficiently from it, especially as the boy's studies advance with his years, and he has to submit,

Not unresisting when that cursed Greek
Ask'd so much time for words that none will speak.

'What can men worse for mortal brain contrive
Than thus a hard dead language to revive!
Heav'ns, if a language once be fairly dead,
Let it be buried, not preserved and read.
If any good these crabbed books contain,
Translate them well, and let them then remain;
To one huge vault convey the useless store,
Then lose the key, and never find it more.'
Something like this the lively boy express'd,
When Homer was his torment and his jest.

And so the lad grows up, still under the beautiful lady's eyes, till he is no longer her 'little man,' but old enough to go to college, in order to prepare him for the living which is all the fortune his father has to leave him. To college he therefore goes; but comes home with but a surly answer as to the discipline there—

'What hours to study did he give?'—He gave
Enough to feel they made him like a slave—
In fact, the vicar found, if George should rise,
'Twas not by college rules and exercise.

'At least the time for your degree abide,
And be ordain'd,' the man of peace replied;
'Then you may come and aid me while I keep,
And watch, and shear, the hereditary sheep;
Choose then your spouse—'

And even while he is speaking, the young man's eyes have been fixed on *her* who has been sitting beside them in the room; and, at those last words, his whole frame is convulsed with that passion which has for some while been whispering within him,

'Why sinks that voice so sweetly in mine ear?
What makes it now a livelier joy to hear?
Why gives that touch—still, still do I retain
The fierce delight that tingled through each vein
Why at her presence with such quickness flows
The vital current?—Well a lover knows!'*

* Here follow some beautiful lines which seem rather beyond the young lover's reach. The last ten, excepting the penultimate couplet, almost set themselves to music:

'O! tell me not of years—can she be old?
Those eyes, those lips, can man unmoved behold?

And she, in truth, was lovely—Time had strown
No snows on her, though he so long had flown ;
The purest damask blossom'd in her cheek,
The eyes said all that eyes are wont to speak.
Her pleasing person she with care adorn'd,
Nor arts that stay the flying graces scorn'd ;
Nor held it wrong these graces to renew,
Or give the fading rose its opening hue :
Yet few there were who needed less the art
To hide an error, or a grace impart.

But knew she, then, this dreaded love ? She guess'd—

And well would she have done to quit that home at once where her presence was so dangerous. But in a short while, George, with his father's reluctant consent, has relinquished the Church for the Army, to which he is more suited. He may be called away to his new duties any day—*must* be called ere long. Alas ! his passion, and her perplexity, do but increase as time contracts ;

No, she is young, or I her love t' engage
Will grow discreet, and that will seem like age :
But speak it not ; Death's equalising arm
Levels not surer than Love's stronger charm,
That bids all inequalities be gone,
That laughs at rank, that mocks comparison.

'There is not young or old, if Love decrees ;
He levels orders, he confounds degrees :
There is not fair, or dark, or short, or tall,
Or grave, or sprightly—Love reduces all.
He makes unite the pensive and the gay,
Gives something here, takes something there away.
From each abundant good a portion takes,
And for each want a compensation makes ;
Then tell me not of years—Love, power divine,
Takes, as he wills, from hers, and gives to mine.'

until, one summer evening, when they are walking together in the garden shade, and, with some hesitation on either side, she has spoken to him—still as a mother might—of the future before him—the young man's passion, incapable of further control, blazes up into an open avowal that he no longer looks upon her as a mother, but—his wife!

For awhile the lady remains aghast; and then, as bracing herself up to a strong effort—

'It cannot be, my George, my child, my son!'

could not, even if she felt otherwise than as a mother towards him. It would be madness on his side; guilt on hers; misery and shame to both. Let him but think. She who has been to him as a mother—almost old enough to have been his mother—to become old while he is yet almost a boy—and on her part, if there were no worthier motive—woman's pride to restrain her.

He is silenced for awhile, but soon breaks out yet more passionately, as if to overpower if he cannot persuade her; till at last she exclaims:

'I tell thee, George, as I have told before,
I feel a mother's love, and feel no more;
A child I bore thee in my arms, and how
Could I—did prudence yield—receive thee now?'

At her remonstrance hope revived, for oft
He found her words severe, her accents soft;
In eyes that threaten'd tears of pity stood,
And truth she made as gracious as she could.

They part: and chiefly from a sense of duty, but also with a little 'of woman's wish to triumph and complain, she tells his father what had passed. When, to her astonishment,

The good old Pastor wonder'd, seem'd to grieve,
And look'd suspicious on this child of Eve :
He judged his boy, though wild, had never dared
To talk of love, had not rebuke been spared ;
But he replied, in mild and tender tone,
'It is not sin, and therefore shame has none.'

The different ages of the pair he knew,
And quite as well their different fortunes too :
A meek, just man ; but difference in his sight
That made the match unequal made it right ;
'His son, his friend, united, and become
Of his own hearth—the comforts of his home—
Was it so wrong? Perhaps it was her pride
That felt the distance, and the youth denied?'

Thus deprived of one main weapon of defence, which has indeed been taken and turned against herself, the lady resolves, in case of renewed attack, upon availing herself of an argument which, because of its peculiar solemnity, she had reserved for a last resource. Nor has she long to wait ; her fiery lover returns to the charge, and, as he proves invulnerable to human warning, she now bids him listen to one from another world which must terminate a conflict which she knew to be desperate from the beginning.

She is, he knows, a daughter of the ancient house of Ratcliffe, and educated in all the family traditions, saving one ; and *that* the most important one of all. Her father, one of the Free-thinkers of his day, who derived their creed

'From crabbed Hobbes to courtly Bolingbroke,'

would fain have his children enlightened as himself.

Especially in the matter of making the most of *this* world without looking to that future, which is only the visionary fabrication of man's credulity on one side, and craft on the other.

This father, in due time, leaves this only world that he had taught himself and others to reckon on; and the Lady Barbara, who had always been troubled by the doctrine she dared not controvert, now takes counsel with a beloved brother who had been equally dissatisfied with it himself. They reason together, they consult with divines, and read philosophers who do not always agree with one another, or with themselves; and, finally, one night when they are meditating on the subject, brother and sister agree that whichsoever of them may die first, shall, if possible, re-appear to the survivor, by way of assurance of that other life which they had been taught to disbelieve in.

Not long after this, the Lady Barbara is wooed and wedded by the amiable nobleman who, after a year of peaceful happiness, leaves her a widow. And hereupon follows in the story of her ghostly warning, to which she solemnly urges her hearer to attend.

One night, she says, when her husband happened to be away from home, her brother on his travels abroad:

'One night I slept not, but I courted sleep,
And forced my thoughts on tracks they could not keep;
Till nature, wearied in the strife, reposed,
And deep forgetfulness my wanderings closed.
'My lord was absent—distant from the bed
A pendent lamp its soften'd lustre shed;
But there was light that chased away the gloom,
And brought to view each object in the room:

These I observed ere yet I sunk in sleep,
That, if disturb'd not, had been long and deep.

'I was awaken'd by some being nigh,
It seem'd some voice, and gave a timid cry—
When sounds, that I describe not, slowly broke
On my attention——"Be composed, and look!"
I strove, and I succeeded; look'd with awe,
But yet with firmness—and my brother saw.'

Yes! He is come, according to their engagement, to assure her by his presence of another world into which he has just entered; yea, and to warn her of a danger which will immediately threaten her in this. "Now a wife—soon to be a widow—let her never be tempted into misery by a second marriage!—Nay, let her not protest; young, fair, tender-hearted—
"But she will swear"—
"No! Free-will must not be fettered by an oath,"

'He said, or I had sworn; and still the vow
Was pass'd—was in my mind—and there is now.'

"But will he not give her some token that she sees her brother indeed, and not in dream?"

"She will hear of his death, at this very hour, before many days are over."

"Even so; but, with a courage not her own, she implores him for some palpable and abiding sign of his presence."

'"Give me thy hand!"——I gave it, for my soul
Was now grown ardent, and above control:
Eager I stretch'd it forth, and felt the hold
Of shadowy fingers, more than icy cold:

A nameless pressure on my wrist was made,
And instant vanish'd the beloved shade !

A few days after came news from abroad of her brother's death, at the very moment when he appeared to her ; and by-and-by the death of her husband follows, as the vision had predicted ; and by-and-by those very trials of her constancy which she had hitherto kept inviolate, and inviolable must keep as long as she lives.

'Surely but a dream!' exclaims her impassioned lover.

'But a true prophet of what afterward came to pass.'

'As many a dream before. You were alone—long sleepless, you say—perhaps thinking of your absent brother—'*

'Nay, but the mark left by that hand on my wrist'—and she draws up her sleeve—

'A slight, an accidental mark—no more'——
'Slight as it is, it was not there before :
Then there was weakness, and I bound it——Nay !
This is infringement—take those lips away !'

Strong in her sense of weakness, now withdrew
The cautious lady from the lover's view ;
But she perceived the looks of all were changed—
Her kind old friends grew peevish and estranged ;
A fretful spirit reign'd, and discontent
From room to room in sullen silence went.
'But he will go,' she said, 'and he will strive
In fields of glorious energy to drive

* These few words about dreams are gathered from a long and elaborate argument urged by the young soldier at that subsequent interview which he believes to be the last.

Love from his bosom—Yes, I then may stay,
And all will thank me on a future day.'

So judged the lady, nor appear'd to grieve,
Till the young soldier came to take his leave;
But not of all assembled—No! he found
His gentle sisters all in sorrow drown'd;
With many a shaken hand, and many a kiss,
He cried, 'Farewell! a solemn business this;
Nay, Susan, Sophy!—heaven and earth, my dears!
I am a soldier—What do I with tears?'

