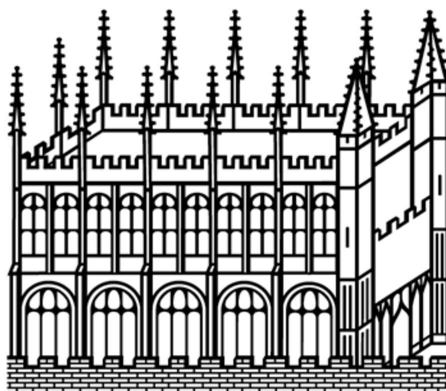

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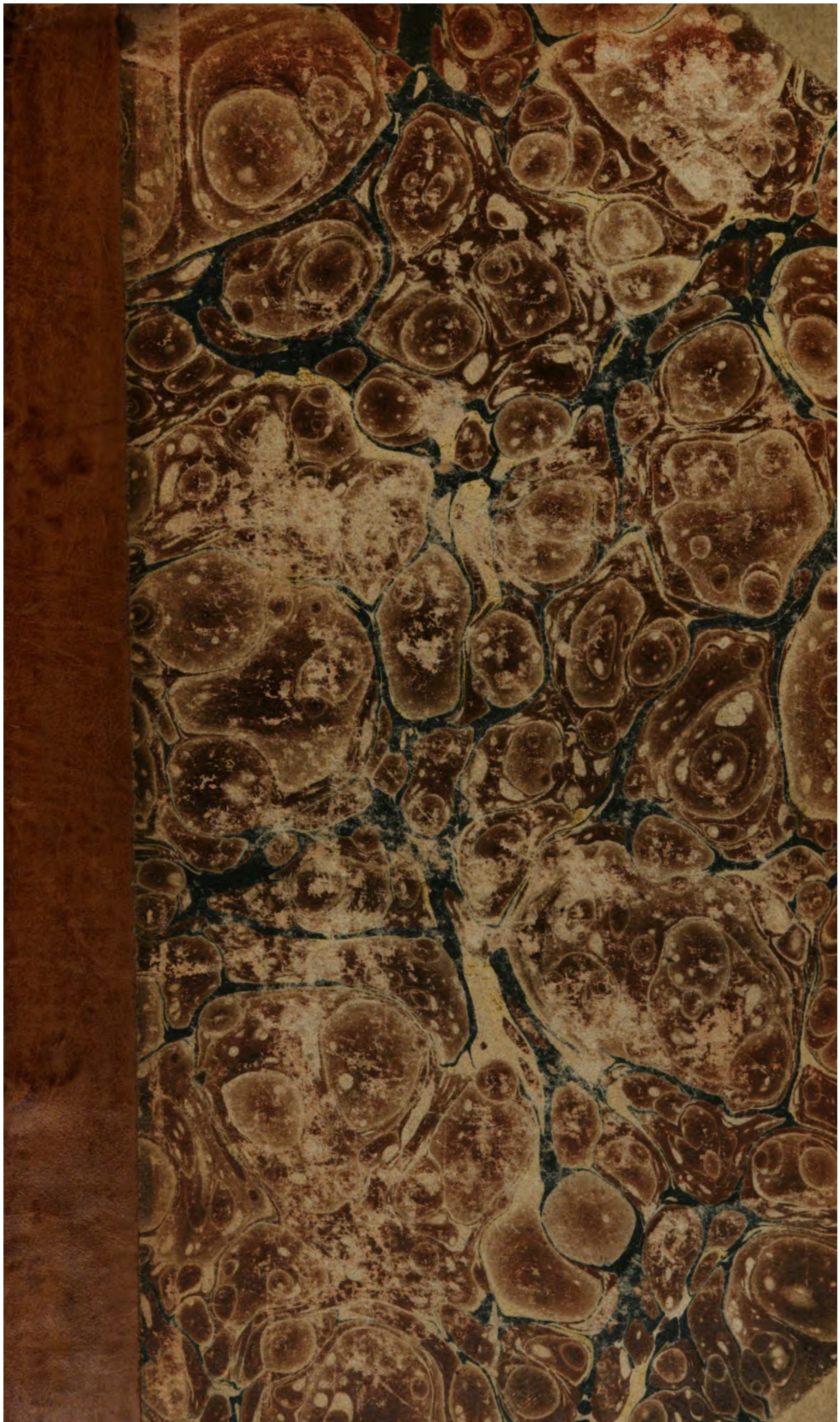

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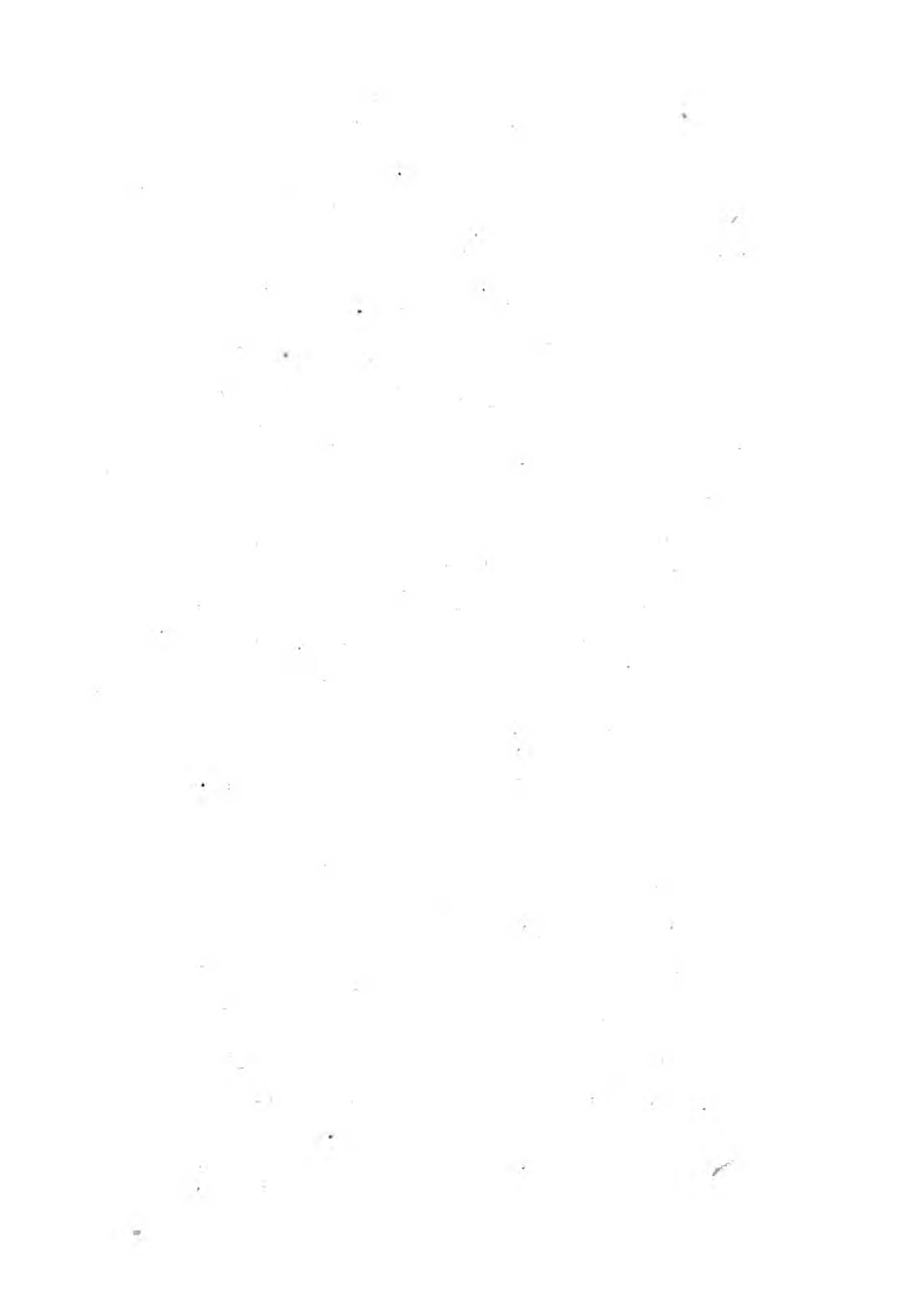

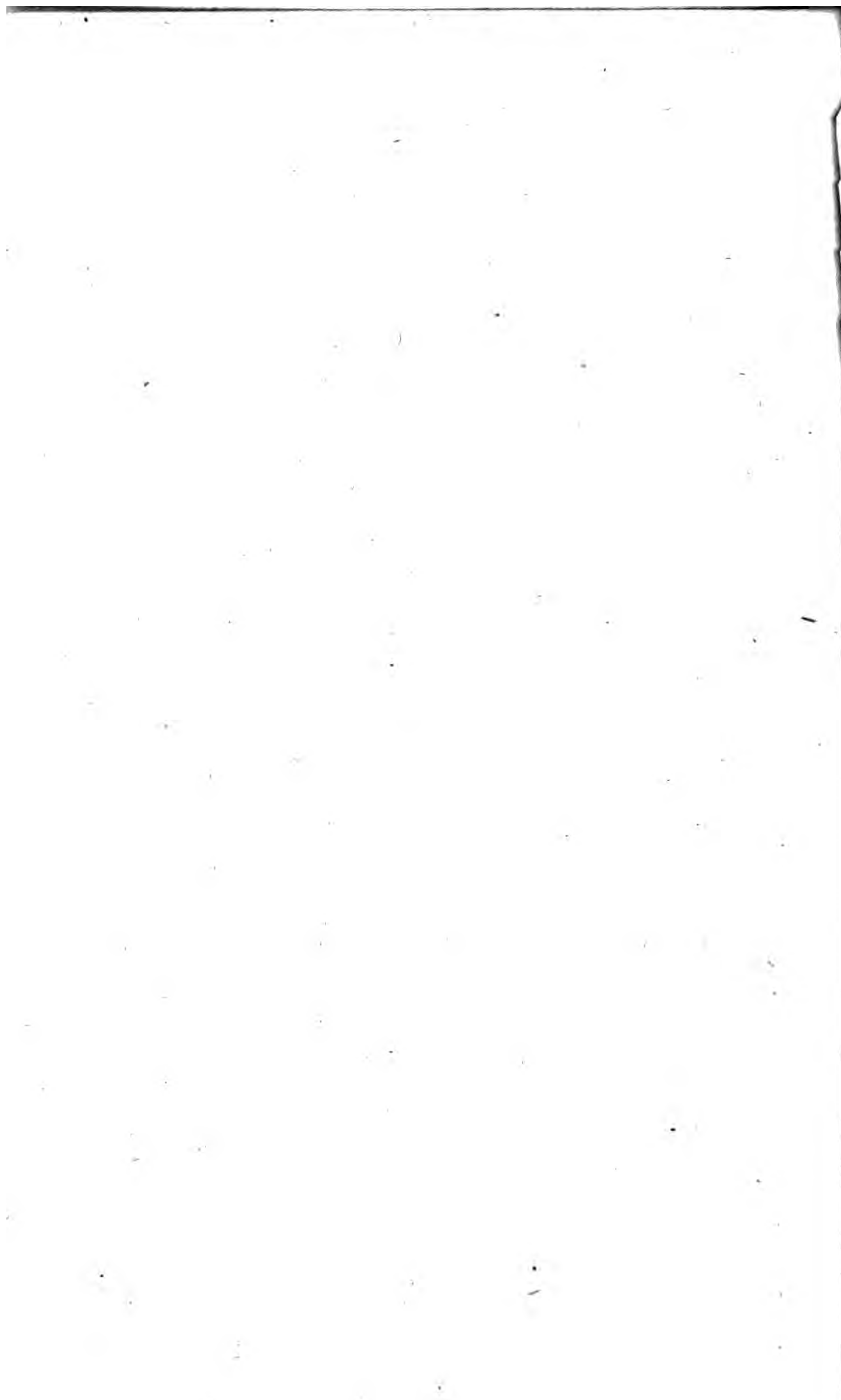

BEAUTIES OF BEATTIE.

Printed by Hamblin and Seyfang,
Queen-street, Cheapside.

BEAUTIES

SELECTED FROM THE WRITINGS

OF

JAMES BEATTIE, LL.D.

Late Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in the Marischal College and University of Aberdeen,

ARRANGED IN A PERSPICUOUS AND PLEASING MANNER,

Under the following Heads:

POETICAL	*THEOLOGICAL*
MORAL	*CRITICAL* AND
PHILOSOPHICAL	*EPISTOLARY.*

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

AND AN

ACCOUNT OF HIS WRITINGS.

TOGETHER

WITH NOTES

ON THE FIRST BOOK OF THE MINSTREL,

BY

THOMAS GRAY, LL.B.

London:

PRINTED FOR

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AND
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PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1809.

THE
LIFE
OF
JAMES BEATTIE, LL.D.

By WILLIAM MUDFORD.

TO the scholar and the poet, whose laurels may be now slowly ripening in obscurity, the Life of Dr. Beattie will present consolation and hope: not perhaps more than the lives of some other literary men, but at least as much. To the obscurity of his birth, were added other impediments in his career of fame, which only genius could surmount. Sequestered in a remote village of a remote province of Scotland, far from the circle of patronage and the opportunities for exertion, ambition found no aliment but what it derived from that inward consciousness of something superior, which is

perhaps always united with extraordinary endowments. It is this consciousness which swells the heart with high forebodings; which prompts the soul to o'erleap its present state, and to snatch a brief glance at futurity; which accompanies the youthful genius to his midnight pillow, and gives a colour to the dreams of sleep; which awakens with him in the fresh morning hour, and sheds around his steps the dubious anticipations of that renown which is to give his name to posterity, and to compensate for the cold and comfortless neglect that now envelopes him. The acknowledgement of these feelings would be too nearly allied to repulsive egotism, to expect that they should be displayed by those who have felt them: but can it be doubted that the existence of those lofty powers which constitute the poet and the man of genius, have ever been unaccompanied by the silent conviction of superiority, which, like the rose of spring, awaits the fostering sun of public praise to expand it into maturity and beauty? With a rapid, timid, but rapturous eye, the youthful Shakspeare or Milton pierced, perhaps, through the shadows that surrounded the future, and hung with rapture on the glorious scene that glanced upon

their sight. Prophetic whispers of imperishable fame soothed their souls; and, proudly eminent in the consciousness of anticipated celebrity, they trod the path, obscure and hidden, which was to terminate in the wide field of renown and glory. These cherished visions of superior minds, serve not only to brighten the immediate course of life, but they act as stimulants by which they are themselves verified: and there can be little doubt that Beattie, who confessed that he has given an adumbration of his own boyhood in the character of *Edwin*, felt all those trembling expectations of future fame which he was destined to accomplish. This ardent, this cheering hope accompanied his progress from the humble privacy of a village schoolmaster, to the more dignified post of a teacher of moral wisdom.

Of the life of Dr. Beattie not much is recorded. He has been made his own historian, by a plan well suited to supply deficiency of knowledge in the narrator, but which can seldom please equal to a perspicuous and copious detail of facts. Sir William Forbes, who had long been his friend, became also his biographer, but with few qualities for the task. As his communication with Dr. Beattie was more

epistolary than personal, he knew little of the man beyond what he learned from his letters; and of these he has not been sparing. The narrative part of Sir William's *Life*, might be comprised within very scanty limits. Neither does he appear to possess the force or discrimination of mind which is requisite to paint the intellectual and moral character of Dr. Beattie. What he has written, any man might have written with the same accumulation of papers before him. His picture is but a copy of Dr. Beattie's self-delineation: such as Beattie describes himself, such his friend describes him: but he who has learned to penetrate the motives of human action, and the principles of human thought, will receive, with cautious deliberation, the opinions each man entertains of himself. There are two kinds of deception; voluntary and involuntary. A man practises the first when his speech is contrary to his knowledge; and this is criminal. The second is almost every man's error: for who is there that does not persuade himself into the belief of virtues which he possesses only in imagination? But this is venial: it is the inseparable lot of human fallibility; and I am willing to think, with Shaftsbury,

that there is more of this innocent delusion than of voluntary imposture in the world. But this may teach us how unfit a man of ordinary faculties is to investigate the character, morally and intellectually, of others. Unless he have penetration of judgement which can pierce through the veil thrown by every man round his actions; unless he can separate apparent from real motives, taking that analogy of incitement for his guide which is found to exist in the general course of human events; and unless he have that perspicuity of intellect which can enable him to argue from effects to causes, he can never hope to scan the recesses of thought, nor consequently to depict the man, except by broad and undistinguishing features.

The truth of this is amply illustrated by the *Life of Beattie*, as detailed by Sir William Forbes, in which we learn much of the author, and little of the man. From it, however, the information contained in the following pages is chiefly obtained.

James Beattie, LL.D. was born on the 25th of October, 1735, at Laurencekirk, in the county of Kincardine, in Scotland. It was, at the period of his birth, an obscure hamlet;

but has since risen to the rank of a *borough of barony* (as such small towns are called in Scotland, holding a rank somewhat above that of a village) by the attention and encouragement of Lord Gardenstown.

The father of Dr. Beattie was James Beattie, who kept a small retail shop in the village, and rented a little farm in the neighbourhood, where, for several generations, his forefathers had toiled in the labours of the field. His mother's name was Jean Watson; and they had six children, of whom the youngest was James, the subject of the present memoir. His father is said to have been a man possessing a degree of intellectual knowledge beyond his condition in life. His mother too has been called a "woman of uncommon abilities;" but these are terms too commonly lavished upon objects of affection to be received as true. This mother, however, after the death of her husband, contrived, with the aid of her eldest son David, who managed the farm, and her own attention to the shop, to bring up her family with respectability and comfort. Her son James she placed at the parish school of Laurencekirk.

What he acquired, while at school, cannot now be distinctly known. It is certain, how-

ever, that he had the use of but few books. Those that he could procure he read with avidity; and among the first that he became acquainted with, was *Ogilby's translation of Virgil*. He was indebted, for the perusal of others, to the kindness of the Rev. Mr. Thomson, at that time minister of the parish. Of this clergyman Dr. Beattie always spoke with grateful tenderness.

The wonders that are usually recorded of the early years of men of genius, are entitled to little credit. The quatrain, ascribed to the infant powers of Dr. Johnson, was long believed to be his, till he acknowledged that the weak ambition of his father had prompted him to write it, and to represent it as his son's. When men become eminent, curiosity is roused to trace the steps by which they ascended; and these retrospective views are tinged, more or less, with the medium through which the man himself is seen. Infantile puerilities are then exalted into prophetic tokens; and the mere accidents of life are transformed into purposes illustrative of the future. Dr. Beattie is said to have acquired the name of *the poet* while at school: this is not improbable; for in an obscure village, with ploughboys for com-

petitors, such a distinction might be cheaply acquired: but it is also told, that, when a youth, he used to get out of bed, and walk about his chamber, to meditate and to compose in the dead of night. These things are more easily affirmed than believed.

In the year 1749, he commenced his academical course, and attended the Greek class in Marischal College, Aberdeen, at that time taught by Dr. Blackwell, well known by his "Memoirs of the Court of Augustus," and other productions upon classical subjects. The scholar became attached to his preceptor; and the preceptor had sagacity to discover the talents of his scholar. He was the first that awoke, in the mind of Beattie, the consciousness of his own genius. He was early distinguished by him as superior to all his class-fellows; and at the close of the session 1749-50, he received from him a book, elegantly bound, with the following inscription on it: *Iacobo Beattie, in prima classe, ex comitatu Mernensi, post examen publicum librum hunc* αριϛευοντι, *præmium dedit T. Blackwell, Aprilis 3°. MDCCL.*

As the finances of young Beattie were, of course, but limited, he became a candidate for one of the bursaries, which are annually

bestowed on such of the students as are unable to bear the usual expenses attendant on a university education. These bursaries are small annual stipends, to which, however, according to Sir W. Forbes, no opprobrious distinction, no menial office, nor any degrading servitude, are annexed. On the contrary, it is a proof of superior merit; "for, instead of being a sinecure to which the student is presented without trial, it is the reward of learning, after a competition among those who are the candidates, and of whose literary merits the professors of the university are the judges."

Dr. Beattie continued his attendance at the university of Aberdeen during four years, and at the same time directed his attention towards philosophy and theology. That he was a diligent student, appears from some papers found after his decease, which evince the assiduity and labour that he thought necessary for a successful application to literature; and some of his notes on the classical authors display considerable critical acumen. (*See Life by Sir W. Forbes, vol. i. p. 21. 8vo. edit.*)

Beattie, while a student in divinity, seems to have incurred the same charge as Thomson did, that his language was too poetical.

When he had finished his academical studies, he obtained, in April, 1753, the appointment of schoolmaster of the parish of Fordoun, a small hamlet, about six miles distant from Lawrencekirk. Here he also filled the office of precentor, or parish clerk.

Thus doomed to obscurity and insignificance, we contrast the celebrity of his after-life, and wish, in vain, for information that might display, minutely, the progress of his elevation. Few men have risen to distinction with greater obstacles of birth, fortune, and station, to overcome. The proudest hopes might have drooped under such circumstances. Literature had not shed that lustre upon Scotland, in the early part of the last century, which it does now: and the facilities of intercourse with the southern part of the kingdom were less. A young man doomed to the same privacy in a village of England, might, feeling his own powers, cherish the expectations of fame by his vicinity to the metropolis, where the means are copious, and the reward, finally, bestowed. He is nearer to the common centre of exertion, patronage, and remuneration; and the opportunities of success are numerous, easy, and, sometimes, certain. But, to be banished to

an obscure hamlet in a remote part of Scotland; exercising the humble functions of a village schoolmaster and a parish clerk; cut off from the power of disclosing the qualities of his mind to those who could appreciate or befriend them; and without the resources of literature; seem such a concurrence of impediments, that our wonder may justly be excited when we see them vanquished, and the individual rising to unusual popularity and deserved eminence.

It may be conjectured, that while in this situation he passed much of his time in solitude. Except the parish minister, it is highly probable that he had no other companions but such as the labouring peasantry could supply. How such a mind as Beattie's would, therefore, employ itself, may be easily imagined. Surrounded by majestic scenery, the towering hill, the silent valley, the stream, the waterfall, and the restless illimitable ocean in the distant landscape, fancy had free range, and his thoughts dwelt upon objects that were congenial to them. Relieved from the toil of instruction, with what ardour must he have sought nature and solitude, there to commune with his own feelings, there to cherish those

tender musings which afterwards delighted the world in his *Minstrel*, and there, perhaps, to anticipate, in bitterness of spirit, the inglorious retreat which might be his lot. Wandering amid these varied beauties of scenery, he composed some of his earliest pieces, and as he looked abroad upon the creation, not seeing it through books, he transfused into his juvenile compositions those simple characters of truth and reality which at once command applause and excite pleasure.

The following stanza, from the second book of the *Minstrel*, is said to be an accurate delineation of the rustic churchyard of Lawrencekirk.

> Let vanity adorn the marble tomb,
> With trophies, rhymes, and 'scutcheons of renown,
> In the deep dungeon of some Gothic dome,
> Where night and desolation ever frown.
> Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the down,
> Where a green grassy turf is all I crave,
> With here and there a violet bestrown,
> Fast by a brook or fountain's murm'ring wave,
> And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave.

One of his greatest delights we are told by Sir William Forbes was, to saunter, through the whole night, in the fields, and to watch for, and contemplate, the dawn of day.

That he habitually or frequently abjured sleep thus, may be doubted; but that, under the temporary influence of peculiar and accidental feeling, he may have been tempted to pass the hours of repose in solemn meditation and silent watching, is not unlikely. What has been occasionally done is too often magnified, by ourselves and others, into a distinct quality of our nature: and Sir William Forbes, having once believed that Dr. Beattie walked and thought, while the rest of mankind slept, finds no difficulty in referring the accuracy of some of the descriptions in the *Minstrel*, to the observations which he made at these times; and even to discover the very hill on which he must have stood when he saw what he has described. This is doubtful sagacity.

From the penury of intercourse to which his situation doomed him, he was relieved by the arrival of his eldest brother David, who arrived at Fordoun, with the intention of establishing himself there.

About the same period, also, he attracted the notice of Lord Gardenstown, at that time sheriff of the county of Kincardine, and whose mansion was in the neighbourhood of Fordoun,

Their meeting was accidental. Beattie had wandered one day into his favourite glen, and was there discovered by Lord Gardenstown, while he was committing to paper some composition. His lordship's enquiries ended in the discovery that they were verses which he was writing. His curiosity was excited, and he became his patron: but he was not without suspicion of the integrity of Beattie. He doubted that his verses were wholly his own. Whether this doubt arose from the consideration of the condition of the youthful poet, his means of cultivating his intellect, the inequality between his discourse and his writing, or from a willingness, in Lord Gardenstown, to believe duplicity a natural concomitant of inferiority of birth and station, cannot perhaps be discovered: but the fact is not very creditable to Beattie, as he condescended to remove his lordship's suspicions by a translation from the Latin of Lucretius, the manuscript of which being blotted with corrections, carried conviction to the mind of his judge. During this period he obtained the notice of Lord Monboddo, a writer well known for his erudition and his singularities of opinion. The in-

tercourse thus established, continued, without interruption, till the death of Monboddo, in May, 1799. Beattie's Elegy beginning

"Still shall unthinking man substantial deem, &c."

was written on the death of Mrs. Walker, the sister of his lordship.

Dr. Beattie continued to teach the parish school of Fordoun till the year 1757, when a vacancy occurring in the situation of usher in the grammar school of Aberdeen, he was advised to become a candidate for it. This he did, but without success. The ability, however, which he displayed on the occasion, made that impression on the magistrates, who are the electors, that he was requested by them, in the ensuing year, to accept the situation without any further trial, a second vacancy having occurred. With this offer he complied, and he was accordingly elected to the appointment on the 20th of June, 1758, and removed from Fordoun to Aberdeen.

We are now to consider Dr. Beattie as an inhabitant of that town from which his "sober wishes" never afterwards "learned to stray;" where he rose to a professorship; and whence issued those works which have elevated his name to a conspicuous place in British litera-

ture. By this event he was removed from that obscurity, and that inequality of society, which he must have felt very keenly. He was now among men from whose conversation he might derive knowledge, and from whose discernment his own attainments might receive distinction. The stores which he had already amassed, would no longer stagnate from want of use: and he would be incited to the accumulation of greater, by an emulation to equal, if not to surpass, those who were now his companions and his rivals. He would learn what were his own deficiencies in general knowledge, by observing how they were supplied by others: and he would acquire a just confidence in his own powers, as often they enabled him to excel those who were already allowed to be his superiors. Weak minds sink into despair and silence before the display of eminent abilities; but conscious genius is invigorated by opposition: defeat only awakens new resolutions to supply defects; and victory excites fresh caution to maintain, by general superiority, what has been gained, perhaps, by accidental. It may easily be imagined, therefore, that Beattie's removal to Aberdeen would stimulate him to a degree of

exertion, which he would scarcely have undertaken while buried in solitude and obscurity.

He did not remain long in the humble capacity of an usher. In the year 1760, Dr. Duncan, professor of natural philosophy, in the Marischal College, Aberdeen, died. It was suggested to him by a friend, (Mr. Arburthnot, a near relative of the celebrated Dr. Arburthnot, and a steady promoter of Beattie's welfare through his whole life,) that he should try for the vacant chair. The proposal towered so high above the expectations of Beattie, that he listened to it with astonishment. His friend, however, had more sanguine hopes, and he prevailed on Lord Erroll to intercede with Lord Milton, that an application might be made to the duke of Argyle, who was, at that time, believed to possess much influence in the disposal of such offices as became vacant in Scotland. The result was favourable. He was installed Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in Marischal College, on the 8th of October, 1760; for this office was more congenial to his pursuits, than that of natural philosophy; and Dr. Skene, who had obtained the appointment to the former, but with

better qualifications for the latter, agreed on an exchange, by which means both chairs were filled more suitably.

Thus Dr. Beattie obtained, in his twenty-fifth year, an honourable situation, and one which, by its emolument, placed him beyond the reach of want. The rest of his life he passed in the unobtrusive duties of his profession, in corresponding with his friends, and in writing his works. His days were not much diversified by events that deserve to be recorded. One praise should not be withheld. He imposed upon himself a conscientious discharge of his professorship, and sought to purify the hearts, as well as to enlighten the minds, of his pupils. Some opinion of what he did, may be formed from an inspection of his "Elements of Moral Science," which are a compendium of his lectures, published for the benefit of his pupils, but from which others may reap benefit in the perusal.

His reading was not confined merely to those works that are intimately connected with moral philosophy. His writings evince much general knowledge, and a very diligent application to poetical composition. In his twenty-fourth year he wrote a letter to Dr. Ogilvie, (the au-

thor of a verbose poem on *Providence*,) in which he gives an opinion of *Clarissa*, that he did not much deviate from at a more mature age. His qualifications as a critic, however, I do not estimate very highly. He praises without much discrimination. He is content to glide with the popular opinion upon popular authors. What has been before applauded, he applauds; and sometimes his encomiums upon contemporary writings have been left without corroboration from any other pen. An instance of this may be found in his eulogy upon a volume of poems, entitled "*Rimes*," published nearly thirty years ago, by a writer (Mr. Pinkerton) who has since shown much ability as a geographer and a laborious compiler, but whose verses merited the obscurity they have found. Affectation of manner, and absurdity of conception, may be praised by him who is resolved to praise; but no single voice can bestow upon them vitality: nor can any panegyric rescue from contempt such lines as the following, which form the conclusion to a *Melody on the Harp of Ossian*.

To hide the king of day,
In vain the clouds display
Their shade:

Soon as the king of day
Assumes meridian sway,
They fade!

In 1760, Dr. Beattie first courted public notice by the publication of a volume of poems, partly original, and partly translated. Some of these he thought worthy of being preserved in subsequent editions of his poetry, and others he silently condemned, by omitting them.

It appears, from a letter to Mr. Arburthnot, dated December 22, 1762, that Dr. Beattie had projected, or probably finished, a satirical poem, which he calls the *Grotesquiad.* I should with difficulty believe Beattie to have been capable of successful satire. The qualities of his mind, as they are displayed in his writings, and as they may be collected from his life, were not those that form a satirist. As a poet, he is distinguished by tenderness, rather than by greatness or energy. In his polemical writings, indeed, he indulges in a vague kind of satire, which, without confuting his opponent, makes him ridiculous, and without convincing his reader, makes him acquiesce in his author's positions. It cannot be denied that in the "Essay on Truth," he is often pert rather than argumentative; and his own

assertions might frequently be brought into suspicion or ridicule, by the same petulance of language as he employs. He was influenced by laudable motives in the composition of his *Essay*, and much good was effected by its publication; yet, every lover of truth must wish that he had employed weapons of a firmer quality.

In disputing Dr. Beattie's claim to the powers of a satirist, a tacit inference is deduced of the benignity of his character. He whose employment it is to wound the feelings of others by personal satire, to degrade the qualities of their minds, and eventually, perhaps, to obstruct their career in life, when harmless imbecility is their only fault, may be admired for his ingenuity or his wit, but can scarcely be envied for his morals.

In the summer of 1763, Dr. Beattie visited London for the first time: but he was then unknown, and the metropolis, therefore, probably left few of those grateful impressions upon his mind which his subsequent journeys produced.

In 1764, he wrote some "verses on the death of Churchill," which were published. National resentment held the pen, and the aspe-

rity of the lines was so gross, that the author, though at first abundantly pleased with the composition, grew, afterwards, ashamed of them, and omitted them at last in the collected edition of his poems.

In the following year he sought and obtained the acquaintance of Gray, who had then just published his far-famed elegy. The intercourse between the two poets subsisted, without interruption, till the death of Gray, who evinced his kindness for Beattie, by minutely criticising the first book of the *Minstrel*, on its publication. The letter from Dr. Beattie, which produced this connection, will be found under the head of *Epistolary Beauties*, in the present volume.

In 1766, a new edition of his poems was published, in which all his early poetical translations were omitted, and only a few of his original pieces retained. Some others, however, were added, and among them, the "Battle of the Pigmies and the Cranes," from the Latin of Addison. It may be observed here, that the miscellaneous pieces of Beattie, as finally collected and published by himself, together with the *Minstrel*, are few, in compa-

rison of what, at different times, he wrote, printed, and rejected.

In 1766, he first hinted at the design of the *Minstrel*, in a letter to Dr. Blacklock, but with so little confidence in his own intentions, that he declares himself "morally certain it never will be finished."

In June, 1767, he married, at Aberdeen, Miss Mary Dun, the only daughter of James Dun, rector of the grammar school there. This union, founded in a prudent attention to circumstances, as far as human sagacity could calculate, proved, however, a source of much affliction to Dr. Beattie. His wife inherited from her mother the most awful of human ills, mental derangement. Some years elapsed before the malady displayed itself; but it finally reduced her to become the inhabitant of a private madhouse, where she survived her husband, and was living in 1806. By this marriage he had two sons, who grew up to manhood, and then were snatched away from their unhappy father.

It is not, perhaps, generally known that Beattie's ballad of the *Hermit* was originally written to accompany the tune of *Pentland Hills*, composed by his friend William Tytler.

In a note to that gentleman, he says, "The sentiments, I fear, are not such as become a song."

In the year 1770, Dr. Beattie published his "Essay on Truth," a work which he had been induced to write from the belief that scepticism and infidelity were making an alarming progress, and the hope that their career might be checked by a professed and pointed opposition. It was this Essay that first introduced him to notice, and while some approved, and some condemned, the manner of its attack, all, except those who were its objects, applauded its motive and its tendency.

It may afford some consolation to youthful merit, struggling now, perhaps, in obscurity, and sole masters of some finished manuscript, whose contents they would fain share with mankind, to learn, that the Essay of Beattie could find *no publisher*, and that his friends Sir William Forbes, and Mr. Arburthnot, were themselves the purchasers at fifty guineas. Of this transaction Dr. Beattie knew nothing at the time; for he had sent his manuscript to those friends, (who resided in Edinburgh,) and entrusted to them its disposal. They could make no disposal, however; and, un-

willing that it should be lost to the world, they inclosed Dr. Beattie a bank bill for fifty guineas, telling him that his work had sold for that, but not saying to whom. These friends afterwards published it at their own risk. Such were the circumstances that attended the appearance of this volume, which served to establish the fame of its author, and whose hopes were so humble, that he says, in a letter to Sir William Forbes, the price really exceeded his warmest expectations.

Dr. Beattie was a very patient reviser of his writings. He affirms, that he wrote the Essay three times over, and some parts of it oftener. Much labour was employed by his friends to give it publicity; and when it appeared, Dr. Blacklock undertook to give a short analysis of it in the Edinburgh newspapers. Hume, however, against whose writings it was principally directed, did not deign to reply to it, from a fixed determination, which he had very early adopted, of not replying to any thing that might be matter against him. The sale of the book was rapid: it passed through a second edition in 1771, and with some alterations and amendments.

Soon after the publication of the *Essay*, he

presented the world with the first canto of the *Minstrel*, a work of singular design, and of singular merit, but which the author never completed. It were, perhaps, to be wished, (notwithstanding the felicity with which Beattie has used the stanza of Spenser,) that he had employed the common English heroic couplet. What he says of its admitting simplicity and magnificence of sound, is perhaps true: but I do not know how it can be maintained that it allows the sententiousness of the couplet, when the closing of the sense is too often protracted to the fourth line, and sometimes dilated through a whole stanza.

The language of Beattie, in this poem, is very rich and poetical; and, if I might venture to dispute the authority of so eminent a judge as Gray, I should consider the occasional adoption of ancient words as strictly characteristical, and as imparting a degree of solemnity to the subject. Beattie has shown that the words he has used have been employed by writers much posterior to the era of Spenser, which at once removes the charge of their being obsolete.

Some of the stanzas of the *Minstrel* are composed in the highest character of poesy; but,

generally speaking, the second book is inferior to the first. Beattie seems to have exhausted his strength by a single effort.

In 1771, he again visited London, and was admitted into all the circles of literature and fashion. He was in the bloom of his reputation, and could not be undelighted with its fragrance. He had previously obtained the epistolary acquaintance of Mrs. Montague, who praised him lavishly, and whom Beattie in return praised most servilely.* At her house he was introduced to Lord Lyttleton, Mrs. Carter, and others of her distinguished assembly. He also obtained the intercourse of the late Dr. Porteus, Dr. Johnson, Garrick, and Goldsmith, and all the principal literary persons then living.

In 1773, he obtained a pension, for which, I am sorry to find, he petitioned his majesty. The meanness of such a procedure deserves reprobation: it was unworthy a man of genius. Dr. Beattie should have felt, that if he possessed any claim to royal munificence, that claim should be allowed to operate by itself: if he did not possess any claim, he should have disdained to sue for it with the servility of a

* See *all* his letters to that lady.

mendicant. *His* pension was *not* the reward of talent, but the success of supplication. He begged, and he obtained. His petition was supported by proper court influence, and it was granted. But he had policy as well as meanness; for when the Queen was instructed to make an offer of assistance to him, he deferred acceptance till he should know what success his petition to the king would have. I hope, for the honour of literature, that there are not many men of genius who would pursue such a course.

As a contrast to this scene of humiliation, we find him refusing a hundred pounds from the Duchess of Portland; and declining the conditional offer of pecuniary aid from Mrs. Montague. Surely Dr. Beattie must have appeared something like a literary pauper in the eyes of these persons, or they would not have ventured to make proposals to him which would have been rejected with indignation by many.

While his pension was yet undecided, he had the honour of being presented to the King at the levee, by Lord Dartmouth, and of kissing His Majesty's hand.

About this time the university of Oxford

conferred upon him an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

At length, on the 20th of August, 1773, he received a letter from Lord North's secretary, informing him that the King had been pleased to confer upon him a pension of two hundred pounds a year; and on the 24th of the same month he had the honour of a private interview with his Majesty at Kew. The conversation that passed between them is recorded by Sir William Forbes, but it contains nothing worthy of being remembered.

In October, 1773, a vacancy occurred in the university of Edinburgh, which Dr. Beattie was solicited to accept; but he declined the offer.

In 1773, while Dr. Beattie was in London, his friends, apprehensive that nothing might be done for him by his Majesty, proposed to publish, by subscription, (another species of literary mendicity,) his *Essay on Truth*, by which subscription it was hoped a considerable sum might be raised. The subscription was not to be public, for the public, it was thought, would feel no motive to buy a book a second time at a higher price: but a few friends, Lord Mayne, Mrs. Montague, Dr. Porteus,

and others, undertook to carry the list about to the opulent, who might be inclined each to contribute a few guineas. Dr. Beattie was not wholly without shame at this procedure, and in a letter to Lord Mayne says, with the phraseology of a "waiting gentlewoman," that considering the persons who had projected the subscription, he could not refuse it his consent, "without *giving himself airs* which would very ill become him." Dr. Beattie does not seem ever to have known what became him, when money was his object.

In the course of the year 1774, some endeavours were made by his friends in England to procure him church preferment there; but Beattie felt no wish to remove from Aberdeen, and the business dropped.

The subscription copy of the *Essay on Truth*, did not appear till the year 1776, and the volume contained, besides, three other Essays, *On Poetry and Music as they affect the Mind*—*On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition*—and *On the Utility of Classical Learning*. These Essays were afterwards, in 1778, published separately, in an octavo volume.

Dr. Beattie is not conspicuous as a letter-

writer. His epistles are either laboured or trifling. He either writes with effort, and the effort is visible; or writes with negligence, and the negligence is offensive. For this reason, therefore, he is to be preferred when he is laborious. There is, in the second volume of Sir William Forbes' Life, a letter to the Duchess of Gordon, than which I cannot conceive any thing more trifling to have been written by a man of genius. It is one hundred and thirty-one of the series, and, though short, is full of weakness. In a pastoral romance, such a letter from a *Strephon* to *Delia* would be tolerable: but for a professor of moral philosophy to implore the kids to frisk, and the bees to hum, before a Duchess of Gordon, is too risible to be read without contempt.

In 1783, he published his *Dissertations Moral and Critical*, in one volume quarto. They consisted of Essays on Memory and Imagination; On Dreaming; On the Theory of Language; On Fable and Romance; On the Attachments of Kindred; and On Illustrations of Sublimity.

In 1784, a new edition of his *Minstrel* was called for, and the volume was inscribed to Mrs. Montague, and her name inwoven with

the last stanza of the first book. But this was not done without falsehood; for Dr. Beattie, writing to Mrs. Montague, and mentioning his intention, says, that a blank had always been left in the last stanza, to be filled up with the name of some friend, but he was undetermined as to the person. He *knew*, however, that he had always represented Mr. Arburthnot as the intended friend.

In 1786, was published his *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, which may be read as an elegant, a temperate, and a forceful explication of those testimonies in favour of the Christian revelation, in which every man is concerned. If the arguments do not always produce conviction, they fail only where conviction must spring from the docility of the reader. To a mind wavering in its belief, and anxious to arrive at certainty in so momentous a point, I do not know any work better adapted for its first wants than the *Evidences* of Beattie.

In the same year a plan was formed in Edinburgh, of publishing the prose works of Addison as a separate collection; and it was proposed to submit the undertaking to Dr. Beattie's superintendance. He readily ac-

ceded to it, and offered to prefix a biographical and critical preface, in the latter part of which he meant to have exhibited an analysis of Addison's style, and an historical survey of the changes which the English language has sustained. This plan, however, he did not execute, for want of sufficient health and leisure: but the work was published with Tickell's Life, some notes from Johnson, and a few more by Beattie. It consisted of four octavo volumes.

In 1789, Dr. Beattie received a donation of money from Mrs. Montague, for his youngest son. What the sum was has not transpired: but we have a letter from Dr. Beattie which shows the utility of reason in defending our own conduct.

Towards the close of the year 1790, he lost his son, James Hay Beattie, whose approaches towards the grave were gradual and obvious, and whose father, therefore, had not to lament the sudden removal of what he held most dear. Of this son Dr. Beattie has told as much as can be wished to be known. He seems to have possessed learning, but not genius. His scholastic acquirements, if compared by the standard of common acquisition, were immature;

yet, when we consider the accidents of birth and situation as co-operating to produce them, we shall not find much that need excite astonishment. More has been done by minds of native vigour, with numerous obstacles to overcome, and unaided by any thing but individual application.

The melancholy event of his death was communicated by Dr. Beattie to the Duchess of Gordon, in the following letter.

Aberdeen, 1st December, 1790.

"KNOWING with what kindness and condescension your Grace takes an interest in every thing that concerns me and my little family, I take the liberty to inform you, that my son James is dead; that the last duties to him are now paid; and that I am endeavouring to return, with the little ability that is left me, and with entire submission to the will of Providence, to the ordinary business of life. I have lost one who was always a pleasing companion; but who, for the last five or six years, was one of the most entertaining and instructive companions that ever man was blest with: for his mind comprehended almost every

science; he was a most attentive observer of life and manners; a master of classical learning; and he possessed an exuberance of wit and humour, a force of understanding, and a correctness and delicacy of taste, beyond any other person of his age I have ever known.

"He was taken ill in the night of the 30th of November, 1789; and from that time his decline commenced. It was long what physicians call a *nervous atrophy;* but towards the end of June, symptoms began to appear of the lungs being affected. Goats' milk, and afterwards asses' milk, were procured for him in abundance; and such exercise as he could bear, he regularly took: these means lengthened his days, no doubt, and alleviated his sufferings, which indeed were not often severe: but, in spite of all that could be done, he grew weaker and weaker, and died the 19th of November, 1790, without complaint or pain, without even a groan or a sigh; retaining to the last moment the use of his rational faculties: indeed, from first to last, not one delirious word ever escaped him. He lived twenty-two years and thirteen days. Many weeks before it came, he saw death approach-

ing; and he met it with such composure and pious resignation, as may no doubt be equalled, but cannot be surpassed.