He sought his parents; they together walk'd,
And of their son, his views and dangers talk'd;
They knew not how to blame their friend, but still
They murmur'd, 'She may save us if she will;
Were not these visions working in her mind
Strange things—'tis in her nature to be kind.'

And where is *she?* Alone in her room, they tell him. She must arm herself with all her resolution for this last interview. For such it is to be, he tells her. Unfit as he may be to die—to die is all he looks for in the field of battle; and she may at least do him that much favour of uniting her prayers with his for the speedy termination of a life she has blighted.

'Why will he say such things—so cruel, so unjust, leaving her more miserable than all he leaves behind?'

'If that were so indeed, she has it in her power to turn all misery into bliss by a single word:

"But an accursed dream has steel'd thy breast,
And all the woman from thy soul supprest.'

"It was a warning, tempter, from the dead,
And, wedding thee, with misery I should wed.'

'Aye,' he answers, 'for one of the proud Ratcliffes to wed herself to so poor—

'Hear me, O hear me! Shall I wed my son!'

'I am in fondness and obedience one—
'And I will reverence, honour, love, adore,
'Be all that fondest sons can be—and more—
'O, thou canst weep!'—
'Leave, leave me, I entreat.'—
'No! here I kneel, a beggar at thy feet.'—
He said, and knelt—with accents, softer still,
He woo'd the weakness of a failing will,
And erring judgment—took her hand, and cried,
'Withdraw it not!—O! let it thus abide,
Pledge of thy love.'—He saw her looks express'd
Favour and grace—the hand was firmer press'd;
Signs of opposing fear no more were shown,
And, as he press'd, he felt it was his own.

Soon through the house was known the glad assent,
The night so dreaded was in comfort spent;
War was no more; the destined knot was tied,
And the fond widow made a fearful bride.

And a miserable wife, as she confessed, along with her ghost story, when she came to die.

'I sinn'd with warning—when I gave my hand,
A power within said, urgently—"Withstand!"
And I resisted—O! my God, what shame,
What years of torment from that frailty came!
Like the first being of my sex I fell,
Tempted, and with the tempter doom'd to dwell.

His day of love, a brief autumnal day,
Ev'n in its dawning hasten'd to decay ;
Doom'd from our odious union to behold
How cold he grew, and then how worse than cold ;
Eager he sought me, eagerly to shun,
Kneeling he woo'd me, but he scorn'd me, won ;
The tears he caused served only to provoke
His wicked insult o'er the heart he broke ;
" Why did I not with my chaste ghost comply !"
And with upbraiding scorn he told me why.

I have had wounds, and some that never heal,
What bodies suffer, and what spirits feel ;
But he is gone who gave them—he is fled
To his account—and my revenge is dead !

She died in peace.—One moral let us draw—
Be it a ghost or not the lady saw—

If our discretion tells us how to live,
We need no ghost a helping hand to give ;
But if discretion cannot us restrain,
It then appears a ghost would come in vain.

THE WIDOW.

RICHARD one morning—it was custom now—
Walk'd and conversed with labourers at the plough,
With thrashers hastening to their daily task,
With woodmen resting o'er the enlivening flask,
And with the shepherd, watchful of his fold
Beneath the hill and pacing in the cold :
Further afield he sometimes would proceed,
And take a path wherever it might lead.

It led him far about to Wickham Green,
Where stood the mansion of the village queen ;
Her garden yet its wintry blossoms bore,
And roses graced the windows and the door—
That lasting kind, that through the varying year
Or in the bud or in the bloom appear ;
All flowers that now the gloomy days adorn
Rose on the view, and smiled upon that morn.
Richard a damsel at the window spied,
Who kindly drew a useless veil aside,
And show'd a lady who was sitting by,
So pensive, that he almost heard her sigh :

Full many years she could, no question, tell,
But in her mourning look'd extremely well.

'In truth,' said Richard, when he told at night
His tale to George, 'it was a pleasant sight ;
She look'd like one who could, in tender tone,
Say, " Will you let a lady sigh alone ?
See ! Time has touch'd me gently in his race,
And left no odious furrows in my face ;
See, too, this house and garden, neat and trim,
Kept for its master——Will you stand for him ?" '

'Your pity, brother,' George, with smile, replied,
'You may dismiss, and with it send your pride :
No need of pity, Richard, that fair she
Has had three husbands ? I repeat it, *three !*
And be not proud—for, though it might be thine,
She would that hand to humbler men resign.

'True, she has years beyond your reckoning seen,
With distance and a window for their screen,
But she has something that may still command
The warm admirer, and the ready hand :
Her fortune, too ; yet there indeed I doubt ;
Since so much money has run in and out,
'Tis hard to guess.—But there is this in her,
That I to minds of stronger cast prefer ;
She may be made, with little care and skill,
Yielding her own, to adopt a husband's will.
Women will give up all their love of rule,
Great as it is, if man be not a fool ;
They're out of place, when they assume the sway,
But feel it safe and easy to obey.

'Queens they will be if man allow the means—
But Heav'n defend us from domestic queens!—
Whom, if he rightly trains he may create
And make obedient members of his state.'

Harriet at school was very much the same
As other misses, and so home she came,
Like other ladies, there to live and learn,
To wait her season and to take her turn.

Their husbands maids as priests their livings gain,
The best, they find, are hardest to obtain;
On those that offer both awhile debate—
'I need not take it, it is not so late;
Better will come if we will longer stay,
And strive to put ourselves in fortune's way:
And thus they wait, till many years are past,
For what comes slowly—but it comes at last.

Harriet was wedded—but it must be said,
The vow'd obedience was not duly paid:
Hers was an easy man—it gave him pain
To hear a lady murmur and complain:
He was a merchant, whom his father made
Rich in the gains of a successful trade:
A lot more pleasant, or a view more fair,
Has seldom fallen to a youthful pair.

But what is faultless in a world like this?
In every station something seems amiss:
The lady, married, found the house too small—
'Two shabby parlours, and that ugly hall!

Had we a cottage somewhere, and could meet
One's friends and favourites in one's snug retreat;
Or only join a single room to these,
It would be living something at our ease,
And have one's self at home the comfort that one sees.'

Such powers of reason, and of mind such strength,
Fought with man's fear, and they prevail'd at length:
The room was built—and Harriet did not know
A prettier dwelling, either high or low.
But Harriet loved such conquests, loved to plead
With her reluctant man, and to succeed;
It was such pleasure to prevail o'er one
Who would oppose the thing that still was done,
Who never gain'd the race, but yet would groan and run.

She now the carriage chose with freshest name,
And was in quite a fever till it came;
But can a carriage be alone enjoy'd?
The pleasure not partaken is destroy'd;
'I must have some good creature to attend
On morning visits as a kind of friend.'

A courteous maiden then was found to sit
Beside the lady, for her purpose fit,
To soothe the pride, to watch the varying look,
And bow in silence to the dumb rebuke.

Harriet, a mother now, was grieved to find
The nursery window caught the eastern wind;
What could she do, with fears like these oppress'd?
She built a room all window'd to the west;

For sure in one so dull, so bleak, so old :
She and her children must expire with cold.
Meantime the husband murmur'd—'So he might ;
She would be judged by Cousins*—Was it right ?'

Water was near them, and, her mind afloat,
The lady saw a cottage and a boat,
And thought what sweet excursions they might make,
How they might sail, what neighbours they might take,
And nicely would she deck the lodge upon the lake.

She now prevail'd by habit ; had her will,
And found her patient husband sad and still :
Yet this displeased ; she gain'd indeed the prize,
But not the pleasure of her victories ;
'Was she a child to be indulged ? He knew
She would have right, but would have reason too.'

Now came the time, when in her husband's face
Care, and concern, and caution she could trace ;
His troubled features gloom and sadness bore,
Less he resisted, but he suffer'd more ;
Grief and confusion seized him in the day,
And the night pass'd in agony away.
'My ruin comes !' was his awakening thought,
And vainly through the day was comfort sought ;
'There, take my all !' he said, and in his dream
Heard the door bolted, and his children scream.

Fretful herself, he of his wife in vain
For comfort sought——'He would be well again ;

* Her companion's name.

Time would disorders of such nature heal—
O! if he felt what she was doom'd to feel!
Such sleepless nights! such broken rest! her frame
Rack'd with diseases that she could not name!
With pangs like hers no other was oppress'd!'
Weeping, she said, and sigh'd herself to rest.

The suffering husband look'd the world around,
And saw no friend: on him misfortune frown'd;
Him self-reproach tormented; sorely tried,
By threats he mourn'd, and by disease he died.

As weak as wailing infancy or age,
How could the widow with the world engage?

'Her debts would overwhelm her, that was sure!'
But one privation would she not endure;
'We shall want bread! the thing is past a doubt.'—
'Then part with Cousins!'—'Can I do without?'—
'Dismiss your servants!'—'Spare me them, I pray!'—
'At least your carriage!'—'What will people say?'—
'That useless boat, that Folly on the lake!'—
'O! but what cry and scandal will it make!'
For ever begging all to be sincere,
And never willing any truth to hear.
'It was so hard on her, who not a thing
Had done such mischief on their heads to bring;
This was her comfort, this she would declare'—
And then slept soundly on her pillow'd chair.

Among the clerks there was a thoughtful one,
Who still believed that something might be done;
He judged the widow, and he saw the way
In which her husband suffer'd her to stray;

He saw entangled and perplex'd affairs,
And Time's sure hand at work on their repairs ;
And looking keenly round him, he believed
That what was lost might quickly be retrieved.

'Madam !' said he, 'with sorrow I relate,
That our affairs are in a dreadful state ;
I call'd on all our friends, and they declared
They dared not meddle—not a creature dared ;
But still our perseverance chance may aid,
And though I'm puzzled, I am not afraid.
Do not, I pray you, my proposal blame,
It is my wish to guard your husband's fame,
And ease your trouble ; then your cares resign
To my discretion—and, in short, be mine.'

'Yours ! O ! my stars !—Your goodness, sir, deserves
My grateful thanks—take pity on my nerves ;
I shake and tremble at a thing so new,
And fear 'tis what a lady should not do.
And then, to marry upon ruin's brink
In all this hurry—What will people think ?'

'Nay, there's against us neither rule nor law,
And people's thinking is not worth a straw ;
Those who are prudent have too much to do
With their own cares to think of me and you ;
And those who are not are so poor a race,
That what they utter can be no disgrace.
Come ! let us now embark, when time and tide
Invite to sea, in happy hour decide ;
If yet we linger, both are sure to fail,
The turning waters and the varying gale ;

Trust me, our vessel shall be ably steer'd,
Nor will I quit her, till the rocks are clear'd.'

Allured and frighten'd, soften'd and afraid,
The widow doubted, ponder'd—and obey'd.
So were they wedded, and the careful man
His reformation instantly began;
Began his state with vigour to reform,
And made a calm by laughing at the storm.

Th' attendant-maiden he dismiss'd—for why?
She might on him and love like his rely;
She needed none to form her children's mind;
That duty nature to her care assign'd:
In vain she mourn'd, it was her health he prized,
And hence enforced the measures he advised.
She wanted air; and walking, she was told,
Was safe, was pleasant!—he the carriage sold;
He found a tenant who agreed to take
The boat and cottage on the useless lake;
The house itself had now superfluous room,
And a rich lodger was induced to come.

The lady wonder'd at the sudden change,
That yet was pleasant, that was very strange;
When every deed by her desire was done,
She had no day of comfort—no, not one;
When nothing moved or stopp'd at her request,
Her heart had comfort and her temper rest.
For all was done with kindness—most polite
Was her new lord, and she confess'd it right;

Within, without, the face of things improved,
And all in order and subjection moved.

As wealth increased, ambition now began
To swell the soul of the aspiring man;
In some few years he thought to purchase land,
And build a seat that Hope and Fancy plann'd;
Then he would farm; and every soil should show
The tree that best upon the place would grow.
He would, moreover, on the Bench debate
On sundry questions—when a magistrate;
Would talk of all that to the state belongs,
The rich man's duties, and the poor man's wrongs.

'Proud words, and vain!' said Doctor Young; and proud
They are; and vain, were by our clerk allow'd.
Young as he was, and planning schemes to live
With more delight than man's success can give,
Came Death's dread summons, and the man was laid
In the poor house the simple sexton made.

But he had time for thought when he was ill,
And made his lady an indulgent will:
'Tis said he gave, in parting, his advice,
'It is sufficient to be married twice;'
To which she answer'd, as 'tis said, again,
'There's none will have you if you're poor and plain;
And if you're rich and handsome, there is none
Will take refusal——let the point alone.'

Be this or true or false, it is her praise
She mourn'd correctly all the mourning days;

But grieve she did not, for the canker grief
Soils the complexion, and is beauty's thief.
Nothing, indeed, so much will discompose
Our public mourning as our private woes;
When tender thoughts a widow's bosom probe,
She thinks not then how graceful sits the robe;
But our nice widow look'd to every fold,
And every eye its beauty might behold;
It was becoming; she composed her face,
She look'd serenely, and she mourn'd with grace.

Some months were pass'd, but yet there wanted three
Of the full time when widows wives may be;
One trying year, and then the mind is freed,
And man may to the vacant throne succeed.

There was a tenant—he, to wit, who hired
That cot and lake, that were so much admired;
A man of spirit, one who doubtless meant,
Though he delay'd awhile, to pay his rent;
The widow's riches gave her much delight,
And some her claims, and she resolved to write.

'He knew her grievous loss, how every care
Devolved on her, who had indeed her share;
She had no doubt of him, but was as sure,
As that she breathed, her money was secure;
But she had made a rash and idle vow
To claim her dues, and she must keep it now:
So, if it suited——'
And for this there came
A civil answer to the gentle dame:

Within the letter were excuses, thanks,
And clean bank paper from the best of banks;
There were condolence, consolation, praise,
With some slight hints of danger in delays.
With these good things were others from the lake,
Perch that were wish'd to salmon for her sake,
And compliment as sweet as new-born hope could make.

This led to friendly visits, social calls,
And much discourse of races, rambles, balls;
But all in proper bounds, and not a word
Before its time—the man was not absurd;
Nor was he cold; but when she might expect,
A letter came, and one to this effect.

That if his eyes had not his love convey'd,
They had their master shamefully betray'd;
But she must know the flame—*that* he was sure—
Nor could she doubt, would long as life endure;
Both were in widow'd state, and both possess'd
Of ample means to make their union bless'd;
That she had been confined he knew for truth,
And begg'd her to have pity on her youth;
Youth, he would say—and he desired his wife
To have the comforts of an easy life:
She loved a carriage, loved a decent seat
To which they might at certain times retreat;
Servants indeed were sorrows—yet a few
They still must add, and do as others do:
She too would some attendant damsel need,
To hear, to speak, to travel, or to read.'

He added, too, 'Twas well that he could prove
That his was pure, disinterested love;
Not as when lawyers couple house and land
In such a way as none can understand;
No! thanks to Him that every good supplied,
He had enough, and wanted nought beside;
Merit was all.'

'Well! now, she would protest,
This was a letter prettily express'd.'
To every female friend away she flew
To ask advice, and say, 'What shall I do?'
She kiss'd her children—and she said, with tears,
'I wonder what is best for you, my dears?
How can I, darlings, to your good attend
Without the help of some experienced friend,
Who will protect us all, or, injured, will defend?'

The widow then ask'd counsel of her heart,
In vain, for that had nothing to impart;
But yet with that, or something, for her guide,
She to her swain thus guardedly replied—

'She must believe he was sincere; for why
Should one who needed nothing deign to lie?
But though she could and did its truth admit,
She could not praise him for his taste a bit;
And yet men's tastes were various, she confess'd,
And none could prove his own to be the best.
It was a vast concern, including all
That we can happiness or comfort, call;
And yet she found that those who waited long
Before their choice, had often chosen wrong;

Nothing, indeed, could for her loss atone,
But 'twas the greater that she lived alone.
And then her children ! he must surely know
What prudent mothers to their offspring owe ;
Not but a father might restrain a child,
Nay, may reject him, if he will be wild ;
But hers were good, and so they would remain ;
If not, alas ! who should their wills restrain ?
She, too, had means, and therefore what the use
Of more, that still more trouble would produce ?
And pleasure too she own'd, as well as care,
Of which, at present, she had not her share.

'The things he offer'd, she must needs confess,
They were all women's wishes, more or less ;
But were expensive ; though a man of sense
Would by his prudence lighten the expense :
Prudent he was, but made a sad mistake
When he proposed her faded face to take ;
And yet 'tis said there's beauty that will last
When the rose withers and the bloom be past.

'One thing displeased her—that he could suppose
He might so soon his purposes disclose ;
Yet had she hints of such intent before,
And would excuse him if he wrote no more ;
What would the world ?—and yet she judged them fools
Who let the world's suggestions be their rules ;
What would her friends ?—Yet in her own affairs
It was her business to decide, not theirs :

Adieu ! then, sir,' she added ; ' thus you find
The changeless purpose of a steady mind,
In one now left alone, but to her fate resign'd.'

The marriage follow'd ; and th' experienced dame
Consider'd what the conduct that became
A thrice-devoted lady—She confess'd
That when indulged she was but more distress'd ;
And by her second husband when controll'd,
Her life was pleasant, though her love was cold—

Alas ! obedience may mistake, and they
Who reason not will err when they obey ;
And fated was the gentle dame to find
Her duty wrong, and her obedience blind.

The man was kind, but would have no dispute,
His love and kindness both were absolute ;
She needed not her wishes to express
To one who urged her on to happiness ;
For this he took her to the lakes and seas,
' She must be pleased, and he must live to please.'
He in the richest dress her form array'd,
And cared not what he promised, what he paid ;
She should share all his pleasures as her own,
And see whatever could be sought or shown.

This run of pleasure for a time she bore,
And then affirm'd that she could taste no more ;
' Have we not means ?' the joyous husband cried ;
' But I am wearied out,' the wife replied.

At length her courage rising with her fear,
She said, ' Our pleasures may be bought too dear !'

To this he answer'd—'Dearest! from thy heart
Bid every fear of evil times depart;
I ever trusted in the trying hour
To my good stars, and felt the ruling power;
When want drew nigh, his threat'ning speed was stopp'd,
Some virgin aunt, some childless uncle dropp'd;
In all his threats I sought expedients new,
And my last, best resource was found in you.'

Silent and sad the wife beheld her doom,
And sat her down to see the ruin come;
And meet the ills that rise where money fails,
Debts, threats and duns, bills, bailiffs, writs and jails.

These was she spared; ere yet by want oppress'd,
Came one more fierce than bailiff in arrest;
Amid a scene where Pleasure never came,
Though never ceased the mention of his name,
The husband's heated blood received the breath
Of strong disease, that bore him to his death.

Her all collected—whether great or small
The sum, I know not, but collected all—
The widow'd lady to her cot retired,
And there she lives delighted and admired:
Civil to all, compliant and polite,
Disposed to think 'whatever is, is right,'
She wears the widow's weeds, she gives the widow's mite.
At home awhile, she in the autumn finds
The sea an object for reflecting minds,
And change for tender spirits: there she reads,
And weeps in comfort in her graceful weeds.