"He has left many things in writing, serious and humorous, scientific and miscellaneous, prose and verse, Latin and English; but it will be a long time before I shall be able to harden my heart so far as to revise them.

"I have the satisfaction to know, that every thing has been done for him that could be done; and every thing according to the best medical advice that Scotland could afford. For the last five months I kept in my family a young medical friend, who was constantly at hand: and from the beginning to the end of my son's illness, I was always either by him, or within call. From these circumstances, your Grace will readily believe, that I derive no little satisfaction. But my chief comfort arises from reflecting upon the particulars of his life, which was one uninterrupted exercise of piety, benevolence, filial affection, and indeed of every virtue which it was in his power to practise. I shall not, with respet to him, adopt a mode of speech which has become too common, and call him *my poor son*: for I

must believe, that he is infinitely happy, and will be so for ever.

"May God grant every blessing to your Grace, your family, and all your friends.

"The Duke of Gordon has done me the honour, according to his wonted and very great humanity, to write me a most friendly and sympathetic letter on this occasion."

The loss of this son weighed very heavily upon the mind of Dr. Beattie. Sir William Forbes represents him as illustrating his own line:

> He thought as a sage, but he felt as a man.

And indeed, there are few evils of life which can afflict us more severely than the death of one who unites the character of son, companion, and friend. The feelings of the heart are acuminated by those of the mind. Our loss is forced upon us by more frequent recurrences of its existence; and scarcely an hour can pass which does not remind us of him that is no more. Dr. Beattie's narrative of his son is simple, pious, and affecting: and every allowance is granted to the father who is employed in the mournful office of twining a wreathe round the sepulchre of his child.

For his tomb-stone he wrote the following inscription.

JACOBO. HAY. BEATTIE. JACOBI. F.
Philos. in. Acad. Mareschal. Professori.
Adolescenti.
Ea. Modestia.
Ea. Suavitate. Morum.
Ea. Benevolentia. erga. omnes.
Ea. erga. Deum. Pietate.
Ut. Humanum. nihil. supra.
In. Bonis. Literis.
In. Theologia.
In. omni. Philosophia.
Exercitatissimo.
Poetæ. insuper.
Rebus. in. Levioribus. faceto.
In. Grandioribus. Sublimi.
Qui. Placidam. Animam. efflavit.
XIX. Novemb. MDCCXC.
Annos. habens. XXII. Diesque. XIII.
PATER. MOERENS. H. M. P.

In 1790, Dr. Beattie published the first volume of "Elements of Moral Science;" and in 1793, he published the second. These, he says, are an abridgement of his lectures on moral philosophy and logic, which he delivered in Marischal College: and the principal object in publishing them, was for the conve-

nience of his pupils: but they may be read with advantage by many.

In the year 1793, he lost his sister, Mrs. Valentine, whose death was sudden, being taken ill in the street of Montrose, carried home speechless, and in a few minutes expired. She was a great favourite of Dr. Beattie's, and he felt her loss with much acuteness: but he had not yet emptied the cup that was prepared for him. In March, 1796, his only surviving son, Montague Beattie, died, in the eighteenth year of his age, of a fever of only a week's continuance. He was interred in the same grave with his brother, and in which, says Dr. Beattie, in a letter to one of his friends, there will be room enough for him. He communicated this second calamity to Sir William Forbes, in a letter, written a few hours after it happened, and from which there seems to have been a settled stupor upon the mind of Dr. Beattie. Indeed, after this double loss, he never recovered himself. He occasionally corresponded with his friends; but his spirit was broken.

Not many days had elapsed after the death of Montague, when an almost total loss of me-

mory respecting it took place. He could not recollect what had become of him: he would search for him in every room of the house, and then observe to his niece, Mrs. Glennie, "You may think it strange, but I must ask you if I have a son, and where he is?" This lady, to restore him to reason, was generally forced to recall to his mind the sufferings of Montague.

Sometimes he would acknowledge, with tears, his gratitude that his sons were taken from him, adding, with an allusion, no doubt, to their mother's dreadful calamity, "how could I have borne to see their elegant minds mangled with madness?" When he beheld, for the last time, the breathless body of his son, he exclaimed, "I have now done with the world:" and he ever afterwards seemed to act as if he thought so.

It is a melancholy task to record the wreck of a highly endowed mind: Dr. Beattie's sunk under its calamities. In his letters to his most intimate friends, he frequently hints at the state of his intellect. In one to Sir William Forbes, he says, "a deep gloom hangs upon me, and disables all my faculties, and

thoughts so strange sometimes occur to me, as to make me 'fear that I am not,' as Lear says, 'in my perfect mind.'"

But his sufferings were drawing to a close. In the beginning of April, 1799, he had a stroke of the palsy, which, for eight days so affected his speech, that he could not make himself understood, and often he forgot the most material words of every sentence. Of this afflicting malady he had afterwards several returns. The last took place on the 5th of October, 1802. It totally deprived him of the power of motion, and in that humiliating state his friend and biographer beheld him, for the last time, in the month of June, 1803.

God of our fathers! what is man!

MILTON.

This mournful state was protracted till Thursday the 18th of August, 1803, when, without any apparent pain or struggle, he breathed his last. His strength had been rapidly declining for some weeks past; and his appetite had wholly left him.

He was buried, according to his own desire, with his two sons, in the church yard of St. Nicholas, at Aberdeen. His friend, Dr. Gregory, the present professor of physic in the

university of Edinburgh, wrote, for his monument, the following epitaph.

Memoriæ. Sacrum.
JACOBI. BEATTIE. LL. D.
Ethices.
In. Academia. Marescallana. hujus. Urbis.
Per. XLIII. Annos.
Professoris. Meritissimi.
Viri.
Pietate. Probitate. Ingenio. atque. Doctrina.
Præstantis.
Scriptoris. Elegantissimi. Poetæ. Suavissimi.
Philosophi. Vere. Christiani.
Natus. est. V. Nov. Anno. MDCCXXXV.
Obiit. XVIII. Aug. MDCCCIII.
Omnibus. Liberis. Orbus.
Quorum. Natu. Maximus. JACOBUS. HAY. BEATTIE.
Vel. a. Puerilibus. Annis.
Patrio. Vigens. Ingenio.
Novumque. Decus. Jam. Addens. Paterno.
Suis. Carissimus. Patriæ. Flebilis.
Lenta. Tabe. Consumptus. Periit.
Anno. Ætatis. XXIII.
GEO. ET. MAR. GLENNIE.
H. M. P.

The character of Dr. Beattie, as pourtrayed by Sir William Forbes, may be exhibited in a small compass.

He was eminently skilled in the languages of antiquity: nor was he wholly unacquainted

with French and Italian. His knowledge was extensive: it rejected nothing but mathematics, geometry, and mechanics. As a professor he was distinguished by his endeavours to form the hearts as well as the minds of his pupils: and many of them speak with an almost filial reverence of his instructions. His celebrity procured him to be spontaneously elected an honorary member of several learned societies.

His chief acquirements were in moral science. In religion, his favourite books, besides the English liturgy,* were Butler, Clarke, Secker, Porteus. Of the classics, Homer, Horace, and, above all, Virgil.

Great tenderness of heart, and the keenest sensibility of soul, were eminently conspicuous in Dr. Beattie. They rendered him "tremblingly alive" to the sorrows and sufferings of others; and produced in him the warmest emotions of friendship, with an earnest desire to perform every service in his power to all within his reach.

His conversation on moral and literary sub-

* Though a Presbyterian, he preferred the service of the church of England, and he used to say of the litany, that it was the finest piece of uninspired composition in any language.

jects, was, in the highest degree, instructive and entertaining; and so much was his company valued and sought after, that, in his best days, he was not able to comply with half the invitations he received from persons eminent for their rank, character, and learning. In the midst of a select party of his private friends, and in his little domestic circle, he was uncommonly cheerful, animated, and pleasant; indulging himself in frequent sallies of playful, but innocent mirth. He was even fond of the amusement of a pun; but he was not always successful in it.

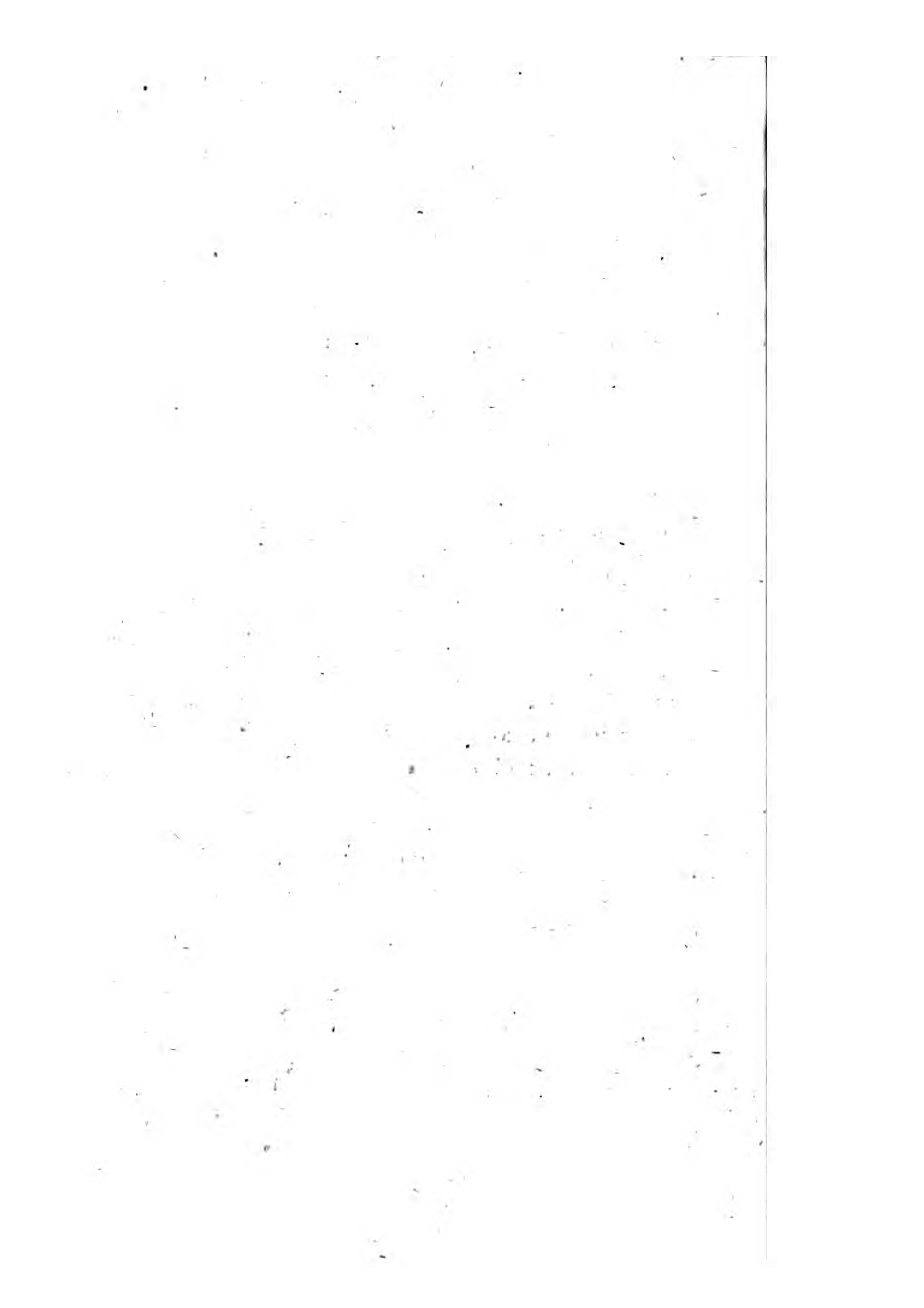
Although his acquaintance in early life hath been of the humblest sort, and even after his removal from the parochial school of Fordoun to Aberdeen, had been of a rank very inferior to that in which he afterwards came to be introduced, yet he showed no awkwardness of behaviour in the most exalted and polished circles.

He was exemplary in his discharge of the duties of a son, a brother, a husband, a father, and a friend. He had great tenderness of heart, and much active charity. He had a quick sensibility, which, in his later years, degenerated into irritability when metaphysical questions were agitated.

He disliked chess as occasioning a great waste of time, and requiring a useless application of thought. He was fond of archery, and practised it, till his increasing corpulency rendered it fatiguing. He always used a great deal of exercise. To a very correct and refined taste in poetry, painting, and music, he added the rare accomplishments of some actual practice in each. In music he was esteemed a pleasing performer upon the violoncello.

In his latter years he had recourse to wine, as a refuge from thought.

In his person he was of the middle size, not elegantly, and yet not awkwardly, formed. His eyes were black and piercing, but with an expression of sensibility somewhat bordering on melancholy, except when engaged in cheerful discourse, and then they were lively and animated. W. M.



TO

THE READER.

IN compiling the following volume, attention has been paid to what ought to be the leading features of all such productions, variety. Its utility has been consulted in stating the works from which the extracts are made, as it will enable those who may wish to quote a passage, to refer to the source. To make the extracts as distinct as possible from all correlative matter, has also been attended to.

Without strictly regarding the title of the volume, it has been thought adviseable to include the whole of Dr. Beattie's poems; for, being few in number, it would enable the purchasers of his *Beauties* to obtain a work which, alone, usually sells for more than the price of the present volume. The notes, too, of Gray,

which are now, for the first time published in connection with the *Minstrel*, are, of themselves, an interesting feature of this work. It is pleasing to behold one poet sitting in judgement upon the works of another, and in the confidence of friendship.

PREFACE

TO

THE MINSTREL.

THE design was, to trace the progress of a poetical genius, born in a rude age, from the first dawning of fancy and reason, till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world as a MINSTREL, that is, as an itinerant poet and musician; a character which, according to the notions of our forefathers, was not only respectable, but sacred.

I have endeavoured to imitate SPENSER in the measure of his verse, and in the harmony, simplicity, and variety, of his composition. Antique expressions I have avoided; admitting, however, some old words, where they seemed to suit the subject; but I hope none will be found that are now obsolete, or in any degree not intelligible to a reader of English poetry.

To those who may be disposed to ask, what could induce me to write in so difficult a measure, I can only answer, that it pleases my ear, and seems, from its Gothic structure and original, to bear some relation to the subject and spirit of the poem. It admits both simplicity and magnificence of sound and of language, beyond any other stanza that I am acquainted with. It allows the sententiousness of the couplet, as well as the more complex modulation of blank verse. What some critics have remarked, of its uniformity growing, at last, tiresome to the ear, will be found to hold true, only where the poetry is faulty in other respects.

PREFATORY NOTICE.

THE Compiler of the present volume has met with a letter from Gray to Dr. Beattie, dated March 8, 1771, acknowledging the receipt of the first book of *The Minstrel* on its publication, and containing some minute verbal criticisms upon it. It may be curious, in the first instance, to know what were the opinions of such a man, delivered in the confidence of friendship; and it may be equally so, in the second, to ascertain how far Dr. Beattie attended to his emendations in future editions of the poem. For this purpose the compiler has subjoined, by way of annotation, to each particular passage, the observations of Gray: and as, in some cases, Dr. Beattie differed from the judgment of his friend, his reasons for that difference are here given, in his own words, as they were found on a piece of paper after his death, and which passed into the hands of his friend and biographer Sir William Forbes.

In the commencement of this letter Gray observes, "I think we should wholly adopt the language of Spenser's time, or wholly renounce it. You say you have done the latter; but, in effect, you retain *fared*, *forth*, *meed*, *wight*, *ween*, *gaude*, *shene*, *in sooth*, *aye*, *eschew*, *&c.*; obsolete words, at least in these parts of the island, and only known to those that read our ancient authors, or such as imitate them."

Upon this Dr. Beattie remarked as follows:

"*To fare*, i. e. *to go*, is used in Pope's *Odyssey*, and so is *meed*: *wight* (in a serious sense) is used by Milton and Dryden. *Ween* is used by Milton; *gaude* by Dryden; *shene* by Milton; *eschew* by Atterbury: *aye* by Milton. The poetical style in every instance (where there is a poetical style) abounds in old words."

It is evident, however, from the notation of the stanzas in Gray's letter, that two entire stanzas have been omitted (since the first edition,) following the third stanza as it now stands. The compiler, not having a copy of the original edition at hand, cannot specify them.

BEAUTIES OF BEATTIE.

THE

MINSTREL:

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS,

BOOK I.

1.

AH! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar!
Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime
Has felt the influence of malignant star,
And wag'd with Fortune an eternal war;
Check'd by the scoff of Pride, by Envy's frown,
And Poverty's unconquerable bar,
In life's low vale remote has pin'd alone,
Then dropt into the grave, unpitied and unknown.

2.

And yet, the languor of inglorious days
Not equally oppressive is to all.
Him, who ne'er listen'd to the voice of praise,
The silence of neglect can ne'er appal.

There are, who, deaf to mad Ambition's call,
Would shrink to hear the obstreperous trump of Fame; *
Supremely blest, if to their portion fall
Health, competence, and peace. Nor higher aim
Had *He*, whose simple tale these artless lines proclaim.

3.

The rolls of fame I will not now explore;
Nor need I here describe in learned lay,
How forth *The Minstrel* far'd in days of yore,
Right glad of heart, tho' homely in array;
His waving locks and beard all hoary grey:
While from his bending shoulder, decent hung †
His harp, the sole companion of his way,
Which to the whistling wind responsive rung:
And ever as he went some merry lay he sung.

4.

Fret not thyself, thou glittering child of pride,
That a poor Villager inspires my strain;
With thee let Pageantry and Power abide:
The gentle Muses haunt the sylvan reign;
Where thro' wild groves at eve the lonely swain
Enraptur'd roams, to gaze on Nature's charms.
They hate the sensual, and scorn the vain,
The parasite their influence never warms,
Nor him whose sordid soul the love of gold alarms.

---

* The *obstreperous* trump of fame hurts my ear, though meant to express a jarring sound.—*Gray*.

† *And from his bending*, &c. the grammar seems deficient: yet as the mind easily fills up the ellipsis, perhaps it is an atticism, and not inelegant.—*Gray*.

Beattie obviated this objection by substituting *while* for *and*.

5.

Tho' richest hues the peacock's plumes adorn,
Yet horror screams from his discordant throat.
Rise, sons of harmony! and hail the morn,*
While warbling larks on russet pinions float:
Or seek at noon the woodland scene remote,
Where the grey linnets carol from the hill
Oh let them ne'er, with artificial note,
To please a tyrant, strain the little bill,
But sing what Heaven inspires, and wander where they will.

6.

Liberal, not lavish, is kind Nature's hand;
Nor was perfection made for man below.
Yet all her schemes with nicest art are plann'd,
Good counteracting ill, and gladness woe.
With gold and gems if Chilian mountains glow,
If bleak and barren Scotia's hills arise;
There plague aud poison, lust and rapine grow;
Here peaceful are the vales, and pure the skies,
And freedom fires the soul, and sparkles in the eyes.

7.

Then grieve not, thou, to whom the indulgent Muse
Vouchsafes a portion of celestial fire;
Nor blame the partial Fates, if they refuse
The imperial banquet and the rich attire.

---

* This is charming: the thought and the expression. I would not be so hypercritical as to add, but it is lyrical, and therefore belongs to a different species of poetry: Rules are but chains, good for little except when one can break through them; and what is fine gives me so much pleasure, that I never regard what place it is in.—*Gray.*

Know thine own worth, and reverence the lyre.
Wilt thou debase the heart which God refin'd?
No; let thy heaven-taught soul to heaven aspire,
To fancy, freedom, harmony, resign'd;
Ambition's groveling crew, for ever left behind.

8.*

Canst thou forego the pure etherial soul
In each fine sense so exquisitely keen,
On the dull couch of Luxury to loll,
Stung with disease and stupified with spleen;
Fain to implore the aid of Flattery's screen,
Even from thyself thy loathsome heart to hide,
(The mansion then no more of joy serene)
Where fear, distrust, malevolence, abide,
And impotent desire, and disappointed pride?

9.†

Oh, how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields!
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;

---

* St. 6, 7, 8. All this thought is well and freely handled. *Here peaceful are the vales*, &c.; *Know thine own worth*, &c.; *Canst thou forego*, &c.—*Gray*.

† *Oh, how cans't thou renounce*, &c. But this of all others is my favourite stanza: it is fine poetry; it is inspiration: only (to show it is mortal) there is one blemish; the word *garniture*, suggesting an idea of dress, and, what is worse, of French dress.—*Gray*.

On this Dr. Beattie has remarked, "I have often wished to alter this same word, but have not yet been able to hit upon a better."

All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven,
Oh, how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!

10.*

These charms shall work thy soul's eternal health,
And love, and gentleness, and joy, impart.
But these thou must renounce, if lust of wealth
E'er win its way to thy corrupted heart;
For, ah! it poisons like a scorpion's dart;
Prompting th' ungenerous wish, the selfish scheme,
The stern resolve, unmov'd by pity's smart,
The troublous day, and long distressful dream.
Return, my roving Muse, resume thy purpos'd theme.

11.

There liv'd in Gothic days, as legends tell,
A shepherd-swain, a man of low degree;
Whose sires, perchance, in Fairyland might dwell,
Sicilian groves, or vales of Arcady;

---

* Very well. *Prompting th' ingenuous wish*, &c. But do do not say, *rambling muse: wand'ring*, or *devious*, if you please.—*Gray.*

Upon this Dr. Beattie remarks: "Wandering happens to be in the last line of the next stanza, save one, otherwise it would certainly have been here." He altered it however to *roving*.

But he, I ween, was of the North Countrie: *
A nation fam'd † for song, and beauty's charms;
Zealous, yet modest; innocent, tho' free;
Patient of toil; serene amidst alarms;
Inflexible in faith; invincible in arms.

12.

The shepherd-swain, of whom I mention made,
On Scotia's mountains fed his little flock;
The sickle, scythe, or plough, he never sway'd;
An honest heart was almost all his stock;
His drink the living water from the rock:
The milky dams supply'd his board, and lent
Their kindly fleece to baffle winter's shock;
And he, tho' oft with dust and sweat besprent,
Did guide and guard their wanderings, wheresoe'er they went.

13.

From labour health, from health contentment springs.
Contentment opes the source of every joy.
He envy'd not, he never thought of kings:
Nor from those appetites sustain'd annoy,

---

* There is hardly an ancient Ballad or Romance, wherein a Minstrel or Harper appears, but he is characterized, by way of eminence, to have been "*Of the North Countrie.*' It is probable, that under this appellation were formerly comprehended all the provinces to the north of the Trent. *See Percy's Essay on the English Minstrels.*

† I like this compliment to your country; the simplicity too of the following narrative: only, st. 15, the words *artless* and *simple* are too synonimous to come so near each other.—*Gray.*

The word *simple* was changed to *humble.*

That chance may frustrate, or indulgence cloy;
Nor fate his calm and humble hopes beguil'd;
He mourn'd no recreant friend, nor mistress coy,
For on his vows the blameless Phœbe smil'd,
And her alone he lov'd, and lov'd her from a child.

14.

No jealousy their dawn of love o'ercast,
Nor blasted were their wedded days with strife;
Each season look'd delightful, as it past,
To the fond husband and the faithful wife.
Beyond the lowly vale of shepherd life
They never roam'd; secure beneath the storm,
Which in ambition's lofty land is rife;
Where peace and love are canker'd by the worm
Of pride, each bud of joy industrious to deform.

15.

The wight, whose tale these artless lines unfold,
Was all the offspring of this humble pair.
His birth no oracle or seer foretold:
No prodigy appear'd in earth or air,
Nor aught that might a strange event declare.
You guess each circumstance of EDWIN's birth;
The parent's transport, and the parent's care;
The gossip's prayer for wealth, and wit, and worth;
And one long summer-day of indolence and mirth.

16.

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy;*
Deep thought oft seem'd to fix his infant eye.
Dainties he heeded not, nor gaude, nor toy,
Save one short pipe of rudest minstrelsy.

---

* This is all excellent, and comes very near the level of st. 9, in my esteem: only perhaps, *and some believed him mad*, falls a little too flat, and rather below simplicity.—*Gray.*

Silent when glad; affectionate tho' shy;
And now his look was most demurely sad,
And now he laugh'd aloud, yet none knew why.
The neighbours star'd and sigh'd, yet bless'd the lad;
Some deem'd him wond'rous wise, and some believ'd him mad.

17.

But why should I his childish feats display?
Concourse, and noise, and toil, he ever fled;
Nor cared to mingle in the clamorous fray
Of squabbling imps, but to the forest sped,
Or roam'd at large the lonely mountain's head;
Or, where the maze of some bewilder'd stream
To deep untrodden groves his footsteps led,
There would he wander wild, till Phœbus' beam,
Shot from the western cliff, releas'd the weary team.

18.

The exploit of strength, dexterity, or speed,
To him nor vanity nor joy could bring.
His heart, from cruel sport estrang'd, would bleed
To work the wo of any living thing,
By trap or net, by arrow or by sling;
These he detested, those he scorn'd to wield:
He wish'd to be the guardian, not the king,
Tyrant far less, or traitor of the field.
And sure the sylvan reign unbloody joy might yield.

19.

Lo! where the stripling, wrapt in wonder, roves
Beneath the precipice o'erhung with pine;
And sees, on high, amidst the encircling groves,
From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine:
While waters, woods, and winds, in concert join,
And Echo swells the chorus to the skies.
Would Edwin this majestic scene resign

For aught the huntsman's puny craft supplies?
Ah, no!* he better knows great Nature's charms to prize.

20.

And oft he trac'd the uplands, to survey,
When o'er the sky advanc'd the kindling dawn,
The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountain grey,
And lake, dim gleaming on the smoky lawn;
Far to the west the long, long vale withdrawn,
Where twilight loves to linger for a while;
And now he faintly kens the bounding fawn,
And villager abroad at early toil.—
But, lo! the Sun appears! and heaven, earth, ocean, smile.

21.

And oft the craggy cliff he lov'd to climb,
When all in mist the world below was lost.
What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,
And view the enormous waste of vapor, toss'd
In billows, lengthening to the horizon round,
Now scoop'd in gulfs, with mountains now emboss'd!
And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound,
Flocks, herds, and water-falls, along the hoar profound.

---

* *Ah, no!* By the way, this sort of interjection is rather too frequent with you, and will grow characteristic, if you do not avoid it.

In that part of the poem which you sent me before, you have altered several little particulars much for the better.—*Gray.*

On this, Dr. Beattie observes, "I had sent Mr. Gray from st. 23, to 39, by way of specimen; but Sir W. Forbes remarks, "how they had been originally altered, by Mr. Gray's advice, does not appear."

22.

In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle, and each dreadful scene.
In darkness, and in storm, he found delight:
Nor less, than when on ocean wave serene
The southern sun diffus'd his dazzling shene.
Even sad vicissitude amus'd his soul:
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh, a tear, so sweet, he wish'd not to control.

23.

" O ye wild groves, O where is now your bloom!"
(The Muse interprets thus his tender thought)
" Your flowers, your verdure, and your balmy gloom,
" Of late so grateful in the hour of drought!
" Why do the birds, that song and rapture brought
" To all your bowers, their mansions now forsake?
" Ah! why has fickle chance this ruin wrought?
" For now the storm howls mournful thro' the brake,
" And the dead foliage flies in many a shapeless flake.

24.

" Where now the rill, melodious, pure, and cool,
" And meads, with life, and mirth, and beauty crown'd!
" Ah! see, the unsightly slime, and sluggish pool,
" Have all the solitary vale embrown'd;
" Fled each fair form, and mute each melting sound,
" The raven croaks forlorn on naked spray:
" And, hark! the river, bursting every mound,
" Down the vale thunders; and with wasteful sway,
" Uproots the grove, and rolls the shatter'd rocks away.

25.

" Yet such the destiny of all on earth :
" So flourishes and fades majestic Man.
" Fair is the bud his vernal morn brings forth,
" And fostering gales awhile the nursling fan.
" O smile, ye heavens, serene ! ye mildews wan,
" Ye blighting whirlwinds, spare his balmy prime,
" Nor lessen of his life the little span :
" Borne on the swift, tho' silent, wings of Time,
" Old age comes on apace to ravage all the clime.

26.

" And be it so. Let those deplore their doom,
" Whose hope still grovels in this dark sojourn.
" But lofty souls, who look beyond the tomb,
" Can smile at Fate, and wonder how they mourn.
" Shall Spring to these sad scenes no more return ?
" Is yonder wave the sun's eternal bed ?
" Soon shall the orient with new lustre burn,
" And Spring shall soon her vital influence shed ;
" Again attune the grove, again adorn the mead.

27.

" Shall I be left forgotten in the dust,
" When Fate, relenting, lets the flower revive ?
" Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
" Bid him, tho' doom'd to perish, hope to live ?
" Is it for this fair Virtue oft must strive
" With disappointment, penury, and pain ?—
" No ; Heav'ns immortal Spring shall yet arrive ;
" And man's majestic beauty bloom again,
" Bright thro' the eternal year of Love's triumphant reign."

28.

This truth sublime his simple sire had taught,
In sooth, 'twas almost all the shepherd knew,
No subtile nor superfluous lore he sought,
Nor ever wish'd his Edwin to pursue.
" Let man's own sphere," said he, " confine his view,
" Be man's peculiar work his sole delight."
And much, and oft, he warn'd him to eschew
Falsehood and guile, and aye maintain the right,
By pleasure unseduced, unawed by lawless might.

29.

" And, from the prayer of Want, and plaint of Wo,
" O never, never turn away thine ear!
" Forlorn, in this bleak wilderness below,
" Ah! what were man, should Heaven refuse to hear!
" To others do (the law is not severe)
" What to thyself thou wishest to be done.
" Forgive thy foes; and love thy parents dear,
" And friends and native land; nor those alone;
" All human weal and wo learn thou to make thine own."

30.

See, in the rear of the warm sunny shower,
The visionary boy from shelter fly!
For now the storm of summer-rain is o'er,
And cool, and fresh, and fragrant, is the sky!
And, lo! in the dark east, expanded high,
The rainbow brightens to the setting sun;
Fond fool, that deem'st the streaming glory nigh,
How vain the chace thine ardor has begun!
'Tis fled afar, ere half thy purpos'd race be run.

31.

Yet couldst thou learn, that thus it fares with age,
When pleasure, wealth, or power, the bosom warm,
This baffled hope might tame thy manhood's rage,
And disappointment of her sting disarm.—
But why should foresight thy fond heart alarm?
Perish the lore that deadens young desire!
Pursue, poor imp, the imaginary charm,
Indulge gay Hope, and Fancy's pleasing fire:
Fancy and hope too soon shall of themselves expire.

32.

When the long-sounding curfew from afar*
Loaded with loud lament the lonely gale,
Young Edwin, lighted by the evening star,
Lingering and listening, wandered down the vale.

---

* I believe I took notice, before, of this excess of alliteration, *long*, *loaded*, *loud lament*, *lonely*, *lighted*, *lingering*, *listening;* though the verses are otherwise very good, it looks like affectation.—*Gray.*

Upon this Dr. Beattie remarks: "It does so, and yet it is not affected. I have endeavoured once and again to clear this passage of those obnoxious letters, but I never could please myself. Alliteration has great authorities on its side, but I would never seek for it; nay, except on some very particular occasions, I would rather avoid it. When Mr. Gray, once before, told me of my propensity to alliteration, I repeated to him one of his own lines, which is indeed one of the finest in poetry—

Nor cast one longing lingering look behind."

There would he dream of graves, and corses pale;
And ghosts, that to the charnel-dungeon throng,
And drag a length of clanking chain, and wail,
Till silenc'd by the owl's terrific song,
Or blast, that shrieks, by fits, the shuddering aisles along.

33.

Or, when the setting moon, in crimson dy'd,
Hung o'er the dark and melancholy deep,
To haunted stream, remote from man he hied,
Where Fays of yore their revels wont to keep;
And there let Fancy roam at large, till sleep
A vision brought to his entranced sight.
And first, a wildly-murmuring wind 'gan creep,
Shrill to his ringing ear; then tapers bright,
With instantaneous gleam, illum'd the vault of Night.

34.

Anon, in view, a portal's blazon'd arch
Arose; the trumpet bids the valves unfold,
And forth a host of little warriors march,
Grasping the diamond lance, and targe of gold.
Their look was gentle, their demeanor bold,
And green their helms, and green their silk attire;
And here and there, right venerably old,
The long-rob'd minstrels wake the warbling wire,
And some with mellow breath the martial pipe inspire.

35.

With merriment, and song, and timbrels clear,
A troop of dames from myrtle bowers advance;
The little warriors doff the targe and spear,
And loud enlivening strains provoke the dance.

They meet, they dart away, they wheel askance;
To right, to left, they thrid the flying maze;
Now bound aloft with vigorous spring, then glance
Rapid along: with many-colour'd rays
Of tapers, gems, and gold, the echoing forests blaze.

36.*

The dream is fled. Proud harbinger of day,
Who scar'dst the vision with thy clarion shrill,
Fell chanticleer!† who oft has reft away
My fancied good, and brought substantial ill!

---

* St. 34, 35, 36. Sure you go too far in lengthening a stroke of Edwin's character and disposition into a direct narrative, as of a fact. In the mean time, the poem stands still, and the reader grows impatient. Do you not, in general, indulge a little too much in *description* and *reflection?* This is not my remark only; I have heard it observed by others; and I take notice of it here, because *these* are among the stanzas that might be spared: they are good, nevertheless, and might be laid by, and employed elsewhere to advantage.—*Gray.*

Upon this Dr. Beattie observes, "This remark is perfectly just. All I can say is, that I meant, from the beginning, to take some latitude in the composition of this poem, and not to confine myself to the epical rules for narrative. In an epic poem, these digressions and reflections, &c. would be unpardonable."

† This expression, says Sir W. Forbes, alludes to a singular, but deep-rooted aversion, which Dr. Beattie all his life evinced for the crowing of a cock.

O to thy cursed scream, discordant still,
Let Harmony aye shut her gentle ear:
Thy boastful mirth let jealous rivals spill,
Insult thy crest, and glossy pinions tear,
And ever in thy dreams the ruthless fox appear.

37.

Forbear, my Muse. Let love attune thy line.
Revoke the spell. Thine Edwin frets not so.
For how should he at wicked chance repine,
Who feels from every change amusement flow?
Even now his eyes with smiles of rapture glow,
As on he wanders thro' the scenes of morn,
Where the fresh flowers in living lustre blow,
Where thousand pearls the dewy lawns adorn,
A thousand notes of joy in every breeze are borne.

38.

But who the melodies of morn can tell?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side;
The lowing herd; the sheepfold's simple bell;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley; echoing far and wide
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above;
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide;
The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

39.

The cottage curs at early pilgrim bark;
Crown'd with her pail the tripping milk-maid sings;
The whistling ploughman stalks afield; and, hark!
Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings;

Thro' rustling corn the hare astonish'd springs;
Slow tolls the village-clock the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequester'd bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aerial tour

40.

O Nature, how in every charm supreme!
Whose votaries feast on raptures ever new!
O for the voice and fire of seraphim,
To sing thy glories with devotion due!
Blest be the day I 'scaped the wrangling crew,
From Pyrrho's maze, and Epicurus' sty;
And held high converse with the godlike few,
Who to th' enraptur'd heart, and ear, and eye,
Teach beauty, virtue, truth, and love, and melody.*

41.

Hence! ye, who snare and stupify the mind,
Sophists! of beauty, virtue, joy, the bane!
Greedy and fell, tho' impotent and blind,
Who spread your filthy nets in Truth's fair fane,
And ever ply your venom'd fangs amain!
Hence to dark Error's den, whose rankling slime
First gave you form! hence! lest the Muse should deign
(Tho' loth on theme so mean to waste a rhyme,)
With vengeance to pursue your sacrilegious crime.

---

* Spite of what I have just now said, this digression pleases me so well, that I cannot spare it.—*Gray.*

42.

But hail, ye mighty masters of the lay,
Nature's true sons, the friends of man and truth!
Whose song, sublimely sweet, serenely gay,
Amus'd my childhood, and inform'd my youth.
O let your spirit still my bosom sooth,
Inspire my dreams, and my wild wanderings guide!
Your voice each rugged path of life can smooth;
For well I know, wherever ye reside,
There harmony, and peace, and innocence, abide.

43.

Ah me! neglected on the lonesome plain,
As yet poor Edwin never knew your lore,
Save when against the winter's drenching rain,
And driving snow, the cottage shut the door.
Then, as instructed by tradition hoar,
Her legends when the Beldam 'gan impart,
Or chant the old heroic ditty o'er,
Wonder and joy ran thrilling to his heart;
Much he the tale admir'd, but more the tuneful art.

44.

Various and strange was the long-winded tale;
And halls, and knights, and feats of arms, display'd;
Or merry swains, who quaff the nut-brown ale,
And sing, enamour'd, of the nut-brown maid;
The moon-light revel of the fairy glade;
Or hags, that suckle an infernal brood,
And ply in caves the unutterable trade,*

---

* *Macbeth.* How now, ye secret, black, and midnight hags.
What is't you do?
Witches. A deed without a name.

'Midst fiends and spectres, quench the moon in blood,
Yell in the midnight storm, or ride the infuriate flood.*

45.

But when to horror his amazement rose,
A gentler strain the Beldam would rehearse,
A tale of rural life, a tale of woes,
The orphan babes, and guardian uncle fierce.
O cruel! will no pang of pity pierce
That heart by lust of lucre sear'd to stone!
For sure, if aught of virtue last, or verse,
To latest times shall tender souls bemoan
Those helpless orphan-babes by thy fell arts undone.

46.

Behold, with berries smear'd, with brambles torn,†
The babes now famish'd lay them down to die:
Amidst the howl of darksome woods forlorn,
Folded in one another's arms they lie;
Nor friend, nor stranger, hears their dying cry;
"For from the town the man returns no more."
But thou, who Heaven's just vengeance dar'st defy,
This deed with fruitless tears shalt soon deplore,
When Death lays waste thy house, and flames consume thy store.

---

* *The infuriate flood.* I would not make new words without great necessity: it is very hazardous at best.—*Gray.*

On this Dr. Beattie observes, "I would as soon make new coin, as knowingly make a new word, except I were to invent any art or science where they would be necessary. *Infuriate* is used by Thomson, *Summer*, line 1096.; and, which is much better authority, by Milton: Paradise Lost, b. vi. v. 487.

† See the fine old ballad, called, *The Children in the Wood.*

47.

A stifled smile of stern vindictive joy
Brighten'd one moment Edwin's starting tear.—
" But why should gold man's feeble mind decoy,
" And innocence thus die by doom severe?"
O Edwin! while thy heart is yet sincere,
Th' assaults of discontent and doubt repel:
Dark even at noontide is our mortal sphere;
But let us hope; to doubt, is to rebel;
Let us exult in hope, that all shall yet be well.

48.

Nor be thy generous indignation check'd,
Nor check'd the tender tear to Misery given;
From Guilt's contagious power shall that protect,
This soften and refine the soul for Heaven.
But dreadful is their doom, whom doubt has driven
To censure Fate, and pious Hope forego:
Like yonder blasted boughs by lightning riven,
Perfection, beauty, life, they never know,
But frown on all that pass, a monument of wo.

49.

Shall he, whose birth, maturity, and age,
Scarce fill the circle of one summer-day,
Shall the poor gnat with discontent and rage
Exclaim, that Nature hastens to decay,
If but a cloud obstruct the solar ray,
If but a momentary shower descend!
Or shall frail man Heaven's dread decree gainsay,
Which bade the series of events extend
Wide thro' unnumber'd worlds, and ages without end!

50.

One part, one little part, we dimly scan
Thro' the dark medium of life's feverish dream,
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
If but that little part incongruous seem.*
Nor is that part perhaps what mortals deem;
Oft from apparent ill our blessings rise.
O then, renounce that impious self-esteem,
That aims to trace the secrets of the skies:
For thou art but of dust; be humble, and be wise.

51.

Thus Heaven enlarg'd his soul in riper years;
For Nature gave him strength and fire, to soar
On Fancy's wing above this vale of tears;
Where dark, cold-hearted sceptics, + creeping, pore
Thro' microscope of metaphysic lore;
And much they grope for truth, but never hit.
For why? their powers, inadequate before,
This art preposterous renders more unfit;
Yet deem they darkness light, and their vain blunders wit.

---

* St. 47, 48, 49, 50. All this is very good. But *medium* and *incongruous* being words of art, lose their dignity in my eyes, and savour too much of prose. I would have read the last line, 'Presumptuous child of dust, be humble, and be wise.' But, on second thoughts, perhaps, '*For thou art but of dust*,' is better, and more solemn, from its simplicity.—*Gray*.

+ *Where dark*, &c. You return again to the charge. Had you not said enough before?—*Gray*.

On this Dr. Beattie observes, "What I said before referred only to sophists perverting the truth: this alludes to the method by which they pervert it."

52.

Nor was this ancient dame a foe to mirth,*
Her ballad, jest, and riddle's quaint device,
Oft cheer'd the shepherds round their social hearth;
Whom levity or spleen could ne'er entice
To purchase chat or laughter, at the price
Of decency. Nor let it faith exceed,
That Nature forms a rustic taste so nice.
Ah! had they been of court or city breed,
Such delicacy were right marvellous indeed.

53.

Oft when the winter-storm had ceased to rave,
He roam'd the snowy waste at even, to view
The cloud stupendous, from th' Atlantic wave
High-towering, sail along th' horizon blue:
Where 'midst the changeful scenery ever new
Fancy a thousand wondrous forms descries
More wildly great than ever pencil drew,
Rocks, torrents, gulfs, and shapes of giant-size,
And glittering cliffs on cliffs, and fiery ramparts rise.

54.

Thence musing onward to the sounding shore,
The lone enthuiast oft would take his way,
Listening with pleasing dread to the deep roar
Of the wide-weltering waves. In black array

---

* *Nor was this ancient dame*, &c. Consider, she has not been mentioned for these six stanzas backward.—*Gray.*

When sulphur'ous clouds roll'd on the autumnal day,*
Even then he hasten'd from the haunt of man,
Along the trembling wilderness to stray,
What time the lightning's fierce career began,
And o'er Heaven's rending arch the rattling thunder ran.

55.

Responsive to the sprightly pipe, when all
In sprightly dance the village youth were join'd,
Edwin, of melody aye held in thrall,
From the rude gambol far remote reclin'd,
Sooth'd with the soft notes warbling in the wind.
Ah then, all jollity seem'd noise and folly.
To the pure soul by Fancy's fire refin'd,
Ah what is mirth but turbulence unholy,
When with the charm compar'd of heavenly melancholy!

56.

Is there a heart that music cannot melt?
Alas! how is that rugged heart forlorn!
Is there, who ne'er those mystic transports felt
Of solitude and melancholy born?
He needs not woo the Muse; he is her scorn.†
The sophist's rope of cobweb he shall twine;
Mope o'er the schoolman's peevish page; or mourn,

---

* *The vernal day.* With us it rarely thunders in the spring, but in the summer frequently.—*Gray.*

On this Dr. Beattie remarks, "It sometimes thunders in the latter part of spring. *Sultry day* would be an improvement perhaps." He afterwards made it *autumnal.*

† St. 55, 56. Very pleasing; and has much the rhythm and expression of Milton in his youth. The last four lines strike me less by far.—*Gray.*

And delve for life in Mammon's dirty mine;
Sneak with the scoundrel fox, or grunt with glutton swine.