What gives our tale its moral? Here we find
That wives like this are not for rule design'd,
Nor yet for blind submission; happy they,
Who while they feel it pleasant to obey,
Have yet a kind companion at their side
Who in their journey will his power divide,
Or yield the reins, and bid the lady guide;
Then points the wonders of the way, and makes
The duty pleasant that she undertakes.
He shows her objects as they move along,
And gently rules the movements that are wrong:
He tells her all the skilful driver's art,
And smiles to see how well she acts her part;
Nor praise denies to courage or to skill,
In using power that he resumes at will.*

* As, I believe, in the general conduct of life, certainly in this particular, the poet, as we read in his son's life of him, was very ready to resign the reins to his wife while he might botanize, or read aloud to his family in their travelling chaise.

ELLEN.

'RIDE you this fair cool morning?' said the Squire:
'Do—for a purchase I have made enquire;
And thus to find it—having made your way
'Cross Hilton Bridge, move on through Breken Clay,
At Dunham Wood turn duly to the east,
And there your eyes upon the ocean feast;
Then ride above the cliff, or ride below,
You'll be enraptured, for your taste I know;
At Tilburn Sluice once more ascend and view
A decent house; an ample garden too,
And planted well behind—a lively scene and new.
A little taste, a little pomp, display'd,
By a dull man, who had retired from trade
To enjoy his leisure—Here he came prepared
To farm; no cost in preparation spared;
But many works he purchased; some he read,
And often rose with projects in his head,
Of crops in courses raised, of herds by matching bred.
We had just found these little humours out,
Just saw—he saw not—what he was about;

Just met as neighbours, still disposed to meet,
Just learned the current tales of Dowling Street,
And were just thinking of our female friends,
Saying—" You know not what the man intends,
A rich, kind, hearty"—and it might be true—
Something he wish'd, but had not time, to do ;
A cold ere yet the falling leaf ! of small
Effect till then, was fatal in the fall ;
And of that house was his possession brief—
Go ; and guard well against the falling leaf.

' But hear me, Richard, looking to my ease,
Try if you can find something that will please ;
Faults if you see, and such as must abide,
Say they are small, or say that I can hide ;
But faults that I can change, remove, or mend,
These like a foe detect—or like a friend.'

Richard goes on the ride his brother had directed ; but, on his return, seems less occupied with thinking of his brother's new house than of another which he had noticed on his way ;

' That pebbled cottage, on the rising ground,
West of the waves, and just beyond their sound ;'

and of the glimpse he had caught of its inmate : a lady so fair, so wasted, and so fragile, with an expression in her beautiful face which seemed to indicate that sorrow, as much as sickness, had so attenuated her.

Even so, answers George, albeit the sorrow of a meek spirit controll'd and chastened by reason and religion. But whether mind or body, have most to do with her decline——

'Whether disease first grew upon regret,
Or nature gave it, is uncertain yet,
And must remain; the frame was slightly made,
That grief assail'd, and all is now decay'd!

'But though so willing from the world to part,
I must not call her case a broken heart;
Nor dare I take upon me to maintain
That hearts once broken never heal again.'

She was an only daughter, one whose sire
Loved not that girls to knowledge should aspire;
But he had sons, and Ellen quickly caught
Whatever by their masters they were taught.
This, when the father saw—'It is the turn
Of her strange mind,' said he, 'but let her learn;
'Tis almost pity with that shape and face—
But is a fashion, and brings no disgrace;
Women of old wrote verse, or for the stage
Brought forth their works!—they now are reasoners sage.
If such her mind, I shall in vain oppose;
If not, her labours of themselves will close.'

His daughter Ellen, accordingly, who, it was found,
'had skill without pretence,
And silenced envy with her meek good sense,'

is permitted to learn along with her brothers; and, along with her learning, imbibes a love for its teacher, Cecil; who, though neither very young nor handsome, inspires her at first with intellectual, and, gradually, with a warmer affection. In time, the modest-minded tutor, whose own heart has not remained untouched, becomes

conscious of how it is with hers; and, sweet as that consciousness may be, he knows that disparity of rank alone must forbid any permanent union between them; and that, for her sake as well as his own, he must break away from an intimacy whose increase can but terminate in despair. Ellen, indeed, when she has come to understand her own feelings, sees nothing to be ashamed or afraid of; and, still unconscious that he reciprocates them, adds fuel to the flame by solicitously asking him the cause of a disquietude, which he labours in vain to conceal.

He sees no remedy save flight. But he will not decide on a step so desperate till he shall have acquainted her father with the motives that urge him to it. Ill health of body, for one thing; but when he touches on that of his heart——

The parent's pride to sudden rage gave way—
'And the girl loves! that plainly you would say—
And you with honour, in your pride, retire!—
Sir, I your prudence envy and admire.'

But here the father saw the rising frown,
And quickly let his lofty spirit down.

'Forgive a parent!—I may well excuse
A girl who could perceive such worth and choose
To make it hers; we must not look to meet
All we might wish;—Is age itself discreet?'

Then with the kindness worldly minds assume
He praised the self-pronounced and rigorous doom;
He wonder'd not that one so young should love,
And much he wish'd he could the choice approve;
Much he lamented such a mind to lose,
And begg'd to learn if he could aid his views,

If such were form'd—then closed the short account,
And to a shilling paid the full amount.

So Cecil left the mansion, and so flew
To foreign shores, without an interview ;
He must not say, I love—he could not say, Adieu !

A friend in England gave him all the news,
A sad indulgence that he would not lose ;
He told how Ellen suffer'd, how they sent
The maid from home in sullen discontent,
With some relation on the Lakes to live,
In all the sorrow such retirements give ;
And there she roved among the rocks, and took
Moss from the stone, and pebbles from the brook ;
Gazed on the flies that settled on the flowers,
And so consumed her melancholy hours.

Again he wrote—The father then was dead,
And Ellen to her native village fled,
With native feeling—there she oped her door,
Her heart, her purse, and comforted the poor,
The sick, the sad—and there she pass'd her days,
Deserving much, but never seeking praise,
Her task to guide herself, her joy the fall'n to raise.
Nor would she nicely faults and merits weigh,
But loved the impulse of her soul t' obey ;
The prayers of all she heard, their sufferings view'd,
Nor turn'd from any, save when Love pursued ;
For though to love disposed, to kindness prone,
She thought of Cecil, and she lived alone.

And now Cecil, who has become independent after his own father's death, hearing his Ellen has become her own mistress by hers, resolves on returning to England, and to her. He returns ; he posts with all the speed he may to her village—to her door—sends up his name ; with all the feverish impatience of a nervous lover awaits her answer—which, when it came,

'Like Death's cold hand it came—
" The lady was a stranger to the name."'

'It is well!'—He falls back half-fainting in the carriage, and is driven away.

Once more he flies abroad—this time to Greece, where, with his own decaying health and ruined hopes, among ruins he dwells,

'Till, with the dead conversing, he began
To lose the habits of a living man.'

And Ellen?—She, one may suppose, had never heard of Cecil's parting interview with her father ; knows only that he had fled from her without a word of explanation—even of adieu—and had never since sent her a word of remembrance till that unexpected card provoked a hasty disacknowledgment. Can he not make allowance for her?

'She did not mean—It was an evil hour—
Her thoughts were guardless, and beyond her power ;
And for one speech, and that in rashness made—
Have I no friend to soothe him and persuade?
Has he no friend to tell him that our pride
Resents a moment, and is satisfied?

No Cecil came.—'Come, peevish and unjust!'
Sad Ellen cried, 'Why cherish this disgust?
Thy Ellen's voice could charm thee once, but thou

Canst nothing see or hear of Ellen now !'
Yes ! she was right ; the grave on him was closed,
And there the lover and the friend reposed.

The news soon reach'd her, and she then replied
In his own manner—'I am satisfied !'

To her a lover's legacy is paid,
The darling wealth of the devoted maid ;
From this her best and favourite books she buys,
From this are doled the favourite charities ;
And when a tale or face affects her heart,
This is the fund that must relief impart.

Such have the ten last years of Ellen been ;
Her very last that sunken eye has seen ;
That half-angelic being still must fade
Till all the angel in the mind be made !
And now the closing scene will shortly come—
She cannot visit sorrow at her home ;
But still she feeds the hungry, still prepares
The usual softeners of the peasant's cares,
And though she prays not with the dying now,
She teaches them to die, and shows them how.

'Such is my tale, dear Richard, but that told
I must all comment on the text withhold ;
What is the sin of grief I cannot tell,
Nor of the sinners who have loved too well ;
But to the cause of mercy I incline,
Or, O my brother, what a fate is mine !'

WILLIAM BAILEY.

THE letters Richard in a morning read
To quiet and domestic comfort led ;
And George, who thought the world could not supply
Comfort so pure, reflected with a sigh ;
Then would pursue the subject half in play,
Half earnest, till the sadness wore away.

They spoke of Passion's errors, Love's disease,
His pains, afflictions, wrongs, and jealousies ;
Of Herod's vile commandment—that his wife
Should live no more, when he no more had life ;
He could not bear that royal Herod's spouse
Should, as a widow, make her second vows ;
Or that a mortal with his queen should wed,
Or be the rival of the mighty dead.

'Herods,' said Richard, 'doubtless may be found,
But haply do not in the world abound ;
Ladies, indeed, a dreadful lot would have,
If jealousy could act beyond the grave :

No doubt Othellos every place supply,*
Though every Desdemona does not die ;
But there are lovers in the world, who live
Slaves to the sex, and every fault forgive.'