57.*

For Edwin, Fate a nobler doom had plann'd;
Song was his favorite and first pursuit.
The wild harp rang to his adventurous hand,
And languish'd to his breath the plaintive flute.
His infant muse, tho' artless, was not mute:
Of elegance as yet he took no care;
For this of time and culture is the fruit;
And Edwin gain'd at last this fruit so rare:
As in some future verse I purpose to declare.

---

* The first five lines charming. Might not the mind of your conqueror be checked and softened in the mid-career of his successes, by some domestic misfortune (introduced by way of episode, interesting and new, but not too long,) that Edwin's music and its triumphs may be a little prepared, and more consistent with probability?—*Gray.*

Upon this Dr. Beattie observes, "This is an excellent hint: it refers to something I had been saying in my last letter to Mr. Gray, respecting the plan of what remains of the Minstrel." He further adds, "Mr. Gray has been very particular. I am greatly obliged to him for the freedom of his remarks, and think myself as much so for his objections as for his commendations."

Mr. Gray died a few months (July, 1771) after writing these remarks; consequently before the publication of the Second Book, which was thus deprived of his critical observations. It is remarkable, that Dr. Beattie made no alterations in the second edition of the First Book, but such as had been suggested by Gray, and of them not all. In the Second Book he changed nothing except *mild* for *wild*, the 6th stanza, and added the 34th.

58.

Meanwhile, whate'er of beautiful, or new,
Sublime or dreadful, in earth, sea, or sky;
By chance, or search, was offer'd to his view,
He scann'd with curious and romantic eye.
Whate'er of lore tradition could supply
From Gothic tale, or song, or fable old,
Rous'd him, still keen to listen and to pry.
At last, tho' long by penury control'd,
And solitude, his soul her graces 'gan unfold.

59.

Thus on the chill Lapponian's dreary land,
For many a long month lost in snow profound,
When Sol from Cancer sends the season bland,
And in their northern cave the storms are bound;
From silent mountains, straight, with startling sound,
Torrents are hurl'd; green hills emerge; and lo,
The trees with foliage, cliffs with flowers, are crown'd;
Pure rills thro' vales of verdure warbling go;
And wonder, love, and joy, the peasant's heart o'erflow.*

---

* Spring and Autumn are hardly known to the Laplanders. About the time the sun enters Cancer, their fields, which a week before were covered with snow, appear on a sudden full of grass and flowers. *Scheffer's History of Lapland,* p. 16.

60.

Here pause, my Gothic lyre, a little while.
The leisure hour is all that thou canst claim.
But on this verse if Montague should smile,*
New strains ere long shall animate thy frame,
And her applause to me is more than fame;
For still with truth accords her taste refin'd.
At lucre or renown let others aim,
I only wish to please the gentle mind,
Whom Nature's charms inspire, and love of human kind.

---

* In the first edition it was dedicated to a male friend, (Mr. Arburthnot,) though the name was left blank. The line then ran, with great want of harmony, thus,

But if **** on this labour smile.

And perhaps, as little can be said in defence of that prostitution of praise which transfers the wreathe from one brow to another, as of the capricious censure of Pope, who substituted a new hero to his Dunciad. *The Compiler.*

THE

MINSTREL.

BOOK II.

1.

OF chance or change, Oh let not man complain,
Else shall he never, never cease to wail:
For, from the imperial dome, to where the swain
Rears the lone cottage in the silent dale,
All feel th' assault of fortune's fickle gale;
Art, empire, earth itself, to change are doom'd;
Earthquakes have rais'd to heaven the humble vale,
And gulfs the mountain's mighty mass entomb'd,
And where the Atlantic rolls, wide continents have bloom'd.*

2.

But sure to foreign climes we need not range,
Nor search the ancient records of our race,
To learn the dire effects of time and change,
Which in ourselves, alas! we daily trace.
Yet at the darken'd eye, the wither'd face,
Or hoary hair, I never will repine:
But spare, O Time, whate'er of mental grace,
Of candour, love, or sympathy divine,
Whate'er of fancy's ray, or friendship's flame is mine.

---

* See Plato's Timeus.

3.

So I, obsequious to Truth's dread command,
Shall here without reluctance change my lay,
And smite the Gothic lyre with harsher hand;
Now when I leave that flowery path for aye
Of childhood, where I sported many a day,
Warbling and sauntering carelessly along;
Where every face was innocent and gay,
Each vale romantic, tuneful every tongue,
Sweet, wild, and artless all, as Edwin's infant song.

4.

"Perish the lore that deadens young desire,"
Is the soft tenor of my song no more.
Edwin, tho' lov'd of Heaven, must not aspire
To bliss which mortals never knew before.
On trembling wings let youthful fancy soar,
Nor always haunt the sunny realms of joy
But now and then the shades of life explore,
Tho' many a sound and sight of wo annoy,
And many a qualm of care his rising hopes destroy.

5.

Vigour from toil, from trouble patience grows.
The weakly blossom, warm in summer bower,
Some tints of transient beauty may disclose,
But, soon it withers in the chilling hour.
Mark yonder oaks! superior to the power
Of all the warring winds of heaven they rise,
And from the stormy promontory tower,
And toss their giant arms amid the skies,
While each assailing blast increase of strength supplies.

6.

And now the downy cheek and deepen'd voice
Gave dignity to Edwin's blooming prime;
And walks of wider circuit were his choice,
And vales more wild, and mountains more sublime.
One evening as he framed the careless rhyme,
It was his chance to wander far abroad,
And o'er a lonely eminence to climb,
Which heretofore his foot had never trode;
A vale appear'd below, a deep retir'd abode.

7.

Thither he hied, enamour'd of the scene;
For rocks on rocks pil'd, as by magic spell,
Here scorch'd with lightning, there with ivy green,
Fenc'd from the north and east this savage dell;
Southward a mountain rose with easy swell,
Whose long long groves eternal murmur made;
And toward the western sun a streamlet fell,
Where, thro' the cliffs, the eye, remote survey'd
Blue hills, and glittering waves, and skies in gold array'd.

8.

Along this narrow valley you might see
The wild deer sporting on the meadow ground,
And here and there a solitary tree,
Or mossy stone, or rock with woodbine crown'd.
Oft did the cliffs reverberate the sound
Of parted fragments tumbling from on high;
And from the summit of that craggy mound
The perching eagle oft was heard to cry,
Or on resounding wings to shoot athwart the sky.

9.

One cultivated spot there was, that spread
Its flowery bosom to the noon-day beam,
Where many a rose-bud rears its blushing head,
And herbs for food with future plenty teem.
Sooth'd by the lulling sound of grove and stream,
Romantic visions swarm on Edwin's soul:
He minded not the sun's last trembling gleam,
Nor heard from far the twilight curfew toll;—
When slowly on his ear these moving accents stole.

10.

" Hail, awful scenes, that calm the troubled breast,
" And woo the weary to profound repose;
" Can Passion's wildest uproar lay to rest,
" And whisper comfort to the man of woes!
" Here Innocence may wander, safe from foes,
" And Contemplation soar on seraph wings,
" O Solitude, the man who thee foregoes,
" When lucre lures him, or ambition stings,
" Shall never know the source whence real grandeur springs.

11.

" Vain man! is grandeur given to gay attire?
" Then let the butterfly thy pride upbraid:
" To friends, attendants, armies, bought with hire?
" It is thy weakness that requires their aid:
" To palaces, with gold and gems inlay'd?
" They fear the thief, and tremble in the storm:—
" To hosts, thro' carnage who to conquest wade?
" Behold, the victor vanquish'd by the worm!
" Behold, what deeds of wo the locust can perform!

12.

" True dignity is his, whose tranquil mind
" Virtue has rais'd above the things below;
" Who, every hope and fear to Heaven resign'd,
" Shrinks not, tho' fortune aim her deadliest blow."
This strain from midst the rocks was heard to flow
In solemn sounds. Now beam'd the evening star;
And from embattled clouds emerging slow,
Cynthia came riding on her silver car;
And hoary mountain-cliffs shone faintly from afar.

13.

Soon did the solemn voice its theme renew;
(While Edwin, wrapt in wonder, listening stood)
" Ye tools and toys of tyranny, adieu,
" Scorn'd by the wise, and hated by the good!
" Ye only can engage the servile brood
" Of Levity and Lust, who, all their days,
" Asham'd of truth and liberty, have woo'd,
" And hugg'd the chain, that, glittering on their gaze,
" Seems to outshine the pomp of heaven's empyreal blaze.

14.

" Like them, abandon'd to Ambition's sway,
" I sought for glory in the paths of guile;
" And fawn'd and smil'd, to plunder and betray,
" Myself betray'd and plunder'd all the while;
" So gnaw'd the viper the corroding file.
" But now with pangs of keen remorse, I rue
" Those years of trouble and debasement vile.—
" Yet why should I this cruel theme pursue?
" Fly, fly, detested thoughts, for ever from my view.

15.

" The gusts of appetite, the clouds of care,
" And storms of disappointment, all o'erpast,
" Henceforth no earthly hope with Heaven shall share
" This heart, where peace serenely shines at last.
" And if for me no treasure be amass'd,
" And if no future age shall hear my name,
" I lurk the more secure from fortune's blast,
" And with more leisure feed this pious flame,
" Whose rapture far transcends the fairest hopes of fame.

16.

" The end and the reward of toil is rest.
" Be all my prayer for virtue and for peace.
" Of wealth and fame, of pomp and power possess'd,
" Who ever felt his weight of wo decrease?
" Ah! what avails the lore of Rome and Greece,
" The lay heaven-prompted, and harmonious string,
" The dust of Ophir, or the Tyrian fleece,
" All that art, fortune, enterprise, can bring,
" If envy, scorn, remorse, or pride, the bosom wring!

17.

" Let vanity adorn the marble tomb
" With trophies, rhymes, and scutcheons of renown,
" In the deep dungeon of some Gothic dome,
" Where night and desolation ever frown.
" Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the down;
" Where a green grassy turf is all I crave,
" With here and there a violet bestrown,
" Fast by a brook, or fountain's murmuring wave;
" And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave.

18.

" And thither let the village swain repair;
" And, light of heart, the village maiden gay,
" To deck with flowers her half-dishevell'd hair,
" And celebrate the merry morn of May.
" There let the shepherd's pipe the live-long day,
" Fill all the grove with love's bewitching wo;
" And when mild Evening comes in mantle grey,
" Let not the blooming band make haste to go;
" No ghost nor spell my long and last abode shall know.

19.

" For tho' I fly to 'scape from fortune's rage,
" And bear the scars of envy, spite, and scorn,
" Yet with mankind no horrid war I wage,
" Yet with no impious spleen my breast is torn:
" For virtue lost, and ruin'd man, I mourn.
" O Man! creation's pride, heaven's darling child,
" Whom Nature's best, diviaest gifts adorn,
" Why from thy home are truth and joy exil'd,
" And all thy favorite haunts with blood and tears defil'd!

20.

" Along yon glittering sky what glory streams!
" What majesty attends night's lovely queen!
" Fair laugh our valleys in the vernal beams;
" And mountains rise, and oceans roll between,
" And all conspire to beautify the scene.
" But, in the mental world, what chaos drear!
" What forms of mournful, loathsome, furious mien!
" O when shall that Eternal Morn appear,
" These dreadful forms to chase, this chaos dark to clear!

21.

" O Thou, at whose creative smile, yon heaven,
" In all the pomp of beauty, life, and light
" Rose from the abyss; when dark Confusion, driven
" Down, down the bottomless profound of night,
" Fled, where he ever flies thy piercing sight!
" O glance on these sad shades one pitying ray,
" To blast the fury of oppressive might,
" Melt the hard heart to love and mercy's sway,
" And cheer the wandering soul, and light him on the way.'"

22.

Silence ensued: and Edwin rais'd his eyes
In tears, for grief lay heavy at his heart.
" And is it thus in courtly life," he cries,
" That man to man acts a betrayer's part?
" And dares he thus the gifts of Heaven pervert,
" Each social instinct, and sublime desire?—
" Hail, Poverty! if honor, wealth, and art,
" If what the great pursue, and learn'd admire,
" Thus dissipate and quench the soul's etherial fire!"

23.

He said, and turn'd away; nor did the Sage
O'erhear, in silent orisons employ'd.
The Youth, his rising sorrow to assuage,
Home as he hied, the evening scene enjoy'd:
For now no cloud obscures the starry void;
The yellow moonlight sleeps on all the hills;*
Nor is the mind with startling sounds annoy'd,
A soothing murmur the lone region fills
Of groves, and dying gales, and melancholy rills.

---

* How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!—*Shakspeare.*

24.

But he from day to day more anxious grew,
The voice still seem'd to vibrate on his ear,
Nor durst he hope the Hermit's tale untrue;
For Man he seem'd to love, and Heaven to fear;
And none speaks false, where there is none to hear.
" Yet, can man's gentle heart become so fell!
" No more in vain conjecture let me wear
" My hours away, but seek the Hermit's cell;
" 'Tis he my doubt can clear, perhaps my care dispel."

25.

At early dawn the youth his journey took,
And many a mountain pass'd, and valley wide,
Then reach'd the wild; where in a flowery nook,
And seated on a mossy stone, he spied
An ancient man: his harp lay him beside.
A stag sprang from the pasture at his call,
And, kneeling, lick'd the wither'd hand that tied
A wreath of woodbine round his antlers tall,
And hung his lofty neck with many a floweret small.

26.

And now the hoary Sage arose, and saw
The wanderer approaching: innocence
Smil'd on his glowing cheek, but modest awe
Depress'd his eye, that fear'd to give offence.
" Who art thou, courteous stranger? and from whence?
" Why roam thy steps to this sequester'd dale?"
" A shepherd-boy," the Youth replied, " far hence
" My habitation: hear my artless tale;
" Nor levity nor falsehood shall thine ear assail.

27.

"Late as I roam'd, intent on Nature's charms,
"I reach'd at eve this wilderness profound;
"And, leaning where yon oak expands her arms,
"Heard these rude cliffs thine awful voice rebound,
"(For in thy speech I recognise the sound.)
"You mourn'd for ruin'd man, and virtue lost,
"And seem'd to feel of keen remorse the wound,
"Pondering on former days by guilt engross'd,
"Or in the giddy storm of dissipation toss'd.

28.

"But say, in courtly life can craft be learn'd,
"Where knowledge opens, and exalts the soul?
"Where Fortune lavishes her gifts unearn'd,
"Can selfishness the liberal heart control?
"Is glory there achiev'd by arts, as foul
"As those which felons, fiends, and furies, plan?
"Spiders ensnare, snakes poison, tygers prowl;
"Love is the godlike attribute of man.
"O teach a simple Youth this mystery to scan.

29.

"Or else the lamentable strain disclaim,
"And give me back the calm, contented mind;
"Which, late exulting, view'd in Nature's frame,
"Goodness untainted, wisdom unconfin'd,
"Grace, grandeur, and utility, combin'd.
"Restore those tranquil days, that saw me still
"Well pleas'd with all, but most with human-kind;
"When Fancy roam'd thro' Nature's works at will,
"Uncheck'd by cold distrust, and uninform'd of ill."

30.

"Wouldst thou," the Sage replied, "in peace return,
"To the gay dreams of fond romantic youth,
"Leave me to hide, in this remote sojourn,
"From every gentle ear the dreadful truth:
"For if my desultory strain with ruth
"And indignation make thine eyes o'erflow,
"Alas! what comfort could thy anguish sooth,
"Shouldst thou the extent of human folly know?
"Be ignorance thy choice, where knowledge leads to wo.

31.

"But let untender thoughts afar be driven;
"Nor venture to arraign the dread decree:
"For know, to man, as candidate for heaven,
"The voice of The Eternal said, Be free;
"And this divine prerogative to thee
"Does virtue, happiness, and heaven, convey;
"For virtue is the child of liberty,
"And happiness of virtue; nor can they
"Be free to keep the path, who are not free to stray.

32.

"Yet leave me not. I would allay that grief,
"Which else might thy young virtue overpower,
"And in thy converse I shall find relief,
"When the dark shades of melancholy lower;
"For solitude has many a dreary hour,
"Even when exempt from grief, remorse, and pain:
"Come often then; for, haply, in my bower,
"Amusement, knowledge, wisdom, thou may'st gain.
"If I one soul improve, I have not liv'd in vain."

33.

And now, at length, to Edwin's ardent gaze
The Muse of history unrolls her page.
But few, alas! the scenes her art displays,
To charm his fancy, or his heart engage.
Here chiefs their thirst of power in blood assuage,
And straight their flames with tenfold fierceness burn:
Here smiling Virtue prompts the patriot's rage,
But, lo! ere long, is left alone to mourn,
And languish in the dust, and clasp the abandon'd urn.

34.

" Ambition's slippery verge shall mortals tread,
" Where ruin's gulph unfathom'd yawns beneath!
" Shall life, shall liberty, be lost (he said,)
" For the vain toys that pomp and power bequeath!
" The car of victory, the plume, the wreath,
" Defend not from the bolt of fate the brave:
" No note the clarion of renown can breathe,
" T' alarm the long night of the lonely grave,
" Or check the headlong haste of Time's o'erwhelming wave. *

35.

" Ah! what avails it to have traced the springs,
" That whirl of empire the stupendous wheel!
" Ah! what have I to do with conquering kings,
" Hands drench'd in blood, and breasts begirt with steel!

* Of this stanza, which was added by Dr. Beattie, in a second edition, the Compiler would observe, that it is a close imitation of his friend Gray's stanza in his *Elegy*, beginning,
" Can storied urn or animated bust, &c."

" To those, whom Nature taught to think and feel,
" Heroes, alas! are things of small concern.
" Could History man's secret heart reveal,
" And what imports a heaven-born mind to learn,
" Her transcripts to explore what bosom would not yearn!

36.

" This praise, O Cheronean Sage,* is thine!
" (Why should this praise to thee alone belong ?)
" All else from Nature's moral path decline,
" Lur'd by the toys that captivate the throng;
" To herd in cabinets and camps, among
" Spoil, carnage, and the cruel pomp of pride;
" Or chant, of heraldry, the drowsy song,
" How tyrant blood o'er many a region wide,
" Rolls to a thousand thrones its execrable tide.

37.

" Oh who of man the story will unfold,
" Ere victory and empire wrought annoy,
" In that elysian age (misnam'd of gold)
" The age of love, and innocence, and joy,
" When all were great and free! man's sole employ
" To deck the bosom of his parent earth;
" Or toward his bower the murmuring stream decoy,
" To aid the flowret's long-expected birth,
" And lull the bed of peace, and crown the board of mirth.

38.

" Sweet were your shades, O ye primeval groves,
" Whose boughs to man his food and shelter lent,
" Pure in his pleasures, happy in his loves,
" His eye still smiling, and his heart content.

---

* Plutarch.

" Then, hand in hand, Health, Sport, and Labour, went.
" Nature supply'd the wish she taught to crave.
" None prowl'd for prey, none watch'd to circumvent,
" To all an equal lot Heaven's bounty gave :
" No vassal fear'd his lord, no tyrant fear'd his slave.

39.

" But, ah ! th' Historic Muse has never dar'd
" To pierce those hallow'd bowers : 'tis Fancy's beam
" Pour'd on the vision of the enraptur'd Bard,
" That paints the charms of that delicious theme.
" Then hail, sweet Fancy's ray ! and hail the dream
" That weans the weary soul from guilt and wo !
" Careless what others of my choice may deem,
" I long, where Love and Fancy lead, to go,
" And meditate on Heaven ; enough of earth I know."

40.

" I cannot blame thy choice," the Sage replied,
" For soft and smooth are Fancy's flowery ways.
" And yet even there, if left without a guide,
" The young adventurer unsafely plays.
" Eyes, dazzled long by Fiction's gaudy rays,
" In modest Truth no light nor beauty find.
" And, who, my child, would trust the meteor-blaze,
" That soon must fail, and leave the wanderer blind,
" More dark and helpless far, than if it ne'er had shin'd ?

41.

" Fancy enervates, while it soothes, the heart,
" And while it dazzles, wounds the mental sight :
" To joy, each heightening charm it can impart,
" But wraps the hour of wo in tenfold night.

" And often, where no real ills affright,
" Its visionary fiends, an endless train,
" Assail with equal or superior might,
" And thro' the throbbing heart, and dizzy brain,
" And shivering nerves, shoot stings of more than mortal pain.

42.

" And yet, alas! the real ills of life
" Claim the full vigor of a mind prepar'd,
" Prepar'd for patient, long, laborious strife,
" Its guide Experience, and Truth its guard.
" We fare on earth as other men have far'd:
" Were they successful? Let not us despair.
" Was disappointment oft their sole reward?
" Yet shall their tale instruct, if it declare,
" How they have borne the load ourselves are doom'd to bear.

43.

" What charms the Historic Muse adorn, from spoils,
" And blood, and tyrants, when she wings her flight,
" To hail the patriot Prince, whose pious toils,
" Sacred to science, liberty, and right,
" And peace, thro' every age divinely bright,
" Shall shine the boast and wonder of mankind!
" Sees yonder sun, from his meridian height,
" A lovelier scene, than Virtue thus enshrin'd
" In power, and man with man for mutual aid combin'd?

44.

" Hail, sacred Polity, by Freedom rear'd!
" Hail, sacred Freedom, when by Law restrain'd!
" Without you what were man? A groveling herd
" In darkness, wretchedness, and want, enchain'd.

" Sublim'd by you, the Greek and Roman reign'd
" In arts unrivall'd: Oh, to latest days,
" In Albion may your influence, unprofan'd,
" To godlike worth the generous bosom raise,
" And prompt the Sage's lore, and fire the Poet's lays!

45.

" But now let other themes our care engage.
" For, lo! with modest yet majestic grace,
" To curb Imagination's lawless rage,
" And from within the cherish'd heart to brace,
" Philosophy appears. The gloomy race
" By Indolence and moping Fancy bred,
" Fear, Discontent, Solicitude, give place,
" And Hope and Courage brighten in their stead.
" While on the kindling soul her vital beams are shed.

46.

" Then waken from long lethargy to life *
" The seeds of happiness, and powers of thought;
" Then jarring appetites forego their strife,
" A strife by ignorance to madness wrought.
" Pleasure by savage man is dearly bought
" With fell revenge, lust that defies control,
" With gluttony and death. The mind untaught
" Is a dark waste, where fiends and tempests howl;
" As Phœbus to the world, is Science to the soul.

---

* The influence of the Philosophic Spirit, in humanizing the mind, and preparing it for intellectual exertion, and delicate pleasure;—in exploring, by the help of geometry, the system of the universe;—in banishing superstition;—in promoting navigation, agriculture, medicine, and moral and political science;—from stanza 46 to stanza 56.

47.

" And Reason now, thro' number, time, and space,
" Darts the keen lustre of her serious eye,
" And learns, from facts compar'd, the laws to trace,
" Whose long progression leads to Deity.
" Can mortal strength presume to soar so high!
" Can mortal sight, so oft bedimm'd with tears,
" Such glory bear!—for lo! the shadows fly
" From Nature's face; Confusion disappears,
" And order charms the eyes, and harmony the ears.

48.

" In the deep windings of the grove, no more
" The hag obscene, and grisly phantom dwell;
" Nor in the fall of mountain-stream, or roar
" Of winds, is heard the angry spirit's yell;
" No wizard mutters the tremendous spell,
" Nor sinks convulsive in prophetic swoon;
" Nor bids the noise of drums and trumpets swell,
" To ease, of fancied pangs, the lab'ring moon,
" Or chase the shade that blots the blazing orb of noon."

49.

" Many a long lingering year, in lonely isle,
" Stunn'd with the eternal turbulence of waves,
" Lo, with dim eyes, that never learn'd to smile,
" And trembling hands, the famish'd native craves
" Of Heaven his wretched fare: shivering in caves,
" Or scorch'd on rocks, he pines from day to day;
" But Science gives the word; and lo, he braves
" The surge and tempest, lighted by her ray,
" And to a happier land wafts merrily away.

50.

"And even where Nature loads the teeming plain
"With the full pomp of vegetable store,
"Her bounty, unimprov'd, is deadly bane:
"Dark woods, and rankling wilds, from shore to shore,
"Stretch their enormous gloom; which to explore
"Even Fancy trembles in her sprightliest mood;
"For there each eye-ball gleams with lust of gore,
"Nestles each murderous and each monstrous brood,
"Plague lurks in every shade, and streams from every flood.

51.

"'Twas from Philosophy man learned to tame
"The soil by plenty to intemperance fed.
"Lo! from the echoing axe, and thundering flame,
"Poison and plague and yelling rage are fled.
"The waters, bursting from their slimy bed,
"Bring health and melody to every vale:
"And, from the breezy main and mountain's head,
"Ceres and Flora, to the sunny dale,
"To fan their glowing charms, invite the fluttering gale.

52.

"What dire necessities on every hand
"Our art, our strength, our fortitude, require!
"Of foes intestine what a numerous band
"Against this little throb of life conspire!
"Yet Science can elude their fatal ire
"Awhile, and turn aside Death's levell'd dart,
"Sooth the sharp pang, allay the fever's fire,
"And brace the nerves once more, and cheer the heart,
"And yet a few soft nights and balmy days impart.

53.

" Nor less to regulate man's moral frame
" Science exerts her all-composing sway.
" Flutters thy breast with fear, or pants for fame,
" Or pines to Indolence and Spleen a prey,
" Or Avarice, a fiend more fierce than they?
" Flee to the shades of Academus' grove;
" Where cares molest not, discord melts away
" In harmony, and the pure passions prove
" How sweet the words of truth breath'd from the lips of love.

54.

" What cannot Art and Industry perform,
" When Science plans the progress of their toil!
" They smile at penury, disease, and storm;
" And oceans from their mighty mounds recoil.
" When tyrants scourge, or demagogues embroil
" A land, or when the rabble's headlong rage
" Order transforms to anarchy and spoil,
" Deep-vers'd in man the philosophic Sage
" Prepares with lenient hand their phrenzy to assuage.

55.

" 'Tis he alone, whose comprehensive mind,
" From situation, temper, soil, and clime
" Explor'd, a nation's various powers can bind
" And various orders, in one form sublime
" Of polity, that, 'midst the wrecks of time,
" Secure shall lift its head on high, nor fear
" Th' assault of foreign or domestic crime,
" While public faith, and public love sincere,
" And Industry and Law maintain their sway severe."

56.

Enraptur'd by the Hermit's strain, the Youth
Proceeds the path of Science to explore.
And now, expanding to the beams of Truth,
New energies, and charms unknown before,
His mind discloses : Fancy now no more
Wantons on fickle pinion thro' the skies ;
But, fix'd in aim, and conscious of her power,
Sublime from cause to cause exults to rise,
Creation's blended stores arranging as she flies.

57.

Nor love of novelty alone inspires,
Their laws and nice dependencies to scan;
For mindful of the aids that life requires,
And of the services man owes to man,
He meditates new arts on Nature's plan;
The cold desponding breast of Sloth to warm,
The flame of Industry and Genius fan,
And Emulation's noble rage alarm,
And the long hours of Toil and Solitude to charm.

58.

But she, who set on fire his infant heart,
And all his dreams, and all his wanderings shar'd
And bless'd, the Muse, and her celestial art,
Still claim the Enthusiast's fond and first regard.
From Nature's beauties variously compar'd
And variously combin'd, he learns to frame
Those forms of bright perfection,* which the Bard,
While boundless hopes and boundless views inflame,
Enamour'd consecrates to never-dying fame.

---

* General ideas of excellence, the immediate archetypes of sublime imitation, both in painting and poetry. *See Aristotle's Poetics, and the Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

59.

Of late, with cumbersome, tho' pompous show,
Edwin would oft his flowery rhyme deface,
Through ardour to adorn; but Nature now
To his experienced eye a modest grace
Presents, where Ornament the second place
Holds, to intrinsic worth and just design
Subservient still. Simplicity apace
Tempers his rage: he owns her charm divine,
And clears th' ambiguous phrase, and lops th' unwieldy line.

60.

Fain would I sing (much yet unsung remains)
What sweet delirium o'er his bosom stole,
When the great Shepherd of the Mantuan plains*
His deep majestic melody 'gan roll:
Fain would I sing what transport storm'd his soul,
How the red current throb'd his veins along,
When, like Pelides, bold beyond controul,
Without art graceful, without effort strong,
Homer rais'd high to heaven the loud, th' impetuous song.

61.

And how his lyre, though rude her first essays,
Now skilled to sooth, to triumph, to complain,
Warbling at will through each harmonious maze,
Was taught to modulate the artful strain,
I fain would sing:—but, ah! I strive in vain.
Sighs from a breaking heart my voice confound,
With trembling step, to join yon weeping train,
I haste, where gleams funereal glare around,
And, mix'd with shrieks of wo, the knells of death resound.

---

* Virgil.

62.

Adieu, ye lays, that Fancy's flowers adorn,
The soft amusement of the vacant mind!
He sleeps in dust, and all the Muses mourn,
He, whom each virtue fir'd, each grace refin'd,
Friend, teacher, pattern, darling of mankind!*
He sleeps in dust. Ah, how shall I pursue
My theme! To heart-consuming grief resign'd,
Here on his recent grave I fix my view,
And pour my bitter tears. Ye flowery lays, adieu!

63.

Art thou, my GREGORY, for ever fled!
And am I left to unavailing wo!
When fortune's storms assail this weary head,
Where cares long since have shed untimely snow!
Ah, now for comfort whither shall I go!
No more thy soothing voice my anguish cheers:
Thy placid eyes with smiles no longer glow,
My hopes to cherish, and allay my fears.
'Tis meet that I should mourn: flow forth afresh my tears.

---

* This excellent person died suddenly on the 10th of February, 1773. The conclusion of the poem was written a few days after.

RETIREMENT.

1758.

WHEN in the crimson cloud of Even,
The lingering light decays,
And Hesper on the front of Heaven
His glittering gem displays;
Deep in the silent vale, unseen,
Beside a lulling stream,
A pensive Youth, of placid mien,
Indulg'd this tender theme.

Ye cliffs, in hoary grandeur pil'd
High o'er the glimmering dale;
Ye woods, along whose windings wild
Murmurs the solemn gale:
Where Melancholy strays forlorn,
And Wo retires to weep,
What time the wan moon's yellow horn
Gleams on the western deep:

To you, ye wastes, whose artless charms
Ne'er drew Ambition's eye,
Scap'd a tumultuous world's alarms,
To your retreats I fly.
Deep in your most sequester'd bower
Let me at last recline,
Where Solitude, mild modest Power,
Leans on her ivy'd shrine.

How shall I woo thee, matchless Fair!
Thy heavenly smile how win!
Thy smile that smooths the brow of Care,
And stills the storm within.
O wilt thou to thy favourite grove
Thine ardent votary bring,
And bless his hours, and bid them move
Serene, on silent wing!

Oft let Remembrance sooth his mind
With dreams of former days,
When in the lap of Peace reclin'd,
He fram'd his infant lays;
When Fancy rov'd at large, nor Care
Nor cold Distrust alarm'd,
Nor Envy with malignant glare
His simple youth had harm'd.

'Twas then, O Solitude! to thee
His early vows were paid,
From heart sincere, and warm, and free,
Devoted to the shade.
Ah why did Fate his steps decoy
In stormy paths to roam,
Remote from all congenial joy!—
Oh take the Wanderer home.

Thy shades, thy silence, now be mine,
Thy charms my only theme;
My haunt the hollow cliff, whose pine
Waves o'er the gloomy stream.
Whence the scar'd owl on pinions gray
Breaks from the rustling boughs,
And down the lone vale sails away
To more profound repose.

Oh, while to thee the woodland pours
Its wildly warbling song,
And balmy, from the bank of flowers,
The zephyr breathes along;
Let no rude sound invade from far,
No vagrant foot be nigh,
No ray from Grandeur's gilded car,
Flash on the startled eye.

But if some pilgrim through the glade
Thy hallow'd bowers explore,
O guard from harm his hoary head,
And listen to his lore;
For he of joys divine shall tell
That wean from earthly wo,
And triumph o'er the mighty spell
That chains his heart below.

For me, no more the path invites
Ambition loves to tread;
No more I climb those toilsome heights
By guileful Hope misled;
Leaps my fond fluttering heart no more
To Mirth's enlivening strain;
For present pleasure soon is o'er,
And all the past is vain.

ELEGY.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1758.

STILL shall unthinking man substantial deem
The forms that fleet thro' life's deceitful dream;
Till at some stroke of Fate the vision flies,
And sad realities in prospect rise;
And, from elysian slumbers rudely torn,
The startled soul awakes, to think, and mourn.

O ye, whose hours in jocund train advance,
Whose spirits to the song of gladness dance,
Who flowery plains in endless pomp survey,
Glittering in beams of visionary day;
Oh, yet while Fate delays th' impending wo,
Be rous'd to thought, anticipate the blow;
Lest, like the lightning's glance, the sudden ill
Flash to confound, and penetrate to kill;
Lest, thus encompass'd with funereal gloom,
Like me, ye bend o'er some untimely tomb,
Pour your wild ravings in Night's frighted ear,
And half pronounce Heaven's sacred doom severe.

Wise, Beauteous, Good! O every grace combin'd,
That charms the eye, or captivates the mind!
Fresh, as the floweret opening on the morn,
Whose leaves bright drops of liquid pearl adorn!
Sweet, as the downy-pinion'd gale, that roves
To gather fragrance in Arabian groves!
Mild, as the melodies at close of day,
That heard remote along the vale decay!

Yet, why with these compar'd? What tints so fine,
What sweetness, mildness, can be match'd with thine?
Why roam abroad, since recollection true
Restores the lovely form to Fancy's view?
Still let me gaze, and every care beguile,
Gaze on that cheek, where all the graces smile;
That soul-expressing eye, benignly bright,
Where meekness beams ineffable delight;
That brow, where Wisdom sits enthron'd serene,
Each feature forms, and dignifies the mien:
Still let me listen, while her words impart
The sweet effusions of the blameless heart,
Till all my soul, each tumult charm'd away,
Yields, gently led, to Virtue's easy sway.

By thee inspir'd, O Virtue, Age is young,
And music warbles from the falt'ring tongue:
Thy ray creative cheers the clouded brow,
And decks the faded cheek with rosy glow,
Brightens the joyless aspect, and supplies
Pure heavenly lustre to the languid eyes:
But when Youth's living bloom reflects thy beams,
Resistless on the view the glory streams,
Love, Wonder, Joy, alternately alarm,
And Beauty dazzles with angelic charm.

Ah whither fled! ye dear illusions stay!
Lo, pale and silent lies the lovely clay.
How are the roses on that cheek decay'd,
Which late the purple light of youth display'd!
Health on her form each sprightly grace bestow'd;
With life and thought each speaking feature glow'd.
Fair was the blossom, soft the vernal sky;
Elate with hope we deem'd no tempest nigh;
When lo, a whirlwind's instantaneous gust
Left all its beauties withering in the dust.

Cold the soft hand, that sooth'd Wo's weary head!
And quench'd, the eye, the pitying tear that shed!
And mute the voice, whose pleasing accents stole,
Infusing balm, into the rankled soul!
O Death, why arm with cruelty thy power,
And spare the idle weed, yet lop the flower!
Why fly thy shafts in lawless error driven!
Is Virtue then no more the care of Heaven!
But peace, bold thought! be still, my bursting heart!
We, not ELIZA, felt the fatal dart.
Escap'd the dungeon, does the slave complain,
Nor bless the friendly hand that broke the chain?
Say, pines not Virtue for the lingering morn,
On this dark wild condemn'd to roam forlorn!
Where Reason's meteor-rays, with sickly glow,
O'er the dun gloom a dreadful glimmering throw;
Disclosing, dubious, to th' affrighted eye,
O'erwhelming mountains tottering from on high,
Black billowy deeps in storms perpetual toss'd,
And weary ways in wildering labyrinths lost.
O happy stroke, that bursts the bonds of clay,
Darts through the rending gloom the blaze of day,
And wings the soul with boundless flight to soar,
Where dangers threat, and fears alarm no more.

Transporting thought! here let me wipe away
The tear of grief, and wake a bolder lay.
But, ah! the swimming eye o'erflows anew;
Nor check the sacred drops to pity due;
Lo, where in speechless, hopeless anguish, bend,
O'er her lov'd dust, the Parent, Brother, Friend!
How vain the hope of man! But cease thy strain,
Nor Sorrow's dread solemnity profane;
Mix'd with yon drooping Mourners, on her bier
In silence shed the sympathetic tear.

ODE TO HOPE.

I. 1.

O THOU, who glad'st the pensive soul,
More than Aurora's smile the swain forlorn,
Left all night long to mourn
Where desolation frowns, and tempests howl;
And shrieks of wo, as intermits the storm,
Far o'er the monstrous wilderness resound,
And cross the gloom darts many a shapeless form,
And many a fire-eyed visage glares around;
O come, and be once more my guest:
Come, for thou oft thy suppliant's vow hast heard,
And oft with smiles indulgent chear'd
And sooth'd him into rest.

I. 2.

Smit by thy rapture-beaming eye
Deep flashing thro' the midnight of their mind,
The sable bands combin'd,
Where Fear's black blanner bloats the troubled sky,
Appall'd retire. Suspicion hides her head,
Nor dares th' obliquely gleaming eyeball raise
Despair, with gorgon-figured veil o'erspread,
Speeds to dark Phlegethon's detested maze.
Lo, startled at the heavenly ray,
With speed unwonted Indolence upsprings,
And, heaving, lifts her leaden wings,
And sullen glides away;

I. 3.

Ten thousand forms, by pining Fancy view'd,
Dissolve.—Above the sparkling flood
When Phœbus rears his awful brow,
From lengthening lawn and valley low
The troops of fen-born mists retire.
Along the plain
The joyous swain
Eyes the gay villages again,
And gold illumin'd spire;
While on the billowy ether borne
Floats the loose lay's jovial measure;
And light along the fairy Pleasure,
Her green robes glittering to the morn,
Wantons on silken wing. And goblins all
To the damp dungeon shrink, or hoary hall,
Or westward, with impetuous flight,
Shoot to the desert realms of their congenial Night.

II. 1.

When first on Childhood's eager gaze
Life's varied landscape, stretch'd immense around,
Starts out of night profound,
Thy voice incites to tempt th' untrodden maze.
Fond he surveys thy mild maternal face,
His bashful eye still kindling as he views,
And, while thy lenient arm supports his pace,
With beating heart the upland path pursues:
The path that leads, where, hung sublime,
And seen afar, youth's gallant trophies, bright
In Fancy's rainbow ray, invite
His wingy nerves to climb.

II. 2.

Pursue thy pleasurable way,
Safe in the guidance of thy heavenly guard,
While melting airs are heard
And soft-ey'd, cherub forms around thee play:
Simplicity, in careless flowers array'd,
Prattling amusive in his accent meek;
And Modesty, half turning as afraid,
The smile just dimpling on his glowing cheek!
Content and Leisure, hand in hand
With Innocence and Peace, advance, and sing;
And Mirth, in many a mazy ring,
Frisks o'er the flowery land.

II. 3.

Frail man, how various is thy lot below!
To-day tho' gales propitious blow,
And Peace soft gliding down the sky
Leads Love along and Harmony,
To-morrow the gay scene deforms:
Then all around
The thunder's sound
Rolls rattling on through heaven's profound,
And down rush all the storms.
Ye days, that balmy influence shed,
When sweet Childhood, ever sprightly,
In paths of pleasure sported lightly,
Whither, ah whither are ye fled!
Ye cherub train, that brought him on his way,
Oh leave him not midst tumult and dismay;
For now youth's eminence he gains:
But what a weary length of lingering toil remains!

III. 1.

They shrink, they vanish into air,
Now Slander taints with pestilence the gale;
And mingling cries assail,
The wail of Wo, and groan of grim Despair.
Lo, wizard Envy from his serpent eye
Darts quick destruction in each baleful glance;
Pride smiling stern, and yellow Jealousy,
Frowning Disdain, and haggard Hate advance;
Behold, amidst the dire array,
Pale wither'd Care his giant-stature rears,
And lo, his iron hand prepares
To grasp its feeble prey.

III. 2.

Who now will guard bewilder'd youth
Safe from the fierce assault of hostile rage?
Such war can Virtue wage,
Virtue, that bears the sacred shield of Truth?
Alas! full oft on Guilt's victorious car,
The spoils of Virtue are in triumph borne;
While the fair captive, mark'd with many a scar,
In lone obscurity, oppress'd, forlorn,
Resigns to tears her angel form.
Ill-fated youth, then whither wilt thou fly?
No friend, no shelter, now is nigh,
And onward rolls the storm.

III. 3.

But whence the sudden beam that shoots along?
Why shrink aghast the hostile throng?
Lo, from amidst Affliction's night,
Hope bursts all radiant on the sight;

Her words the troubled bosom sooth.
" Why thus dismay'd?
" Though foes invade,
" Hope ne'er is wanting to their aid,
" Who tread the path of truth.
" 'Tis I, who smooth the rugged way,
" I, who close the eyes of Sorrow,
" And with glad visions of to-morrow
" Repair the weary soul's decay.
" When Death's cold touch thrills to the freezing heart,
" Dreams of heaven's opening glories I impart,
" Till the freed spirit springs on high
" In rapture too severe for weak Mortality."

PYGMÆO-GERANO-MACHIA:

THE

BATTLE OF THE PYGMIES AND CRANES.

FROM THE LATIN OF ADDISON.

1762.

THE pygmy-people, and the feather'd train,
Mingling in mortal combat on the plain,
I sing. Ye Muses, favour my designs,
Lead on my squadrons, and arrange the lines;
The flashing swords and fluttering wings display,
And long bills nibbling in the bloody fray;
Cranes darting with disdain on tiny foes,
Conflicting birds and men, and war's unnumber'd woes.
The wars and woes of heroes six feet long
Have oft resounded in Pierian song.
Who has not heard of Colchos' golden fleece,
And Argo mann'd with all the flower of Greece?
Of Thebes' fell brethren, Theseus stern of face,
And Peleus' son unrivall'd in the race,
Eneas founder of the Roman line,
And William glorious on the banks of Boyne?
Who has not learn'd to weep at Pompey's woes,
And over Blackmore's epic page to doze?

'Tis I, who dare attempt unusual strains,
Of hosts unsung, and unfrequented plains:
The small shrill trump, and chiefs of little size,
And armies rushing down the darken'd skies.
Where India reddens to the early dawn,
Winds a deep vale from vulgar eye withdrawn:
Bosom'd in groves the lowly region lies,
And rocky mountains round the border rise.
Here, till the doom of Fate its fall decreed,
The empire flourish'd of the pigmy-breed;
Here Industry perform'd, and Genius plann'd,
And busy multitudes o'erspread the land.
But now to these lone bounds if pilgrim stray,
Tempting through craggy cliffs the desperate way,
He finds the puny mansion fallen to earth,
Its godlings mouldering on th' abandon'd hearth;
And starts, where small white bones are spread around,
"Or little footsteps lightly print the ground;"
While the proud crane her nest securely builds,
Chattering amid the desolated fields.

But different fates befel her hostile rage,
While reign'd, invincible thro' many an age,
The dreaded Pygmy: rous'd by war's alarms
Forth rush'd the madding Mannikin to arms.
Fierce to the field of death the hero flies;
The faint Crane fluttering flaps the ground, and dies;
And by the victor borne (o'erwhelming load!)
With bloody bill loose-dangling marks the road.
And oft the wily dwarf in ambush lay,
And often made the callow young his prey;
With slaughter'd victims heap'd his board, and smil'd
T' avenge the parent's trespass on the child.
Oft, where his feather'd foe had rear'd her nest,
And laid her eggs and household gods to rest,

Burning for blood, in terrible array,
The eighteen-inch militia burst their way:
All went to wreck; the infant foeman fell,
When scarce his chirping bill had broke the shell.
Loud uproar hence, and rage of arms arose,
And the fell rancour of encountering foes;
Hence dwarfs and cranes one general havoc whelms,
And Death's grim visage scares the pygmy-realms.
Not half so furious blaz'd the warlike fire
Of Mice, high theme of the Meonian lyre;
When bold to battle march'd th' accoutred frogs,
And the deep tumult thunder'd through the bogs,
Pierc'd by the javelin bulrush on the shore
Here agonizing roll'd the mouse in gore;
And there the frog, (a scene full sad to see!)
Shorn of one leg, slow sprawl'd along on three:
He vaults no more with vigorous hops on high,
But mourns in hoarsest croaks his destiny.
And now the day of wo drew on apace,
A day of wo to all the pygmy-race,
When dwarfs were doom'd (but penitence was vain)
To rue each broken egg and chicken slain.
For rous'd to vengeance by repeated wrong,
From distant climes the long-bill'd regions throng:
From Strymon's lake, Cäyster's plashy meads,
And fens of Scythia green with rustling reeds;
From where the Danube winds thro' many a land,
And Mareotis laves th' Egyptian strand,
To rendezvous they waft on eager wing,
And wait assembled the returning spring.
Meanwhile they trim their plumes for length of flight,
Whet their keen beaks, and twisting claws, for fight;
Each crane the pygmy power in thought o'erturns,
And every bosom for the battle burns.

When genial gales the frozen air unbind,
The screaming legions wheel, and mount the wind:
Far in the sky they form their long array,
And land and ocean stretch'd immense survey
Deep deep beneath; and, triumphing in pride,
With clouds and winds commix'd, innumerous ride:
'Tis wild obstreperous clangour all, and heaven
Whirls, in tempestuous undulation driven.
Nor less th' alarm that shook the world below,
Where march'd in pomp of war th' embattled foe;
Where mannikins with haughty step advance,
And grasp the shield, and couch the quivering lance:
To right and left the lengthening lines they form,
And rank'd in deep array await the storm.
High in the midst the chieftain-dwarf was seen,
Of giant-stature and imperial mien:
Full twenty inches tall, he strode along,
And view'd with lofty eye the wondering throng;
And while with many a scar his visage frown'd,
Bared his broad bosom, rough with many a wound
Of beaks and claws, disclosing to their sight
The glorious meed of high heroic might.
For with insatiate vengeance, he pursu'd,
And never-ending hate, the feathery brood.
Unhappy they, confiding in the length
Of horny beak, or talon's crooked strength,
Who durst abide his rage; the blade descends,
And from the panting trunk the pinion rends:
Laid low in dust the pinion waves no more,
The trunk disfigur'd stiffens in its gore.
What hosts of heroes fell beneath his force!
What heaps of chicken carnage mark'd his course!
How oft, O Strymon, thy lone banks along,
Did wailing Echo waft the funeral song!

And now from far the mingling clamours rise,
Loud and more loud rebounding through the skies.
From skirt to skirt of heaven, with stormy sway,
A cloud rolls on, and darkens all the day.
Near and more near descends the dreadful shade,
And now in battailous array display'd
On sounding wings, and screaming in their ire,
The cranes rush onward, and the fight require.

The pygmy warriors eye with fearless glare
The host thick swarming o'er the burden'd air;
Thick swarming now, but to their native land
Doom'd to return a scanty straggling band.—
When sudden, darting down the depth of heaven,
Fierce on th' expecting foe the cranes are driven.
The kindling phrensy every bosom warms,
The region echoes to the crash of arms:
Loose feathers from th' encountering armies fly,
And in careering whirlwinds mount the sky.
To breathe from toil upsprings the panting crane,
Then with fresh vigour downward darts again.
Success in equal balance hovering hangs.
Here, on the sharp spear, mad with mortal pangs,
The bird transfix'd in bloody vortex whirls,
Yet fierce in death the threatening talon curls;
There, while the life-blood bubbles from his wound,
With little feet the pygmy beats the ground;
Deep from his breast the short short sob he draws,
And dying curses the keen-pointed claws.
Trembles the thundering field, thick cover'd o'er
With falchions, mangled wings, and streaming gore,
And pygmy arms, and beaks of ample size,
And here a claw, and there a finger lies.

Encompass'd round with heaps of slaughter'd foes,
All grim in blood the pygmy champion glows.

And on th' assailing host impetuous springs,
Careless of nibbling bills and flapping wings;
And midst the tumult wheresoe'er he turns,
The battle with redoubled fury burns;
From ev'ry side th' avenging cranes amain
Throng, to o'erwhelm this terror of the plain.
When suddenly (for such the will of Jove)
A fowl enormous, sousing from above,
The gallant chieftain clutch'd, and, soaring high,
(Sad chance of battle!) bore him up the sky.
The cranes pursue, and clustering in a ring,
Chatter triumphant round the captive king.
But, ah! what pangs each pygmy bosom wrung,
When, now to cranes a prey, on talons hung,
High in the clouds they saw their helpless lord,
His wriggling form still lessening as he soar'd.
  Lo! yet again, with unabated rage,
In mortal strife the mingling hosts engage.
The crane with darted bill assaults the foe,
Hovering; then wheels aloft to scape the blow:
The dwarf in anguish aims the vengeful wound;
But whirls in empty air the falchion round.
  Such was the scene, when midst the loud alarms
Sublime th' eternal Thunderer rose in arms.
When Briarëus, by mad ambition driven,
Heav'd Pelion huge, and hurl'd it high at heaven.
Jove roll'd redoubling thunders from on high,
Mountains and bolts encounter'd in the sky;
Till one stupendous ruin whelm'd the crew,
Their vast limbs weltering wide in brimstone blue.
  But now at length the pygmy legions yield,
And wing'd with terror fly the fatal field.
They raise a weak and melancholy wail,
All in distraction scattering o'er the vale.

Prone on their routed rear the cranes descend;
Their bills bite furious, and their talons rend:
With unrelenting ire they urge the chace,
Sworn to exterminate the hated race.
'Twas thus the Pygmy Name, once great in war,
For spoils of conquer'd cranes renown'd afar,
Perish'd. For, by the dread decree of Heaven,
Short is the date to earthly grandeur given,
And vain are all attempts to roam beyond
Where Fate has fix'd the everlasting bound.
Fallen are the trophies of Assyrian power,
And Persia's proud dominion is no more;
Yea, though to both superior far in fame,
Thine empire, Latium, is an empty name.
And now with lofty chiefs of ancient time,
The pygmy heroes roam th' elysian clime.
Or, if belief to matron-tales be due,
Full oft, in the belated shepherd's view,
Their frisking forms, in gentle green array'd,
Gambol secure amid the moonlight glade.
Secure, for no alarming cranes molest,
And all their woes in long oblivion rest:
Down the deep vale, and narrow winding way,
They foot it featly, rang'd in ringlets gay:
'Tis joy and frolic all, where'er they rove,
And Fairy-people is the name they love.

THE HARES.

A FABLE.

YES, yes, I grant the sons of earth
Are doom'd to trouble from their birth.
We all of sorrow have our share;
But say, is yours without compare?
Look round the world; perhaps you'll find
Each individual of our kind
Press'd with an equal load of ill,
Equal at least. Look further still,
And own your lamentable case
Is little short of happiness.
In yonder hut that stands alone
Attend to Famine's feeble moan;
Or view the couch where Sickness lies,
Mark his pale cheek, and languid eyes,
His frame by strong convulsion torn,
His struggling sighs, and looks forlorn.
Or see, transfix'd with keener pangs,
Where o'er his hoard the miser hangs;
Whistles the wind; he starts, he stares,
Nor Slumber's balmy blessing shares
Despair, Remorse, and Terror, roll
Their tempests on his harrass'd soul.
But here perhaps it may avail
T' enforce our reasoning with a tale.

Mild was the morn, the sky serene,
The jolly hunting band convene,
The beagle's breast with ardour burns,
The bounding steed the champaign spurns,
And Fancy oft the game descries
Thro' the hound's nose and huntsman's eyes.
Just then, a council of the hares
Had met, on national affairs.
The chiefs were set; while o'er their head
The furze its frizzled covering spread.
Long lists of grievances were heard,
And general discontent appear'd.
" Our harmless race shall every savage
" Both quadruped and biped ravage?
" Shall horses, hounds, and hunters, still
" Unite their wits to work us ill?
" The youth, his parent's sole delight,
" Whose tooth the dewy lawns invite,
" Whose pulse in every vein beats strong,
" Whose limbs leap light the vales along,
" May yet ere noontide meet his death,
" And lie dismember'd on the heath.
" For youth, alas, nor cautious age,
" Nor strength, nor speed, eludes their rage.
" In every field we meet the foe,
" Each gale comes fraught with sounds of wo:
" The morning but awakes our fears,
" The evening sees us bath'd in tears.
" But must we ever idly grieve,
" Nor strive our fortunes to relieve?
" Small is each individual's force:
" To stratagem be our recourse;
" And then, from all our tribes combin'd,
" The murderer to his cost may find

"No foes are weak, whom Justice arms,
"Whom Concord leads, and Hatred warms.
"Be rous'd; or liberty acquire,
"Or in the great attempt expire."
He said no more, for in his breast
Conflicting thoughts the voice suppress'd:
The fire of vengeance seem'd to stream
From his swoln eyeball's yellow gleam.
And now the tumults of the war,
Mingling confusedly from afar,
Swell in the wind. Now louder cries
Distinct of hounds and men arise.
Forth from the brake, with beating heart,
Th' assembled hares tumultuous start,
And, every straining nerve on wing,
Away precipitately spring.
The hunting band, a signal given,
Thick thundering o'er the plain are driven;
O'er cliff abrupt, and shrubby mound,
And river broad, impetuous bound;
Now plunge amid the forest shades,
Glance through the openings of the glades;
Now oe'r the level valley sweep,
Now with short steps strain up the steep;
While backward from the hunter's eyes
The landscape like a torrent flies.
At last an ancient wood they gain'd,
By pruner's ax yet unprofan'd.
High o'er the rest, by Nature rear'd,
The oak's majestic boughs appear'd;
Beneath, a copse of various hue
In barbarous luxuriance grew.
No knife had curb'd the rambling sprays,
No hand had wove th' implicit maze.

The flowering thorn, self-taught to wind,
The hazle's stubborn stem entwin'd,
And bramble twigs were wreath'd around,
And rough furze crept along the ground.
Here sheltering, from the sons of murther,
The hares drag their tired limbs no further.
  But lo, the western wind ere long
Was loud, and roar'd the woods among;
From rustling leaves, and crashing boughs,
The sound of wo and war arose.
The hares distracted scour the grove,
As terror and amazement drove;
But danger, wheresoe'er they fled,
Still seem'd impending o'er their head.
Now crowded in a grotto's gloom,
All hope extinct, they wait their doom.
Dire was the silence, till, at length,
Even from despair deriving strength,
With bloody eye, and furious look,
A daring youth arose and spoke.
  " O wretched race, the scorn of Fate,
" Whom ills of every sort await!
" Oh, curs'd with keenest sense to feel
" The sharpest sting of every ill!
" Say ye, who, fraught with mighty scheme,
" Of liberty and vengeance dream,
" What now remains? To what recess
" Shall we our weary steps address,
" Since Fate is evermore pursuing
" All ways and means to work our ruin?
" Are we alone, of all beneath,
" Condemn'd to misery worse than death!
" Must we, with fruitless labour, strive
" In misery worse than death to live!

"No. Be the smaller ill our choice:
"So dictates Nature's powerful voice.
"Death's pang will in a moment cease;
"And then, All hail, eternal peace!"
Thus while he spoke, his words impart
The dire resolve to every heart.

A distant lake in prospect lay,
That, glittering in the solar ray,
Gleam'd thro' the dusky trees, and shot
A trembling light along the grot.
Thither with one consent they bend,
Their sorrows with their lives to end,
While each, in thought, already hears
The water hissing in his ears.

Fast by the margin of the lake,
Conceal'd within a thorny brake,
A Linnet sate, whose careless lay
Amus'd the solitary day.
Careless he sung, for on his breast
Sorrow no lasting trace impress'd;
When suddenly he heard a sound
Of swift feet traversing the ground.
Quick to the neighbouring tree he flies,
Thence trembling casts around his eyes;
No foe appear'd, his fears were vain;
Pleas'd he renews the sprightly strain.

The hares, whose noise had caus'd his fright,
Saw with surprise the linnet's flight.
Is there on earth a wretch, they said,
Whom our approach can strike with dread?
An instantaneous change of thought
To tumult every bosom wrought.
So fares the system-building sage,
Who, plodding on from youth to age,

At last on some foundation-dream
Has rear'd aloft his goodly scheme,
And prov'd his predecessors fools,
And bound all Nature by his rules;
So fares he in that dreadful hour,
When injur'd Truth exerts her power,
Some new phenomenon to raise:
Which, bursting on his frighted gaze,
From its proud summit to the ground
Proves the whole edifice unsound.

"Children," thus spoke a hare sedate,
Who oft had known th' extremes of fate,
"In slight events the docile mind
"May hints of good instruction find.
"That our condition is the worst,
"And we with such misfortunes curs'd
"As all comparison defy,
"Was late the universal cry,
"When, lo, an accident so slight
"As yonder little linnet's flight,
"Has made your stubborn heart confess
"(So your amazement bids me guess)
"That all our load of woes and fears
"Is but a part of what he bears.
"Where can he rest secure from harms,
"Whom even a helpless hare alarms?
"Yet he repines not at his lot,
"When past, the danger is forgot:
"On yonder bough he trims his wings,
"And with unusual rapture sings:
"While we, less wretched, sink beneath
"Our lighter ills, and rush to death.
"No more of this unmeaning rage,
"But hear, my friends, the words of age.

"When by the winds of autumn driven,
"The scatter'd clouds fly cross the heaven,
"Oft have we, from some mountain's head,
"Beheld th' alternate light and shade
"Sweep the long vale. Here hovering lowers
"The shadowy cloud; there downwards pours,
"Streaming direct, a flood of day,
"Which from the view flies swift away;
"It flies, while other shades advance,
"And other streaks of sunshine glance.
"Thus chequer'd is the life below
"With gleams of joy and clouds of wo.
"Then hope not, while we journey on,
"Still to be basking in the sun:
"Nor fear, tho' now in shades ye mourn,
"That sunshine will no more return.
"If, by your terrors overcome,
"Ye fly before th' approaching gloom,
"The rapid clouds your flight pursue,
"And darkness still o'ercasts your view.
"Who longs to reach the radiant plain,
"Must onward urge his course amain;
"For doubly swift the shadow flies,
"When 'gainst the gale the pilgrim plies.
"At least be firm, and undismay'd
"Maintain your ground! the fleeting shade
"Ere long spontaneous glides away,
"And gives you back th' enlivening ray.
"Lo, while I speak, our danger past!
"No more the shrill horn's angry blast
"Howls in our ear; the savage roar
"Of war and murder is no more.
"Then snatch the moment fate allows,
"Nor think of past or future woes."

He spoke; and hope revives; the lake
That instant one and all forsake,
In sweet amusement to employ
The present sprightly hour of joy.
Now from the western mountain's brow,
Compass'd with clouds of various glow,
The sun a broader orb displays,
And shoots aslope his ruddy rays.
The lawn assumes a fresher green,
And dew-drops spangle all the scene.
The balmy zephyr breathes along,
The shepherd sings his tender song,
With all their lays the groves resound,
And falling waters murmur round,
Discord and care were put to flight,
And all was peace and calm delight.

EPITAPH.

BEING PART OF AN INSCRIPTION FOR A MONUMENT TO BE ERECTED BY A GENTLEMAN TO THE MEMORY OF HIS LADY.

FAREWELL, my best-lov'd; whose heavenly mind
Genius with virtue, strength with softness, join'd;
Devotion, undebas'd by pride or art,
With meek simplicity, and joy of heart;
Though sprightly, gentle; though polite, sincere;
And only of thyself a judge severe;
Unblam'd, unequall'd in each sphere of life,
The tenderest Daughter, Sister, Parent, Wife.
In thee their Patroness th' afflicted lost;
Thy friends, their pattern, ornament, and boast;
And I——but ah, can words my loss declare,
Or paint th' extremes of transport and despair!
O Thou, beyond what verse or speech can tell,
My guide, my friend, my best-belov'd, farewell!

ODE

ON

LORD H**'s BIRTH-DAY.

A MUSE, unskill'd in venal praise,
Unstain'd with flattery's art;
Who loves simplicity of lays
Breath'd ardent from the heart;
While gratitude and joy inspire,
Resumes the long-unpractis'd lyre,
To hail, O H**, thy natal Morn:
No gaudy wreath of flowers she weaves,
But twines with oak the laurel leaves,
Thy cradle to adorn.

For not on beds of gaudy flowers
Thine ancestors reclin'd,
When Sloth dissolves, and Spleen devours
All energy of mind.
To hurl the dart, to ride the car,
To stem the deluges of war,
And snatch from Fate a sinking land;
Trample th' Invader's lofty crest,
And from his grasp the dagger wrest,
And desolating brand:

'Twas this, that rais'd th' illustrious line
To match the first in fame!
A thousand years have seen it shine
With unabated flame.
Have seen thy mighty Sires appear
Foremost in Glory's high career,
The pride and pattern of the Brave.
Yet pure from lust of blood their fire,
And from Ambition's wild desire,
They triumph'd but to save.

The Muse with joy attends their way
The vale of peace along;
There to its Lord the village gay
Renews the grateful song.
Yon castle's glittering towers contain
No pit of wo, nor clanking chain,
Nor to the suppliant's wail resound;
The open doors the needy bless,
Th' unfriended hail their calm recess,
And gladness smiles around.

There to the sympathetic heart
Life's best delights belong,
To mitigate the mourner's smart,
To guard the weak from wrong.
Ye sons of Luxury, be wise:
Know, happiness for ever flies
The cold and solitary breast;
Then let the social instinct glow,
And learn to feel another's wo,
And in his joy be bless'd.

Oh yet, ere Pleasure plant her snare
For unsuspecting youth;
Ere Flattery her song prepare
To check the voice of Truth;
Oh may his country's guardian power
Attend the slumbering Infant's bower,
And bright inspiring dreams impart;
To rouse th' hereditary fire,
To kindle each sublime desire,
Exalt and warm the heart.

Swift to reward a Parent's fears,
A Parent's hopes to crown,
Roll on in peace, ye blooming years,
That rear him to renown;
When in his finish'd form and face,
Admiring multitudes shall trace
Each patrimonial charm combin'd,
The courteous yet majestic mien,
The liberal smile, the look serene,
The great and gentle mind.

Yet, though thou draw a nation's eyes,
And win a nation's love,
Let not thy towering mind despise
The village and the grove.
No slander there shall wound thy fame,
No ruffian take his deadly aim,
No rival weave the secret snare:
For Innocence with angel smile,
Simplicity that knows no guile,
And Love and Peace, are there.

When winds the mountain oak assail,
And lay its glories waste,
Content may slumber in the vale,
Unconscious of the blast.
Thro' scenes of tumult while we roam,
The heart, alas! is ne'er at home,
It hopes in time to roam no more;
The mariner, not vainly brave,
Combats the storm, and rides the wave,
To rest at last on shore.

Ye proud, ye selfish, ye severe,
How vain your mask of state!
The good alone have joy sincere,
The good alone are great:
Great, when, amid the vale of peace,
They bid the plaint of sorrow cease,
And hear the voice of artless praise;
As when along the trophied plain
Sublime they lead the victor train,
While shouting nations gaze.

TO THE RIGHT HON.

LADY CHARLOTTE GORDON,

DRESSED IN A TARTAN SCOTCH BONNET, WITH PLUMES, &c.

Why, Lady, wilt thou bind thy lovely brow
With the dread semblance of that warlike helm,
That nodding plume, and wreath of various glow,
That grac'd the chiefs of Scotia's ancient realm?

Thou knowest that virtue is of power the source,
And all her magic to thy eyes is given;
We own their empire, while we feel their force,
Beaming with the benignity of heaven.

The plumy helmet, and the martial mien,
Might dignify Minerva's awful charms;
But more resistless far th' Idalian Queen—
Smiles, graces, gentleness, her only arms.

THE HERMIT.

AT the close of the day, when the hamlet is still,
And mortals the sweets of forgetfulness prove,
When nought but the torrent is heard on the hill,
And nought but the nightingale's song in the grove:
'Twas thus, by the cave of the mountain afar,
While his harp rung symphonious, a Hermit began;
No more with himself or with nature at war,
He thought as a Sage, though he felt as a Man.

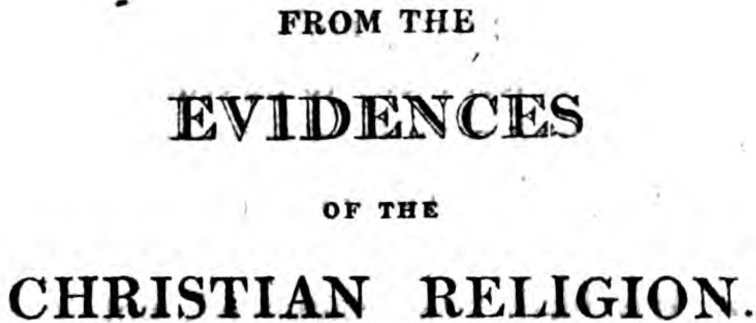
" Ah! why, all abandon'd to darkness and wo,
" Why, lone Philomela, that languishing fall?
" For spring shall return, and a lover bestow,
" And Sorrow no longer thy bosom enthral.
" But, if pity inspire thee, renew the sad lay,
" Mourn, sweetest complainer, man calls thee to mourn;
" Oh soothe him, whose pleasures like thine pass away:
" Full quickly they pass—but they never return.

" Now gliding remote, on the verge of the sky,
" The Moon half extinguish'd her crescent displays:
" But lately I mark'd, when majestic on high
" She shone, and the planets were lost in her blaze.
" Roll on, thou fair orb, and with gladness pursue
" The path that conducts thee to splendor again.
" But Man's faded glory what change shall renew!
" Ah, fool! to exult in a glory so vain!

" 'Tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more;
" I mourn, but, ye woodlands, I mourn not for you;
" For morn is approaching, your charms to restore,
" Perfum'd with fresh fragrance, and glittering with dew.
" Nor yet for the ravage of winter I mourn;
" Kind Nature the embryo blossom will save.
" But when shall Spring visit the mouldering urn!
" Oh when shall it dawn on the night of the grave!"

' 'Twas thus, by the glare of false Science betray'd,
' That leads, to bewilder; and dazzles, to blind:
' My thoughts wont to roam, from shade onward to shade,
' Destruction before me, and sorrow behind.
" Oh pity, great Father of Light," then I cried,
" Thy creature who fain would not wander from Thee;
" Lo, humbled in dust, I relinquish my pride:
" From doubt and from darkness thou only canst free."

' And darkness and doubt are now flying away.
' No longer I roam in conjecture forlorn.
' So breaks on the traveller, faint and astray,
' The bright and the balmy effulgence of morn.
' See Truth, Love, and Mercy, in triumph descending,
' And Nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom!
' On the cold cheek of Death, smiles and roses are bending,
' And Beauty immortal awakes from the tomb.'



FROM THE

EVIDENCES

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

The Coming of the Messiah.

WHEN the fulness of the time was come, THE TEACHER OF THE POOR did at last appear: not like the Stoic, proud, hard-hearted, and disputatious; but like the Son of God, meek and unaffected, compassionate and lowly, divinely benevolent, and divinely wise. 'Go,' said he to two of John's disciples, who had come to ask whether he was the Messiah, 'Go your way, and tell John what 'things ye have seen and heard; how that the 'blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are 'cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, '*and* good tidings are preached to the poor.' All this had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah; and in Jesus the prophecy was ful-

filled. And his doctrine was distinguished from that of all other teachers, not only by its intrinsic excellence, and by those mighty works that bore testimony to its truth, but also by its being in so peculiar a manner addressed to the poor, and suited to their capacity, and consequently to that of all the rest of mankind. His birth was announced, not to the great ones of the earth, but to shepherds. On poverty of spirit, or lowliness of mind, which is indeed the foundation of the Christian character, he pronounced a particular benediction: his servants he chose from among the poor; and, by the establishment of a church, he provided a perpetual succession of ministers, who should preach the gospel to the poor, and to all other ranks of men, to the end of the world. In consequence of this most gracious dispensation, the meanest of the Christian people, if it is not their own fault, may, in all ordinary cases, learn juster notions of virtue and vice, of God and man, of providence and a future state, than the most learned philosopher could ever attain in the days of paganism. Can these facts be denied? And in him who admits them, is it possible that any doubts should remain con-

cerning the usefulness of divine revelation, or the infinite importance of that which is brought to light by the gospel?

Credibility of Miracles, as supporting Revelation.

MIRACULOUS facts are not to be ranked with impossibilities. There was a time, when the matter that composes my body was as void of life, as it will be when it shall have lain twenty years in the grave; when the elementary particles, whereof my eye is made up, could no more enable a percipient being to see, than they can now enable one to speak; and when that which forms the substance of this hand was as inert as a stone. Yet now, by the goodness of the Creator, the first lives, the last moves, and, by means of the second, I perceive light and colours. And if Almighty power can bring about all this gradually, by one particular succession of causes and effects, may not the same power perform it in an instant, and by the operation of other causes to us unknown? Or will the atheist say, (and none who believes in God can doubt the possibility of miracles,) that he himself

knows every possible cause that can operate in the production of any effect? Or is he certain that there is no such thing in the universe as Almighty power?

To raise a dead man to life; to cure blindness with a touch; to remove lameness, or any other bodily imperfection, by speaking a word, are all miracles; but must all be as easy to the Author of nature, or to any person commissioned by him for that purpose, as to give life to an embryo, make the eye an organ of sight, or cause vegetables to revive in the spring. And therefore, if a person, declaring himself to be sent of God, or invested with divine power, and saying and doing what is worthy of such a commission, should perform miracles like these, mankind would have the best reason to believe, that his authority was really from heaven.

As the common people have neither time nor capacity for deep reasoning; and as divine revelation of religion must be intended for all sorts of men, the vulgar as well as the learned, the poor as well as the rich; it is necessary, that the evidence of such a revelation should be of that kind which may command general attention, and convince men of

all ranks and characters, and should therefore be level to every capacity. It would be easy, no doubt, for the Deity to convey his truths immediately to every man by inspiration, so as to make inquiry unnecessary, and doubt impossible. But this would not be consistent with man's free agency and moral probation; and this would be very unlike every other dispensation of Providence with respect to man, who, as he is endowed with rational faculties, feels that he is under an obligation to use and improve them. This would be to make him love religion, and believe in it, without leaving it in his power to do otherwise: and such faith, and such love, would be no mark of either a good disposition or a bad.—Now there is no kind of evidence, consistent with our moral probation and free agency, that is likely to command universal attention, and carry full conviction in religious matters to men of all ranks and capacities, except the evidence arising from miracles, or supernatural events.

The Character of the Apostles.

SUCH of their doctrines as are level to human capacity appear to be agreeable to the

purest truth, and the soundest morality. All the genius and learning of the heathen world; all the penetration of Pythagoras, Socrates, and Aristotle, had never been able to produce such a system of moral duty, and so rational an account of Providence and of man, as is to be found in the New Testament. Compared, indeed, to this, all other moral and theological wisdom

Loses discountenanced, and like folly shows.

Was the great apostle of the Gentiles a weak man; he who spoke and wrote with such energy and address, and whose eloquence made a Roman proconsul tremble? Were those weak men, who taught a system of opinions, which even the sovereigns of the world, and some of the least cruel, the most learned, and the most politic of them too, thought it their interest to bear down and destroy, not with argument, in which it would appear they had no confidence, but with fire and sword? Were those weak men, who, in defiance of persecution, and in opposition to all the power, policy, and learning, of the Roman empire, brought in, though unarmed and defenceless, a new religion, which continues to this day; is gradually extending itself over the earth more and

more; and, by the still small voice of reason, daily puts to silence, or confutes at least, its most cunning and most inveterate adversaries? Were those weak men, who taught that which has given wisdom and happiness to millions of mankind, and has without violence introduced into the manners and policy of a great part of the world, changes the most important and beneficial, and likely to be as durable as the world itself? Could those, in fine, be weak men, whom the most inquisitive and most enlightened minds that have been on earth since their time, whom Bacon and Grotius, whom Newton and Boyle, whom Hooker, Clarke, Butler, and Stillingfleet, whom Milton, Clarendon, Addison, Arbuthnot, and Lyttleton, have held in the highest veneration, as not only wise, but inspired? Either, then, let the infidel admit, that the publishers of Christianity were not weak men; or, let him prove, that the great persons now mentioned were destitute of understanding, or at least in that respect inferior to himself.

Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion.

FIRST, the morality of the gospel gives it an infinite superiority over all systems of doc-

trine that ever were devised by man. Were our lives and opinions to be regulated as it prescribes, nothing would be wanting to make us happy: there would be no injustice, no impiety, no disorderly passions; harmony and love would universally prevail; every man, content with his lot, resigned to the divine will, and fully persuaded that a happy eternity is before him, would pass his days in tranquillity and joy, to which neither anxiety, nor pain, nor even the fear of death, could ever give any interruption. The best systems of pagan ethics are very imperfect, and not free from absurdity; and in them are recommended modes of thinking unsuitable to human nature, and modes of conduct which, though they might have been useful in a political view, did not tend to virtue and happiness universal. But of all our Lord's institutions the end and aim is, to promote the happiness, by promoting the virtue, of all mankind.

And, secondly, his peculiar doctrines are not like any thing of human contrivance. 'Never man spake like this man.' One of the first names given to that dispensation of things which he came to introduce, was *the kingdom*, or the reign, *of heaven*. It was

justly so called; being thus distinguished, not only from the religion of Moses, the sanctions whereof related to the present life, but also from every human scheme of moral, political, or ecclesiastical legislation.

The views of the heathen moralist extended not beyond this world; those of the Christian are fixed on that which is to come. The former was concerned for his own country only, or chiefly; the latter takes concern in the happiness of all men, of all nations, conditions, and capacities. A few, and but a few, of the ancient philosophers spoke of a future state of retribution as a thing desirable, and not improbable: revelation speaks of it as certain; and of the present life as a state of trial, wherein virtue or holiness is necessary, not only to entitle us to that salvation which, through the mercy of God and the merits of his Son, Christians are taught to look for, but also to prepare us, by habits of piety and benevolence, for a reward, which none but the pure in heart can receive, or could relish.

The duties of piety, as far as the heart is concerned, were not much attended to by the heathen lawgiver. Cicero coldly ranks them

with the social virtues, and says very little about them. The sacrifices were mere ceremony. And what the Stoics taught of resignation to the will of heaven, or to the decrees of fate, was so repugnant to some of their other tenets, that little good could be expected from it. But of every Christian virtue piety is an essential part. The love and the fear of God must every moment prevail in the heart of a follower of Jesus; and whether he eat or drink, or whatever he do, it must all be to the glory of the Creator. How different this from the philosophy of Greece and Rome!

In a word, the heathen morality, *even in its best form*, that is, as two or three of their best philosophers taught it, amounts to little more than this: Be useful to yourselves, your friends, and your country; so shall ye be respectable while ye live, and honoured when ye die; and it is to be hoped ye may receive reward in another life. The language of the Christian lawgiver is different. The world is not worthy of the ambition of an immortal being. Its honours and pleasures have a tendency to debase the mind, and disqualify it for future happiness. Set therefore your affections on things above, and not on things

on the earth. Let it be your supreme desire to obtain God's favour: and, by a course of discipline, begun here, and to be completed hereafter, prepare yourselves for a re-admission into that rank which was forfeited by the fall, and for again being but a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour everlasting.

What an idea is here! Is there any thing like this in Xenophon or Plato, in Cicero, Seneca, or Epictetus? 'Whence had this 'man these things? What wisdom is this 'that was given him?' Surely man gave it not; for man had it not to give. This is an idea which never occurred to human imagination, till it was taught by a poor carpenter of Galilee, and by a few fishermen who followed him. Yet to the native dignity, and undeniable degeneracy, of human nature, no other moral theory was ever so well adapted; and no other has so direct a tendency to promote the glory of God, and the real good of mankind. Is it possible to explain this upon the principles that usually regulate human affairs? Is it possible for us to believe, that teachers so holy, so benevolent, and so pious, so superior to the world, and so thoroughly disengaged

from its allurements, were not taught of God? As easy almost it is to believe, that this world was not made by him. Is it possible for us to imagine, that persons of such a character could have employed their lives in the promulgation of a lie, and willingly encountered persecution and death in support of it? As well may we imagine, that an evil tree brings forth good fruit, and that men gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles.

Elevated Conception of the Deity.

WHAT an elevation must it give to our pious affections, to contemplate the Supreme Being and his Providence, as revealed to us in Scripture! We are there taught, that man was created in the image of God, innocent and happy; and that he had no sooner fallen into sin, than his Creator, instead of abandoning him and his offspring to the natural consequences of his disobedience, and of their hereditary depravity, was pleased to begin a wonderful dispensation of grace, in order to rescue from perdition, and raise again to happiness, as many as should acquiesce in the terms of the offered salvation, and regulate their lives accordingly.

By the sacred books that contain the history of this dispensation we are further taught, that God is a spirit, unchangeable, and eternal, universally present, and absolutely perfect; that it is our duty to fear him, as a being of consummate purity and inflexible justice, and to love him as the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation; to trust in him as the friend, the comforter, and the Almighty guardian, of all who believe and obey him; to rejoice in him as the best of Beings, and adore him as the greatest:—we are taught, that he will make allowance for the frailties of our nature, and pardon the sins of those who repent:—and, that we may see, in the strongest light, his peculiar benignity to the human race, we are taught, that he gave his only Son as our ransom and deliverer; and we are not only permitted, but commanded, to pray to him, and address him as OUR FATHER:—we are taught, moreover, that the evils incident to this state of trial are permitted by him, in order to exercise our virtue, and so prepare us for a future state of never-ending felicity; and that these momentary afflictions are pledges of his paternal love, and shall, if we receive them as such, and venerate them accordingly,

work out for us 'an exceeding great and eter-'nal weight of glory.' If these hopes and these sentiments contribute more to our happiness, and to the purification of our nature, than any thing else in the world can do, surely that religion, to which alone we owe these sentiments and hopes, must be the greatest blessing that ever was conferred on the posterity of Adam.

And is it, after all, but a mere human contrivance; the invention of mean and illiterate men, who lived, and who died, in the voluntary promulgation of falsehood? To what other human artifice does this bear any resemblance? Does not this religion as plainly prove itself to be the work of a wise and gracious God, as the absurdity of the pagan superstitions proves them to have been the work of weak and wretched men?

Apology for the Corruptions of Christianity.

BUT why should Christianity be liable to corruption? Would not the power and goodness of God have appeared in it more conspicuously, if he had made it insusceptible of debasement or change? Totally to debase or

alter it, is indeed impossible, as long as the sacred records remain; to which all sects of Christians appeal as their standard of faith, and which their mutual jealousy of each other will never suffer to be materially corrupted. But every thing must be liable to debasement, which is entrusted to a creature so frail and fallible as man. What is more debased, or more perverted, than health and speech? Yet it will not be said, that the divine goodness and power would have appeared more conspicuously in us, if we had all been sickly and dumb. In every state of moral probation, error must be possible, and evil must exist.

But, beside the general principle of debasement arising from the frailty of our nature, other causes of a more particular, and indeed of an extraordinary kind, co-operated, soon after the apostolic age, in corrupting the Christian religion. Was it possible that its gentle influence could check the progress of that ruin, into which the enormous mass of the Roman power was then rushing headlong; or prevent the confusion, the crimes, and the universal degeneracy of manners, which always attend the fall of empire, and did so remarkably distinguish that of the Roman? And, amidst

the savage uproar of the conquering invaders from the north, was it possible that the soft accents of the gospel of peace could be heard with efficacy, or heard at all? Then followed that long night of intellectual darkness, threatening the final extinction of every ray of knowledge that had hitherto enlightened the sons of men. And from this chaos of ignorance was it possible to exclude the fiends of surperstition, or those other sanguinary demons of rapacity and cruelty, which never fail to haunt the uncultivated mind? It cannot be matter of surprise, that, in these circumstances, a religion founded in peace, in right reason, and in the purest morality, should first be neglected, then misunderstood, and afterwards grossly corrupted; and that, from being made subservient to the purposes of human, and often of barbarous, policy, it should, in its corrupted state, contract many stains of barbarism, and much of the pride and vanity and other follies of human nature.

In fact, in the course of a few centuries, Christianity had lost its beauty and purifying virtue, and, like a stream choaked with rubbish, if the reader will pardon the figure, presented an image of danger and desolation, ra-

ther than of utility and comfort: but, though the waters were polluted, the fountain was not dried up: and, by the gradual operation of causes, some more and others less observable, when obstructions began at last to give way, and the channel to open, this river of life again broke forth in a copious and sprightly current; which, though not yet every-where free from restraint, nor in any nation restored to its primitive purity, will in time, it is hoped, diffuse itself, by the divine blessing, into all lands, and, in its progress,

> Work itself clear, and, as it runs, refine;
> Till by degrees the floating mirror shine,
> Reflect the flowers that on its border blow,
> And heaven's own light in its fair bosom show.

For, to drop the allegory, whatever other changes may happen, we have nothing now to apprehend similar to the Gothic invasions, or to that extinction of literature which attended and followed them. As the world is now constituted, learning and liberal inquiry are likely to prevail in it more and more: and, as these prevail, ignorance and tyranny, sophistry and superstition, which have hitherto been the most deadly enemies of both Christian faith and true philosophy, will in the same proportion lose their influence.

Superior Comfort and Excellence of the Christian Religion.

OF those who worship the living and true God, is not the condition preferable to that of him who trembles before the shrine of devils and idols, of stocks, stones, and vegetables, of brutes, monsters, and vermin? In this respect, is not the superiority of the Christian over the Pagan almost, if not altogether, as great as that of a man over a beast? And let it never be forgotten, that if it had not been for Jesus Christ and Moses, and the divine goodness manifested in them, the whole world would at this day have been barbarous, or pagan, or both, and likely to continue so long as there were men upon the earth.

In this argument it is not necessary to advert to the condition of savages, cannibals, and the worst sort of barbarians. He who can look upon such misery without compassion and horror, or without a due sense of the blessings derived from Christianity and civilized manners, must be equally destitute of humanity and of reason. But may not the wisdom and virtue of the ancient Greeks and Romans, in their most civilized state, bear a comparison with the manners and literature of the Christian world?

In some respects they may, in others they cannot. For example, it will not be pretended, that, in any Christian country, a father may either adopt his new-born infant, (if I may use the expression,) or abandon it to famine and beasts of prey;—that the massacre of slaves is part of a funeral solemnity in honour of great men deceased;—that horrid obscenities form any part of religious worship;—that the most unnatural crimes are not only practised without shame, but celebrated by poets, and coolly mentioned as customary things, even by the greatest writers;—that, to gratify an ambitious profligate, inoffensive nations are invaded, enslaved, or exterminated;—that, for the amusement of a few young soldiers, two or three thousand poor unarmed and innocent men may be murdered in one night, with the connivance, nay, and by the authority, of the law;—that the most worthless tyrants are flattered with divine honours when alive, and worshipped as Gods when dead;—that prisoners of war are enslaved, or impaled, or crucified, for having fought in defence of their country, and in obedience to their lawful rulers;—that captive kings and nations are publicly insulted by their conquerors, in those

barbarous solemnities which of old were called triumphs;—that men are trained up for the purpose of cutting one another to pieces, by thousands and ten thousands in a month,* for the diversion of the public;—that, as the father of gods and men, a king of Crete is worshipped, whom even his worshippers believe to have been guilty of innumerable crimes of the most infamous nature; while, among the other objects of divine worship are to be reckoned thieves, drunkards, harlots, ruffians; to say nothing of those underling idols, whose functions and attributes it is not decent even to name.—They, who are ever so little acquainted with ancient Greece and Rome, know that I allude, not to the depravities of individuals only, but to the avowed opinions and fashionable practice of those celebrated nations. Surely, modern manners, censurable as we confess them to be in so many respects, are regulated, in the Christian world, by principles very different. And were they in all respects regulated, as they ought to be, by the pure

* Lipsius affirms (Sat. b. i. c. 12,) that the gladiatorial shows sometimes cost Europe twenty or thirty thousand lives in a month; and that not only the men, but even the women of all ranks, were passionately fond of these shows. See Bishop Porteus, Sermon xiii.

principles of the gospel, we need not hesitate to affirm, that the virtue of Christians would as far transcend that of the Greeks and Romans, as the arts and literature of England surpass those of New Zealand or the land of Hottentots.

This affirmation is warranted by what we see of the influence of the gospel among those who believe and obey it; whose numbers, though far short of what they ought to be, are by no means inconsiderable. And it is still further warranted by what we know of the first Christians; to whom the gospel was preached in its primitive simplicity; who believed it with full assurance of faith; and whose manners were accordingly pure and perfect to a degree, which, as an elegant author observes, it is almost as difficult for us to conceive as to imitate.

Insignificance of Man, no Objection to Christianity.

BY some well-meaning but weak minds, and by some of a different character, who were vain of their philosophy, the apparent insignificance of the human race may have been

thought to lessen the credibility of the Christian religion. Compared to the extent of our solar system, this earth is but a point; and the solar system itself, compared to the universe, may be little more. How then, say they, is it possible, to imagine that such creatures as we are, can be of so great importance, as that the Deity should send his Son, accompanied with so many displays of divine power, into this little world, to instruct us by his doctrine and example, and die on a cross to accomplish our salvation?

This is indeed an astonishing proof of the goodness of the great Creator, and of the condescension of that glorious Person, who, for our sake, willingly submitted to such debasement. But the infinite goodness and power of God, though surpassing all comprehension, cannot exceed the belief of those who know, that he, in order to communicate felicity, created this boundless universe, with all the varieties of beings it contains; whom he continually supports and governs, and with every individual of whom he is continually present. The object may be too vast for any intelligence that is short of infinite: but to Him who sees all things, and can do all things, who had no

beginning and can have no end, all this must be easy; incomparably easier, indeed, than it is for a father to take care of his child, or for a generous friend to relieve his indigent neighbour. God's dispensations with respect to man may reasonably enough overwhelm us with gratitude and adoration, and with a most humiliating sense of our own unworthiness; but let us take care that they do not raise within us an evil spirit of unbelief; which they will not do, unless we have the inexcusable temerity to judge of him by ourselves; and to infer, because our goodness is nothing, that his cannot be perfect; and, because we are ignorant and weak, that he cannot be omniscient and almighty. Far less absurd would it be, for the unlettered peasant to deny the possibility of calculating eclipses; for the blind to believe, that because they cannot see, there is none else who can; and for the poor to conclude, because they cannot relieve themselves, that it is not in the power of generosity to relieve them.