'I know,' said George, 'a happy man and kind,
Who finds his wife is all he wish'd to find,
They dwell in plenty, in respect, and peace,
Landlord and lady of the "Golden Fleece."
Our hostess, now so grave and steady grown,
Has had some awkward trials of her own ;
I speak of ancient stories, long worn out,
That honest William would not talk about ;
But he will sometimes check her starting tear,
And call her self-correction too severe.
But you shall hear the tale that I will tell
When we have seen the mansion where they dwell.'

They saw the mansion ; and the couple made
Obeisance due, and not without parade ;
'His honour, still obliging, took delight
To make them pleasant in each other's sight ;
It was their duty—they were very sure
It was their pleasure.'
This they could endure,
Nor turn'd impatient——In the room around
Were care and neatness : instruments were found

* So this careless poet occasionally confuses his verb between the singular and plural nouns severally connected with it. Of course, he might as easily have written :

'No doubt Othellos every place supplies,
Although not every Desdemona dies.'

For sacred music, books with prints and notes
By learned men and good, whom William quotes
In mode familiar—Beveridge, Doddridge, Hall,
Pyle, Whitby, Hammond—he refers to all.

Next they beheld his garden, fruitful, nice,
And, as he said, his little paradise.

This past, the visit was with kindness closed,

And George, with some little feint of apology for the homeliness of his subject, begins the story of those two rustic lovers who, after several years of as severe a trial as love can well survive, became at last the happy couple who now preside over the 'Golden Fleece.'

William was honest, simple, gentle, kind,
Laborious, studious, and to thrift inclined ;
More neat than youthful peasant in his dress,
And yet so careful, that it cost him less :
He kept from inns, though doom'd an inn to keep,
And all his pleasures and pursuits were cheap.
Yet would the youth perform a generous deed,
When reason saw or pity felt the need ;
He of his labour and his skill would lend,
Nay, of his money, to a suffering friend.

Black parted locks his ample forehead press'd,
His placid smile an easy mind confess'd ;
Constant at church, and there a little proud,
He sang with boldness, and he read aloud ;
Self taught to write, he his example took,
And form'd his letters from a printed book.

Yet was he full of glee, and had his strokes
Of rustic wit, his repartees and jokes ;
Nor was averse, ere yet he pledged his love,
To stray with damsels in the shady grove ;
When he would tell them, as they walk'd along,
How the birds sang and imitate their song :
In fact, our rustic had his proper taste,
Was with peculiar arts and manners graced—
And Absolom had been, had Absolom been chaste.

Frances, like William, felt her heart incline
To neat attire—but Frances would be fine :
Though small the farm, the farmer's daughter knew
Her rank in life, and she would have it too :
This, and this only, gave the lover pain,
He thought it needless, and he judged it vain :
Advice in hints he to the fault applied,
And talk'd of sin, of vanity, and pride.

'And what is proud,' said Frances, 'but to stand,
Singing at church, and sawing thus your hand ?
Looking at heaven above, as if to bring
The holy angels down to hear you sing ?
And when you write, you try with all your skill,
And cry, No wonder that you wrote so ill !
For you were ever to yourself a rule,
And humbly add, you never were at school—
Is that not proud ?—And I have heard beside,
The proudest creatures have the humblest pride :
If you had read the volumes I have hired,
You'd see your fault, nor try to be admired ;

For they who read such books can always tell
The fault within, and read the mind as well.'

William had heard of hiring books before,
He knew she read, and he inquired no more ;
On him the subject was completely lost,
What he regarded was the time and cost ;
Yet that was trifling—just a present whim—
'Novels and stories ! what were they to him ?'

With such slight quarrels, or with those as slight,
They lived in love and dreamed of its delight.
Her duties Fanny knew, both great and small,
And she with diligence observed them all.
If e'er she fail'd a duty to fulfil,
'Twas childish error, not rebellious will ;
For her much reading, though it touch'd her heart,
Could neither vice nor indolence impart.

While yet to wait the pair were half content,
And half disposed their purpose to repent,
A spinster-aunt, in some great baron's place,
Would see a damsel, pride of all her race :
And Fanny, flatter'd by the matron's call,
Obey'd her aunt, and long'd to see the Hall.

Now that good dame had in the castle dwelt
So long that she for all its people felt ;
She kept her sundry keys, and ruled o'er all,
Female and male, domestics in the hall ;
By her lord trusted, worthy of her trust,
Proud but obedient, bountiful but just.

She praised her lucky stars, that in her place
She never found neglect, nor felt disgrace ;
To do her duty was her soul's delight,
This her inferiors would to theirs excite,
This her superiors notice and requite ;
To either class she gave the praises due,
And still more grateful as more favoured grew.
Her lord and lady were of peerless worth,
In power unmatch'd, in glory and in birth.
There was Lord Robert ! could she have her choice,
From the world's masters he should have her voice ;
So kind and gracious in his noble ways,
It was a pleasure speaking in his praise :
And Lady Catharine—O ! a prince's pride
Might by one smile of hers be gratified ;
With her would monarchs all their glory share,
And in her presence banish all their care.
And such the virtue of the noble race,
It reach'd the meanest servant in the place ;
All, from the chief attendant on my lord
To the groom's helper, had her civil word ;
From Miss Montregor, who the ladies taught,
To the rude lad who in the garden wrought ;
From the first favourite to the meanest drudge,
Were no such women, Heaven should be her judge !

When William first the invitation read
It some displeasure in his spirit bred,
Not that one jealous thought the man possess'd,
He was by fondness, not by fear distress'd.

But when his Fanny to his mind convey'd
The growing treasures of the ancient maid,
The thirty years, come June, of service past,
Her lasting love, her life that would not last—
Her power! her place!—he answer'd, 'You are right;
But things appear in such a different light!'

Her parents bless'd her, and as well became
Their love advised her, that they might not blame;
They said, 'If she should earl or countess meet,
She should be humble, cautious, and discreet;
Humble, but not abased, remembering all
Are kindred sinners—children of the Fall;
That from the earth our being we receive,
And are all equal when the earth we leave.'

The mother's whisper cannot here have place,
The words distinguish'd were but caps and lace,
With something lying in a cedar chest,
And a shrewd smile that further thoughts express'd.

So went the pair; and William told at night
Of a reception gracious and polite;
He spake of galleries long, and pictures tall;
The handsome parlours, the prodigious hall;
The busts, the statues, and the floors of stone,
The storied arras, and the vast saloon,
In which was placed an Indian chest and screen,
With figures such as he had never seen—
He told of these as men enraptured tell,
And gave to all their praise, and all was we

Left by the lover, the desponding maid
Was of the matron's ridicule afraid;
But when she heard a welcome frank and kind,
The wonted firmness repossess'd her mind;
Pleased by the looks of love her aunt display'd,
Her fond professions, and her kind parade.
In her own room, and with her niece apart,
She gave up all the secrets of her heart;
And, grown familiar, bid her Fanny come,
Partake her cheer, and make herself at home.

Shut in that room, upon its cheerful board
She laid the comforts of no vulgar hoard;
Then press'd the damsel both with love and pride,
For both she felt—and would not be denied.
Grace she pronounced before and after meat,
And bless'd her God that she could talk and eat;
Then with new glee she sang her patron's praise——
'He had no paltry arts, no pimping ways;
She had the roast and boil'd of every day,
That sent the poor with grateful hearts away;
And she was grateful——Come, my darling, think
Of them you love the best, and let us drink.'

And now she drank the healths of those above,
Her noble friends, whom she must ever love;
But not together, not the young and old,
But one by one, the number duly told.
Nor could she praise alone, but she would take
A cheerful glass for every favourite's sake—
And all were favourites—till the rosy cheek
Spoke for the tongue that nearly ceased to speak;

But there she ended—felt the singing head,
Then pray'd as custom will'd, and so to bed.

The morn was pleasant, and the ancient maid
With her fair niece about the mansion stray'd ;
There was no room without th' appropriate tale
Of blood and murder, female sprite or male ;
There was no picture that th' historic dame
Pass'd by and gave not its peculiar fame ;
The births, the visits, weddings, burials, all
That chanced for ages at the noble Hall.
This was her first delight, her pride, her boast ;
She told of many an heiress, many a toast,
Of Lady Ellen's flight, of Lord Orlando's ghost ;
The maid turn'd pale ; and what should then ensue
But wine and cake ?—the dame was frighten'd too.

The aunt and niece now walk'd about the grounds,
And sometimes met the gentry in their rounds ;
'Do let us turn !' the timid girl exclaimed—
'Turn !' said the aunt, 'of what are you ashamed ?
What is there frightful in such looks as those ?
What is it, child, you fancy or suppose ?
Look at Lord Robert, see if you can trace
More than true honour in that handsome face !
There ! let them pass——Why, yes, indeed 'tis true
That was a look, and was design'd for you ;
But what the wonder when the sight is new ?'

A month had pass'd ; 'And when will Fanny come ?'
The lover ask'd, and found the parents dumb ;

Silence so long they could not understand,
And this of one who wrote so neat a hand;
Their sister sure would send were aught amiss,
But youth is thoughtless—there is hope in this.

As time elapsed, their wonder changed to woe,
William would lose another day,* and go;
Yet if she should be wilful and remain,
He had no power to take her home again:
But he would go:—He went, and he return'd—
And in his look the pair his tale discern'd.
Fanny was gone!—her aunt was sick in bed,
Dying, she said—none cared if she were dead;
Her charge, his darling, was decoy'd, was fled!
But at what time, and whither, and with whom,
None seem'd to know—all surly, shy, or dumb.

Moved by his grief, the father sought the place,
Ask'd for his girl, and talk'd of her disgrace;
Then sought his sister, and beheld her grief,
Her pain, her danger—this was no relief.