Great extent is a thing so striking to our imagination, that sometimes, in the moment of forgetfulness, we are apt to think nothing can be important but what is of vast corporeal mag-

nitude: and yet, even to our apprehension, when we are willing to be rational, how much more sublime and more interesting an object is a mind like that of Newton, than the unwieldy force and brutal stupidity of such a monster as the poets describe Polyphemus? Who, that had it in his power, would scruple to destroy a whale, in order to preserve a child? Nay, when compared with the happiness of one immortal mind, the greatest imaginable accumulation of inanimate substance must appear an insignificant thing. 'If we consider,' says Bentley, 'the dignity of an intelligent being, 'and put that in the scale against brute and 'inanimate matter, we may affirm, without 'overvaluing human nature, that the soul of 'one virtuous man is of greater worth and excellency, than the sun and his planets, and 'all the stars in the world.' Let us not then make bulk the standard of value; or judge of the importance of man from the weight of his body, or from the size or situation of the planet that is now his place of abode.

Our Saviour, as if to obviate objections of this nature, expresses most emphatically the superintending care of Providence, when he teaches, that it is God who adorns the grass

of the field, that without him a sparrow falls not to the ground, and that even the hairs of our head are numbered. Yet this is no exaggeration; but must, if God is omniscient and almighty, be literally true. By a stupendous exuberance of animal, vegetable, and mineral, production, and by an apparatus still more stupendous (if that were possible) for the distribution of light and heat, he supplies the means of life and comfort to the short-lived inhabitants of this globe. Can it then appear incredible; nay, does not this consideration render it in the highest degree probable, that he has also prepared the means of eternal happiness for beings whom he has formed for eternal duration, whom he has endowed with faculties so noble as those of the human soul, and for whose accommodation chiefly, during their present state of trial, he has provided all the magnificence of this sublunary world?

FROM

DISSERTATIONS,

MORAL AND CRITICAL.

On Memory.

THIS is a faculty, which, if it were less common and we equally qualified to judge of it, would strike us with astonishment. That we should have it in our power to recal past sensations and thoughts, and make them again present, as it were: that a circumstance of our former life should, in respect of us, be no more; and yet occur to us, from time to time, dressed out in colours so lively, as to enable us to examine it, and judge of it, as if it were still an object of sense:—these are facts, whereof we every day have experience, and which, therefore, we overlook as things of course. But, surely, nothing is more wonderful, or more inexplicable. If thoughts

could occupy space we might be tempted to think that we had laid them up in certain cells or repositories, to remain there till we had occasion for them. But thoughts cannot occupy space; nor be conceived to have any other existence than what the mind gives them by meditating upon them. Yet, that which has been long forgotten, nay, that which we have often endeavoured in vain to recollect, will sometimes, without any effort of ours, occur to us, on a sudden, and, if I may so speak, of its own accord. A tune, for example, which I hear to-day, and am pleased with, I perhaps endeavour to remember to-morrow, and next day, and the day following, without success: and yet, that very tune shall occur to me a month after, when my mind is taken up with something else. Where, if I may ask the question, were my ideas of this tune, when I wished to recollect them, and could not? How comes it, that they now present themselves, when I am not thinking of them at all? These questions no man can answer: but the fact is certain.

Often, when we do not immediately call to mind what we wish to remember, we set ourselves, as it were, to search for it; we medi-

tate on other things or persons, that seem to be like it, or contrary to it, or contiguous, or to bear any other relation to what we are in quest of; and thus, perhaps, we at last remember it. This continued effort of voluntary remembrance is called recollection. It resembles the procedure of those, who, missing something valuable, look for it in every place where they think they might have been when they dropped it; and thus recover what they had lost. For the last mentioned fact it is easy to account. A jewel, or a piece of coin, is a visible, tangible, and permanent thing, and must remain in its place till it be removed: and, if we come to that place, and examine it with attention, we can hardly fail to find what we are in quest of. But, where a thought should be, when it is forgotten; how it should have any permanency or any existence, when it is no longer in the mind; and what should restore it to our memory, after a long interval of forgetfulness; are points, whereon human wisdom can determine nothing.

Is it not wonderful, that old men should remember more accurately what happened fifty years ago, than the affairs of last week? And yet that, in many cases, our remembrance of

any fact should be accurate in proportion to its recency? It may be said, indeed, that the more we attend, the better we remember; and that old men are forgetful of those things only, to which they are inattentive; for that not one of them ever forgot the place where he had deposited his money. All this is true, as Cicero remarks in his book on Old Age; but how we come to remember that best, to which we are most attentive, we can no otherwise explain, than by saying, that such is the law of our nature.

The Importance of habitual Attention.

THE rule here hinted at should never, on any occasion, be forgotten. It is a matter of no small importance, that we acquire the habit of doing only one thing at one time: by which I mean, that while employed on any one object our thoughts ought not to wander to another. When we go from home in quest of amusement, or to the fields for the sake of exercise, we shall do well to leave all our speculations behind: if we carry them with us, the exercise will fatigue the body without refreshing it; and the amusement, instead of enli-

vening, will distract the soul: and, both in the one case and in the other, we shall confirm ourselves in those habits of inattention, which, when long persisted in, form what is called an absent man. In conversation too, let us always mind what is saying and doing around us, and never give the company ground to suspect, that our thoughts are elsewhere. Attention is a chief part of politeness. An absent man, provided he is goodnatured, may be borne with, but never can be agreeable. He may command our esteem, if we know him to be wise and virtuous; but he cannot engage our love. For inattention implies negligence, and neglect often proceeds from contempt: if, therefore, we find that we are not attended to, we shall fancy that we are neglected, and to a certain degree despised: and how is it possible to repay contempt with kindness! And when unkindness and dissatisfaction prevail in any society, all the comforts of it are at an end.—Besides, if we are not strictly observant of every thing that passes in company, we cannot be either amused by it or instructed; in other words, we deprive ourselves of much innocent pleasure and useful information. For a great deal of our best knowledge is obtained by mu-

tual intercourse: and for the most valuable comforts of life we are indebted to the social and benevolent attentions of one another.

Let it not be objected, that some great men, as Newton, have been remarkably absent in company. Persons, who are engaged in sublime study, and who are known to employ their time and faculties in adorning human nature by the investigation of useful truth, may be indulged in such peculiarities of behaviour, as in men of common talents neither are, nor ought to be tolerated. For, in regard to the former, we are willing to suppose, that, if they overlook us, it is because they are engrossed by matters of greater importance: but this is a compliment, which we should not think ourselves obliged to pay the latter, at least in ordinary cases. And I scruple not to say, that it would have been better for Newton himself, as well as for society, if he had been free from the weakness abovementioned. For then his thoughts and his amusements would have been more diversified, and his health probably better, and his precious life still longer than it was: and a mind like his, fully displayed in free and general conversation, would have been, to all who had the happiness to ap-

proach him, an inexhaustible source of instruction and delight.

Great, indeed, and many are the advantages of habitual attention. Clearness of understanding, extensive knowledge, and exact memory, are its natural consequences. It is even beneficial to health, by varying the succession of our ideas and sensations; and it gives us the command of our thoughts, and enables us at all times to act readily, and with presence of mind. As they who live retired are disconcerted at the sight of a stranger; as he whose body has never been made pliant by exercise cannot perform new motions either gracefully or easily; so the man, who has contracted a habit of ruminating upon a few things and overlooking others, is fluttered, and at a loss, whenever he finds himself, as he often does, in unexpected circumstances. He looks round amazed, like one raised suddenly from sleep. Not remembering what happened the last moment, he knows nothing of the cause of the present appearance, nor can form any conjecture with respect to its tendency. If you ask him a question, it is some time before he can recollect himself so far as to attend to you; he hesitates, and you must repeat your words be-

fore he can undersand them: and when he hast with difficulty made himself master of your meaning, he cannot, without an effort, keep out of his usual track of thinking, so long as is necessary for framing an explicit reply. This may look like exaggeration; but nothing is more certain, than that habits of inattention, contracted early, and long persisted in, will in time form such a character.

The mutual Advantages of different Degrees of Memory.

BUT, whatever we determine concerning the efficient causes of variety of memory, it may, in regard to their final cause, be confidently affirmed, that they are of the greatest utility: as they give different turns to human genius, and so dispose men to different pursuits; and as they promote variety of conversation, and make men more amusing and more instructive to one another, than we could have been, if all had attended to and remembered the same things. Scholars, who associate with none but scholars, may improve in learning: but, if they would acquire a general knowledge of human affairs, they

must frequent promiscuous company, in which are men of all capacities and callings. Hence let us learn to undervalue that narrow-mindedness, which inclines some people to avoid the society of those, who cannot talk to them in their own profession. A man of sense and virtue is in every condition respectable, and may contribute to the improvement of the greatest philosopher. He, who dislikes another for peculiarity of genius, sets an example, according to which he himself becomes the object of dislike; and betrays his insensibility to a most wise institution of Providence, from which human society derives many of its best comforts and ornaments. As well might he, on observing the varieties of animal nature, express dissatisfaction, that some creatures should have been endued with strength, and others with swiftness; some enabled to feed us with their milk, and others to clothe us with their wool; some fitted for domestic use, and others for the business of the field; and insist, that it would have been better for us and for them, if they had all been of the same kind, and possessed the same faculties.

The Duty of mutual Accommodations in Society.

IN company, it is our duty to adapt ourselves to the innocent humours and ways of thinking of those with whom we converse; and it is indelicate to obtrude our concerns upon them, or give scope to any of those peculiarities of behaviour, that distingnish our own profession, or the small societies to which we are accustomed. The violation of this rule is called pedantry. It is offensive to persons of polite manners, and conveys a mean idea of the man in whom it has become habitual. And for this there is good reason. The conversation of such a man shows, that he does not deserve the attention of others, because he is always thinking of himself; that he has not enlargement of mind for conceiving the circumstances and sentiments of his company, nor tenderness and generosity of nature to take part in them, or sympathise with them; and that his customary associates, among whom he has contracted or confirmed these evil habits, must be equally narrow-minded with himself.—Therefore, unless called upon to do so by the company, or by those who have a right to preside in it, the soldier ought not to expatiate on military affairs,

nor the traveller on his adventures, nor the hunter on hounds and foxes, nor the farmer on his improvements, nor the scholar on his authors. Soldiers with soldiers, farmers with farmers, and learned men with learned men, may talk in their respective trades; because in this way they may please and instruct one another: but, where people are of different pursuits and characters, the conversation ought to be general, and such as all present, especially those to whom particular respect is due, may be supposed to understand, and to relish. And, how muchsoever we may be impressed with what we have been reading or meditating, and however desirous we may be to digest and remember it, we are not entitled to make it an object of general attention, unless we have reason to believe it will be generally agreeable.

The solemn Nature of Pulpit Eloquence.

THE orators of Greece and Rome, in the forum, in the senate, and before the judges, spoke with a view to determine their hearers to some immediate resolution; and, if they gained this end, were not solicitous, whether

it was by means of fair reasoning, or of sophistry; by swaying the judgment, or inflaming the passions; by giving useful information, that might be followed with lasting advantage, or by throwing out what had only plausibility enough to produce momentary consequences. It was, therefore, necessary, that, by the promptness of their eloquence, they should impress the hearers with a high opinion of their wisdom; should deliver their harangues with that vehemence, and those varieties of gesture, which command attention and applause; and should have their eye continually upon their audience, to observe the effects of what was said, that they might know how to change their topics and manner of address, according to the circumstances.

How different are the views; and, therefore, how different ought the eloquence to be, of the Christian Divine! He speaks the truth, and that only; in order to instruct his people in matters which they and he know to be of everlasting concern, and to establish in them not momentary, but permanent principles of piety and benevolence. His doctrines are all supposed to be collected with caution from the unerring word of God. He is required, not

only to speak with modesty and soberness, but also to be sober and modest; not to overpower with vehemence, far less to dazzle with sophistry, but to prevail by motives urged in meekness, and to persuade by arguments founded in right reason. His aim is, to direct their attention, not to himself, but to God and their duty; not to court applause as an orator, but to do good to the souls of men, and set them an example of that humility, contrition, and pious hope, which become a man, a sinner, and a christian. In a word, if he have a right sense of the importance of his function, and of what it is incumbent on him to say and to do, a peculiar seriousness, simplicity, and unaspiring dignity, will purify his style, modulate his voice, and characterise his whole deportment. To read his discourse, may, therefore, be grace in him; though in the Greek or Roman orator, it must have been absurd, and even impossible.

I hope it will not be thought presumptuous in a layman, to have said so much on the elocution of the pulpit. It is a matter in which I am interested, as well as others: and I have not affirmed any thing concerning it, but what I know to be warranted by reason and scrip-

ture. Let me confess, however, that the sketch here offered is not the effect of investigation merely: it is a copy taken from the life. And they who have had the happiness to observe, and to feel, that sublime and apostolic simplicity, and that mild, though commanding energy, which distinguish both the composition, and the pronunciation, of a Hurd and a Porteus, will be at no loss to discover the originals.

The Association of Ideas, producing pleasing Emotions.

THE sight of a place in which we have been happy or unhappy, renews the thoughts and the feelings that we formerly experienced there. With what rapture, after long absence, do we visit the haunts of our childhood, and early youth! A thousand ideas, which had been for many years forgotten, now crowd upon the imagination, and revive within us the gay passions of that romantic period. The same effect is produced, though perhaps in a fainter degree, when in a foreign land we talk of, or recollect, the place of our nativity. And from these, and other associations of a like nature,

arises in part that most important principle, the love of our country; whereof the chief objects are, our friends, and fellow-citizens, and the government that has so long protected us and our fathers; but in which is also comprehended a fondness for the very fields and mountains, the vales, the rocks, and the rivers, which formed the scenery of our first amusements and adventures.

Most persons feel something of this fondness: and those who do not, may yet admit the reality of it, when they are told, that the natives of certain countries, when abroad in foreign parts, do sometimes fall sick, and even die, of a desire to revisit their native land. The Swiss were formerly so liable to this malady, that they distinguished it by a particular name. The Scots, too, have suffered from it. And in general it has been thought, that the natives of a mountainous region are more subject to this infirmity than those who have been born and bred in level countries. For precipices, rocks, and torrents, are durable things; and, being more striking to the fancy than any natural appearances in the plains, take faster hold of the memory; and may therefore more frequently recur to the absent native, accom-

panied with an idea of the pleasures formerly enjoyed in those places, and with regret that he is now removed to so great a distance from them. To which we may add, that the daily contemplation of the grand phenomena of nature, in a mountainous country, elevates, and continually exercises, the imagination of the solitary inhabitant; one effect of which is, to give those sensibilities to the nervous system, which render the mind in a peculiar degree susceptible of wild thoughts and warm emotions.

The Power of Imagination over the Senses and the Reason.

IN a large and uninhabited building, like a church, the wind may howl; doors and windows may clap; the creaking of rusty hinges may be heard; a stone, or a bit of plaister, may drop with some noise from the mouldering wall; the light of the moon may gleam unexpectedly through a cranny, and, where it falls on the broken pavement, form an appearance not unlike a human face illuminated, or a naked human body, which the peasant, whose chance it is to see it, may readily mis-

take for a ghost, or some other tremendous being. In the forsaken apartments of an old castle, rats and jack-daws may raise an uproar, that shall seem to shake the whole edifice to the foundation. Piles of ruins, especially when surrounded with trees and underwood, give shelter to owls and wild cats, and other creatures, whose screaming, redoubled with echoes, may to the superstitious ear, seem to be, as Shakspeare says, "no mortal business, nor no sound that the earth owns." In deep groves, by twilight, our vision must be so indistinct, that a bush may, without enchantment, assume the form of a fiend or monster; and the crashing of branches, tossed by the wind, or grated against one another, may sound like groans and lamentations. By the side of a river, in a still or in a stormy evening, many noises may be heard, sufficient to alarm those, who would rather tremble at a prodigy, than investigate a natural cause: a sudden change, or increase of the wind, by swelling the roar of the far-off torrent, or by dashing the waters in a new direction against rocks or hollow banks, may produce hoarse and uncommon sounds; and the innocent gambols of a few otters have been known to occasion those yells, which the vul-

gar of this country mistake for laughing or crying, and ascribe to a certain goblin, who is supposed to dwell in the waters, and to take delight in drowning the bewildered traveller.

These, and the like considerations, if duly attended to, would overcome many of those terrors that haunt the ignorant and the credulous, restore soundness to the imagination; and, as Persius says, in his usual rough but expressive manner, "pull the old grandmother out of our entrails." And the habit of encountering such imaginary terrors, and of being often alone in darkness, will greatly conduce to the same end. The spirit of free-enquiry, too, is in this, as in all other respects, friendly to our nature. By the glimmering of the moon, I have once and again beheld, at midnight, the exact form of a man or woman, sitting silent and motionless by my bedside. Had I hid my head, without daring to look the apparition in the face, I should have passed the night in horrors, and risen in the morning with the persuasion of having seen a ghost. But, rousing myself, and resolving to find out the truth, I discovered, that it was nothing more than the accidental disposition of my clothes upon a chair.—Once I remember to have been alarmed

at seeing, by the faint light of the dawn, a coffin laid out between my bed and the window. I started up; and recollecting, that I had heard of such things having been seen by others, I set myself to examine it, and found, that it was only a stream of yellowish light, falling in a particular manner upon the floor, from between the window-curtains. And so lively was the appearance, that, after I was thoroughly satisfied of the cause, it continued to impose on my sight as before, till the increasing light of the morning dispelled it.—These facts are perhaps too trivial to be recorded: but they serve to show, that free enquiry, with a very small degree of fortitude, may sometimes, when one is willing to be rational, prove a cure to certain diseases of imagination.

The perpetual Folly of Fashion.

WE are told, that, in the age of Richard the Second, about four hundred years ago, the peaks or tops of the shoes, worn by people of fashion, were of so enormous a length, that, in order to bear them up, it was necessary to tie them to the knee. And we learn from Cowley, that in his days ladies of quality wore gowns as long again as their body, so that they could

not stir to the next room, without a page or two to carry their train. What ridiculous disproportion! we exclaim: what intolerable inconvenience! Is it possible, that the taste of our forefathers could be so perverted, as to endure such a fashion! But let us not be rash in condemning our forefathers, lest we should unwarily pass sentence upon ourselves. Have we never seen, in our time, forms of dress equally inconvenient, and yet equally fashionable? Does a shoe of four and twenty inches in length disfigure or encumber the one extremity of the human body more, than a head-dress two feet high does the other? Or is it a greater hindrance to the amusements, or more hurtful to the health of a fine lady to drag after her two dozen superfluous yards of silk, than to sit two hours in a morning under the discipline of the curling iron, or totter upon a sharp-pointed shoe-heel, which every moment threatens her ancle with dislocation! In fact, as the world goes, former and latter ages, and the male and the female sex, may mutually say, in regard to absurdity of dress, what the poet says, when speaking of that wildness of invention which prevails among poets and painters,

——hanc veniam damus, petimusque vicissim.

This privilege we grant, and ask it in return.

Now, how are we to account for the prevalency of fashions so uncouth, and so inconvenient? It is to be accounted for, in part, from the power of *custom*, as an associating principle. The fashion may be improper, and, when first brought in, ridiculous: but the mere habit of seeing it will gradually overcome our aversion: and, when we have long seen it worn by persons of rank, beauty, virtue, or wisdom, and on occasions of the greatest festivity or solemnity, it acquires in our fancy a connection with many pleasing ideas: and whatever is so connected must itself be pleasing.

Infancy and Old Age compared.

I MEAN not to insinuate, that the body of an infant, and that of an old man, are equally remote from the standard of perfect beauty. Infancy has its peculiar charms; and every feeling heart knows them to be irresistable. Innocence, helplessness, playfulness, freshness of constitution and of colour, with the consideration that it is advancing to maturity, all conspire to recommend infancy to our love, by suggesting a thousand delightful ideas: whereas, a human body, emaciated with age,

can boast of none of those charms; and, instead of complacency and hope, calls forth the painful passions of regret and sorrow.

But let me correct myself. This is an idea of decrepitude, rather than of old age. The last period of life, like the evening sky, is often distinguished by a lustre, not dazzling indeed, nor ardent, like the splendour of noon, but no less pleasing to a contemplative mind. A fresh old age, with cheerfulness, good sense, and a good conscience, though it cannot be called the loveliest, is however the most venerable, of all terrestrial things.

Beauty in Dancing.

DANCING is connected with so many delightful ideas of youth, health, activity, cheerfulness, and beauty, that the motions commonly practised in it cannot fail to please, unless accompanied with some peculiarity that conveys a disagreeable suggestion of deformity, want of skill, affectation, impudence, or any other incongruity. But I need not remark, because it is obvious, that the motions of different dancers differ exceedingly in respect of grace. Much will depend on the

comeliness, good shape, and agility, of the person; on the ease wherewith the several movements and evolutions are performed, and on their perfect coincidence with the expression and rhythm of the music, and with the rules of the dance.

That all dances are not equally graceful, is no less obvious. Those that show to advantage the motion, shape, and activity, of the human body, are always approved of. But some steps, as already observed, particularly in the hornpipe and minuet, seem to derive a charm rather from their difficulty than from their elegance. The latter dance, if I can trust my own judgment, is not so graceful in men as in women; whose full and flowing attire not only gives dignity to their mien, and an easy winding curvature to their motion, but also conceals the inconvenient, and (I had almost said) distorted position of the feet.

Lest I should get beyond my depth, (being no great connoisseur in this elegant art,) I shall only observe further, that some dances please, by uniting regularity with apparent disorder; which yields the gratification of surprise, and conveys a favourable idea of the skill with which they are planned and con-

ducted. Some pieces of music are contrived with a like purpose, and please from the same principle: as Fugues, in which different voices or instruments take up the same air, but not all at the same time; so that one is, as it were, the echo, or an imitation, of another. And yet the general result is, not dissonance or confusion, which one would be apt to expect, but perfect harmony. This gives an agreeable surprise; and heightens our admiration of the composer's skill, and of the dexterity of the performers.

True Origin of Human Beauty.

HUMAN beauty is so far from being (what it is said in the Scotch proverb to be) only *skin-deep*, that it derives its origin, and most essential characters, from the soul. Most people, therefore, may in some degree acquire it, who are willing to cultivate their intellectual powers, and to cherish good affections. And without a sound understanding, and a cheerful, benevolent, and gentle, disposition, no fineness of shape, delicacy of complection, or regularity of feature, will ever form that genuine beauty, which at once pleases a dis-

cerning eye, and captivates and secures an intelligent mind. What ideas do we affix to the terms, a pretty idiot, or a handsome termagant? Surely they are not agreeable, but very much the contrary. "Beauty," according to Plutarch, "is the flower and blossom of virtue." It is outwardly ornamental; because it is the effect of a generous nature operating within.

The Moral Utility of Dreams.

AFTER hinting that dreams may be of use in the way of physical admonition, what if I should go a step further, and say, that they may be serviceable as means of moral improvement? I will not affirm, however, as some have done, that, by them, we may make a more accurate discovery of our temper and prevailing passions, than by observing what passes in our minds when awake. For in sleep we are very incompetent judges of ourselves, and of every thing else: and one will dream of committing crimes with little remorse, which, if awake, one could not think of without horror. But, as many of our passions are inflamed or allayed by the tempera-

ture of the body, this, I think, may be affirmed with truth, that, by attending to what passes in sleep, we may sometimes discern what passions are predominant, and so receive good hints for the regulation of them.

A man dreams, for example, that he is in violent anger, and that he strikes a blow, which knocks a person down, and kills him. He awakes in horror at the thought of what he has done, and of the punishment he thinks he has reason to apprehend; and while, after a moment's recollection, he rejoices to find that it is but a dream, he will also be inclinable to form resolutions against violent anger, lest it should one time or other hurry him on to a real perpetration of a like nature. If we ever derive this advantage from dreams, we cannot pronounce them useless. And why may we not in this way reap improvement from a fiction of our own fancy, as well as from a novel, or a fable of Esop?

The Origin of Fable and Romance.

THE love of truth is natural to man; and adherence to it, his indispensable duty. But to frame a fabulous narrative, for the purpose

of instruction or of harmless amusement, is no breach of veracity, unless one were to obtrude it on the world for truth. The fabulist and the novel-writer deceive nobody; because, though they study to make their inventions probable, they do not even pretend that they are true; at least, what they may pretend in this way is considered only as words of course, to which nobody pays any regard. Fabulous narrative has accordingly been common in all ages of the world, and practised by teachers of the most respectable character.

It is owing, no doubt, to the weakness of human nature, that fable should ever have been found a necessary, or a convenient, vehicle for truth. But we must take human nature as it is: and, if a rude multitude cannot readily comprehend a moral or political doctrine, which they need to be instructed in, it may be as allowable to illustrate that doctrine by a fable, in order to make them attend and understand it, as it is for a physician to strengthen a weak stomach with cordials, in order to prepare it for the business of digestion. Such was the design of Jotham's parable of the trees chusing a king, in the ninth chapter of the book of Judges: and such that famous

apologue, of a contention between the parts of the human body, by which Menenius Agrippa satisfied the people of Rome, that the welfare of the state depended on the union and good agreement of the several members of it. In fact, the common people are not well qualified for argument. A short and pithy proverb, which is easily remembered; or little tales, that appeal as it were to their senses, weigh more with them than demonstration.

We need not wonder, then, to find, that, in ancient times, moral precepts were often delivered in the way of proverb or aphorism, and enforced and exemplified by fictitious narrative. Of those fables that are ascribed to Esop, some are no doubt mod.rn, but others bear the stamp of antiquity: and nothing can be better contrived than many of them are, for the purpose of impressing moral truth upon the memory, as well as the understanding. The disappointment that frequently attends an excessive desire of accumulation, is finely exemplified in the fable of the dog and his shadow; and the ruinous and ridiculous nature of ambition is with equal energy illustrated in that of the frog and the ox. These little allegories we are apt to undervalue, because we

learned them at school; but they are not for that reason the less valuable. We ought to prize them as monuments of ancient wisdom, which have long contributed to the amusement and instruction of mankind, and are entitled to applause, on account of the propriety of the invention.

The Excellencies and Defects of Gulliver's Travels.

GULLIVER'S Travels are a sort of allegory; but rather satirical and political, than moral. The work is in every body's hands, and has been criticised by many eminent writers. As far as the satire is leveled at human pride and folly, at the abuses of human learning, at the absurdity of speculative projectors, at those criminal or blundering expedients in policy, which we are apt to overlook, or even to applaud, because custom has made them familiar, so far the author deserves our warmest approbation, and his satire will be allowed to be perfectly just, as well as exquisitely severe. His fable is well conducted, and, for the most part, consistent with itself, and connected with probable circumstances. He per-

sonates a sea-faring man, and with wonderful propriety supports the plainness and simplicity of the character: and this gives to the whole narrative an air of truth, which forms an entertaining contrast, when we compare it with the wildness of the fiction. The style too deserves particular notice. It is not free from inaccuracy; but, as a model of easy and graceful simplicity, it has not been exceeded by any thing in our language, and well deserves to be studied by every person who wishes to write pure English. These, I think, are the chief merits of this celebrated work, which has been more read than any other publication of the present century. Gulliver has something in him to hit every taste. The statesman, the philosopher, and the critic, will admire his keenness of satire, energy of description, and vivacity of language: the vulgar, and even children, who cannot enter into these refinements, will find their account in the story, and be highly amused with it.

But I must not be understood to praise the whole indiscriminately. The last of the four voyages, though the author has exerted himself in it to the utmost, is an absurd and an abominable fiction. It is absurd; because,

in presenting us with rational beasts, and irrational men, it proceeds upon a direct contradiction to the most obvious laws of nature, without deriving any support from either the dreams of the credulous, or the prejudices of the ignorant. And it is abominable, because it abounds in filthy and indecent images; because the general tenor of the satire is exaggerated into absolute falsehood; and because there must be something of an irreligious tendency in a work, which, like this, ascribes the perfection of reason, and of happiness, to a race of beings who are said to be destitute of every religious idea. But, what is yet worse, if any thing can be worse, this tale represents human nature itself as the object of contempt and abhorrence. Let the ridicule of wit be pointed at the follies, and let the scourge of satire be brandished at the crimes, of mankind: all this is both pardonable and praiseworthy, because it may be done with a good intention, and produce good effects: but when a writer endeavours to make us dislike and despise every one his neighbour, and be dissatisfied with that Providence who has made us what we are, and whose dispensations towards the human race are so peculiarly, and

so divinely beneficent, such a writer, in so doing, proves himself the enemy, not of man only, but of goodness itself; and his work can never be allowed to be innocent, till impiety, malevolence, and misery, cease to be evils.

The Courtesy of a true Knight Errant.

THE character of a true knight was very delicate; and single combat was a thing so familiar to him, and withal accounted so honourable, that he never failed to resent in a hostile manner any reproachful word that might be thrown out against his virtue, particularly against his faith, or his courage. Hence reproachful words would in general be avoided, which would promote courtesy, by refining conversation. And hence the origin of duelling; a practice unknown to Greece and Rome, which took its rise in the feudal times, and probably among the sons of chivalry; and which, though in many respects absurd and wicked, is allowed to have promoted politeness, by making men cautious of offending one another.

The knight errant was the declared enemy of the oppressor, the punisher of the injurious,

and the pattern of the weak. And as women were more exposed to injury than men; and as ladies of rank and merit were, for reasons already given, the objects of veneration to all men of breeding, the true knight was ambitious, above all things, to appear the champion of the fair sex. To qualify himself for this honour, he was careful to acquire every accomplishment that could entitle him to their confidence: he was courteous, gentle, temperate, and chaste. He bound himself, by solemn vows, to the performance of those virtues: so that, while he acted with honour in his profession, a lady might commit herself to his care without detriment to her character; he being in regard to those virtues as far above suspicion, as a clergyman is now. And, that women of fashion might confide in him with the more security, he commonly attached himself to some one lady, whom he declared to be the sole mistress of his affections, and to whom he swore inviolable constancy. Nothing is more ridiculous than Don Quixote's passion for Dulcinea del Toboso, as Cervantes has described it: and yet it was in some sort necessary for every knight errant to have a nominal mistress; because, if he had not ac-

knowledged any particular attachment, nor made any vows in consequence of it, his conduct, where women were concerned, might have been suspected; which would alone have disqualified him for what he justly thought the most honourable duty annexed to his profession. In a word, the chastity of a knight errant was to be no less unimpeachable, than the credit of a merchant now is, or the courage of a soldier.

The true knight was religious, valiant, passionately fond of strange adventures, a lover of justice, a protector of the weak, a punisher of the injurious; temperate, courteous, and chaste; and zealous, and respectful, in his attentions to the fair sex. And this is the character assigned him in all those old romances and poems that describe the adventures of chivalry.

On the Love of Petrarch for Laura.

PETRARCH'S passion for Laura, though disinterested, seems to have been in some degree fictitious, or at least, not quite so serious a matter as many people imagine. "He was "wretched to show he had wit," as the song

says: he loved after the Provensal fashion: he wanted to make passionate verses; and Laura, being a beautiful lady, and a married one too, with a pretty romantic name, suited his poetical purposes as well as Dulcinea del Toboso did the heroic views of Don Quixote. Had his heart been really engaged, he could not have gone on, from day to day, in the same strain of elegant and elaborate whining: a sincere passion would have allowed him neither time nor tranquillity for such amusement.—What is observed, in the old aphorism, of violent grief, that it is silent, and of slight sorrow, that it vents itself in words, will be found to hold true of many of our affections. Hammond was not in love when he wrote his elegies, as I have been informed on good authority: and Young, while composing the most pathetic parts of the Night-thoughts, was as cheerful as at other times. These are not the only instances that might be mentioned.

Robinson Crusoe—its Origin and Merits.

THE account commonly given of this well-known work is as follows.

Alexander Selkirk, a Scotch mariner, happened, by some accident which I forget, to be left in the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandes in the South Seas. Here he continued four years alone, without any other means of supporting life, than by running down goats, and killing such other animals as he could come at. To defend himself from danger during the night, he built a house of stones rudely put together, which a gentleman, who had been in it, (for it was extant when Anson arrived there) described to me as so very small, that one person could with difficulty crawl in, and stretch himself at length. Selkirk was delivered by an English vessel, and returned home. A late French writer says, he had become so fond of the savage state, that he was unwilling to quit it: but that is not true. The French writer either confounds the real story of Selkirk with a fabulous account of one Philip Quarl, written after Robinson Crusoe, of which it is a paltry imitation, or wilfully misrepresents the fact, in order to justify, as far as he is able, an idle conceit, which, since the time of Rousseau, has been in fashion amongst infidel and affected theorists on the continent, that savage life is most natural to us, and that

the more a man resembles a brute in his mind, body, and behaviour, the happier he becomes, and the more perfect.—Selkirk was advised to get his story put in writing, and published. Being illiterate himself, he told every thing he could remember to Daniel Defoe, a professed author of considerable note; who, instead of doing justice to the poor man, is said to have applied these materials to his own use, by making them the groundwork of Robinson Crusoe, which he soon after published; and which, being very popular, brought him a good deal of money.

Some have thought, that a love-tale is necessary to make a romance interesting. But Robinson Crusoe, though there is nothing of love in it, is one of the most interesting narratives that ever was written; at least in all that part which relates to the desert island: being founded on a passion still more prevalent than love, the desire of self-preservation; and therefore likely to engage the curiosity of every class of readers, both old and young, both learned and unlearned.

I am willing to believe, that Defoe shared the profits of this publication with the poor seaman; for there is an air of humanity in it,

which one would not expect from an author who is an arrant cheat. In the preface to his second volume, he speaks feelingly enough of the harm done him by those who had abridged the first, in order to reduce the price. "The "injury, says he, which these men do to the "*proprietors* of works, is a practice all honest "men abhor: and they believe they may chal-"lenge them to show the difference between "that, and robbing on the highway, or break-"ing open a house. If they cannot show any "difference in the crime, they will find it "hard to show, why there should be any dif-"ference in the punishment." Is it to be imagined that any man of common prudence would talk in this way, if he were conscious that he himself might be proved guilty of that very dishonesty which he so severely condemns?

Be this however as it may, for I have no authority to *affirm* any thing on either side, Robinson Crusoe must be allowed, by the most rigid moralist, to be one of those novels which one may read not only with pleasure, but also with profit. It breathes throughout a spirit of piety and benevolence: it sets in a very striking light,

the importance of the mechanic arts, which they, who know not what it is to be without them, are so apt to undervalue: it fixes in the mind a lively idea of the horrors of solitude, and, consequently, of the sweets of social life, and of the blessings we derive from conversation and mutual aid: and it shows, how, by labouring with one's own hands, one may secure independence, and open for one's self many sources of health and amusement. I agree, therefore, with Rousseau, that this is one of the best books that can be put in the hands of children.—The style is plain, but not elegant, nor perfectly grammatical; and the second part of the story is tiresome.

The Evils resulting from Romance Reading.

ROMANCES are a dangerous recreation. A few, no doubt, of the best may be friendly to good taste and good morals; but far the greater part are unskilfully written, and tend to corrupt the heart, and stimulate the passions. A habit of reading them breeds a dislike to history, and all the substantial parts of knowledge; withdraws the attention from nature and truth, and fills the mind with extra-

vagant thoughts, and too often with criminal propensities. I would therefore caution my young reader against them: or, if he must, for the sake of amusement, and that he may have something to say on the subject, indulge himself in this way now and then, let it be sparingly and seldom.

Defective Education among the common People.

OF the proper methods of education, the generality of the common people are more ignorant, than of any other part of duty. They imitate one another in this respect; and a person who has had no opportunities of observing their conduct, would hardly believe what absurd practices prevail among them. The books that have been written on education, many of which are very useful, come not into their hands, and are not level to their capacity. Indeed they are rather unwilling to receive advice on this head. "I breed my "children (say they) as I was bred myself:" to which some complaisant neighbour subjoins, "And if they do as you have done, they will "act their part very well." While matters

go on thus, improvements are not to be looked for in education, or in any thing else.

How is the evil to be remedied? By separating the children from their parents, and committing the former to the care of strangers? No: such a remedy would be worse than the evil. How then? By instructing parents in their duty? Yes; that would be the easier, the more natural, and the more effectual, way.

I have therefore often wished, that the teachers of religion would, in their public discourses and private admonitions, not only recommend the right education of children in general terms, which in fact they do, but also lay down, and enforce, the method of it, with some degree of minuteness; exposing at the same time the improprieties of the prevailing practice. The subject, it may be said, is too copious to be discussed in a sermon, and too familiar to be delivered from the pulpit. I answer, that, if expressed in proper language, it would derive dignity from its importance; and that its relation to common life would render it intelligible and interesting. And surely, education is not a more copious theme, than many of those are, on which it is the preach-

er's duty to expatiate. It would not be necessary for him to enter into it with the nicety of a Locke, or a Rousseau. If he could only reform a few of the grosser improprieties of domestic discipline, he would be a blessing to his people, and an honour to his profession. Nor would parents only be improved by discourses of this nature. He who instructs the teacher, may convey useful hints to those who are to be taught. By hearing a parent's duty explained, a child could hardly fail to learn his own.

The Charms of Parental and Filial Duties.

AN interchange of the parental and filial duties, is friendly to the happiness, and to the virtue, of all concerned. It gives a peculiar sensibility to the heart of man; infusing a spirit of generosity, and a sense of honour, which have a most benign influence on public good, as well as on private manners. When we read, that Epaminondas, after the battle of Leuctra, declared, that one chief cause of his joy was the consideration of the pleasure which his victory would give his father and mother,

is it possible for us to think, that this man, the greatest perhaps, and the best that Greece ever saw, would have been so generous, or so amiable, if he had not known who his parents were? In fact, there are not many virtues that reflect greater honour upon our nature, than the parental and the filial. When any uncommon examples of them occur in history, or in poetry, they make their way to the heart at once, and the reader's melting eye bears testimony to their loveliness.

Amidst the triumphs of heroism, Hector never appears so great, as in a domestic scene, when he invokes the blessing of heaven upon his child: nor does Priam, on any other occasion, engage our esteem so effectually, or our pity, as when, at the hazard of his life, he goes into the enemies' camp, and into the presence of his fiercest enemy, to beg the body of his son. Achilles's love to his parents forms a distinguishing part of his character; and that single circumstances throws an amiable softness into the most terrific human personage that ever was described in poetry. The interview between Ulysses and his father, after an absence of twenty years, it is impossi-

ble to read without such emotion, as will convince every reader of sensibility, that Homer judged well, in making parental and filial virtue the subject of his song, when he meant to show his power over the tender passions.

Virgil was too wise, not to imitate his master in this particular. He expatiates on the same virtue with peculiar complacency; and loves to set it off in the most charming colours. His hero is an illustrious example. When Anchises refuses to leave Troy, and signifies his resolution to perish in its flames, Eneas, that he may not survive his father, or witness the massacre of his household, is on the point of rushing to certain death; and nothing less than a miracle prevents him. He then bears on his shoulders the infirm old man to a place of safety, and ever after behaves towards him as becomes a son and a subject, and speaks of his death in terms of the utmost tenderness and veneration. As a father he is equally affectionate; and his son is not deficient in filial duty.—Turnus, when vanquished, condescends to ask his life, for the sake of his aged parent, who he knew would be inconsolable for his loss. The young, the gentle, the beautiful, Lausus dies in defence of his father; and the

father provokes his own destruction, because he cannot live without his son, and wishes to be laid with him in the same grave. The lamentations of Evander over his Pallas, transcend all praise of criticism. And nothing, even in this poem, the most pathetic of all human compositions, is more moving, than what is related of the gallant youth Euryalus; when, on undertaking that night-adventure which proved fatal to him, he recommends his helpless parent to the Trojan prince. "She "knows not," says he, "of this enterprise; "and I go without bidding her farewell: for "I call the gods to witness, that I cannot sup-"port the sight of a weeping mother."—Let a man read Virgil with attention, and with taste, and then be a cruel parent, or an undutiful child, if he can. And let him ask his own heart this question, whether human nature would not be deprived of many of its best affections, and human society of its best comforts, if the ideas of those projectors were to be realised, who propose to improve the political art, by annihilating the attachments of consanguinity.

Horror sometimes a pleasurable Emotion.

THERE is a kind of horror which may be infused into the mind both by natural appearances, and by verbal description; and which, though it make the blood seem to run cold, and produce a momentary fear, is not unpleasing, but may be even agreeable: and therefore, the objects that produce it are justly denominated sublime. Of natural appearances that affect the mind in this manner, are vast caverns, deep and dark woods, overhanging precipices, the agitation of the sea in a storm: and some of the sounds abovementioned have the same effect, as those of cannon and thunder. Verbal descriptions infusing sublime horror, are such as convey lively ideas of the objects of superstition, as ghosts and enchantments; or of the thoughts that haunt the imaginations of the guilty; or of those external things which are pleasingly terrible, as storms, conflagrations, and the like.

It may seem strange, that horror of any kind should give pleasure. But the fact is certain. Why do people run to see battles, executions, and shipwrecks? Is it, as an

Epicurean would say, to compare themselves with others, and exult in their own security while they see the distress of those who suffer? No, surely: good minds are swayed by different motives. Is it, that they may be at hand, to give every assistance in their power to their unhappy brethren? This would draw the benevolent, and even the tender-hearted, to a shipwreck; but to a battle, or to an execution, could not bring spectators, because there the humanity of individuals is of no use.—It must be because a sort of gloomy satisfaction, or terrific pleasure, accompanies the gratification of that curiosity which events of this nature are apt to raise in the minds of a certain frame.

No parts of Tasso are read with greater relish, than where he describes the darkness, silence, and other horrors, of the enchanted forest: and the poet himself is so sensible of the captivating influence of such ideas over the human imagination, that he makes the catastrophe of the poem in some measure depend upon them. Milton is not less enamoured "of forests and enchantments drear;" as appears from the use to which he applies them in *Comus:* the scenery whereof charms us the

more, because it affects our minds, as it did the bewildered lady, and causes "a thousand "fantasies"

> ——to throng into the memory,
> Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
> And aery tongues, that syllable men's names
> On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.

Forests in every age must have had attractive horrors: otherwise so many nations would not have resorted thither to celebrate the rites of superstition. And the inventors of what is called the Gothic, but perhaps should rather be called the Saracen, architecture, must have been enraptured with the same imagery, when, in forming and arranging the pillars and ailes of their churches, they were so careful to imitate the rows of lofty trees in a deep grove.

Observe a few children assembled about a fire, and listening to tales of apparitions and witchcraft. You may see them grow pale, and croud closer and closer through fear: while he who is snug in the chimney corner, and at the greatest distance from the door, considers himself as peculiarly fortunate; because he thinks that, if the ghost should enter, he has a better chance to escape, than if he were in a more exposed situation. And yet, notwithstanding their present, and their ap-

prehension of future, fears, you could not perhaps propose any amusement that would at this time be more acceptable. The same love of such horrors as are not attended with sensible inconvenience continues with us through life: and Aristotle has affirmed, that the end of tragedy is to purify the soul by the operations of pity and terror.

The Sublime not essential to good Writing, nor restricted to Poetry.

LET it not be thought, because sublimity is one of the highest virtues of fine writing, that therefore no composition is excellent but what is sublime. A book, that partakes not of this quality at all, may please by its elegance, instruct by its doctrines, or amuse by its wit and humour, and in all, or in any of these respects, be truly valuable. Rivulets and meadows have their charms, as well as mountains and the ocean. Though Horace had never written any thing but his Epistles, in which there is no attempt at sublimity, he must always have been considered as an elegant and instructive poet.

Nor think, because most of the examples are taken from poetry, that the sublime is peculiar

to that art. In the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes; in the histories of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Livy; in the moral writings of Addison and Johnson, of Seneca, Plato, and Antoninus; and especially in the doctrinal and historical parts of holy writ; are many instances of the true sublime, both in sentiment and description. The same thing may be said of almost every serious author who composes with elegance.