'Where is my daughter? bring her to my sight!'—
'Brother, I'm rack'd and tortured day and night.'
'Where is my daughter?'—'She would take her oath
For her right doing, for she knew them both,
And my young lord was honour.'—'Woman, cease!
You've sold the wretched girl, betray'd your niece.'
'The Lord be good! and O! the pains that come
In limb and body—Brother, get you home!

* That is in Suffolk, "another day's work at home."

Your voice runs through me—every angry word,
If he should hear it, would offend my lord.'

My lord appear'd, perhaps by pity moved,
And kindly said he no such things approved ;
Nay, he was angry with the foolish boy,
Who might his pleasures at his ease enjoy ;
The thing was wrong—he hoped the farm did well—
The angry father doom'd the farm to hell ;
Which my lord pardon'd, though he blamed such rage,
And bade him think upon his state and age.

'Think ! yes, my lord ! but thinking drives me mad—
Give me my child !—Where is she to be had ?
I'm old and poor, but I with both can feel,
And so shall he that could a daughter steal !
Old if I am, could I the robber meet
I'd lay his breathless body at my feet !—
Was that a smile, my lord ? you think your boy
Will both the father and the child destroy ?'

My lord replied—'I'm sorry, from my soul !
But boys are boys, and there is no control.'
'The girl has done no more than thousands do,
Nor has the boy—they laugh at me and you.'
'And this my vengeance ?'—Such was his redress ;
And he return'd to brood upon distress.

At length a letter from the daughter came,
'Frances' subscribed, and that the only name ;
She 'pitied much her parents, spoke of fate,
And begg'd them to forget her, not to hate ;

Said she had with her all the world could give,
And only pray'd that they in peace should live—
True, that she lived in pleasure and delight,
But often dream'd and saw the farm by night;
The boarded room that she had kept so neat,
And all her roses in the window-seat;
But she was happy, and the tears that fell
As she was writing had no grief to tell.'

A bill inclosed, which they beheld with pain
And indignation, they returned again:
There was no mention made of William's name,
Check'd as she was by pity, love and shame.

'And what of William?' He cannot rest; he cannot work; he cannot abide the lanes and meadows he had walked about with *her;* and when he has done what he can for her aged parents, who do not very long survive their sorrow, he resolves on quitting the village which is the scene of all his happiness and misery. Some little money he had laid up of his own; and this, with some more bequeathed him by a sister, whose sick-bed he had dutifully attended, have made him independent of daily work. He will wander away, and try to recover elsewhere some of the peace he has for ever lost at home.

'Thus careless, lost, unheeding where he went,
Nine weary years the wandering lover spent;
His sole companions through the passing day,
Friends of the hour, and walkers by the way;'

from whom he learns how many have their mortal trials as well as himself. Some of them born to sickness, sorrow, and poverty, whom he relieves and consoles:

others, who have brought all on themselves by their own improvidence or vice, yet imputing all to ill luck, or to the cruelty of unnatural kinsfolk,

Famous, great, or rich,
Learned or wise—they never scrupled which—

who either heartlessly renounced, or kept them, by the law's help, out of their own—one comfort being that they will all come to the same dust together. Others maintaining that all riches should be divided; otherwise,

'What do you call, my friend, the rights of man?'
'To get his bread,' said William, 'if he can.'

'But if he cannot, must he not take his neighbour's?' To which William answers by the single commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal.'*

The simple religion of his native village church and school is mostly lost upon the men, who generally close the argument with 'Well, sorrow is dry,' at the nearest tavern door. But with many of the women his word falls on better ground, although they wonder wherefore it is that he who tells them where comfort is to be sought, appears not as yet to have found it himself.

'I am a sinful being!' William cried;
'Then, what am I?' the conscious heart replied:
And oft-times pondered in a pensive way,
'He is not happy, yet he loves to pray.'

* In Crabbe's Posthumous Volume mention is made of some such vagabonds;

Whom Law condemns, and Justice, with a sigh
Pursuing, shakes her sword, and passes by.'

Has English poetry many a finer couplet than now quoted from this slipshod 'Muse of the mad, the foolish, and the poor'?

Thus not only the sinners, but the saints whom he falls in with on the road, and who insist in thrusting themselves upon him, and probing his soul to the bottom.

How ! they would say, such woe and such belief,
Such trust in heaven, and yet on earth such grief ?
Thou art *almost,* my friend—thou art not *all;*
Thou hast not yet the self-destroying Call ;
Thou hast a carnal wish, perhaps a will
Not yet subdued—the root is growing still :
There is the strong man yet that keeps his own,
Who by a stronger must be overthrown ;
There is the burden that must yet be gone,
And then the pilgrim may go singing on.

William to this would seriously incline,
And to their comfort would his heart resign ;
It soothed, it raised him—he began to feel
Th' enlivening warmth of methodistic zeal ;
He learn'd to know *The Brethren* by their looks—
He sought their meetings, he perused their books ;
But yet was not within the pale and yoke,
And as a novice of experience spoke ;
But felt the comfort, and began to pray
For such companions on the king's highway.

William had now across the kingdom sped,
To th' Eastern ocean from St. David's Head ;
And wandering late, with various thoughts oppress'd,
'Twas midnight ere he reach'd his place of rest—
A village inn, that one way-faring friend
Could from experience safely recommend,

Where the kind hostess would be more intent
On what he needed than on what he spent.
Her husband, once a heathen, she subdued,
And with religious fear his mind imbued,
Though his conviction came too late to save
An erring creature from an early grave.

Since that event the cheerful widow grew
In size and substance—her *The Brethren* knew—
And many friends were hers, and lovers not a few ;
But either love no more could warm her heart,
Or no man came who could the warmth impart.

William drew near, and saw the comely look
Of the good lady, bending o'er her book ;
Hymns it appear'd—for now a pleasing sound
Seem'd as a welcome in his wanderings found.

The traveller entered softly, and their eyes
Met in goodwill, and something like surprise :
It was not beauty William saw, but more,
Something like that which he had loved before—
At first she colour'd to the deepest red,
That hurried off, till all the rose was fled ;
She call'd a servant, whom she sent to rest,
Then made excuse to her attentive guest ;
She own'd her thoughts confused—'twas very true—
He brought a dear departed friend in view—
Then, as he listen'd, bade him welcome there
With livelier looks and more engaging air,
And stirr'd the fire of ling, and brush'd the wicker chair,
Waiting his order with the cheerful look,
That proved how pleasant were the pains she took.

He takes his temperate supper, still conversing with his landlady; and, before retiring for the night, would ask her for a hymn from the book he had seen in her hands. She willingly complies, and his voice goes along with hers as she sings it. The clock has already warned them it is late, and yet neither seems inclined to stir; it strikes midnight, and they are still engaged in serious conversation, which deepens in religious interest—the insufficiency of all but *that*—the vanity of this world—the delusions of youth; and William is led on to tell something of his own experience; how one whom he had loved from a boy had been tempted away from him by the flattery and falsehood that she was too young and innocent to suspect, and to whose loss he could hardly, with all help of divine grace, reconcile himself after many years—his hostess listening with suffused and downcast eyes, we may imagine, and in broken voice answering that one so fallen, however she might repent, and even as a repentant sinner be accepted by Heaven, was yet unworthy of a place in the heart of the man she had deserted—till, after fluttering ever nearer and nearer they light upon the discovery they must from the beginning have anticipated, and which the reader long ago might guess—

'Art thou my Fanny?'

'O, my William, yes!'

This pair, our host and hostess of the Fleece,
Command some wealth, and smile at its increase;
Saving and civil, cautious and discreet,
All sects and parties in their mansion meet;
There from their chapels teachers go to share
The creature-comforts—mockery grins not there;

There meet the wardens at their annual feast,
With annual pun—'The parish must be fleeced;'
There traders find a parlour cleanly swept
For their reception, and in order kept;
And there the sons of labour, poor, but free,
Sit and enjoy their hour of liberty.

So live the pair—and life's disasters seem
In their unruffled calm a troubled dream;
In comfort runs the remnant of their life—
He the fond husband, she the faithful wife.

THE CATHEDRAL.

In their discourse again the brothers dwelt
On early subjects—what they once had felt,
Once thought of things mysterious ; themes that all
With some degrees of reverence recall.
And George reverted to the days of old,
When his heart fainted, and his hope was cold ;
When by the power of fancy he was sway'd,
And every impulse of the mind obey'd.

'Then, my dear Richard,' said the Squire, 'my case
Was call'd consumptive—I must seek a place
And soil salubrious, thither must repair,
And live on asses' milk and milder air.
My uncle bought a farm, and on the land
The fine old mansion yet was left to stand,
Not as it is, but old and much decay'd ;
Of this a part was habitable made ;
The rest—who doubts?—was by the spirits seized,
Ghosts of all kinds, who used it as they pleased.

'The worthy farmer tenant yet remain'd,
Of good report—he had a fortune gain'd ;

And his three daughters at their school acquired
The air and manner that their swains admired ;
The mother-gossip and these daughters three
Talk'd of genteel and social company,
And while the days were fine, and walks were clean,
A fresh assemblage day by day were seen.

'There as I stole the yew-tree shades among,
I saw the parties walking, old and young,
Where I was nothing—if perceived, they said,
"The man is harmless, be not you afraid ;
A poor young creature, who, they say, is cross'd
In love, and has in part his senses lost—
His health for certain—and he comes to spend
His time with us ; we hope our air will mend—
Not that for air or change there's much to say,
But Nature then has time to take her way.
He loves the garden avenues, the gloom
Of the old chambers, of the tap'stried room,
And we no notice take, we let him go and come."

'Much it amused me in the place to be
This harmless cypher, seeming not to see,
Yet seeing all, break in on no one's plan,
And hear them speak of the forsaken man.

'In scenes like these, a mansion so decay'd,
With blighted trees in hoary moss array'd,
And ivy'd walls around, for many an hour
I walk'd alone, and felt their witching power.
So others felt ; and ev'n the old appear'd
Their fears upbraiding, like the young who fear'd.

Among them all some sad discourse at night
Was sure to breed a terrified delight:
Some luckless one of the attentive dames
Had figures seen like those within the frames,
Figures of lords who once the land possess'd,
And who could never in their coffins rest;
Unhappy spirits! who could not abide
The loss of all their consequence and pride—
'Twas death in all his power, their very names had died.

'These tales of terror views terrific bred,
And sent the hearers trembling to their bed.'

In an autumnal evening, cool and still,
The sun just dropp'd beneath a distant hill,
The children gazing on the quiet scene,
Then rose in glory Night's majestic queen;
And pleasant was the chequer'd light and shade
Her golden beams and maple shadows made—
An ancient tree that in the garden grew,
And that fair picture on the gravel threw.

Then all was silent, save the sounds that make
Silence more awful, while they faintly break;
The frighten'd bat's low shriek, the beetle's hum,
With nameless sounds we know not whence they come.

Such was the evening; and that ancient seat
The scene where then some neighbours chanced to meet;
Up to the door led broken steps of stone,
Whose dewy surface in the moonlight shone,

On vegetation, that with progress slow
Where man forbears to fix his foot will grow.
The window's depth and dust repell'd the ray
Of the moon's light and of the setting day;
Pictures there were, and each display'd a face
And form that gave their sadness to the place;
The frame and canvas show'd that worms unseen,
Save in their works, for years had working been;
A fire of brushwood on the irons laid
All the dull room in fitful views display'd.
And with its own wild light in fearful forms array'd.

'In this old Hall, in this departing day,
Assembled friends and neighbours, grave and gay;
When one good lady at a picture threw
A glance that caused inquiry—'Tell us who?'

'That was a famous warrior; one, they said,
That by a Spirit was awhile obey'd;
In all his dreadful battles he would say,
"Or win or lose, I shall escape to-day,"
And though the shot as thick as hail came round,
On no occasion he received a wound;
He stood in safety, free from all alarm,
Protected, Heaven forgive him! by his charm.
But he forgot the date, till came the hour
When he no more had the protecting power;
And then he bade his friends around farewell;
"I fall!" he cried, and in the instant fell.

'Behold those infants in the frame beneath!
A witch offended wrought their early death;

She form'd an image, made as wax to melt,
And each the wasting of the figure felt ;
The hag confess'd it when she came to die,
And no one living can the truth deny.

'But see a Beauty in King William's days,
With that long waist, and those enormous stays ;
She had three lovers, and no creature knew
The one preferr'd, or the discarded two ;
None could the secret of her bosom see ;
Loving, poor maid, th' attention of the three,
She kept such equal weight in either scale,
'Twas hard to say who would at last prevail.
Thus you may think in either heart arose
A jealous anger, and the men were foes ;
Each with himself concluded, two aside,
The third may make the lovely maid his bride :
This caused their fate—It was on Thursday night
The deed was done, and bloody was the fight ;
Just as she went, poor thoughtless girl ! to prayers,
The maid ran wild with horror up the stairs ;
Pale as a ghost, but not a word she said,
And then the lady utter'd, "Coates is dead !"

'Then the poor damsel found her voice and cried,
"Ran through the body, and that instant died !
But he pronounced your name, and so was satisfied."
A second fell ; and he who *did* survive
Was kept by skill and sovereign drugs alive ;
"O ! would she see me !" *he* was heard to say ;
"No ! I'll torment him to his dying day !"

The maid* exclaim'd ; and every Thursday night
Her spirit came his wretched soul to fright.
Once as she came he cried aloud " Forgive !"
" Never !" she answer'd, " never while you live,
Nor when you die, as long as time endures ;
You have my torment been, and I'll be yours !"
That is the lady, and the man confess'd
Her vengeful spirit would not let him rest.'

' But *are* there ghosts ?' exclaim'd a timid maid ;
' My father tells me not to be afraid ;
He cries when buried we are safe enough,
And calls such stories execrable stuff.'

' Your father, child,' the former lady cried,
' Has learning much, but he has too much pride ;
It is impossible for him to tell
What things in nature are impossible ;
Or out of nature, or to prove to whom
Or for what purposes a ghost may come.
It may not be intelligence to bring,
But to keep up a notion of the thing.'

' True,' said a friend : ' Heaven doubtless may dispense
A kind of dark and clouded evidence ;
And therefore though such floating stories bring
No strong or certain vouchers of the thing,
Still would I not, presuming, pass my word
That all such tales were groundless and absurd.'

' But you will grant,' said one who sate beside,
' That all appear so when with judgment tried ?'

* That is, ' the lady.'

'For that concession, madam, you may call,
When we have sat in judgment upon all.'

An ancient lady, who with pensive smile
Had heard the stories, and been mute the while,
Now said, 'Our prudence had been better shown
By leaving uncontested things unknown;
Yet if our children must such stories hear,
Let us provide some antidotes to fear.
If then permitted I will fairly state
One fact, nor doubt the story I relate;
'Tis of myself I tell.'——'O! tell us all!'
Said every one; and silent was the Hall.

The ancient lady's story is briefly this:

When young, she had been engaged to an amiable young man to whom she was devoted, as he to her. Before they could be united, however, he fell into a mortal illness, through which she nursed him with unwearied affection, sometimes conversing with him on their union in another world—nay, on the possibility that death may not wholly disunite them in this. And on the very last night of life, while her over-watched mother had retired to rest; while

'The nurse was dreaming in a distant chair,
And I had knelt to soothe him with a prayer,

she persuaded herself that one dying look conveyed a promise which his lips could not utter, that his Spirit should, if possible, revisit her from that world into which he was just entering.

When he expired, she tells her friends,
'I wish'd to die—and grief, they say, will kill,
But you perceive 'tis slowly if it will ;'

And when, not long after him, her mother also passed away, she thought that nothing was left in this world to care for, and would have been left alone to think of those she had lost, had not her lately widowed uncle, "the Dean," invited her to share his scarce less melancholy home, in which they lived together, brooding over their several sorrows.

'In his cathedral's gloom I pass'd my time,
Much in devotion, much in thought sublime ;
There oft I paced the aisles, and watch'd the glow
Of the sun setting on the stones below,
And saw the failing light, that strove to pass
Through the dim coating of the storied glass,
Nor fell within, but till the day was gone
The faint red fire upon the window shone.

'I took the key, and ofttimes chose to stay
Till all was vanish'd of the tedious day,
Till I perceived no light, nor heard a sound,
That gave me notice of a world around.

'Then had I grief's proud thoughts, and said, in tone
Of exultation, "World, I am alone !
I care not for thee, thou art vile and base,
And I shall leave thee for a nobler place."

'And, saying this, I at the altar knelt,
And painful joys and rapturous anguish felt;
Till strong, bold hopes possess'd me, and I cried,
"Even at this instant is he at my side!"

'Thus have I thought, returning to the Dean,
As one who had some glorious vision seen:
He ask'd no question, but would sit and weep,
And cry, in doleful tone, "I cannot sleep!"

'One night, when urged with more than usual zeal,
And feeling all that such enthusiasts feel,
I paced the altar by, the pillars round—
While thus engaged, I started at a sound;
I look'd about—A distant window threw
A weak, soft light, that help'd me in my view;
Something with anxious heart I hoped to see,
And pray'd, "O! God! of all things, let it be!
For all are Thine, were made by Thee, and Thou
Canst both the meeting and the means allow;
Canst clothe his spirit for my fleshly sight,
Or make my earthly sense more pure and bright."

'So was I speaking, when without a sound
There was a movement in the sacred ground:
I saw a figure rising, but could trace
No certain features, no peculiar face;
But I prepared my mind that form to view,
Nor felt a doubt—*he* promised, and was true!

I should embrace his angel, and my clay,
And what was mortal in me, melt away.'

Thus 'borne along on visionary wings' toward the figure she sees indistinctly rising as from the grave, her ecstatic exclamations were answered—by no spiritual lover's voice—but by the deep growl of a ruffian who had come to pry into the tomb for other purposes; and supernatural awe at once gave way to mortal terror.

'"What," said the wretch, "what is it you would have?
Would'st hang a man for peeping in the grave?"

'The light increased, and plainly now appear'd
A knavish fool whom I had often fear'd,
But hid the dread; and I resolved at least
Not to expose it to the powerful beast.

'"Come, John," I said, suppressing fear and doubt,
"Walk on before, and let a lady out!"—
"Lady!" the wretch replied, with savage grin,
"Apply to him that let the lady in:
What! you would go, I take it, to the Dean,
And tell him what your ladyship has seen."

'When thus the fool exposed the knave, I saw
To gain my safety by his dread of law.

'"Alas!" I cried, "I fear the Dean like you,
For I transgress, and am in trouble too:
If it be known that we are here, as sure
As here we are we must the law endure:
Each other's counsel therefore let us keep,
And each steal homeward to our beds and sleep."

'"Steal!" said the ruffian's conscience—"Well, agreed;
Steal on, and let us to the door proceed:"
With eager hand I oped the ponderous door—
The wretch rush'd by me, and was heard no more.

'So I escaped—and when my dreams came on,
I check'd the madness by the thoughts of John;
Yet say I not what can or cannot be,
But give the story of my ghost and me.'

THE VISIT CONCLUDED.