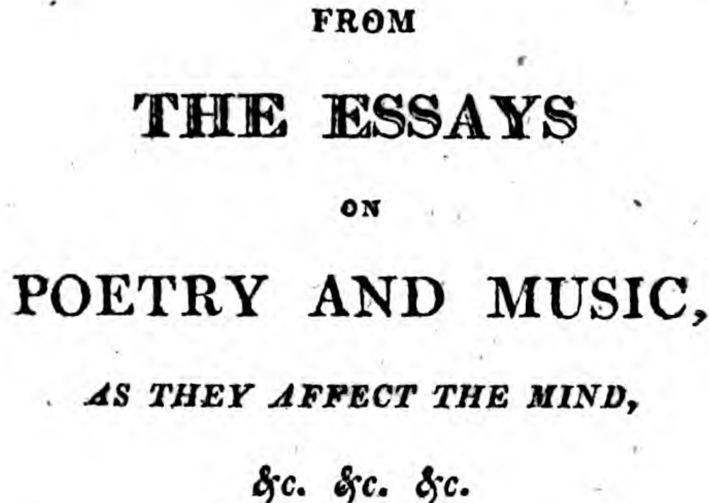
Most of the writers on this subject have considered our passion for what is great and elevated, as a proof of the dignity of the soul, and of the glorious ends for which it was made. The words of Longinus to this purpose are well translated by Dr. Akenside. "God has "not intended man for an ignoble being; but, "bringing us into life, and the midst of this "wide universe, as before a multitude assem- "bled at some heroic solemnity, that we might "be spectators of all his magnificence, and "candidates high in emulation for the prize of "glory, has therefore implanted in our souls "an inextinguishable love of every thing great "and exalted, of every thing which appears "divine beyond our comprehension. Whence "it comes to pass, that even the whole world

"is not an object sufficient for the depth and
"rapidity of human imagination, which of-
"ten sallies forth beyond the limits of all that
"surrounds us. Let any man cast his eye
"through the whole circle of our existence,
"and consider how especially it abounds with
"excellent and grand objects, and he will soon
"acknowledge for what enjoyments and pur-
"suits we were destined."

These are the sentiments of a Pagan philosopher. And how noble, (I had almost said, how divine) must they appear, when compared with the selfish, sensual, and groveling, ideas of the Epicurean, or with the narrow views and brutal insensibility of the antient and modern Pyrrhonist!—I must not omit, that Addison has adopted the same turn of thinking; and, enlightened with the knowledge, and warmed with the piety, of a Christian, has greatly improved it. "The Su-
"preme Being," says he, "has so formed
"the soul of man, that nothing but himself
"can be its last, adequate, and proper, hap-
"piness. Because therefore a great part of
"our happiness must arise from the contem-
"plation of his being, that he might give our
"souls a just relish of such a contemplation,

"he has made them naturally delight in the "apprehension of what is great and unlimited. "Our admiration, which is a very pleasing "emotion of the mind, immediately rises at "the consideration of any object that takes up "a great deal of room in the fancy; and, by "consequence, will improve into the highest "pitch of astonishment and devotion, when "we contemplate his nature, who is neither "circumscribed by time or place, nor to be "comprehended by the largest capacity of a "created being."

I shall only add, that our taste for the sublime, cherished into a habit, and directed to proper objects, may, by preserving us from vice, which is the vilest of all things, and by recommending virtue for its intrinsic dignity, be useful in promoting our moral improvement. The same taste will also lead to the study of nature, which everywhere displays the sublimest appearances. And no study has a better effect upon the heart. For it keeps men at a distance from criminal pursuits, yields a variety of inoffensive and profitable amusement, and gives full demonstration of the infinite goodness and greatness of the adorable Creator.



FROM

THE ESSAYS

ON

POETRY AND MUSIC,

AS THEY AFFECT THE MIND,

&c. &c. &c.

Parallel between Dryden and Pope.

THERE is no modern writer whose style is more distinguishable than Dryden's. Energy and ease are its chief characters. The former is owing to a happy choice of expressions, equally emphatical and plain; the latter to a laudable partiality in favour of the idioms and radical words of the English tongue; the *native* riches and *peculiar* genius whereof are perhaps more apparent in him, than in any other of our poets. In Dryden's more correct pieces, we meet with no affectation of words of Greek or Latin etymology, no cumbersome

pomp of epithets, no drawling circumlocutions, no idle glare of images, no blunderings round about a meaning: his English is pure and simple, nervous and clear, to a degree which Pope has never exceeded, and not always equalled. Yet, his attachment to the vernacular idiom, as well as the fashion of his age, often betrays him into a vulgarity, and even meanness, of expression, which is particularly observable in his translations of Virgil and Homer, and in those parts of his writings where he aims at pathos or sublimity. In fact, Dryden's genius did not lead him to the sublime or pathetic. Good strokes of both may doubtless be found in him; but they are momentary, and seem to be accidental. He is too witty for the one, and too familiar for the other. That he had no adequate relish for the majesty of Paradise Lost, is evident to those who have compared his opera, called *The State of Innocence*, with that immortal poem; and that his taste for the true pathetic was imperfect, too manifestly appears from the general tenor of his translations, as well as tragedies. His Virgil abounds in lines and couplets of the most perfect beauty; but these are mixed with others of a different stamp:

nor can they who judge of the original by this translation, ever receive any tolerable idea of that uniform magnificence of sound and language, that exquisitive choice of words and figures, and that sweet pathos of expression and of sentiment, which characterise the Mantuan Poet.—In delineating the more familiar scenes of life, in clothing plain moral doctrines with easy and graceful versification, in the various departments of Comic Satire, and in the spirit and melody of his Lyric poems, Dryden is inferior to none of those who went before him. He exceeds his master Chaucer in the first: in the three last he rivals Horace; the style of whose epistles he has happily imitated in his *Religio Laici*, and other didactic pieces; and the harmony and elegance of whose odes he has proved that he could have equalled, if he had thought proper to cultivate that branch of the poetic art. Indeed, whether we consider his peculiar significancy of expression, or the purity of his style; the sweetness of his lyric, or the ease and perspicuity of his moral poems; the sportive severity of his satire, or his talents in wit and humour; Dryden in point of *genius*, (I do not say *taste*), seems to bear a closer affinity to Horace, than to any

other ancient or modern author. For energy of words, vivacity of description, and apposite variety of numbers, his *Feast of Alexander* is superior to any ode of Horace or Pindar now extant.

Dryden's verse, though often faulty, has a grace, and a spirit, peculiar to itself. That of Pope is more correct, and perhaps upon the whole more harmonius; but it is in general more languid, and less diversified. Pope's numbers are sweet but elaborate; and our sense of their energy is in some degree interrupted by our attention to the art displayed in their contexture: Dryden's are natural and free; and, while they communicate their own sprightly motion to the spirits of the reader, hurry him along with a gentle and pleasing violence, without giving him time either to animadvert on their faults, or to analyse their beauties. Pope excels in solemnity of sound; Dryden, in an easy melody, and boundless variety of rhythm. In this last respect I think I could prove, that he is superior to all other English poets, Milton himself not excepted. Till Dryden appeared, none of our writers in rhime of the last century approached in any measure to the harmony of Fairfax and Spen-

er. Of Waller it can only be said, that he is not harsh; of Denham and Cowley, if a few couplets were struck out of their woks, we could not say so much. But in Dryden's hands, the English rhiming couplet assumed a new form, and seems hardly susceptible of any further improvement. One of the greatest poets of this century, the late and much-lamented Mr. Gray, of Cambridge, modestly declared to me, that if there was in his own numbers any thing that deserved approbation, he had learned it all from Dryden.

Critics have often stated a comparison between Dryden and Pope, as poets of the same order, and who differed only in *degree* of merit. But, in my opinion, the merit of the one differs considerably in *kind* from that of the other. Both were happy in a sound judgment and most comprehensive mind. Wit, and humour, and learning too, they seem to have possessed in equal measure; or, if Dryden may be thought to have gone deeper in the sciences, Pope must be allowed to have been the greater adept in the arts. The diversities in point of correctness and delicacy, which arose from their different ways of life, I do not now insist upon. But, setting those aside, if

Dryden founds any claim of preference on the originality of his manner, we shall venture to affirm, that Pope may found a similar claim, and with equal justice, on the perfection of his taste; and that, if the critical writings of the first are more voluminous, those of the second are more judicious; if Dryden's inventions are more diversified, those of Pope are more regular, and more important. Pope's style may be thought to have less simplicity, less vivacity, and less of the purity of the mother-tongue; but is at the same time more uniformly elevated, and less debased by vulgarism, than that of his great master:—and the superior variety that animates the numbers of the latter, will perhaps be found to be compensated by the steadier and more majestic modulation of the former. Thus far their merits would appear to be pretty equally balanced.—But if the opinion of those critics be true, who hold that the highest regions of Parnassus are appropriated to pathos and sublimity, Dryden must after all confess, that he has never ascended so far as his illustrious imitator: there being nothing in the writings of the first so deeply pathetic as the *Epistle of Eloisa*, or the *Elegy on the Unfortunate Lady*; nor so

uniformly sublime as the *Essay on Man*, or the *Pastoral of the Messiah*. This last is indeed but a selection and imitation of choice passages; but it bespeaks a power of imitation, and a taste in selection, that Dryden does not seem to have possessed. To all which may I not be permitted to add, what I think I could prove, that the pathos of Homer is frequently improved by Pope, and that of Virgil very frequently debased by Dryden?

The writings of Dryden are stamped with originality, but are not always the better for that circumstance. Pope is an imitator professedly, and of choice; but to most of those whom he copies he is at least equal, and to many of them superior: and it is pleasing to observe, how he rises in proportion to his originals. Where he follows Denham, Buckingham, Roscomon, and Rochester, in his Windsor-forest, Essay on Criticism, and poem on Silence, he is superior indeed, but does not soar very high above them. When he versifies Chaucer, he catches, as by instinct, the ease, simplicity, and spirit, of Dryden, whom he there emulates. In the Rape of the Lock he outshines Boileau, as much as the sylphs that flutter round Belinda exceed in sprightliness and lu-

minous beauty those mechanical attendants of the goddess of luxury, who knead up plumpness for the chin of the canon, and pound vermillion for the cheek of the monk.* His Eloisa is beyond all comparison more sublime and more interesting than any of Ovid's letter-writing ladies. His imitations of Horace equal their archetypes in elegance, and often surpass them in energy and fire. In the lyric style, he was no match for Dryden: but when he copies the manner of Virgil, and borrows the thoughts of Isaiah, Pope is superior not only to himself, but to almost all other poets.

The Pleasure of contemplating Nature.

SOME minds there are, who, even in the early part of life, receive from the contemplation of nature a species of delight which they would hardly exchange for any other; and who, as avarice and ambition are not the infirmities of that period, would, with equal sincerity and rapture, exclaim,

* See Rape of the Lock, canto 2. verse 55; and Lutrin, chant. 2. verse 100.

I care not, Fortune, what you me deny;
You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace;
You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
Through which Aurora shows her bright'ning face;
You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
The woods and lawns by living stream at eve.*——

Such minds have always in them the seeds of true taste, and frequently of imitative genius. At least, though their enthusiastic or visionary turn of mind (as the man of the world would call it) should not always incline them to practise poetry or painting, we need not scruple to affirm, that without some portion of this enthusiasm, no person ever became a true poet or painter. For he who would imitate the works of nature, must first accurately observe them; and accurate observation is to be expected from those only who take great pleasure in it.

To a mind thus disposed no part of creation is indifferent. In the crouded city, and howling wilderness; in the cultivated province, and solitary isle; in the flowery lawn, and craggy mountain; in the murmur of the rivulet, and in the uproar of the ocean; in the radiance of summer, and gloom of winter; in the thunder of heaven, and in the whisper of

* Castle of Indolence.

the breeze; he still finds something to rouse or to sooth his imagination, to draw forth his affections, or to employ his understanding. And from every mental energy that is not attended with pain, and even from some of those that are, as moderate terror and pity, a sound mind derives satisfaction; exercise being equally necessary to the body and the soul, and to both equally productive of health and pleasure.

This happy sensibility to the beauties of nature should be cherished in young persons. It engages them to contemplate the Creator in his wonderful works; it purifies and harmonizes the soul, and prepares it for moral and intellectual discipline; it supplies an endless source of amusement; it contributes even to bodily health; and, as a strict analogy subsists between material and moral beauty, it leads the heart by an easy transition from the one to the other; and thus recommends virtue for its transcendant loveliness, and makes vice appear the object of contempt and abomination. An intimate acquaintance with the best descriptive poets, Spenser, Milton, and Thomson, but above all with the divine Georgics, joined to some practice in the art of drawing,

will promote this amiable sensibility in early years; for then the face of nature has novelty superadded to its other charms; the passions are not pre-engaged, the heart is free from care, and the imagination warm and romantic.

Reality ennobled by Imagination.

IN the beginning of life, and while experience is confined to a small circle, we admire every thing, and are pleased with very moderate excellence. A peasant thinks the hall of his landlord the finest apartment in the universe, listens with rapture to the strolling ballad-singer, and wonders at the rude wooden cuts that adorn his ruder compositions. A child looks upon his native village as a town; upon the brook that runs by as a river; and upon the meadows and hills in the neighbourhood, as the most spacious and beautiful that can be. But when, after long absence, he returns in his declining years, to visit, once before he die, the dear spot that gave him birth, and those scenes whereof he remembers rather the original charms than the exact proportions, how is he disappointed to find every thing so debased and so diminished!

The hills seem to have sunk into the ground, the brook to be dried up, and the village to be forsaken of its people; the parish-church, stripped of all its fancied magnificence, is become low, gloomy, and narrow; and the fields are now only the miniature of what they were. Had he never left this spot, his notions might have remained the same as at first; and had he travelled but a little way from it, they would not perhaps have received any material enlargement. It seems then to be from observation of many things of the same or similar kinds, that we acquire the talent of forming ideas more perfect than the real objects that lie immediately around us: and these ideas we may improve gradually more and more, according to the vivacity of our mind, and extent of our experience, till at last we come to raise them to a degree of perfection superior to any thing to be found in real life. There cannot, sure, be any mystery in this doctrine; for we think and speak to the same purpose every day. Thus nothing is more common than to say, that such an artist excels all we have ever known in his profession, and yet that we can still conceive a superior performance. A moralist, by bringing together into

one view the separate virtues of many persons, is enabled to lay down a system of duty more perfect than any he has ever seen exemplified in human conduct. Whatever be the emotion the poet intends to raise in his reader, whether admiration or terror, joy or sorrow; and whatever be the object he would exhibit, whether Venus or Tisiphone, Achilles or Thersites, a palace or a pile of ruins, a dance or a battle, he generally copies an idea of his own imagination; considering each quality as it is found to exist in several individuals of a species, and thence forming an assemblage more or less perfect in its kind, according to the purpose to which he means to apply it.

Causes of our Delight in Tragedy.

THAT has been thought a very mysterious pleasure, which we take in witnessing tragical imitations of human action, even while they move us to pity and sorrow. Several causes seem to co-operate in producing it.—1. It gives an agreeable agitation to the mind, to be deeply interested in any event that is not attended with real harm to ourselves or others. Nay, certain events of the most substantial

distress would seem to give a gloomy entertainment to some minds: else why should men run so eagerly to see shipwrecks, executions, riots, and even battles, and fields of slaughter? But the distress upon the stage neither is, nor is believed to be, real; and therefore the agreeable exercise it may give to the mind is not allayed by any bitter reflections, but is rather heightened by this consideration—that the whole is imaginary. To those who mistake it for real, as children are said to do sometimes, it gives no pleasure, but intense pain.—2. Throughout the performance, we admire the genius of the poet, as it appears in the language and sentiments, in the right conduct of the fable, in diversifying and supporting the characters, and in devising incidents, affecting in themselves and conducive to the main design.—3. The ingenuity of the actors must be allowed to be a principal cause of the pleasure with which we witness either tragedy or comedy. A bad play well acted may please, and in fact often does; but a good play ill acted is intolerable.—4. We sympathise with the emotions of the audience, and this heightens our own. For, I apprehend that no person of sensibility would choose to be the sole

spectator of a play, if he had it in his power to see it in company with a multitude. When we have read by ourselves a pleasing narrative till it has lost every charm that novelty can bestow, we may renew its relish by reading it in company, and perhaps be even more entertained than at the first perusal.—5. The ornaments of the theatre, the music, the scenery, the splendor of the company; nay, the very dress of the players, must be allowed to contribute something to our amusement: else why do managers expend so much money in decoration?—And, lastly, let it be observed, that there is something very peculiar in the nature of pity. The pain, however exquisite, that accompanies this amiable affection, is such, that a man of a generous mind would not disqualify himself for it, even if he could: nor is the "luxury of woe," that we read of in poetry, a mere figure of speech, but a real sensation, wherewith every person of humanity is acquainted by frequent experience. Pity produces a tenderness of heart very friendly to virtuous impressions. It inclines us to be circumspect and lowly, and sensible of the uncertainty of human things, and of our dependence upon the great Author of our being;

while continued joy and prosperity harden the heart, and render men proud, irreligious, and inattentive: so that Solomon had good reason for affirming, that "by the sadness of the "countenance the heart is made better." The exercise of pity, even towards imaginary sufferings, cannot fail to give pleasure, if attended, as it generally is, with the approbation of reason and conscience, declaring it to be a virtuous affection, productive of signal benefit to society, and peculiarly suitable to our condition, honourable to our nature, and amiable in the eyes of our fellow-creatures.

Whence are the Pleasures derived from Music?

IT has been said, that certain melodies and harmonies have *an aptitude* to raise certain passions, affections, and sentiments, in the human soul. Let us inquire a little into the nature of this *aptitude*, by endeavouring, from acknowledged principles of the human constitution, to explain the cause of that pleasure which mankind derive from music. I am well aware of the delicacy of the argument, and of my inability to do it justice; and therefore I

promise no complete investigation, nor indeed any thing more than a few cursory remarks. As I have no theory to support, and as this topic, though it may amuse, is not of any great utility, I shall be neither positive in my assertions, nor abstruse in my reasoning.

The vulgar distinguish between the sense of hearing, and that faculty by which we receive pleasure from music, and which is commonly called *a musical ear*. Every body knows, that to hear, and to have a relish for melody, are two different things; and that many persons have the first in perfection, who are destitute of the last. The last is indeed, like the first, a gift of nature; and may, like other natural gifts, languish if neglected, and improve exceedingly if exercised. And though every person who hears, might, no doubt, by instruction and long experience, be made sensible of the musical properties of sound, so far as to be in some measure gratified with good music, and disgusted with bad, yet both his pain and his pleasure would be very different in kind and degree, from that which is conveyed by a true musical ear.

Does not part of the pleasure, both of melody and harmony, arise from the very nature of

the notes that compose it? Certain inarticulate sounds, especially when continued, produce very pleasing effects on the mind. They seem to withdraw the attention from the more tumultuous concerns of life, and, without agitating the soul, to pour gradually upon it a train of softer ideas, that sometimes lull and sooth the faculties, and sometimes quicken sensibility, and stimulate the imagination. Nor is it altogether absurd to suppose, that the human body may be mechanically affected by them. If in a church one feels the floor and the pew tremble to certain tones of the organ; if one string vibrates of its own accord when another is sounded near it of equal length, tension, and thickness; if a person who sneezes, or speaks loud, in the neighbourhood of a harpsichord, often hears the strings of the instrument murmur in the same tone, we need not wonder, that some of the finer fibres of the human frame should be put in a tremulous motion, when they happen to be in unison with any notes proceeding from external objects.—That certain bodily pains might be alleviated by certain sounds, was believed by the Greeks and Romans: and we have it on the best authority, that one species at least of

madness was once curable by melody.* I have seen even instrumental music of little expression draw tears from those who had no knowledge of the art, nor any particular relish for it. Nay, a friend of mine, who is profoundly skilled in the theory of music, well acquainted with the animal economy, and singularly accurate in his inquiries into nature, assures me, that he has been once and again wrought into a feverish fit by the tones of an Eolian harp. These, and other similar facts that might be mentioned, are not easily accounted for, unless we suppose, that certain sounds may have a mechanical influence upon certain parts of the human body.—Be that however as it will, it admits of no doubt, that the mind may be agreeably affected by mere sound, in which there is neither meaning nor modulation; not only by the tones of the Eolian harp, and other musical instruments, but also by the murmur of winds, groves, and water-falls; nay, by the shouts of multitudes, by the uproar of the ocean in a storm; and, when one can listen to it without fear, by that "deep "and dreadful organ-pipe," the thunder itself.

* First book of Samuel, chap. xvi. verse 23.

Scotch Music—its peculiarity accounted for.

THE Highlands of Scotland are a picturesque, but in general a melancholy, country. Long tracts of mountainous desert, covered with dark heath, and often obscured by misty weather; narrow valleys, thinly inhabited, and bounded by precipices resounding with the fall of torrents; a soil so rugged, and a climate so dreary, as in many parts to admit neither the amusements of pasturage, nor the labours of agriculture; the mournful dashing of waves along the friths and lakes that intersect the country; the portentous noises which every change of the wind, and every increase and diminution of the waters, is apt to raise in a lonely region, full of echoes, and rocks, and caverns; the grotesque and ghastly appearance of such a landscape by the light of the moon:—objects like these diffuse a gloom over the fancy, which may be compatible enough with occasional and social merriment, but cannot fail to tincture the thoughts of a native in the hour of silence and solitude. If these people, notwithstanding their reformation in religion, and more frequent intercourse with strangers, do still retain many of their old

superstitions, we need not doubt but in former times they must have been much more enslaved to the horrors of imagination, when beset with the bugbears of Popery, and the darkness of Paganism. Most of their superstitions are of a melancholy cast. That *second sight*, wherewith some of them are still supposed to be haunted, is considered by themselves as a misfortune, on account of the many dreadful images it is said to obtrude upon the fancy. I have been told, that the inhabitants of some of the Alpine regions do likewise lay claim to a sort of second sight. Nor is it wonderful, that persons of lively imagination, immured in deep solitude, and surrounded with the stupendous scenery of clouds, precipices, and torrents, should dream, even when they think themselves awake, of those few striking ideas with which their lonely lives are diversified; of corpses, funeral processions, and other objects of terror; or of marriages, and the arrival of strangers, and such like matters of more agreeable curiosity. Let it be observed also, that the ancient highlanders of Scotland had hardly any other way of supporting themselves, than by hunting, fishing, or war; professions that are continually exposed to fa-

tal accidents. And hence, no doubt, additional horrors would often haunt their solitude, and a deeper gloom overshadow the imagination even of the hardiest native.

What then would it be reasonable to expect from the fanciful tribe, from the musicians and poets, of such a region? Strains, expressive of joy, tranquillity, or the softer passions? No: their style must have been better suited to their circumstances. And so we find in fact that their music is. The wildest irregularity appears in its composition: the expression is warlike and melancholy, and approaches even to the terrible.—And that their poetry is almost uniformly mournful, and their views of nature dark and dreary, will be allowed by all who admit the authenticity of Ossian; and not doubted by any who believe those fragments of highland poetry to be genuine, which many old people, now alive, of that country, remember to have heard in their youth, and were then taught to refer to a pretty high antiquity.

Some of the southern provinces of Scotland present a very different prospect. Smooth and lofty hills covered with verdure; clear streams winding through long and beautiful valleys;

trees produced without culture, here straggling or single, and there crouding into little groves and bowers;—with other circumstances peculiar to the districts I allude to, render them fit for pasturage, and favourable to romantic leisure and tender passions. Several of the old Scotch songs take their names from the rivulets, villages, and hills, adjoining to the Tweed near Melrose;* a region distinguished by many charming varieties of rural scenery, and which, whether we consider the face of the country, or the genius of the people, may properly enough be termed the Arcadia of Scotland. And all these songs are sweetly and powerfully expressive of love and tenderness, and other emotions suited to the tranquillity of pastoral life.

Man.

OF Man, it is observed by Homer, that he is the most wretched, and by Addison and others, that he is the merriest, animal in the whole creation: and both opinions are plausible, and both perhaps may be true. If, from

* Cowdenknows, Galashiels, Galawater, Etterick banks, Braes of Yarrow, Bush above Traquair, &c.

the acuteness and delicacy of his perceptive powers, from his remembrance of the past, and his anticipation of what is to come, from his restless and creative fancy, and from the various sensibilities of his moral nature, man be exposed to many evils, both imaginary and real, from which the brutes are exempted, he does also from the same sources derive innumerable delights, that are far beyond the reach of every other animal. That our pre-eminence in pleasure should thus, in some degree, be counterbalanced by our pre-eminence in pain, was necessary to exercise our virtue, and wean our hearts from sublunary enjoyment; and that beings thus beset with a multitude of sorrows should be supplied from so many quarters with the means of comfort, is suitable to that benign economy which characterises every operation of nature.

When a brute has gratified those few appetites that minister to the support of the species, and of the individual, he may be said to have attained the summit of happiness, above which a thousand years of prosperity could not raise him a single step. But for man, her favourite child, nature has made a more liberal provision. He, if he have only guarded against

the necessities of life, and indulged the animal part of his constitution, has experienced but little of that felicity whereof he is capable. To say nothing at present of his moral and religious gratifications, is he not furnished with faculties that fit him for receiving pleasure from almost every part of the visible universe? Even to those persons whose powers of observation are confined within a narrow circle, the exercise of the necessary arts may open inexhaustable sources of amusement, to alleviate the cares of a solitary and laborious life. Men of more enlarged understanding, and more cultivated taste, are still more plentifully supplied with the means of innocent delight. For such, either from acquired habit or from innate propensity, is the soul of man, that there is hardly any thing in art or nature from which we may not derive gratification. What is great, overpowers with pleasing astonishment; what is little, may charm by its nicety of proportion or beauty of colour; what is diversified, pleases by supplying a series of novelties; what is uniform, by leading us to reflect on the skill displayed in the arrangement of its parts; order and connection gratify our sense of propriety; and certain

forms of *irregularity* and *unsuitableness* raise within us that agreeable emotion whereof LAUGHTER is the outward sign.

RISIBILITY, considered as one of the characters that distinguish man from the inferior animals, and as an instrument of harmless and even of profitable recreation, to every age, condition, and capacity, of human creatures, must be allowed to be not unworthy of the philosopher's notice. Whatever is peculiar to rational nature, must be an object of some importance to a rational being; and Milton has observed, that

> Smiles from reason flow,
> To brute denied :——

——Whatever may be employed as a means of discountenancing vice, folly, or falsehood, is an object of importance to a moral being; and Horace has remarked,

> Ridiculum acri
> Fortius et melius magnas pleruınque secat res.*

Let this apology suffice at present for my choice of a subject. Even this apology might have been spared: for nothing is below the at-

* —— Ridicule shall frequently prevail,
And cut the knot when graver reasons fail.
Francis.

tention of philosophy, which the Author of nature has been pleased to establish.

The Absurdity of Fashion.

IF an old Greek or Roman were to rise from his grave, and see the human head and shoulders overshadowed with a vast periwig; or were he to contemplate the native hairs of a fine gentleman arranged in the present form,* part standing erect, as if their owner were beset with hobgoblins, and part by means of grease and meal consolidated into paste; he could hardly fail to be struck with the appearance; and I question, whether the features even of Heraclitus himself, or of the younger Cato, would not relax a little upon the occasion. For in this absurd imitation of nature, we have likeness coupled with dissimilitude, and imaginary grace with real deformity, and inconvenience sought after with eagerness, and at considerable expence. Yet in these fashions they who are accustomed to them do not perceive any thing ridiculous. Nay, were we to see a fine lady dressed according to the mode still extant in some old pictures, with

* In the year 1764.

her tresses all hanging about her eyes, in distinct and equal portions, like a bunch of candles, and twisted into a hundred strange curls, we should certainly think her a laughable phenomenon; though the same object two centuries ago would have been gazed at with admiration and delight. There are few incongruities to which *custom* will not reconcile us. Nay, so wonderfully ductile is the taste of some people, that, in the various revolutions of fashion, they find the same thing *charming* while in vogue, which when obsolete is altogether *frightful*.

The Absurdity of Vice.

A MORE striking absurdity there is not in the whole universe, than a vicious man. His frame and faculties are human: his moral nature, originally inclined to rectitude, is sadly perverted, and applied to purposes not less unsuitable to humanity, than dancing is to a bear, or a sword and snuff-box to a monkey. He judges of things, not by their proper standard, nor as they are in themselves, but as they appear through the medium of his own variable and artificial appetites; as the

clown is said to have applied his candle to the sun-dial to see how the night went. He overlooks and loses real good, in order to attain that of which he knows not whether it be good, or whether it be attainable; like the dog in the fable, losing the substance by catching at a shadow. He justifies his conduct to his own mind, by arguments whereof he sees the fallacy; like the thief endeavouring to enrich himself by stealing out of his own pocket. He purposes to take up and reform, whenever his appetites are fully gratified; like the rustic, whose plan was, to wait till the water of the river should run by, and then pass over dry-shod. He attempts what is beyond his reach, and is ruined by the attempt; like the frog that burst by endeavouring to blow herself up to the size of an ox.—In a word, more blunders and absurdities than ever the imitators of Esop ascribed to the beasts, or Joe Millar to the Scots and Irish, might easily be traced out in the conduct of the wicked man. And yet vice, however it may *surprise* by its novelty or enormity, is by no means an object of laughter, even to those who perceive in it all the absurdities I have specified. We pity, and in some cases we abhor, the perpetrator;

but our mind must be depraved like his own, if we laugh at him.

Superiority of the Moderns in Humour.

EVERY thing that gives variety to the thoughts, the manners, and employments, of men, must also tend to diversify their conversations and compositions in general, and their wit and humour in particular. Accordinly we find, that almost every profession in life has a turn of humour, as well as of thinking and acting, peculiar in some degree to itself. The soldier, the seaman, the mechanic, the husbandman, is more amused by the conversation of people of his own trade, than by that of others: and a species of wit shall be highly relished in one club or society, which in another would be but little attended to. We need not wonder, then, that in the humour of each country there should be some peculiar character, to the forming of which, not only the language and manners, but even the climate and soil, must contribute, by giving a peculiar direction to the pursuits and thoughts of the inhabitants. Nor need we wonder, that each nation should be affected most agreeably

with its own wit and humour. For, not to mention the prejudice that one naturally entertains in favour of what is one's own, a native must always understand, better than foreigners can, the relations, contrarieties, and allusions, implied in what is ludicrous in the speech and writings of his countrymen.

Shakspeare's humour will never be adequately relished in France, nor that of Moliere in England: and translations of ludicrous writings are seldom popular, unless they exhibit something of the manners and habits of thinking, as well as the language, of the people to whom they are addressed. Echard's Terence, from having adopted such a multitude of our cant phrases, and proverbial allusions, is perhaps more generally relished in Great Britain, than a more literal and more elegant version would have been. Sancho Panza diverts us more in Motteux's Don Quixote, than in Jervas's translation, or Smollet's; because he has more of the English clown, and less of the Spaniard, in the former than in the latter. And a certain French author, to render his translation of Tom Jones more acceptable to his countrymen, and to clear it of what he foolishly calls English phlegm, has greatly

abridged that incomparable performance, and, in my opinion, expunged some of the finest passages; those conversation-pieces, I mean, which tend more immediately to the elucidation of the characters, than to the progress of the story.

May there not, then, in ancient authors, be many excellent strokes of wit and humour, which we misapprehend, merely because we cannot adequately relish? The dialogues of the Socratic philosophers abound in pleasantry, which is no doubt entertaining to a modern reader, but which does not at all come up to those expectations that one would be apt to form of it from the high encomiums of Cicero, and other ancient critics: and may not this be partly imputed to our not sufficiently understanding the Socratic dialogues? To us nothing appears more paltry in the execution, than the ridicule with which Aristophanes persecuted Socrates: and yet we know, that it operated with wonderful energy on the Athenians, who, for refinement of taste, and for wit and humour, were distinguished among all the nations of antiquity. Does not this amount to a presumption, that we are no competent judges of the humour of that profligate comedian?

Let it be remarked, too, that the sphere most favourable to wit and humour, is that which is occupied by the middle and lower ranks of mankind; persons in high stations being obliged to maintain a reserve unfriendly to risible emotion, and to reduce their behaviour to an artificial uniformity, which does indeed answer many important purposes, but which, for the most part, disqualifies them for filling any eminent place in humorous description. Now we are much in the dark in regard to the manners that prevailed among the Greeks and Romans of the lower sort: and there must have been, in their ludicrous writings, as there are in ours, many nice allusions to trifling customs, to the news of the day, and to characters and incidents too inconsiderable to be minded by the historian, which none but persons living at the time, and in a particular place, could ever comprehend;—as the writers of those days had no notion of the modern practice of illustrating their own works with marginal annotations. Many authors, too, are lost; and with them has probably perished (as we remarked already) the ludicrous effect of innumerable parodies and turns of expression, to be met with

in Aristophanes, Plautus, Lucian, Horace, and other witty ancients. It is at least certain, that there are in Shakespeare many parodies and allusions, the propriety of which we cannot estimate, as the authors, customs, and incidents, referred to, are already forgotten.

From the causes now hinted at, works of wit and humour would appear to be less permanent in their effects, and more liable to become obscure, than any other literary compositions. Commentaries are now necessary to make Hudibras and the Dunciad thoroughly intelligible: and what a mysterious rhapsody would the Rape of the Lock be to those, who, though well instructed in the language of Hooker and Spenser, had never heard of snuff or coffee, watches or hoop-petticoats, beaus or lap-dogs, toilettes or card-tables! But the reasonings of Euclid and Demosthenes, the moral and natural paintings of Homer and Virgil, the pathos of Eloisa's Epistle to Abelard, the descriptions of Livy and Tacitus, can never stand in need of commentaries to explain them, so long as the Greek, Latin, and English, languages are tolerably understood; because they are founded in those suggestions of human reason, and those appearances in the moral and material

world, which are always the same, and with which every intelligent observer must in every age be acquainted.

I would not insinuate, that all sorts of ludicrous writing are equally liable to lose their effect, and be misunderstood. Those must preserve their relish unimpaired through ages, which allude,—to our more permanent follies and absurdities; like Horace's picture of an intrusive coxcomb, and the greater part of the satire which he levels at pedantry and avarice;—or to writings transcendently excellent; like the Virgilian cento of Ausonius, the Splendid Shilling of Philips, and the Batrachomyomachia erroneously ascribed to Homer;—or to customs or opinions universally known; such as Lucian's ridicule of the Pagan Theology, and that inimitable raillery on the abuses of learning which is contained in the Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus.—I mean only to say, that ludicrous writing in general is extremely subject to the injuries of time; and that, therefore, the wit and humour of the ancient Greeks and Romans might have been far more exquisite, than we at present have any positive reason to believe.

Character of Milton.

MILTON was one of the most learned men this nation ever produced. But his great learning neither impaired his judgement, nor checked his imagination. A richer vein of invention, as well as a more correct taste, appear in the Paradise Lost, written when he was near sixty years of age, than in any of his earlier performances. Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes, which were his last works, are not so full of imagery, nor admit so much fancy, as many of his other pieces; but they discover a consummate judgement; and little is wanting to make each of them perfect in its kind.—I am not offended at that profusion of learning which here and there appears in the Paradise Lost. It gives a classical air to the poem: it refreshes the mind with new ideas; and there is something, in the very sound of the names of places and persons whom he celebrates, that is wonderfully pleasing to the ear. Admit all this to be no better than pedantic superfluity; yet will it not follow, that Milton's learning did him any harm upon the whole, provided it appear to have improved him in matters of higher importance. And

that it did so, is undeniable. This poet is not more eminent for strength and sublimity of genius, than for the art of his composition; which he owed partly to a fine taste in harmony, and partly to his accurate knowledge of the ancients. The style of his numbers has not often been imitated with success. It is not merely the want of rhyme, nor the diversified position of pauses, nor the drawing out of the sense from one line to another; far less is it the mixture of antiquated words and strange idioms, that constitutes the charm of Milton's versification; though many of his imitators, when they copy him in these or in some of these respects, think they have acquitted themselves very well. But one must study the best classic authors with as much critical skill as Milton did, before one can pretend to rival him in the art of harmonious writing. For, after all the rules that can be given, there is something in this art, which cannot be acquired but by a careful study of the ancient masters, particularly Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, Cicero, and Virgil; every one of whom, or at least the two first and the last, it would be easy to prove, that Milton has imitated, in the construction of his numbers.—In a word,

we have good reason to conclude, that Milton's genius, instead of being over-loaded or encumbered, was greatly improved, enriched, and refined, by his learning. At least we are sure this was his own opinion. Never was there a more indefatigable student. And from the superabundance of classic allusions to be met with in every page of his poetry, we may guess how highly he valued the literature of Greece and Rome, and how frequently he meditated upon it.

Character of Spenser.

SPENSER was learned in Latin and Greek, as well as in Italian. But either the fashion of the times, or some deficiency in his own taste, inclined him to prefer the modern to the ancient models. His genius was comprehensive and sublime, his style copious, his sense of harmony delicate: and nothing seems to have been wanting to make him a poet of the highest rank, but a more intimate acquaintance with the classic authors. We may at least venture to say, that if he had been a little more conversant in these, he would not, in his Shepherd's Calendar, have debased the tenderness

of pastoral with the impure mixture of theological disputation; nor would he have been so intoxicated with the splendid faults of the Orlando Furioso, as to construct his Fairy Queen on that Gothic model, rather than according to the plan which Homer invented, and which Virgil and Tasso (who were also favourites with our author) had so happily imitated. It is said to be on account of the purity of his style, and the variety of his invention, and not for any thing admirable in his plan, that the Italians in general prefer Ariosto to Tasso:—and indeed we can hardly conceive, how a tale so complex and so absurd, so heterogeneous in its parts, and so extravagant as a whole, should be more esteemed than a simple, probable, perspicuous, and interesting, fable. Yet Spenser gave the preference to the former; a fact so extraordinary, considering his abilities in other respects, that we cannot account for it, without supposing it to have been partly the effect of a bias contracted by long acquaintance. And if so, have we not reason to think, that if he had been but equally conversant with better patterns, his taste would have acquired a different and better direction?

FROM

AN ESSAY

ON THE

NATURE AND IMMUTABILITY

OF

TRUTH.

Importance of Self-knowledge.

It is commonly allowed, that the science of human nature is of all human sciences the most curious and important. To know ourselves, is a precept which the wise in all ages have recommended, and which is enjoyed by the authority of revelation itself. Can any thing be of more consequence to man, than to know what is his duty, and how he may arrive at happiness? It is from the examination of his own heart that he receives the first intimations of the one, and the only sure criterion of the other.—What can be more useful, more de-

lightful, and more sublime, than to contemplate the Deity? It is in the works of nature, particularly in the constitution of the human soul, that we discern the first and most conspicuous traces of the Almighty; for without some previous acquaintance with our own moral nature we could not have any certain knowledge of His. — Destitute of the hope of immortality, and a future retribution, how contemptible, how miserable is man! And yet, did not our moral feelings, in concert with what reason discovers of the Deity, evidence the necessity of a future state, in vain should we pretend to judge rationally of that revelation by which life and immortality have been brought to light.

How then is this science to be learned? In what manner are we to study human nature? Doubtless by examining our own hearts and feelings, and by attending to the conduct of other men. But are not the writings of philosophers useful towards the attainment of this science? Most certainly they are; for whatever improves the sagacity of judgment, the sensibility of moral perception, or the delicacy of taste; whatever renders our knowledge of moral and intellectual facts more extensive;

whatever impresses our minds with more enlarged and more powerful sentiments of duty, with more affecting views of God and Providence, and with greater energy of belief in the doctrines of natural religion;—every thing of this sort either makes us more thoroughly acquainted, or prepares us for becoming more thoroughly acquainted with our own nature, and with that of other beings, and with the relations which they and we bear to one another. But I fear we shall not be able to improve ourselves in any one of these respects, by reading the modern systems of scepticism.

Of the Importance of Conscience.

WE cannot disbelieve the evidence of internal sense, without offering violence to our nature. And if we be led into such disbelief, or distrust, by the sophistry of pretended philosophers, we act just as wisely as a mariner would do, who should suffer himself to be persuaded, that the pole-star is continually changing its place, or that the wind always blows from the same quarter. Common sense, or instinct, which prompts men to trust to their own feelings, hath in all ages continued the same: but the interests, pursuits, and abilities

of philosophers are susceptible of endless variety; and their theories vary accordingly.

Let it not be thought, that these objects and faculties of internal sensation are things too evanescent to be attended to, or that their evidence is too weak to produce a steady and well-grounded conviction. They are more necessary to our happiness than even the powers and objects of external sense; yea, they are no less necessary to our existence. What can be of greater consequence to man, than his moral sentiments, his reason, his memory, his imagination? What more interesting, than to know, whether his notions of duty and of truth be the dictates of his nature, that is, the voice of God, or the positive institutions of men? What is it to which a wise man will pay more attention, than to his reason and conscience, those divine monitors, by which he is to judge even of religion itself, and which he is not at liberty to disobey, though an angel from heaven should command him? The generality of mankind, however ignorant of the received distinctions and explications of their internal powers, do yet by their conduct declare, that they feel their influence, and acknowledge their authenticity. Every instance

of their being governed by a principle of moral obligation, is a proof of this. They believe an action to be lawful in the sight of God, when they are conscious of a sentiment of lawfulness attending the performance of it: they believe a certain mode of conduct to be incumbent on them in certain circumstances, because a notion of duty arises in their mind, when they contemplate that conduct in relation to those circumstances.—"I ought to be grate-"ful for a favour received. Why? Because "my conscience tells me so. How do you "know that you ought to do that, of which "your conscience enjoins the performance? "I can give no further reason for it; but I "feel that such is my duty." Here the investigation must stop; or, if carried a little further, it must return to this point:—"I "know that I ought to do what my conscience "enjoins, because God is the author of my "constitution; and I obey His will, when I "act according to the principles of my con-"stitution. Why do you obey the will of "God? Because it is my duty. How know "you that? Because my conscience tells "me so.

Of Faith in Testimony.

THERE are in the world many men, whose declaration concerning any fact which they have seen, and of which they are competent judges, would engage my belief as effectually as the evidence of my own senses. A metaphysician may tell me, that this implicit confidence in testimony is unworthy of a philosopher and a logician, and that my faith ought to be more rational. It may be so; but I believe as before, notwithstanding. And I find that all men have the same confidence in the testimony of certain persons; and that, if a man should refuse to think as other men do in this matter, he would be called obstinate, whimsical, narrow-minded, and a fool. If, after the experience of so many ages, men are still disposed to believe the word of an honest man, and find no inconvenience in doing so, I must conclude that it is not only natural, but rational, expedient, and manly, to credit such testimony: and though I were to peruse volumes of metaphysic written in proof of the fallability of testimony, I should still, like the rest of the world, believe credible testimony without fear of inconvenience. I know

very well, that testimony is not admitted in proof of any doctrine in mathematics, because the evidence of that science is quite of a different kind. But is truth to be found in mathematics only? is the geometrician the only person who exerts a rational belief? do we never find conviction arise in our minds, except when we contemplate an intuitive axiom, or run over a mathematical demonstration? In natural philosophy, a science not inferior to pure mathematics in the certainty of its conclusions, testimony is admitted as a sufficient proof of many facts. To believe testimony, therefore, is agreeable to nature, to reason, and to sound philosophy.

The real Object of Human Knowledge.