RICHARD had of late become somewhat uneasy at his own absence, and his wife's less frequent, and (he thought) less satisfactory letters, from home. All this George had treated as what he called 'the self-tormentor's pain;'

Nay, had been peevish when the subject rose,
And never failed the parting to oppose;
Name it, and straight his features cloudy grew
To stop the journey as the clouds will do;

and so had succeeded in detaining his brother. But one morning, when the postman came, and—

'No letters, Tom?' said Richard—'None to-day.'
'Excuse me, brother, I must now away;
Matilda never in her life so long
Deferr'd—Alas! there must be something wrong!'

And now, knowing Richard's determination, as also his own, the Squire consents to let him go, provided he on his part will agree to wait two days longer, so as to bid adieu to the friends he has met at the Hall, and also to take another look at that new purchased house and grounds:

'And should you praise them in a knowing style,
I'll take it kindly—it is well—a smile.'

Richard must now his morning visits pay,
And bid farewell! for he must go away.

He sought the Rector first, not lately seen,
For he had absent from his parish been;
'Farewell!' the younger man with feeling cried,
'Farewell!' the cold but worthy priest replied;
'When do you leave us?'—'I have days but two:'
''Tis a short time—but, well—Adieu, adieu!'

'Now here is one,' said Richard, as he went
To the next friend in pensive discontent,
'With whom I sate in social, friendly ease,
Whom I respected, whom I wish'd to please;
Whose love profess'd I question'd not was true,
And now to hear his heartless "Well! adieu!"

'But 'tis not well—and he a man of sense,
Grave, but yet looking strong benevolence;
Whose slight acerbity and roughness told
To his advantage; yet the man is cold;
Nor will he know, when rising in the morn,
That such a being to the world was born.'

Of the fair sisters then he took his leave,
Forget he could not, he must think and grieve,
Must the impression of their wrongs retain,
Their very patience adding to his pain;

Parting was painful ; when 'Adieu' he cried,
'You will return ?' the gentle girls replied ;
'You *must* return ! your brother knows you now,
But to exist without you knows not how ;
Has he not told us of the lively joy
He takes—forgive us—in the brother-boy ?
He is alone and pensive ; you can give
Pleasure to one by whom a number live ;
The poor are call'd ungrateful, but you still
Will have their thanks for this—indeed you will.'

Richard but little said, for he of late
Held with himself contention and debate.

'My brother loves me, his regard I know,
But will not such affection weary grow ?
He kindly says, "Defer the parting day,"
But yet may wish me in his heart away ;
Why should I grieve if he should weary be ?
There have been visitors who wearied me ;
He yet may love, and we may part in peace,
Nay, in affection—novelty must cease—
Man is but man ; the thing he most desires
Pleases awhile—then pleases not—then tires ;
George to his former habits and his friends
Will now return, and so my visit ends.'

Thus Richard communed with his heart ; but still
He found opposed his reason and his will,
Found that his thoughts were busy in this train,
And he was striving to be calm in vain.

Now to his home, the morning visits past,
Return'd the guest—that evening was his last.

He met his brother, and they spoke of those
From whom his comfort in the village rose ;
Spoke of the favourites, whom so good and kind
It was peculiar happiness to find :
Then for the sisters in their griefs they felt,
And, sad themselves, on saddening subjects dwelt.

But George was willing all this woe to spare,
And let to-morrow be to-morrow's care :
He of his purchase talk'd—a think of course,
As men will boldly praise a new-bought horse.

Richard was not to all its beauty blind,
And promised still to seek, with hope to find :
'The price indeed——'
'Yes, that,' said George, 'is high ;
But if I bought not, one was sure to buy,
Who might the social comfort we enjoy,
And every comfort, lessen or destroy.

'We must not always reckon what we give,
But think how precious 'tis in peace to live ;
Some neighbour Nimrod might in very pride
Have stirr'd my anger, and have then defied ;
Or worse, have loved, and teased me to excess
By his kind care to give me happiness ;
Or might his lady and her daughters bring
To raise my spirits, to converse, and sing :
'Twas not the benefit alone I view'd,
But thought what horrid things I might exclude.

Some party man might here have sat him down,
Some country champion, railing at the crown,
Or some true courtier, both prepared to prove,
Who loved not them, could not their country love,
If we have value for our health and ease,
Should we not buy off enemies like these ?'

So pass'd the evening in a quiet way,
When, lo ! the morning of the parting day.

Each to the table went with clouded look,
And George in silence gazed upon a book ;
Something that chance had offer'd to his view—
He knew not what, or cared not, if he knew.

Richard his hand upon a paper laid—
His vacant eye upon the carpet stray'd ;
His tongue was talking something of the day,
And his vex'd mind was wandering on his way.

They spake by fits—but neither had concern
In the replies—they nothing wish'd to learn,
Nor to relate ; each sat as one who tries
To baffle sadnesses and sympathies :
Each of his brother took a steady view,
As actor he, and as observer too.

' Hours yet remain—'tis misery to sit
With minds for conversation all unfit ;
Suppose I take the purposed ride with you,
And guide your jaded praise to objects new,
That buyers see ?'——

And Richard gave assent
Without resistance, and without intent:
And thus they rode along in pensive mood,
Their thoughts pursuing, by their cares pursued.

'Richard,' said George, 'I see it is in vain
By love or prayer my brother to retain;
And, truth to tell, it was a foolish thing
A man like thee from thy repose to bring
Ours to disturb——Say, how am I to live
Without the comfort thou art wont to give?
How will the heavy hours my mind afflict—
No one t' agree, no one to contradict,
None to awake, excite me, or prevent,
To hear a tale or hold an argument,
To help my worship in a case of doubt,
And bring me in my blunders fairly out?
Who now by manners lively or serene
Comes between me and sorrow like a screen,
And giving, what I look'd not to have found,
A care, an interest in the world around?'

Silent was Richard, striving to adjust
His thoughts for speech—for speak, he thought, he must.

'Well, there is Jacques, who ever seem'd to treat
Thy brother kindly as we chanced to meet;
Nor with thee only pleased our worthy guide,
But in the hedge-row path and green-wood side,
There he would speak with that familiar ease
That makes a trifle, makes a nothing, please.

'But now to my farewell—and that I spoke
With honest sorrow—with a careless look,
Gazing unalter'd on some stupid prose—
His sermon for the Sunday, I suppose—
"Going?" said he: "why then the Squire and you
Will part at last—You're going?—Well, adieu!"
And careless put his sermons in their place,
With no more feeling than his sermon-case.

'Are such the friendships we contract in life?
O! give me then the friendship of a wife!
Adieus, nay, parting-pains to us are sweet,
They make so glad the moments when we meet.'*

George stopp'd his horse, and with the kindest look
Spoke to his brother—earnestly he spoke,
As one who to his friend his heart reveals,
And all the hazard with the comfort feels.

* In the original there is much more of Richard's secret suspicion that his brother has been gradually wearying of his company, and wanting to get rid of him now. Surely an unlikely suspicion after George's repeated, and even peevish, efforts to detain him; assuredly most unlikely in one of the frank and unsuspicious character attributed to Richard from the first. And, could he have suspected, would he not, according to that character—would he not have spoken out? Whereas, when George here notices something amiss, Richard 'evades' a direct reply by pleading his Matilda's silence; and then, six lines after, tells his brother that she *has* written; and, however it may fare with friends, there is health and affection at home. Such is one of many instances of carelessness running through these poems.

So, whether right or wrong, I have left George to guess at some hidden discontent, couched under his brother's petulant fling at the Rector; and, thereupon, to stop his horse, and put an end to all misunderstanding at once and for ever.

'Soon as I loved thee, Richard—and I loved
Before my reason had the will approved—
So soon I felt, that thus a friend to gain,
And then to lose, is but to purchase pain :
Daily the pleasure grew ; then sad the day
That takes it all in its increase away !

'Patient thou wert, and kind—but well I knew
The husband's wishes, and the father's too ;
Once and again, I urged thee to delay
Thy purposed journey, still deferr'd the day,
And still on its approach the pain increased,
Till my request and thy compliance ceased ;
I could not further thy affection task,
Nor more of one so self-resisting ask.
But yet to lose thee, Richard, and with thee
All hope of social joys—it cannot be !
No ! I would have thee, brother, all my own,
To grow beside me as my trees have grown ;
For ever near me, pleasant in my sight,
And in my mind my pride and my delight.

'We part no more, dear Richard ! thou wilt need
Thy brother's help to teach thy boys to read ;
And I should love to hear Matilda's psalm,
To keep my spirit in a morning calm,
And feel the soft devotion that prepares
The soul to rise above its earthly cares.
Then thou and I, an independent two,
May have our parties, and defend them too :
Thy liberal notions, and my loyal fears,
Will give us subjects for our future years ;

Before her all our views and plans were laid,
And Jacques was there to explain or to persuade.
Here, on this lawn, thy boys and girls shall run,
And play their gambols when their tasks are done ;
There, from that window, shall their mother view
The happy tribe and smile at all they do ;
While thou, more gravely, hiding thy delight,
Shalt cry " O ! childish !" and enjoy the sight.'

One of the Stories not included in this volume closes with an allusion to these childish games by way of illustrating a survey of life far sadder than Richard needs anticipate.

As men may children at their sports behold,
And smile to see them ; though unmov'd and cold,
Smile at the recollected games, and then
Depart, and mix in the affairs of men :
So Rachel looks upon the world, and sees
It can no longer pain her, longer please,
But just detain the passing thought, or cause
A gentle smile of pity or applause,
And then the recollected soul repairs
Her slumbering hope, and heeds her own affairs.

BILLING AND SONS, PRINTERS, GUILDFORD, SURREY.