THE end of all science, and indeed of every useful pursuit, is to make men happier, by improving them in wisdom and virtue. I beg leave to ask, whether the present race of men owe any part of their virtue, wisdom, or happiness, to what metaphysicians have written in proof of the non-existence of matter, and the necessity of human actions? If it be answered, that our happiness, wisdom, and

virtue, are not at all affected by such controversies, then I must affirm, that all such controversies are useless. And if it be true, that they have a tendency to promote wrangling, which of all kinds of conversation is the most unpleasant, and the most unprofitable; or vain polemical disquisition, which cannot be carried on without waste of time, and prostitution of talents; or scepticism, which tends to make a man uncomfortable in himself, and unserviceable to others:—then I must affirm, that all such controversies are both useless and mischievous; that the world would be more wise, more virtuous, and more happy, without them.—But it is said, that they improve the understanding, and render it more capable of discovering truth, and detecting error. Be it so:—but though bars and locks render our houses secure; and though acuteness of hearing and feeling be a valuable endowment, it will not follow that thieves are a public blessing, or that the man is intitled to my gratitude who quickens my touch and hearing, by putting out my eyes.

It is further said, that such controversies make us sensible of the weakness of human reason, and the imperfection of human know-

ledge; and for the sanguinary principles of bigotry and enthusiasm, substitute the milky ones of scepticism and moderation. And this is conceived to be of prodigious emolument to mankind; because a firm attachment to religion, which a man may call bigotry if he pleases, doth often give rise to a persecuting spirit; whereas a perfect indifference about it, which some men are good-natured enough to call moderation, is a principle of great good-breeding, and gives no sort of disturbance, either in private or public life. This is a plea on which our modern sceptics plume themselves not a little. And who will venture to arraign the virtue or the sagacity of these projectors? To accomplish so great effects by means so simple; to prevent such dreadful calamities by so innocent an artifice,—does it not display the perfection of benevolence and wisdom? Truly I can hardly imagine such another scheme, except perhaps the following. Suppose a physician of the Sangrada school, out of zeal for the interest of the faculty, and the public good, to prepare a bill to be laid before the parliament, in these words: "That "whereas good health, especially when of "long standing, has a tendency to prepare the

" human frame for acute and inflammatory
" distempers, which have been known to give
" extreme pain to the unhappy patient, and
" sometimes even bring him to the grave; and
" whereas the said health, by making us brisk,
" and hearty, and happy, is apt also, on some
" occasions, to make us disorderly and licen-
" tious, to the great detriment of glass win-
" dows, lanterns, and watchmen: Be it there-
" fore enacted, That all the inhabitants of these
" realms, for the peace of government, and
" the repose of the subject, be compelled, on
" pain of death, to bring their bodies down to
" a consumptive habit; and that henceforth
" no person presume to walk abroad with a
" cane, on pain of having his head broke with
" it, and being set in the stocks for six months;
" nor to walk at all, except with crutches, to
" be delivered at the public charge to each
" person who makes affidavit, that he is no
" longer able to walk without them," &c.—
He who can eradicate conviction from the hu-
man heart, may doubtless prevent all the fa-
tal effects of enthusiasm and bigotry: and if
all human bodies were thrown into a consump-
tion, I believe there would be an end of riot,
as well as of inflammatory diseases.

The Simplicity of Nature, well understood.

IN the laws of nature, when thoroughly understood, there appear no contradictions. It is only in the systems of philosophers that reason and common sense are at variance. No man of common sense ever did or could believe, that the horse he saw coming towards him at full gallop, was an idea in his mind, and nothing else; no thief was ever such a fool as to plead in his own defence, that his crime was necessary and unavoidable, for that man is born to pick pockets as the sparks fly upward. When Reason invades the Rights of Common Sense, and presumes to arraign that authority by which she herself acts, nonsense and confusion must of necessity ensue: science will soon come to have neither head nor tail, beginning nor end; philosophy will grow contemptible; and its adherents, far from being treated, as in former times, upon the footing of conjurors, will be thought by the vulgar, and by every man of sense, to be little better than downright fools.

Mutability of Opinion defended.

OUR internal, as well as external senses, may be, and often are, imposed upon, by inaccurate views of their objects. We may in sincerity of heart applaud, and afterwards condemn the same person for the same action, according to the different lights in which that action is presented to our moral faculty. Just now I hear a report, that a human body is found dead in the neighbouring fields, with marks of violence upon it. Here a confused suspicion arises in my mind of murder committed; but my conscience suspends its judgment till the true state of the case be better known: I am not as yet in a condition to perceive those qualities of this event which ascertain the morality of the action; no more than I can perceive the beauty or deformity of a face while it is veiled, or at too great distance. A passenger informs me, that a person has been apprehended who confesses himself the murderer; my moral faculty instantly suggests, that this person has committed a crime worthy of a most severe and exemplary punishment. By and by I learn, from what I think good authority, that my former information is false,

for that the man now dead had made an unprovoked assault on the other, who was thus driven to the necessity of killing him in self-defence, my conscience immediately acquits the man-slayer. I send a messenger to make particular enquiry into this affair; who brings word that the man was accidentally killed by a fowler shooting at a bird, who, before he fired, had been at all possible pains to discover whether any human creature was in the way; but that the deceased was in such a situation that he could not be discovered. I regret the accident; but I blame neither party. Afterwards I learn that this fowler was a careless fellow, and though he had no bad intention, was not at due pains to observe whether any human creature would be hurt by his firing. I blame his negligence with great severity, but I cannot charge him with guilt so enormous as that of murder. Here my moral faculty passes several different judgments on *the same action;* and each of them is right, and will be in its turn believed to be right, and trusted to accordingly, as long as the information which gave rise to it is believed to be true. I say *the same action,* not *the same intention;* a different intention appears in the man-slayer from

each information; and it is only the intention and affections that the moral faculty condemns or approves. To discover the intention wherewith actions are performed, reason is often necessary; but the design of such reasoning, is not to sway or inform the conscience, but only to ascertain those circumstances, or qualities, of the action, from which the intention of the agent may appear. When this becomes manifest, the conscience of mankind immediately and intuitively declares it to be virtuous, or vitious, or innocent.—These different judgments of the moral faculty are so far from proving it fallacious, that they prove the contrary; at least this faculty would be extremely fallacious, and absolutely useless, if, in the case now supposed, it did not form different judgments.—While the intention of the agent is wholly unknown, an action is upon the same footing in regard to its morality, as a human face, in regard to its beauty, while it is veiled, or at too great distance. By removing the veil, or walking up to the object, we perceive its beauty and features; and by reasoning, or by information concerning the circumstances of the action, we are enabled to discover or infer the intention of the agent. The

act of removing the veil, or walking up to the object, has no effect on the eye; nor has the reasoning any effect on the conscience.—While we view an object through an impure or unequal medium, through a pair of green spectacles, or an uneven pane of glass, we see it discoloured or distorted; just so, when misrepresented, a good action may seem evil, and an evil action good. If we be suspicious of the representation, if we be aware of the improper medium, we distrust the appearance accordingly; if not, we do, and must, believe it genuine. It is by reasoning from our experience of human actions and their causes, or by the testimony of credible witnesses, that we detect misrepresentations concerning moral conduct.

The Subtility of verbal Disputation.

CLAY is not more obsequious to the potter, than words to the skilful disputant. They may be made to assume almost any form, to enforce almost any doctrine. So true it is, that much may be said on either side of most questions, that we have known dealers in controversy, who were always of the same mind

with the author whom they read last. We have seen theories of morality deduced from pride, from sympathy, from self-love, from benevolence; and all so plausible, as would surprise one who is unacquainted with the ambiguities of language. Of these the advocates for simple truth are less careful to avail themselves, than their paradoxical antagonists. The arguments of the former, being more obvious, stand less in need of illustration; those of the latter require all the embellishments of eloquence and refinement to recommend them. Robbers seldom go abroad without arms; they examine every corner and countenance with a penetrating eye, which habitual distrust and circumspection have rendered intensely sagacious: the honest man walks carelessly about his business, intending no harm, and suspecting none. It cannot be denied, that philosophers do often, in the use of words, impose on themselves as well as on others; an ambiguous word slipping in by accident, will often perplex a whole subject, to the equal surprise of both parties; and perhaps, in a long course of years, the cause of this perplexity shall not be discovered. This was never more remarkably the case, than in the controversy about the ex-

istence of matter; and this no doubt is one great hindrance to the utter confutation of the doctrine of necessity. Fatalists, indeed, make a stir, and seem much in earnest about settling the signification of the words: but "words be-"get words," as Bacon well observeth; and it cannot be expected, that they who are interested in supporting a system, will be scrupulously impartial in their definitions.

With a few of these, a theorist commonly begins his system. This has the appearance of fairness and perspicuity. We hold it for a maxim, that a man may use words in any sense he pleases, provided he explain the sense in which he uses them; and we think it captious to find fault with words. We therefore are easily prevailed on to admit his definitions, which are generally plausible, and not apparently repugnant to the analogy of language. But the understanding of the author when he writes, and that of the student when he reads them, are in very different circumstances. The former knows his system already, and adapts his definitions to it: the latter is ignorant of the system, and therefore can have no notion of the tendency of the definitions. Besides, every system is in some degree obscure

to one who is but beginning to study it; and this obscurity serves to disguise whatever in the preliminary illustrations is forced or inexplicit. Thus the mind of the most candid and most attentive reader is prepared for the reception of error, long before he has any suspicion of the author's real design. And then, the more he is accustomed to use words in a certain signification, the more he is disposed to think it natural; so that the further he advances in the system, he is still more and more reconciled to it. Need we wonder then at the variety of moral systems? need we wonder to see man's judgment so easily, and often so egregiously, misled by abstract reasoning? need we wonder at the success of any theorist, who has a tolerable command of language, and a moderate share of cunning, provided his system be well-timed, and adapted to the manners and principles of his age? Neither need we wonder to see the grossest and most detestable absurdities recommended by singular plausibility of argument, and such as may for a time impose even on the intelligent and sagacious; till at last, when the author's design becomes manifest, common sense begins to operate, and men have recourse to their in-

stinctive and intuitive sentiments, as the most effectual security against the assaults of the logician.

The Doctrine of Moral Liberty supported.

LET not the friends of liberty be discouraged by the perplexing arguments of the fatalist. Arguments in opposition to self-evident truth, must, if plausible, be perplexing. Think what method of argumentation a man must pursue, who sets himself to confute any axiom in geometry, or to argue against the existence of a sentiment, acknowledged and felt by all mankind. Indeed I cannot see how such a person should ever impose upon people of sense, except by availing himself of expressions, which either are in themselves ambiguous, or become so by his manner of applying them. If the ambiguity be discernable, the argument can have no force; if there be no suspicion of ambiguity, the dispute may be continued from generation to generation without working any change in the sentiments of either party. When fact is disregarded, when intuition goes for nothing, when no standard of truth is acknowledged, and every unan-

swerable argument is deemed unanswerable, true reasoning is at an end; and the disputant, having long ago lost sight of common sense, is so far from regaining the path of truth, that, like Thomson's peasant bewildered in the snow, he continues "to wander on, still "more and more astray." If any person will give himself the trouble to examine the whole controversy concerning liberty and necessity, he will find, that the arguments on both sides comes at last to appear unanswerable:—there is no common principle acknowledged by both parties, to which an appeal can be made, and each party charges the other with begging the question. Is it not then better to rest satisfied with the simple feeling of the understanding? I feel that it is in my power to will or not to will: all you can say about the influence of motives, will never convince me of the contrary; or if I should say that I am convinced by your arguments, my conduct must continually belie my profession. One thing is undeniable: your words are obscure, my feeling is not:—this is universally attended to, acknowledged, and acted upon; those to the majority of mankind would be unintelligible; nay, perhaps they are in a great measure so, even to yourselves.

The vulgar Facility of Disputation.

TO dispute readily on either side of any question, is admired by some as a very high accomplishment: but it is what any person of moderate abilities may easily acquire by a little practice. Perhaps moderate abilities are the most favourable to the acquisition of this talent. Sensibility and penetration, the inseparable attendants, or rather the most essential parts of true genius, qualify a man for discovering truth, with little labour of investigation; and, at the same time, interest him so deeply in it, that he cannot bear to turn his view to the other side of the question. Thus he never employs himself in devising arguments; and therefore seldom arrives at any proficiency in that exercise. But the man of slow intellect and dull imagination advances step by step in his enquiries, without any keenness of sentiment or ardour of fancy to distract his attention; and without that instantaneous anticipation of consequences, that leads the man of genius to the conclusion, even before he has examined all the intermediate relations. Hence he naturally acquires a talent for minute observation, and for a patient

examination of circumstances; at the same time that his insensibility prevents his interesting himself warmly on either side, and leaves him leisure to attend equally to his own arguments, and to those of the antagonist. This gives him eminent superiority in a dispute, and fits him, not indeed for discovering truth, but for baffling an adversary and supporting a system.

The malignant Influence of Controversy upon social Intercourse.

I GRANT, that much of our knowledge is gathered from our intercourse with one another; but I cannot think that we are greatly indebted to the argumentative part of conversation; and nobody will say, that the most disputatious companions are either the most agreeable or the most instructive. For my own part, I have always found those to be the most delightful and most improving conversations, in which there was the least contradiction; every person entertaining the utmost possible respect, both for the judgment and for the veracity of his associate; and none assuming any of those dictatorial airs, which are

so offensive to the lovers of liberty, modesty, and friendship.—If a catalogue were to be made of all the truths that have been discovered by wrangling in company, or by solemn disputations in the schools, I believe it would appear, that the contending parties might have been employed as advantageously to mankind, and much more so to themselves, in whipping a top, or brandishing a rattle.

A Recipe to make a Sceptic.

TAKE a word (an abstract term is the most convenient) which admits of more than one signification; and, by the help of a predicate and copula, form a proposition, suitable to your system, or to your humour, or to any other thing you please, except truth. When laying down your premises, you are to use the name of the quality or subject, in one sense; and when inferring your conclusion, in another. You are then to urge a few equivocal facts, very slightly examined, (the more slightly the better,) as a further proof of the said conclusion; and to shut up all with citing some ancient authorities, either real or fictitious, as may best suit your purpose. A few

occasional strictures on religion as an unphilosophical thing, and a sneer at the *Whole Duty of Man*,* or any other good book, will give your Dissertation what many are pleased to call a *liberal turn*; and will go near to convince the world, that you are a candid philosopher, a manly free-thinker, and a very fine writer.

Character of Rousseau.

I CONSIDER Rousseau as *a moral writer of true genius*. Sensibility of heart; a talent for extensive and accurate observation; liveliness and ardour of fancy; and a style copious, nervous, and elegant, beyond that of any other French writer, are his distinguishing characteristics. In argument he is not always equally successful, for he often mistakes declamation for proof, and hypothesis for fact; but his eloquence, when addressed to the heart, overpowers with force irresistible. A greater number of important facts relating to the human mind are recorded in his works, than in all the books of all the sceptical philosophers, ancient and modern. And he appears in general

* See Hume's Essays, vol. ii. p. 388. edit. 1767.

to be a friend to virtue, to mankind, to natural religion, and sometimes to Christianity.

Yet none, even of his best works, are free from absurdity. His reasonings, on the effects of the sciences, and on the origin and progress of human society, are diffuse, inaccurate, and often weak; much perverted by theories of his own, as well as by too implicit an admittance of the vague assertions of travellers, and of the systems and doctrines of some favourite French philosophers: and he seems, in these, and frequently too in his other writings, to consider animal pleasure and bodily accomplishments, as the happiness and perfection of man. His plan of education, though admirable in many parts, is in some injudicious and dangerous, and impracticable as a whole. The character of Julia's Lover is drawn with a masterly hand indeed, and well conducted throughout; but the lady has two characters, and those incompatible;—the Wife of Wolmar is quite a different person from the mistress of St. Preux. Wolmar himself is an impossible character; destitute of principle, yet of rigid virtue; destitute of feeling, yet capable of tenderness and attachment; delicate in his notions of honour, yet not ashamed

to marry a woman whom he knew to be, to all intents and purposes, devoted to another.

Some of this author's remarks on the spirit of Christianity, and on the character of its Divine Founder, are not only excellent, but transcendently so, and I believe no Christian ever read them without feeling his heart warmed, and his faith confirmed. But what he says—of the absurdities which he fancies to be contained in the sacred history,—of the impropriety of the evidence of miracles,—of the analogy between those of Jesus Christ and the tricks of jugglers,—of the insignificancy and impertinence of prayer,—of the sufficiency of human reason for discovering a complete and comfortable scheme of natural religion,—of the discouraging nature of the terms of salvation offered in the Gospel,—of the measure of evidence that ought to accompany divine revelation (which, as he states it, would be incompatible with man's free agency and moral probation),—what he says of these, and of several other theological points of great importance, betrays a degree of ignorance and prejudice, of which, as a philosopher, as a scholar, and as a man, he should have been utterly ashamed. He appears to be distressed with his doubts; and yet, without having ever examined whe-

ther they be well or ill-founded, scruples not to exert all his eloquence on purpose to infuse them into others: a conduct which I must ever condemn as illiberal, unjust, and cruel. Had Rousseau studied the Scripture, and the writings of rational divines, with as much care as he seems to have employed in reading the books, and listening to the conversation, of French infidels, and in attending to the unchristian practices and doctrines warranted by some ecclesiastical establishments, I may venture to assure him, that his mind would have been much more at ease, his works much more valuable, and his memory much dearer to all good men.

Rousseau is, in my opinion, a great philosophical genius, but wild, irregular, and often self-contradictory; disposed from the fashion of the times, and from his desire of being reputed a bold speaker and free-thinker, to adopt the doctrines of infidelity; but of a heart too tender, and an imagination too lively, to permit him to become a thorough-paced infidel. Had he lived in an age less addicted to hypothesis, he might have distinguished himself as a moral philosopher of the first rank. What pity, that a proper sense of his supe-

riority to his contemporaries upon the continent could not preserve him from the contagion of their example! For, though now it is the fashion for every French declaimer to talk of Bacon and Newton, I question whether in any age since the days of Socrates, the building of fanciful theories was so epidemical as in the present. If the men of learning formerly employed their ingenuity in defending the theories of that philosopher by whose name they were ambitious to be distinguished, they are now no less industrious in devising and vindicating each man a theory of his own.

To conclude: the writings of this author, with all their imperfections, may be read by the philosopher with advantage, as they often direct to the right observation and interpretation of nature; and by the Christian without detriment, as the cavils they contain against religion are too slight and too paradoxical to weaken the faith of any one who is tolerably instructed in the principles and evidence of Christianity. To the man of taste they can never fail to recommend themselves, by the irresistible charms of the composition.

The improprieties in Rousseau's late conduct appear to me to have arisen rather from bodily

infirmity than from moral depravation, and consequently to render him an object of forbearance and pity, rather than of persecution or ridicule.

On the Study of Human Nature.

NO degree of genius will ever make one a proficient in the science of man, without accurate observation of human nature in all its varieties. Homer, the greatest master in this science ever known, passed the most of his life in travelling: his poverty, and other misfortunes, made him often dependent on the meanest, as his talents recommended him to the friendship of the greatest; so that what he says of Ulysses, may justly be applied to himself, that "he visited many states and nations, "and knew the characters of many men." Virgil had not the same opportunities: he lived in an age of more refinement, and was perhaps too much conversant in courtly life, as well as too bashful in his deportment, and delicate in his constitution, to study the varieties of human nature, where in a monarchy they are most conspicuous, namely, in the middle and lower ranks of mankind. Need

we wonder, then, that in the display of character he falls so far short of his great original? Shakespeare was familiarly acquainted with all ranks and conditions of men; without which, notwithstanding his unbounded imagination, it is not to be supposed, that he could have succeeded so well in delineating every species of human character, from the constable to the monarch, from the hero to the clown. And it deserves our notice, that, however ignorant he might be of Latin and Greek, he was well acquainted by translation, with some of the Ancients, particularly Plutarch, whom he seems to have studied with much attention, and who indeed excels all historians in exhibiting lively and interesting views of human nature. Great vicissitudes of fortune gave Fielding an opportunity of associating with all classes of men, except perhaps the highest, whom he rarely attempts to describe. Swift's way of life is well known: and I have been told, that Congreve used to mingle in disguise with the common people, and pass whole days and weeks among them.

The Enormity of Sceptical Writings.

WHY can I not express myself with less warmth! Why can I not devise an apology for these philosophers, to screen them from this dreadful imputation of being the enemies and plagues of mankind!—Perhaps they do not themselves believe their own tenets, but publish them only as the means of getting a name and a fortune. But I hope this is not the case; God forbid that it should! for then the enormity of their guilt would surpass all power of language; we could only gaze at it and tremble. Compared with such wickedness, the crimes of the thief, the robber, the incendiary, would almost disappear. These sacrifice the fortunes or the lives of some of their fellow-creatures, to their own necessity or outrageous appetite; but those would run the hazard of sacrificing, to their own avarice or vanity, the happiness of all mankind, both here and hereafter. No; I cannot suppose it. The heart of man, however depraved, is not capable of such infernal malignity.—Perhaps they do not foresee the consequences of their doctrines. Berkeley most certainly did not.—But Berkeley did not attack the reli-

gion of his country, did not seek to undermine the foundations of virtue, did not preach or recommend atheism. He erred; and who is free from error? but his intentions were irreproachable; and his conduct as a man and a Christian did honour to human nature.—Perhaps our modern sceptics are ignorant, that, without the belief of a God, and the hope of immortality, the miseries of human life would often be insupportable. But can I suppose them in a state of total and invincible stupidity, utter strangers to the human heart and to human affairs! Sure they would not thank me for such a supposition. Yet this I must suppose, or I must believe them to be the most cruel, the most perfidious, and the most profligate, of men.

Caressed by those who call themselves the great, ingrossed by the formalities and fopperies of life, intoxicated with vanity, pampered with adulation, dissipated in the tumult of business, or amidst the vicissitudes of folly, they perhaps have little need, and little relish, for the consolations of religion. But let them know, that, in the solitary scenes of life, there is many an honest and tender heart pining with incurable anguish, pierced with the sharpest

sting of disappointment, bereft of friends, chilled with poverty, racked with disease, scourged by the oppressor; whom nothing but trust in Providence, and the hope of a future retribution, could preserve from the agonies of despair. And do they, with sacrilegious hands, attempt to violate this last refuge of the miserable, and to rob them of the only comfort that had survived the ravages of misfortune, malice, and tyranny! Did it ever happen, that the influence of these execrable tenets disturbed the tranquillity of virtuous retirement, deepened the gloom of human distress, or aggravated the horrors of the grave? Is it possible that this may have happened in many instances? Is it probable that this hath happened, or may happen, in one single instance?—Ye traitors to human kind, ye murderers of the human soul, how can ye answer for it to your own hearts! Surely every spark of your generosity is extinguished for ever, if this consideration do not awaken in you the keenest remorse, and make you weep in bitterness of soul.——But I remonstrate in vain. All this must have often occurred to you, and been as often rejected as utterly frivolous. Could I enforce the present topic by an appeal to

your vanity, I might possibly make some impression: but to plead with you on the principles of benevolence or generosity, is to address you in language ye do not or will not understand; and as to the shame of being convicted of absurdity, ignorance, and want of candour, ye have long ago proved yourselves superior to the sense of it.

But let not the lovers of truth be discouraged: Atheism cannot be of long continuance, nor is there much danger of its becoming universal. The influence of some conspicuous characters has brought it too much into fashion; which, in a thoughtless and profligate age, it is no difficult matter to accomplish. But when men have retrieved the powers of serious reflection, they will find it a frightful phantom; and the mind will return gladly and eagerly to its old endearments. One thing we certainly know; the fashion of sceptical and metaphysical systems soon passeth away. Those unnatural productions, the vile effusion of a hard and stupid heart, that mistakes its own restlessness for the activity of genius, and its own captiousness for sagacity of understanding, may, like other monsters, please a while by their singularity; but the charm is soon over;

and the succeeding age will be astonished to hear, that their forefathers were deluded, or amused, with such fooleries. The measure of scepticism seems indeed to be full; it is time for truth to vindicate her rights, and we trust they shall be yet completely vindicated. Such are the hopes and the earnest wishes of one, who has seldom made controversy his study, who never took pleasure in argumentation, and who disclaims all ambition of being reputed a subtle disputant, but who, as a friend to human nature, would account it his honour to be instrumental in promoting, though by means unpleasant to himself, the cause of virtue and true science, and in bringing to contempt that sceptical sophistry which is equally subversive of both.

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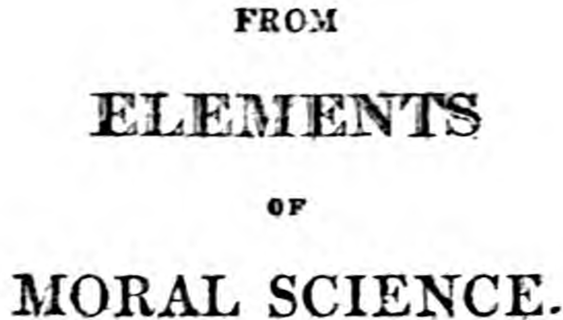

ELEMENTS OF MORAL SCIENCE.

The Variety of Human Powers beneficial to Mankind.

MANY are the degrees, and the varieties, of human genius. One man has a genius in mechanics; another in architecture; a third in the conduct of military affairs; or in painting, geometry, music, poetry, eloquence, &c.; and one man may make great progress, and contrive many improvements in one art, who could not have been so successful in another. And some men there are, of talents so universal, as to discover genius in every thing to which they apply themselves. It is not easy, nor perhaps possible, to account for these peculiarities and varieties of intellectual character. They may be partly owing to ha-

bits contracted in early years; and partly, and perhaps chiefly, to that particular constitution of mind, by which, as well as by his face and other bodily peculiarities, one man is distinguished from another.

But, though we may be at a loss to explain the *efficient cause* of this variety, it is easy to see its *final cause*, that is, the intention of Providence in appointing it. It is this that makes men take to different pursuits and employments, which renders them mutually useful to one another, and prevents too violent oppositions of interest. And hence mankind enjoy a variety of conveniencies; arts and sciences are invented and improved; and many sources are opened of commerce and friendly intercourse, whereby the circulation of truth is promoted, and the bounds of social virtue enlarged.

When one takes a view of the arts that flourish in society, one is apt to wonder at two things; first, their vast number and mutual subserviency; and, secondly, that men should be found who voluntarily make choice of one or other of all the employments necessary in civilized life. This consideration affords a proof of the extreme pliableness of the human

mind, as well as of the goodness of Providence. For, though some professions and trades are of low esteem, we find, that in every condition, honest industry, with contentment, may be happy. Let us therefore learn to set a proper value on all the useful arts of life, and on all those who practise them with integrity and industry.

Novelty.

THE taste for novelty is an important part of the human constitution. It is the source of much amusement, and prompts men to labour in the acquisition of knowledge. It is, besides, one of our first passions. You cannot gratify a child more, than by shewing him something new, or telling him a wonderful story. The same novelties are not equally captivating to all. Some seek after new attainments in science; some wander through the world to visit different nations; some explore the wonders of inanimate nature, and some the characters of men; some read history, some study the fine arts, some are curious in whatever relates to mechanism, and some mind little more than the news of the day;

some amuse themselves with collecting pictures, prints, manuscripts, medals, shells, minerals; and some are fond of old, and others of new, books. Thus men take to different pursuits and employments, and every part of knowledge is cultivated.

Of Sympathy.

THERE is in our nature a tendency to participate in the pains and pleasures of others; so that their good is in some degree our good, and their evil our evil: the natural effect of which is, to unite men more closely to one another, by prompting them, even for their own sake, to relieve distress and promote happiness. This participation of the joys and sorrows of others, may be termed sympathy, or fellow-feeling. Sympathy with distress is called compassion, or pity. Sympathy with the happiness of another has no particular name; but, when expressed in words to the happy person, is termed congratulation. Every good man knows, that it is natural for him to rejoice with them who rejoice, and to weep with those that weep.

Even for some inanimate things we have a sort of tenderness, which, by a licentious figure of speech, might be called sympathy. To lose a staff which we have long walked with, or see in ruins a house where we had long lived happily, would give a slight concern, though the loss to us were a trifle, or nothing at all. We feel something like pity for the dead bodies of our friends, arising from the consideration of their being laid in the solitary grave, a prey to worms and reptiles; and yet we are sure that from that circumstance the dead can never suffer any thing. Towards the brute creation, who have feeling as well as we, though not in the same degree or kind, our sympathy is more rational, and indeed ought to be strong: 'A righteous man regard-'eth the life,' and is not insensible to the happiness, 'of his beast.'

But our sympathy operates most powerfully towards our fellow-men; and, other circumstances being equal, is for the most part more or less powerful, according as they are more nearly or more remotely connected with us by kindred, by friendship, or by condition. With a friend, with a relation, or with a per-

son of our own condition, we are more apt to sympathise, than with people of different circumstances or connections. If we were to be tried for our life, we should wish to have a jury of our equals. He who has had the tooth-ach or the gout, is more inclined to pity those who suffer from the same distempers, than that person is who never felt them.

Let us cherish sympathy. By attention and exercise it may be improved in every man. It prepares the mind for receiving the impressions of virtue; and without it there can be no true politeness. Nothing is more odious, than that insensibility which wraps a man up in himself and his own concerns, and prevents his being moved with either the joys or the sorrows of another. This inhuman temper, however common, seems not to be natural to the soul of man, but to derive its origin from evil habits of levity, selfishness, or pride; and will therefore be easily avoided by those who cultivate the opposite habits of generosity, humility, and good-nature. Of these amiable affections, the forms of common civility, and the language of polite conversation, are remarkably expressive; a proof that good-breeding is founded in virtue and good sense, and

that a kind and honest heart is the first requisite to an engaging deportment.

The Depravity of independent Bullies.

THERE is a class of men that one has sometimes the misfortune to meet with, who affect what they call a bluntness of manners, and value themselves on speaking their mind on all occasions, whether people take it well or ill. Now it is right that people should speak their minds; but the mind that is fit *to be spoken* (if I may express myself so strangely) ought to be free from pride, ostentation, and ill-nature; for from these hateful passions the bluntness here alluded to may generally be derived. Such people may have a sort of negative honesty; but of delicacy they are destitute. In their company one sweats with the apprehension of their committing some gross indecorum; for nobody knows what limits an indelicate mind may choose to prescribe to itself. From injury, punishable by law, they may abstain; but they often give such offence as amounts not to injury only, but to cruelty. The thief that picks our pocket does not so much harm in society, nor occasion so much pain, as they

may be charged with, who shock the ear of piety with profaneness, or tear open the wounds of the bleeding heart by forcing upon it some painful recollection.

Free Will and Necessity.

EVEN those few speculative men, and they are but few, who in words deny the freedom of the will, do yet in the ordinary affairs of life speak and act like other people; making promises, giving advice, laying down rules and precepts, blaming certain actions as what ought not to have been done, and praising others as right and what ought to be done: the propriety of which conduct it is not easy to reconcile, in a satisfactory manner, to the tenets of those who teach (as the advocates for necessity do) that no past action of our lives could have been different from what it is, and that no future action can be contingent, or such as it is in our power to do or not to do. The condition of these theorists is similar to that of those who argue against the existence of matter. Both affirm what contradicts the opinion and experience, not of the vulgar only, but of the most acute philosophers, and of mankind in gene-

ral: both say, they believe that which is inconsistent with what common sense taught them to believe, and with what they would still have believed, if they had *kept to their natural sense of things*, and not perplexed themselves with metaphysical arguments: and both assert to be true what they cannot reduce to practice, and what is not warranted by Christianity, or by the morality and politics of any enlightened nation.

With respect to the Christian religion, as concerned in this matter;—it may be observed, than one strenuous fatalist urges the doctrine of necessity, as an argument, either in favour of atheism, or against the turpitude of vice; and that another zealous necessarian, who avows his belief both in God and in Christ, seems to admit, that the testimony of the sacred writers is rather against necessity than for it. Judging, then, either from the affirmation of the one, or from the concession of the other, we must infer, that the Christian religion and the doctrine of necessity are not friendly to each other; which is indeed what the asserters of liberty have generally maintained. If necessity lead to atheism, or if it confound the distinctions of vice and virtue, (and I not only

agree with Mr. Hume, that it does either the one or the other, but am satisfied that it does both,) it is surely subversive of all religion. And if the sacred writers seem to declare in favour of liberty, (which I agree with Dr. Priestley that they do,) and if it is from them, and from them only, that I learn what Christianity is, I must either question their infallibility as teachers, or I must with them declare in favour of liberty. But, though the belief of necessity would, if I were capable of it, be fatal to *my* religious and moral principles, I am far from thinking, that it must have the same effect on every other person: different minds may no doubt conceive of it differently. Yet it is remarkable, that some of its most distinguished advocates, of whom I shall only mention Spinosa, Hobbes, Collins, Hume, and Voltaire, were enemies to our faith; whereas of the modern defenders of liberty I do not recollect one who was not a Christian. The opinion of necessity, says Bishop Butler, seems to be the very basis upon which infidelity grounds itself.

Of Habit.

THE word habit is used in two different significations, which frequently are, and may without inconvenience be, confounded in common language. It denotes a facility of doing a thing acquired by having frequently done it; in this sense of the word, *habit* can hardly be called a *principle of action*. Habit is a principle of action, when, in consequence of having frequently done a thing, we acquire an inclination to do it. A man who is accustomed to walk every day at a certain hour, is uneasy if he be kept from walking: and they who read much, are never happy at a distance from books. Choose the best course of life, said an ancient moralist, and custom will make it the most pleasant. If frequency of performance did not produce facility, art would be impossible; but why the one should produce the other we cannot explain; we can only say that such is the law of our nature. And if doing a thing frequently did not breed an inclination to do it, the improvement of our nature would be impossible, and we could hardly be said to be moral beings. Without instinct an infant could not live to be a man, and without habit a

man would always continue as helpless as an infant.

Habit, in both senses of the word, is observable in the more sagacious brutes, and in none more than in dogs trained to hunting, and horses inured to the discipline of war. The war-horse not only learns to obey command, but is impetuous to obey it; and the beagle seems to take as much delight as his master in the sports of the field. The power of habit in forming rational beings to vice or virtue, to elegant or rustic manners, to attention or inattention, to industry or idleness, to temperance or sensuality, to passionateness or forbearance, to manual dexterity or the want of it, is universally acknowledged. Something, no doubt, depends on the peculiar constitution of different minds; and something too, perhaps, on the structure and temperament of different bodies: but in fashioning the character, and in giving impulse and direction to genius, the influence of habit is certainly very great.

As in early life our powers of imitation are strongest, our minds most docile, and our bodily organs most flexible, so good or bad habits, both mental and corporeal, are then most

easily acquired. Hence the necessity of early discipline, the unspeakable advantages of a good education, and the innumerable evils consequent upon a bad one. It amazes one to consider what progress, in the most difficult arts, may be made, when our faculties of mind and body are properly directed in the beginning of life; and how easy an action, which at first seemed impracticable, comes to be when it has grown habitual. Performances in music and painting, and many other sorts of manual dexterity, might be mentioned as examples: to say nothing of those barbarous arts of balancing, tumbling, and legerdemain, which in all ages have been deemed so wonderful, that the clown is inclined to impute them to magic, and even the more considerate spectator, when he first sees them, can hardly believe his own eyes.

But nothing in a more astonishing manner displays the power of habit, or rather of habit and genius united, in facilitating the performance of the most complex and most difficult exertions of the human mind, than the eloquent and unstudied harangue of a graceful speaker, in a great political assembly. It is long before we learn to articulate words; long

before we can deliver them with exact propriety; and longer still before we can recollect a sufficient variety of them, and, out of many that may occur at once, select instantly the most proper. Then, the rules of grammar, of logic, of rhetoric, and of good breeding, which can on no account be dispensed with, are so numerous, that volumes might be filled with them, and years employed in acquiring the ready use of them. Yet to the accomplished orator all this is so familiar, in consequence of being habitual, that, without thinking of his rules, or violating any one of them, he applies them all; and has, at the same time, present to his mind whatever he may have heard of importance in the course of the debate, and whatever in the laws or customs of his country may relate to the business in hand: which, as a very acute and ingenious author observes, 'if it were not more common, would 'appear more wonderful, than that a man 'should dance blindfold, without being burned, 'amidst a thousand red-hot plowshares.'*

* See Reid on the Active Powers of Man. Essay III.

Universal Benevolence considered.

IT has been made a question, whether there be in man a principle of universal benevolence. But does not every good man wish well to all mankind? and is not this universal benevolence? He who wishes harm to those who never offended him, or who cares not whether a fellow-creature be happy or unhappy, is a monster, and deserves not the name of a man. It is true, that every man, even in civilized society, is not capable of forming extensive views of things, or of considering the whole human race, or the whole system of percipient beings, as the objects of his benevolence. But in every good man there is a benevolent principle, which makes him wish well, and do good, to every one to whom he has it in his power to be serviceable; and this sort of benevolence will do as much real good in the world, as benevolence universal. Accordingly our religion, which is suited to our general nature, and enjoins nothing as incumbent on all men, but what every man, of extensive or narrow views, of much or little knowledge, may perform;—our religion, I say, instead of recommending universal benevolence in the abstract,

requires, that we do good to all men, *as we have opportunity;* and commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves; declaring every man to be our neighbour who needs our aid, and to whom we have the means of giving it.

Concerning universal benevolence some have argued in this manner.—'Benevolence arises 'from love; and love from the view of agree'able qualities in another. Now the good qua'lities of others can be known to us in two ways 'only; from personal acquaintance, or from 'information. Of one whom we never saw or 'heard of, we cannot know either the good 'qualities, or the bad: him, therefore, we 'cannot love; but benevolence is founded in 'love: therefore towards such a person we 'cannot be benevolent. It follows, that there 'can be no such affection as universal bene'volence in human nature.' This reasoning is good for nothing. Whether the principle in question be a part of our frame, is a query that relates to a matter of fact, and is therefore to be determined, not by argument, but by observation and experience. He who is conscious that he wishes well to all his fellow-creatures, is a man of universal benevolence; and I have no scruple to affirm, that every good man does

so, and that to do so is in the power of every man.

Though one were to grant the premises of the foregoing argument, the conclusion would not follow: for, though we are not personally acquainted with every man upon earth, we know that all men possess certain agreeable qualities, for which we may and ought to love them. We know, that all men are percipient beings, are endowed with reason and speech, are animated with souls intelligent and immortal, are descended from our first parents, and are dependent on the same Great Being on whom we depend. On these accounts, a good man loves all mankind; and may, therefore, if benevolence arise from love, be benevolent towards all mankind. The very circumstance of our all inhabiting the same planet, and of being all liable to the same wants and infirmities, will naturally serve as a bond of endearment; for similarity of fortune never fails to attach men to one another.

Moderation in our Desires, a Duty.

NOTHING more discomposes the mind than inordinate desire, or more effectually disqua-

lifies it for prudent exertion. It is a torment in itself, and it exposes to disappointment; and the anguish of disappointment is in proportion to the violence of desire. And, therefore, it is of the utmost importance to our virtue and happiness, and indeed to our reputation as men of prudence, that we inure ourselves to habits of moderation in all our desires, in all those at least that are liable to become extravagant, that is, in all that regard this world. To effect this, we shall do well to meditate frequently on the shortness of life, the uncertainty of present things, and their insufficiency to yield those gratifications which are expected from them. If we are anxious to be wealthy, eminent, or great, let us attend to the fates and fortunes of those who have acquired renown, riches, or power, and consider how much happier they were than other men; what proportion of their happiness arose from such things, and whether a reasonable share of felicity might not be attained without them: continually bearing in mind, that, though happiness is not always in our power, contentment is; and that contentment is enough.

Moral Joy and Sorrow.

THE satisfaction one feels in the approbation of one's own conscience may be called *moral joy;* and is of all human feelings the most delightful and permanent. An approving conscience is a counterbalance to all the evils of life, and supplies, even in the hour of death, the sweetest consolation. Without it there can be no happiness, and with it there can be no misery. As, on the other hand, *moral sorrow,* in all its forms of remorse, regret, and self-condemnation, unless alleviated by those hopes of pardon which the truly penitent are permitted and encouraged to entertain, is alone sufficient, even in the greatest worldly prosperity, to make life a burden. 'The spirit of a man 'will sustain his infirmity;' that is, may support the natural evils that flesh is heir to; 'but 'a wounded spirit who can bear?' A condemning conscience has often driven men to distraction; and sometimes made them confess crimes which it was in their power to conceal, and which they knew would, when confessed, bring upon them capital punishment.

Shame is a passion which always accompanies moral sorrow. Some persons are, indeed,

incapable of shame; but those, it is to be hoped, are few: for to say of a man, that he is impudent, or has lost the sense of shame, is a most severe censure, and seems to imply, that he has no conscience, no fear of God, and no regard to man. The word *shame* has several significations, and is applied to several passions, similar perhaps in their nature, but not the same. Consciousness of reputation lost, or in danger of being lost, causes one sort of shame, which is also called *confusion of face*, and discovers itself by blushing, downcast eyes, and abject behaviour. We feel in some degree the same passion, when any thing dishonourable is unjustly charged upon us: only in this case our knowledge of our own innocence supports the mind, and yields great consolation; and the shame that may then remain proceeds from our apprehension that others, whose opinion we revere, may think hardly of us, from not having the means of being better informed.

Upon the bare mention of any thing indecent, though not imputed to any body, a person of delicacy is conscious of a passion or feeling, which has also been called shame, and discovers itself by the same symptom of

blushing. This, as a sign of an uncorrupted mind, is a very amiable affection, and particularly becoming in young people; as the rudeness or impudence of those who give occasion to it is detestable. Profane talkers, lewd jesters, and they, who by speech or writing, present to the ear or to the eye of modesty any of the indecencies I allude to, are pests of society. Against the thief and the highwayman, we may, with the assistance of law, guard, so as to be in no great danger from them; but a shameless profligate, by scrawling his execrable trash on the walls or windows of an inn, may, to the young and harmless, do lasting mischief, which it is impossible to punish, and which, therefore, the law cannot prevent. In this respect there is not, I have been told, any other country so infamous as our own. It is some comfort however to reflect, that none but the vilest of the people are capable of this enormity. Those specimens of it that I have had the misfortune to see, appear, from the spelling and other circumstances, to have been the work of wretches who were equally destitute of sense, delicacy, and literature.

Anger not always criminal.

THERE are many occasions on which anger is not to be blamed; there are many on which it is praiseworthy. The Scripture intimates, that we may be angry without sin: nay, our Saviour himself once looked round with anger on the Jews, 'being grieved for the 'hardness of their hearts.' Aristotle has very perspicuously, though with great brevity, marked the boundaries within which this passion may innocently operate, and so as to deserve praise, instead of blame. He who is angry only on such occasions as he ought, and with such persons as he ought, and in such manner, and at such time, and for such length of time, as he ought, is actuated by a laudable anger.

Anger is laudable when the *occasion* is such as renders it, in some degree, our duty: and that happens, when not to be angry would discover on our part a want of moral sensibility, or might prove an encouragement to wickedness in others. Parents overlooking a child's transgression, or being equally indulgent to him when he is and when he is not in a fault, would shew a very blameable indifference:

they could hardly take a more effectual way to corrupt his mind. A woman listening, without extreme indignation, to a licentious proposal from a man, would undoubtedly give him reason to think that she did not disapprove of it. To speak without emotion of any shocking instance of cruelty, ingratitude, injustice, blasphemy, or any other impiety, would make us suspect the speaker, not only of insensibility, but of a total want of principle. In cases of this nature, anger, under certain limitations, is a virtue, and the want of it a vice.

With respect to indignities offered to ourselves, though we ought always to exercise forbearance, and be ready to forgive; yet if, on receiving a very gross and public insult, we were to shew no resentment, the world would blame our meanness of spirit, and think us not very fit to be entrusted with the important concerns of another, when we shewed so little attention to our own. Peculiar circumstances, however, and the dignity of certain characters, might make great alteration in a matter of this kind. When, at the trial of Charles I. one of the by-standers spat in the king's face, and he, without speaking, or even

looking at the traitor, calmly wiped his cheek with a handkerchief, he manifested a greatness of soul that had in it something more than heroic, and almost more than human. But what words can express our detestation of the ruffian who could perpetrate such a deed?

Anger is laudable when a man is angry with *such persons* as he ought. The persons with whom we may reasonably be angry have been, most of them, specified already. Those towards whom we ought to exercise particular lenity and forbearance, are, first, our benefactors and friends, who may happen, in an unguarded moment, through the weakness of human nature, to give us offence. Secondly, men eminently good, or whom we know to be good. Great reverence is due to good men; and if we only hint to them, in the gentlest terms, that they have without design done us injury, it will wound them as deeply as they ought to be wounded; they will readily make acknowledgments; and further reproach from us would be cruel. Thirdly, they who are liable to be too much disheartened by our anger, as dependents, affectionate children, persons in adversity, or of delicate health and spirits, or weak in understanding, are all en-

titled to peculiar tenderness; being all objects of pity, and not likely to offend, except through inadvertence. And, fourthly, those whom our anger would probably irritate, or to whom it could not do any good, we ought to bear with, or let alone, for our own sakes, as well as for theirs.*

I need not add, that to be angry with our Creator is, of all passions, the most shocking, unnatural, and inexcusable; insomuch that you may, perhaps, think the human heart, bad as it is, incapable of such impiety. But are not they guilty of it who repine at Providence, either for bringing on them adversity, which they may fancy they do not deserve, or for making their neighbour prosperous beyond what they may think him entitled to? All such murmurings, envyings, and discontents, however common, and however disguised, are so many instances of anger, if not of hatred, towards both God and man. This ought to be seriously considered. Contentment with our lot, joy in our neighbour's prosperity, and resignation to the divine will, diffuse ineffable tranquillity over the soul, prevent the intrusion of anger, and every other painful passion,

* See Archbishop Secker's Sermons, vol. v.

keep us at peace with all the world, and make us rejoice in God and in all his dispensations.

Anger is laudable when the *manner* of it is consistent with propriety and duty. It appears from what has been said, that our anger may be in too slight a degree; as when it sets before others an example of blameable indifference, or tends to repress, and consequently to weaken, our moral sensibility. But excess of anger is the more common and more dangerous extreme: and it is hardly possible, and perhaps would not be expedient, to fix the boundary to which anger, consistently with innocence, may go. If this were ascertained, and people taught that they might safely proceed so far, they would think they might proceed a little and a little farther, till at last they might lose all remembrance of the boundary. For he who ventures to the utmost verge of innocence seldom fails to go beyond it: there is criminal presumption in venturing so far. Two rules, however, may be given on this head: the first, that our anger should never make us lose the government of ourselves; the second, that it should never do injury to others.

Anger, thus moderated, will not produce in

us any commotion so violent as to hurt our health, or our character as men of prudence; nor will it break out in boisterous or insulting language, far less in that impious and barbarous practice of cursing and swearing. To whatever degree we may be irritated, we shall do well neither to speak nor to act, while our agitation is such as to prevent calm reflection. It is said of Socrates, that, when greatly provoked, he became instantly silent; and, I suppose, he never had occasion to repent of his silence. And I have heard it recommended as a good rule, that, before a man give way to his passion, he should take time to do something else that is not connected with it, and, if possible, retire for a moment, if it were only to recollect some passage of a favourite author, or even to repeat the letters of the alphabet. A little delay may do good, and forbearance and mildness can never do harm.

Anger is laudable when it is *well-timed.* Now it is not well-timed when it interferes with the performance of any important duty: to pray, or go to church, in anger, would be very indecent. Nor is anger well-timed when we have not had the means of knowing whether any real offence has been given, or what is the

true amount of the offence: mistakes of this nature are not uncommon; men are often offended without cause, and generally more than they ought to be. Anger is also unseasonable when it is likely to give pain, or shew disrespect to our company; or when it is directed against a man whose present temper of mind makes him, from an excess of levity, or from any other intemperance, deaf to reason, or in a condition of being easily exasperated. Such infirmities we all have; and, as we all wish allowances to be made for them in ourselves, we all ought to make the like allowances in favour of others.

Anger is not blamed when it *continues no longer* than is reasonable. Lasting resentment is inexcusable, whatever the provocation may have been. It sours the temper, and so makes a man unfit for society, and unhappy in himself; it excludes from his mind benevolent and pious thoughts; it cherishes pride, envy, contempt, and other violent and gloomy perturbations. 'Let not the sun go down on your 'wrath,' is an excellent rule: but, for the most part, anger is censurable if it last an hour, or even a much shorter space. The moment the offender owns his fault, or seems desirous

of reconciliation, our anger ought to be lost in forgiveness. Though he should not own his fault, nor give reason to believe that there is any change in his mind for the better, we shall do well to check our anger; or, if it be prudent to keep up an appearance of it, to take care that it be an appearance only: for, because he is injurious, it does not follow that we ought to make ourselves unhappy; which we shall certainly do, if we suffer this tormenting passion to take and to keep possession of us.

Let those who are prone to anger abstain at least from every outward expression of it, from reproachful words and vindictive deeds, and conceal it carefully within their own breast. In this way they may in time get the command of it; for most passions thus restrained become weaker. Let them resolve that they will abstain from anger for a day, for two days, for a week, for a month; and, if they adhere to the resolution, they will soon congratulate themselves on the happy consequences. Let them, as much as possible, keep aloof from vexatious business, and from quarrelsome and litigious men; and avoid not only those altercations which may lead to anger, but disputes in general, and all that sort of reading which is

termed controversial. Let them never for a moment imagine, as passionate men are apt to do, that their anger is incurable. They can manage it sometimes for the sake of interest: let them learn to manage it for God's sake, and for the sake of their fellow-creatures and themselves.

Character of Lavater.

OF all the physiognomists I know, ancient or modern, the most eminent is John Gaspard Lavater, a clergyman of Zurich, in Switzerland. He has published two or three magnificent volumes, and adorned them with many curious drawings. The work has noble strains of eloquence, and proves the author to be a man of great piety and goodness of heart; and many of his remarks on the human, and other figures, which he presents to his reader, are such as, I think, no person of observation can refuse to acquiesce in. But he is frequently whimsical, and in affirmation too positive. His style, though beautiful in particular passages, is, upon the whole, diffuse, incoherent, and declamatory, to such a degree, that I believe it would be a difficult matter to di-

gest his notions into a system. Some persons in his neighbourhood having been poisoned with the wine in the Eucharist, Lavater, supposing it had been done intentionally, preached a sermon with extraordinary vehemence; in which was this remarkable saying, which I mention, to show his confidence in his art: 'I 'would not advise the perpetrator of this hor'rid deed to come in my way; for I shall cer'tainly know him by his look, if ever I set my 'eyes upon him.' Lavater is a man of genius and penetration, and a good deal of entertainment may be found in his book. But I am afraid it will not teach sagacity to those on whom nature has not bestowed that talent; nor form to habits of minute attention those who are habitually inattentive. And if it should encourage the unskilful to form rash judgments, there is reason to apprehend that it may do more harm than good.

Magnificence of the Solar System.

WHAT a fabric is our solar system! wherein bodies of such enormous magnitude accomplish their revolutions through spaces immense; and with a regularity, than which nothing can be more perfect. The distance of the planets from the sun, and their several magnitudes, are determined with the utmost wisdom, and according to the nicest geometrical proportion. The central orb, whether we consider its glorious appearance, its astonishing greatness, or the beneficial influence of its light and heat, is such an object as no rational being can contemplate without adoring the Creator. We have good reason to believe, that there are thousands of other suns and systems of worlds, more glorious perhaps, and more extensive than ours; which form such a stupendous whole, that the human soul, labouring to comprehend it, loses sight of itself and of all sublunary things, and is totally overwhelmed with astonishment and veneration. With such thoughts in our view, we are apt to forget the wonders that lie immediately around us, and that the smallest plant or animal body amounts to a demonstration of

the divine existence.. But God appears in all his works, in the least as well as in the greatest; and there is not, in the whole circle of human sciences, any one truth confirmed by so many irresistible proofs, as the existence of the Deity.

The diurnal motion of the planets is the easiest way possible of exposing all their parts to the influence of light and heat. Their globular form is the fittest for motion, and for the free circulation of atmosphere around them; and at the same time supplies the most capacious surface. The principle of gravitation, prevailing through the whole system, and producing innumerable phenomena, is a most amazing instance of unbounded variety united with the strictest uniformity and proportion.—But it is impossible in a few pages to give such an enumeration of particulars, as would do any justice to the subject. The man who should suppose a large city, consisting of a hundred thousand palaces, all finished in the minutest parts, and furnished with the greatest elegance and variety of ornament, and with all sorts of books, pictures, and statues, executed in the most ingenious manner, to have been produced by the accidental blowing of winds

and rolling of sands, would justly be accounted irrational. But to suppose the universe, or our solar system, or this earth, to be the work of undesigning chance, is an absurdity incomparably greater.

The Moral Attributes of God.

THE goodness of God appears in all his works of creation and providence. Being infinitely and eternally happy in himself, it was goodness alone that could move him to create the universe, and give being, and the means of happiness, to the innumerable orders of creatures contained in it. Revelation gives such a display of the divine goodness, as must fill us with the most ardent gratitude and adoration; for in it we find that God has put it in our power, notwithstanding our degeneracy and unworthiness, to be happy both in this life and for ever; a hope which reason alone could never have permitted us to entertain on any ground of certainty. And here we may observe, that although the right use of reason supplies our first notions of the divine nature, yet it is from revelation that we receive those distinct ideas of his attributes and providence which are

the foundation of our dearest hopes. The most enlightened of the heathens had no certain knowledge of his unity, spirituality, eternity, wisdom, justice, or mercy; and, by consequence, could never contrive a comfortable system of natural religion; as Socrates, the wisest of them, acknowledged.

Lastly, justice is necessary to the formation of every good character; and, therefore, the Deity must be perfectly just. This, however, is an awful consideration to creatures who, like us, are immersed in error and wickedness, and whose conscience is always declaring, that every sin deserves punishment. It is reasonable to think, that a being infinitely good must also be of infinite mercy: but still the purity and justice of God must convey the most alarming thoughts to those who know themselves to have been, in instances without number, inexcusably criminal. But, from what is revealed in Scripture concerning the divine dispensations with respect to man, we learn, that, on performing certain conditions, we shall be forgiven and received into favour, by means, which at once display the divine mercy in the most amiable light, and fully vindicate the divine justice.

It is, indeed, impossible to understand the doctrines of our religion, and not to *wish, at least*, that they may be true: for they exhibit the most comfortable views of God and his providence; they recommend the purest and most perfect morality; and they breathe nothing throughout, but benevolence, equity, and peace. And one may venture to affirm, that no man ever *wished* the gospel to be true, who did not *find* it so. Its evidence is even more than sufficient to satisfy those who love it. And every man who knows it must love it, if he be a man of candour and a good heart.

The Utility of Public Worship.

LET it be considered, that worship, properly conducted, tends greatly to our improvement in every part of virtue. To indulge a pious emotion, to keep it in our mind, to meditate on its object, and with reverence and in due season to give it vocal expression, cannot fail to strengthen it: whereas, by restraining the outward expression, and thinking of the emotion, and its object, seldom and slightly, we make it weaker, and may, in time, destroy it. Besides, the more we contemplate the

perfections of God, the more we must admire, love, and adore, them, and the more sensible we must be of our own degeneracy, and of the need we have of pardon and assistance. And the wishes we express for that assistance and pardon, if they be frequent and sincere, will incline us to be attentive to our conduct, and solicitous to avoid what may offend him. These considerations alone would recommend external worship as a most excellent means of improving our moral nature. But Christians know, further, that this duty is expressly commanded; and that particular blessings are promised to the devout performance of it. In us, therefore, the neglect of it must be inexcusable and highly criminal.

It being of so great importance, we ought not only to practise this duty ourselves, but also by precept and example, avoiding however all ostentation, to encourage others to do the same. Hence one obligation to the duty of social and public worship. But there are many others. One arises from the nature and influence of sympathy, by which all our good affections may be strengthened. To join with others in devotion tends to make us devout, and should be done for that reason. Besides,

public worship, by exhibiting a number of persons engaged, notwithstanding their different conditions, in addressing the Great Father of all, and imploring his mercy and protection, must have a powerful tendency to cherish in us social virtue, as well as piety. The inequalities of rank and fortune, which take place in society, render it highly expedient, and even necessary, that there should be such a memorial, to enforce upon the minds of men, that they are all originally equal, all placed in the same state of trial, all liable to the same wants and frailties, and all equally related, as his accountable creatures, to the supreme governor of the universe. Hence let the mean learn contentment, and the great humility; and hence let all learn charity, meekness, and mutual forbearance.

By associating together, men are much improved both in temper and understanding. Where they live separate, they are generally sullen and selfish, as well as ignorant: when they meet frequently, they become acquainted with one another's characters and circumstances, and take an interest in them; acquire more extensive notions, and learn to correct their opinions, and get the better of their pre-

judices: they become, in short, more humane, more generous, and more intelligent. Were it not for that rest which is appointed on the first day of the week, and the solemn meetings which then take place for the purposes of social worship and religious instruction, the labours of the common people, that is of the greatest part of mankind, would be insupportable; most of them would live and die in utter ignorance, and those who are remote from neighbours would degenerate into barbarians. Bad as the world is, there is reason to think it would be a thousand times worse, if it were not for this institution; the wisdom and humanity of which can never be sufficiently admired; and which, if it were as strictly observed as it is positively commanded, would operate with singular efficacy in advancing public prosperity, as well as private virtue.

Impiety.

IMPIETY consists in neglecting to cultivate pious affections; or in cherishing evil passions of an opposite tendency; or in being guilty of such practices, by word or deed, as may lesson our own or other men's reverence of

the divine attributes, providence, or revelation. If we neglect the means of cultivating pious affection, it is a sign that in us piety is weak, or rather wanting; and that we are regardless of our own improvement, and insensible to the best interests of mankind. Want of pious affection is a proof of great depravity. When infinite goodness cannot awaken our love, nor almighty power command our reverence; when unerring wisdom cannot raise our admiration; when the most important favours, continually and gratuitously bestowed, cannot kindle our gratitude; how perverse, how unnatural must we be! In order to guard against these and the like impieties, we shall do well to meditate frequently on the divine perfections, and on our own demerit, dependence, and manifold infirmities. Thus we may get the better of pride and self-conceit, passions most unfriendly to piety; and form our minds to gratitude, humility, and devotion. But, instead of this, if we cherish bad passions of a contrary nature, or allow ourselves in impious practice; if, at any time, we think unworthily of our Creator; if we use his name in common discourse without reverence; if we invoke him to be the witness of what is

false or frivolous; if we practise cursing and swearing, or any other mode of speech disrespectful to his adorable majesty; if by serious argument we attempt the subversion of religious principles; or if, by parody or ludicrous allusion, we endeavour to make scriptural phraseology the occasion of merriment. In any of these cases we too plainly show, that our minds are familiarized, more or less, to impiety, and in great danger of utter depravation.

Parental and Filial Duty.

LET me now mention that duty which consists in the natural affection of parents and children; and which in a greater or less degree prevails through the whole of animated nature, with some exceptions in those irrational tribes, where it is not necessary to the preservation of the young. I express myself improperly, when I mention this as a duty, and at the same time speak of irrational animals as possessed of it: it is a duty in those only who have a sense of duty, that is, who are endowed with a moral faculty. Natural affection is in brutes an instinct merely; a very

amiable one, it must be acknowledged to be; but nothing more: in rational animals it is both an instinct and a duty; and, when exerted in action, a virtue. Human infants are far more helpless, and much longer so, than any other young animals, and require much more education; for they must be trained up, not only for animal life, and taught how to support themselves in the world (all which the brutes know by instinct), but also for a right performance of the many duties incumbent on them as rational and immortal beings. In the human species, therefore, natural affection is, and ought to be, peculiarly strong, and to continue through the whole of life. In other animals it lasts while the young are unable to provide for themselves, and, for the most part, no longer.

Unless when exerted in unfavourable circumstances, or in a very exemplary manner, (and these peculiarities enhance the merit of any virtue,) the performance of this duty is not considered as a proof of great moral goodness; the motives to it being almost irresistible. But, for the same reason, the neglect of it incurs the heaviest censure. An unnatural parent is a character that raises not only disap-

probation, but horror; nor less odious is an undutiful child: indeed it is not easy to determine which of the two is the more detestable. The former counteracts one of the best and most powerful instincts of animal nature, is at no pains to avert perdition from those whom he has been instrumental in bringing into the world, and manifests a total disregard to the good of society, which would soon become a chaos of misery, if parents were not attentive to the great duty of educating their children. The undutiful child hardens his heart no less against the calls of natural affection; shows that he can hate his best friends, and be ungrateful for the most important favours; and is guilty of the most barbarous cruelty, in wounding the sensibility, and blasting the hopes of a parent, to whom, in the emphatic language of a poet who understood human nature,—'a serpent's tooth is not so sharp as to 'have a thankless child.' To which I may take the liberty to add, that of the undutiful children whom it has been my misfortune to see, or hear of, not one ever came to good.

Definition of Marriage.

IT is a strict and intimate union for life, founded on mutual esteem, of one man and one woman, in one family, for the purpose of having children, educating them, and promoting the happiness of one another. This union being the foundation of regular society, all persons are bound in conscience to pay great regard to it; to account its laws sacred; and to do nothing to lessen it in the opinion of the public, or of individuals; remembering that it has been in the world from the beginning, and is of divine institution. But all persons are not obliged to enter into this estate. Want of prudence or of inclination, untowardly dispositions, immature age, and the indispensable duties annexed to certain employments that one may be engaged in, may make it in particular cases improper. These are called natural impediments. Others there are of a moral kind, which render it unlawful.

The Supremacy of Man maintained.

THE superiority of the husband to the wife is so generally acknowledged, that it must be

owing to some good and permanent cause: and that it was so from the beginning, and so appointed of God, we believe on the authority of Scripture. Considering the matter abstractly, we should say, that in the management of a family, that person ought to be superior, who has most prudence and virtue. But the exact degree of virtue and prudence it might be difficult to ascertain; and controversies on this subject between husband and wife would have disagreeable consequences. And therefore the superiority of one sex ought to be fixed by law as well as by custom. Supposing the two sexes equal in virtue and understanding, which, after making allowance for diversity of education, we should perhaps find to be the case, it is still right that the man should have the superiority. For his bodily strength, and his incapacity for some domestic duties, the nursing of children for example, not to mention other circumstances of a more delicate nature, make him better qualified, and leave him more at leisure, to guard the family from injury, and superintend all the members of it. However, the more the sexes approach to equality, the more will society be civilized. Savages are tyrannical to their women. In polite na-

tions it is otherwise; and the superiority vested by law in the men, is compensated to the women by that superior complaisance which is paid them by every man who aspires to elegance of manners.

On the Punishment of Children.

WHEN vices are practised, or without disapprobation named, in the presence of children; when a parent or teacher punishes at one time a fault which he overlooks at another, or neglects to take cognizance of a transgression whereof the child knows that he cannot be ignorant, these are so many lessons of immorality, which cannot fail to corrupt a young mind. To correct a child when one is in a passion, gives him an example of two vices at once, rage and revenge: for all correction of this kind is likely to be, and to the sufferer will appear to be, excessive; and seem to have, and perhaps really has, something vindictive in it. To bodily punishment we are not to have recourse till all other means of reformation have been attempted in vain; and let this last remedy be applied, if at all applied, with temper and solemnity, that the child may see

we are driven to it against our will, from a regard to our duty and his good. Honour and shame are much more liberal motives; and experience proves, that they may for the most part, if not always, be more effectual. These indeed may be employed, with good success, through the whole of life, as a preservative from vice, and a curb to every inordinate passion.

Filial Duty.

ON the duties of children to their parents it is unnecessary to expatiate, they being in Christian nations universally known. Next to that which is due to the Creator, children owe their parents the highest love, reverence, and gratitude; for to a good parent, in all ordinary cases, his child is more obliged than to any other fellow-creature. Children ought, as far as it is necessary and they are able, to support their parents, and to bear with their infirmities, do every thing in their power to make their lives comfortable, receive their advice with respectful attention, and obey all their lawful commands. It does not, however appear, that in things so intimately connected with the

happiness of life, as marriage, and the choice of an employment, parents have any right to force the inclinations of their children. Their best advice, in these and all other matters, parents are bound to give them: but in these their temporal welfare may be so deeply interested, that compulsion would be cruelty; nay, such compulsion, by irritating their passions, and unsettling their minds, might endanger their happiness in a future life, as well as destroy it in this. It is indeed true, that habits of long acquaintance will sometimes overcome dislike; but it is no less true, that some things and persons are so disagreeable, that we dislike them the more the longer we know them, and the more intimately we are connected with them. In the affair of marriage, the utmost a parent can claim is the validity of a negative; and in many cases even that may be disputable. Nature intended mutual affection to be the principal motive to this union; and therefore, marriage contracted from a different motive, where that is wanting, such as ambition, the love of money, or even implicit obedience to parents, is unnatural, and of course unlawful.

The Injustice of Slavery.

IT is impossible for a considerate and unprejudiced mind to think of slavery without horror. That a man, a rational and immortal being, should be treated on the same footing with a beast, or piece of wood, and bought and sold, and entirely subjected to the will of another man, whose equal he is by nature, and whose superior he may be in virtue and understanding, and all for no crime, but merely because he was born in a certain country, or of certain parents, or because he differs from us in the shape of his nose, the colour of his skin, or the size of his lips;—if this be equitable, or excusable, or pardonable, it is vain to talk any longer of the eternal distinctions of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good and evil.

So repugnant is slavery to the British genius, that when, about two hundred years ago, a law was made in England condemning idle vagabonds to this condition, the spirit of the nation could not bear it; and it was soon after repealed. And now every slave, of whatever colour, from the moment of his arrival in Great Britain, and as long as he remains in it, is a

free man, and a British subject, whether baptized or not; the law protects his person and his property; he has no more to fear from his master, than any other free servant has; he cannot be bought or sold; but if he has bound himself by contract to serve his master for a certain length of time, that contract, like those entered into by apprentices and some other servants will be valid.—I wish I were warranted to add, that the same regard is had to the rights of human nature in all the British dominions. But I must confess, with anguish of heart, that it is not so; for that almost all the products of the West Indies, and some too of the East, are procured for us by the sweat, the tears, and the blood, of miserable slaves.

The general Nature of Law.

IF we were to give an account of the laws of any particular country, we might begin with this definition.—Law is a rule of civil conduct, prescribed by the supreme power in a state, commanding what is right, and prohibiting what is wrong.* But, taking the word *law* in a more general sense, and consi-

* Blackstone.

dering ourselves as subject to the laws of God, as well as of man, we may rather say, that law is the declared will of a person or persons in authority, (that is, having a right to govern,) commanding some things, and forbidding others, with a promise, expressed or implied, of reward or convenience to those who obey, and a denunciation of punishment or inconvenience to those who disobey. The good thus promised, and the evil thus denounced, are called the sanctions of the law. They who obey the law enjoy the advantage of being protected by it, and sometimes other positive rewards. They who transgress are liable to the punishment or penalty denounced. That, under equitable government, the protection of law is an unspeakable advantage, will appear to those who consider, that a good citizen has the whole power of the state engaged on his side, to vindicate his rights, and guard him from injury.

Laws may be divided into those of God, and those of man. The law of God is subdivided into the natural or moral law, and the positive or revealed. The former may be discovered by a right use of reason, the latter is made known by revelation. To appropriate

certain portions of our time to the offices of religion, is a moral duty, discoverable by reason, and founded on the same principle that recommends those offices; time being necessary to every work of man. To set apart one day in seven for this purpose, is a positive duty, which man did not know till it was revealed to him. When moral and positive duties interfere, so that we cannot perform the one without a temporary neglect of the other, moral duties generally deserve the preference. To rest from our ordinary business on Sunday is not so strictly incumbent as to relieve distress on that day, even though, in doing so, we should be obliged to labour from morning to night. The sanctions of the divine law are, first, future reward or punishment; secondly, the approbation or disapprobation of conscience; and, thirdly, the advantages and disadvantages annexed even in this life to virtuous and vicious conduct.—The divine moral law, which is also called the law of nature, regulates, or ought to regulate, the intercourse of independent nations with respect to one another; and in this view it is commonly called the law of nations.

The Moral Law of Nature.

WHAT *is* the moral law of nature? is a question that has often been proposed. That (I would answer) is incumbent on us by the law of our nature, which, after candid inquiry, our reason and conscience declare to be right. Other answers have been given. Some speak of seven precepts of Noah, from which the whole law of nature is deducible; but of this there is no evidence. Some have thought that the law of nature is nothing else than the general consent of all nations. And it is true that, with respect to the principal points of the law of nature, all civilized nations are of the same opinion. But though there were only one nation, one family, or one person, upon the earth, certain duties would be incumbent on that nation, family, or person; which duties would result from, and be a part of, the law of nature: so that there is a law of nature previous, not only to the consent, but even to the existence, of nations. Others have said, that the law of nature is that rule of conduct which men would observe in a state of perfect virtue. In such a state, no doubt, the law of nature would be obeyed; but in such a state

there would be no room for many duties incumbent on men by the law of nature; those particularly that regard the regulation of such passions as a sense of injury is apt to render excessive. For in such a state there would be no injury, and consequently no room for forgiveness, placability, and mercy, which yet are duties enjoined by the law of nature.—The conceit of Mr. Hobbes, that in the nature of things there is no distinction between just and unjust, right and wrong; and that in civil society the will of human governors is the sole standard of duty, and consequently of the law of nature; this conceit, I say, we need not stop to examine. For Hobbes and his paradoxes are now forgotten, as they deserve to be: and Dr. Clarke, in his excellent work on the Evidences of Religion, has proved, that this paradox is both absurd and self-contradictory, as well as impious.

The Importance of strict Adherence to Truth.

A STRICT regard to truth in every thing we say or do is an indispensable duty. All men have a right to expect it from us; for, without it, speech, instead of a blessing, would

be a snare and a curse, and the comforts of social life at an end. On some occasions, however, when we do not even pretend to declare the truth, and where it is not expected from us, as in composing an instructive or amusing fable, there is no deviation from integrity, because we mean no deception, and in fact nobody is deceived: which is also the case in those complimental forms of speech that are universally known to express a great deal more than they mean; as when we address a man of a certain rank by the title of lord, or subscribe ourselves the humble servants of a person whom perhaps we should not think it incumbent on us to obey in any thing. In very large towns, too, where people have so numerous an acquaintance, that if they were to admit every visitant, they could have no time to look after their own affairs, it cannot be blameable to deny their being at home, if the phrase conveying the denial be generally understood to mean nothing more, than that they are not at leisure. It were better, no doubt, if these deviations from the literal use of language were fewer; but in complying with a custom that softens the harshness of refusal, does no harm in society, and neither offends nor deceives any in-

dividual, there can be no great evil.—To use the words of deception, in order to do good to the person deceived, may be not only warrantable, but a duty. Were a physician always to tell his patients that they were in danger, when he thought them so, his visits might do more harm than good. To quiet a sick person's mind, to pacify a madman, to defend the helpless from an enraged adversary, deviations from strict truth, if there be no other way of accomplishing the benevolent purpose, are undoubtedly lawful.

It is another great duty in the use of speech, to make it not only pleasing to others, but also profitable; by giving good advice, correcting error, allaying the violence of passion, enforcing good principles, and discountenancing bad; by encouraging the timorous, comforting the afflicted, reproving in meekness the transgressor; and always using such words as may neither raise evil thoughts in others, nor give proof of any indelicacy in ourselves. The Cynics of old, and some of the Stoics, maintained, that in *words* there is no indelicacy; that there can be no harm in speaking of any thing that is natural; and that, if we may speak without blame of any one crime, or any

one part or function of the human body, we may, in like manner, of any other. But this is vile sophistry, tending to the utter debasement of man, and founded in the grossest ignorance of human nature and human language.

Words are Things.—MIRABEAU.

WORDS may do much harm as well as much good. Many of them not only convey the speaker's meaning, but also exhibit the disposition of mind wherewith he speaks; and, in the hearer, not only raise ideas, but stimulate passions: and that which either stimulates bad passions in us, or sets an ensnaring example of them in others, is surely no matter of indifference. There are functions and parts of our bodily frame, which may be signified by two sorts of words; first, by those that express the meaning and nothing more, and such are the words that anatomists and philosophers use; and secondly, those that express the meaning, together with a sensual and profligate inclination, or some other indelicacy, in him who speaks. Words of this last character are called obscene; and prove the speaker to be equally destitute of good principles and good breed-

ing. Words there are too, expressive of crimes, that signify on the part of the speaker either disapprobation, or no disapprobation; of the former sort are *adultery*, *murder*; of the latter, *an affair of gallantry*, *an affair of honour*, and those other sneaking circumlocutions, whereby modern profligacy endeavours to confound the distinctions of right and wrong. And among robbers and thieves there is said to be a similar jargon, to notify certain crimes to those of the gang who have been initiated, and at the same time to insinuate, that to those crimes the speaker has no disinclination, but considers them as tools pertaining to his trade.

Duelling.

LET us consider what may be said for and against duels. For them, little, I think, can be said, except that they promote polite behaviour, by making men afraid of one another; and that the abolition of them would be difficult, and might be attended with evil, by furnishing profligate men with a temptation to assassinate. But these are weak apologies. The Athenians and Romans were in their better days as polite as we; much more so, indeed,

we must acknowlege them to have been, if we take into the account the grossness of their religion, and the purity of ours: yet they were strangers to duelling, as well as to those ridiculous notions of honour which give rise to it; and it is impossible to mention a single instance of their unpoliteness, which duelling, if it had been fashionable among them, would have prevented. Nor do we find, in our days, at least among the enlightened part of mankind, that persons who do not fight duels are less distinguished for elegance of behaviour than those that do: with some exceptions, the contrary will perhaps be found to be the case. And it is not very honourable to human nature to suppose, that nothing but the fear of death, or of disgrace, can prevail on persons in the higher ranks of life to practise the common rules of good-nature and civility.

That it is difficult to prevent duelling, I shall be willing to admit, when I have seen any legislature attempt the prevention of it seriously, and yet unsuccessfully. But this has not happened as yet, so far as I know. A more despicable mockery of legislation there cannot be, than that pretended prohibition whereby our law is said to discourage it. For surely those

laws, or those customs established in defiance of law, which grant not only indemnity, but honour, to the transgressor, and punish obedience with infamy and ruin, must mean either nothing at all, or nothing but public mischief.—As to assassination: it is true, that in modern Italy, where duels are rare, it is very common; but it is impossible to prove, that the infrequency of the one enormity occasions the prevalence of the other. Two or three centuries ago, when the point of honour, in regard to single combat, was carried to a very extravagant height, assassinations were in most parts of Europe common to a degree that fills us with horror. In fact, it is not unnatural, that he, to whose mind one species of murder is become familiar without being shocking, should, without great difficulty, be able to reconcile himself to any other. To plead in behalf of duels, that they prevent assassination, is not less absurd, than to plead in behalf of robbery, that it prevents theft.

What is Liberty?

DOES liberty consist in the power of doing what we please? No: for if every body had

this power, there could be no liberty at all; because our life and property would be at the disposal of every man who was able and willing to take them from us. In a free country, every violation of law is an attack upon the public liberty. The laws of God and our country are our best and only security against oppression; and therefore liberty can exist amongst us no longer than while those laws are obeyed. Milton, who loved liberty as much, I believe, as any man ever did, has truly observed, when speaking of it, that 'who loves that, must first 'be wise and good.' See his twelfth sonnet.

Does liberty consist in our being governed by laws of our own making? I know not how many political writers have laid this down as a first principle, and a self-evident maxim: and yet, if Britain be a free government, this maxim is grossly absurd. Who are they who can be said to be governed by laws of their own making? I know of no such persons; I never heard or read of any such, except, perhaps, among pirates and other banditti, who, trampling on all laws, divine and human, refuse to be governed in any other way than by their own licentious regulations. The greatest part of the laws by which we are governed were

made long ago: I should be glad to know how a man co-operates in making a law before he is born. But are we not instrumental in making those laws which are made in our own time? Granting that we are, which is by no means the case, these are not the only laws by which we are governed: we must obey the common law of the land, which is of immemorial standing, as well as the statutes made in the last session of parliament.

The British laws are enacted by the king, lords, and commons, who may amount in all to about eight hundred persons: the inhabitants of Great Britain, who must obey these laws, are computed at eight millions. In Britain, therefore, not to mention the rest of the empire, are more than seven millions of persons, who are governed by laws which they neither make, nor can alter: and even the king, lords, and commons, are themselves governed by laws which were made before they were born. Nay more: if the majority of the lords and commons agree to a bill, which afterwards receives the royal assent, that bill is a law, though the minority vote against it; and the minority in both houses might comprehend three hundred and eighty persons: so that a

law to bind the whole British nation might, according to the principles of our constitution, be made, even contrary to the will of three hundred and eighty members of the legislature.—Nay, further; in the house of commons, forty members, in ordinary cases of legislation, make a house, or quorum; the majority is twenty-one, which, deducted from five hundred and fifty-eight, the number of members in that house, leaves five hundred and thirty-seven: so that a bill might pass the house of commons, if the house happened to be very thin, contrary to the will of five hundred and thirty-seven members of that house; and yet, if such a bill were afterwards ratified by the lords, and assented to by the king, it would be a law.—Surely, if we are a free people, liberty must be something that does not consist in our being governed by laws of our own making.

It is said, indeed, that every British subject has influence in the legislature by means of his representative freely chosen, who appears and acts for him in parliament. But this is not true. There are not, in this island, one million of persons who have a vote in electing parliament-men: and yet, in this island, there are

eight millions of persons who must obey the law. And for their conduct, as lawgivers, our parliament-men are not answerable to their electors, or to any other persons whatever: And it not often happens, that in making laws they are unanimous; yet the minority in both houses must obey the laws that are made against their will.—Besides, we are all subject to the law of God, and are free in proportion as we obey it; for his service is perfect freedom. But who will say that man is the maker of God's law!—We see, then, that our liberty does not consist either in the power of doing what we please, or in being governed by laws made by ourselves.

They who are hindered from doing what the law allows, or who have reason to be afraid of one another, even while they are doing their duty, cannot be said to enjoy liberty. Where this is the case, there must be in the hands of certain individuals some exorbitant power productive of oppression, and not subject to law; or there must prevail in the state a spirit of licentiousness which the law cannot controul.—Nor can men be said to be free, who are liable to have oppressive laws imposed on them, or to be tried by tyrannical or incompetent judges.

In Great Britain, by a contrivance to be explained hereafter, our laws are made by men, whose interest it is to make them equitable; and who, with a very few exceptions of little moment, are themselves subject to the laws they make. In Britain, too, by the institution of juries, our judges in all criminal, and in many civil, causes, are our equals; men, who are acquainted with our circumstances, to whose prudence and probity we have no objection, and who are favourably inclined towards us, on account of our being their equals. In Great Britain, therefore, an honest man has nothing to fear, either from the law or from the judge.—Neither can those people be accounted free, who dare not complain when they suffer injury, or who are denied the privilege of declaring their sentiments freely to one another. In both these respects our freedom is secured by the liberty of the press, of which I shall speak afterwards.

Political liberty, therefore, I would describe thus: 'It is that state in which men are so governed by equitable laws, and so tried by 'equitable judges, that no person can be hindered from doing what the law allows, or 'have reason to be afraid of any person so long

'as he does his duty.' This is true liberty; for this is the only sort of liberty that promotes virtue and happiness; and surely no wise or good man would ever wish for any other: and this is a degree and a perfection of liberty, which I know not that any other people on earth ever enjoyed.

Despotism.

WHERE despotism prevails, the will of the prince is the law; and therefore the government must always be bad, and would indeed be intolerable, if he were not afraid of his people, and if there were not some established customs which supply the place of laws, and which even a tyrant dares not violate. A despotic prince is generally ignorant, sensual, and idle. He is therefore inclined to commit the management of his affairs, not to many persons, for that would give him too much trouble, but to one person, to whom he transfers his power, and who has long been distinguished in Mahometan governments, which are all despotical, by the appellation of *Visir*. In some of these governments the sovereign declares himself the heir of all his subjects, and seizes

on a man's estate the moment he dies, and often before, which effectually destroys industry, as well as domestic happiness. In others, he is satisfied with a certain proportion, as three, four, or five, *per cent.* on the value of inheritances. There being no law but his will, the right of the successor to the crown is frequently uncertain. Sometimes, however, it is settled by the order of birth; and sometimes by the will of the former prince. If there be competitors for the crown, a civil war ensues, and victory determines the succession; and the new sovereign, to prevent like trouble for the future, removes his brothers and near relations out of the way, by imprisoning them for life, or murdering them, or putting out their eyes, or making them swallow drugs that deprive them of reason.

Extensive empires have a tendency to become despotical: for the sovereign must keep a great military force, which makes him, if not strictly limited by law, master of the lives and fortunes of his people. The great extent of the Roman empire was one chief cause of that despotism which came at last to prevail in it. In warm and fruitful countries, unless where a spirit of commerce and manufactures

takes place, there is seldom that activity which we find in more temperate climates: and this indolence of the people inclines them to submit to despotic government: and where are very wide continents, as in the northern part of Europe and Asia, the natives of the inland provinces, having little intercourse with the rest of the world, and being for that reason very ignorant, remain satisfied with their own bad government, because they have never heard of better. Besides, nothing but force is necessary to establish despotism; whereas a free monarchy, like ours, is a work of the greatest art.

In many parts of Europe there has been, from very early times, a spirit of activity, and a love of freedom, which may have been owing partly to the climate and soil making industry necessary, and so giving scope to the exertions of genius; and partly, perhaps, to the situation of the several countries, divided from one another, as they are, by seas and mountains, which break them into distinct nations, and yet, by rendering commerce and mutual intercourse easy, give rise to emulation and the various arts of life. I would not impute the characters and fates of nations to climate, soil, and situation, merely; I only

say, that these things may have influence. But Providence varies the characters of nations, and raises one, and brings down another, in order to accomplish its own good purposes: and we find, that the characters, governments, laws, and manners, of nations are not fixed, but perpetually changing. How different are the modern inhabitants of Greece and Italy, and, I may add, of our own country, from the ancient!

The *principle* of despotism, I mean the human passion that supports it, is fear; for when the people throw off their fear of the tyrant, he is undone; and if he were not afraid of them, his tyranny would be intolerable. Now fear is a passion that depresses the mind, and makes it inactive: and this may be given as one reason for the long duration of some despotical governments. The religion of Mahomet is another. It was brought in by a tyrant, and whithersoever it goes, tyranny and ignorance go along with it.

Qualities necessary to a good Clergyman.

A PREACHER must be a man of piety, and one who has the instruction and salvation of

mankind sincerely at heart. If this is not the case, he will not be able to touch the hearts of his hearers; and if he cannot do that, he will preach in vain. In the utterance of him who speaks what he believes to be true, and of infinite importance, there is an earnestness, a simplicity, and an energy, of which every man of sense who hears him feels the effect, and which recommends a preacher more than any other accomplishment. To which let me add, that though hypocrisy be at all times, and in men of all professions, a most hateful vice, in a clergyman it is peculiarly atrocious, and must be accompanied with such corruption and baseness of heart, as cannot fail to render him not only useless in his calling, but absolutely detestable.

A preacher must be a man of modest and simple manners; and in his public performances and general behaviour, conduct himself so as to make his people sensible that he has their temporal and eternal welfare more at heart than any thing else. Without this disinterested love to the souls of men, he will never gain the confidence of those under his care, if they be people of sense: they may wonder at his talents, but will not profit by his minis-

try. Reason, as well as Scripture, declares, that a Christian minister ought to preach, not himself, but the gospel; that he ought to be much more anxious to promote the knowledge and love of Christianity, than to gain applause by an ostentatious display of his address, eloquence, or learning. He must be well instructed in morality and religion, and in the original tongues in which the Scripture was written: for without these talents he can hardly be qualified to explain Scripture, or to teach religion and morality. Yet, as men are more effectually led to virtue by example than by precept, it must be owned, that a holy life and good sense may make a clergyman very useful, even though his learning and genius be not great.

He must be such a proficient in his own language, as to be able to express every doctrine and precept with the utmost simplicity; and without any thing in the diction either finical on the one hand, or vulgar on the other. I have been told, that candidates for holy orders are usually examined on their knowledge of ancient language: this is undoubtedly right: but they ought, in my humble opinion, to give proof that they are also masters of their own.

An elegant simplicity of style is more necessary in a sermon, than in any other composition: for to men of all ranks and capacities the preacher addresses himself: and if he does not make what he says intelligible to all, and in respect of style not offensive to any, he may chance to do more harm than good. Plain language, therefore, he must speak; otherwise the vulgar cannot understand him: and any thing which tends to debase his subject he must not utter, lest he offend both the learned and unlearned part of his audience. If he introduce uncommon words, to show his learning; violent figures, to display his wit; poetical flourishes, to make people admire his fine fancy; or theatrical looks and gestures, to intimate that he is not unacquainted with players and playhouses; ignorant people may be amazed at him; but every person of sense will see, that the instruction of his hearers is with him but a secondary consideration.

A sermon should be composed with regularity and unity of design, so that all its parts may have a mutual and natural connection; and it should not consist of many heads, nor should it be very long. If these rules are not observed, it may make a slight impression

while it is heard, but will quickly be forgotten. One can remember all the parts of a regular machine, and their connections, on once seeing it: but had those parts been laid together in a heap, without connection or method, they would have taken no hold of the memory. The human mind can attend for a certain space; but if it be over-fatigued with attention, what it hears will do it harm without doing good: and let it be considered, that the common people are less capable of strict attention than the learned are, because less used to it; so that very long sermons can answer no end, either to learned or unlearned hearers, except to wear out the spirits of the former, and raise in the latter a foolish admiration of the preacher's powers, both which ends are very remote from the views of a conscientious minister of the gospel.—I shall only add, that a sermon ought to be pronounced with gravity, modesty, and meekness, and so as to be distinctly heard by all the audience. Let the preacher therefore accustom himself to articulate slowly, and deliver the words with a distinct voice, and without artificial attitudes or motions, or any other affectation.

On the Evidence of Testimony.

IT is natural for man to speak as he thinks; and it is easy, like walking forward. One may walk backwards, or sideways; but it is uneasy, and a sort of force upon nature: and the same thing is true of speaking one thing and thinking another.—It is also natural for us to believe what others seriously tell us. We trust the word of a man of whose veracity we have had experience; but we also credit testimony previously to such experience; for children who have least experience, are most credulous. It is from having had experience of the dishonesty of men, and of the motives that tempt them to it, that we come to disbelieve or distrust what they say. In general, when we doubt a man's word, we have always some reason for it. We think, that what he says is incredible in itself; or, that there is some motive or temptation which inclines him in the present case to violate truth; or, that he is not a competent judge of the matter in which he gives testimony; or, lastly, we distrust him now, because we know him to have been a deceiver formerly.

Faith in testimony often rises to absolute cer-

tainty. Of places and persons whom we never saw, and of whom we know nothing but from the testimony of others, we believe many things as firmly as we believe our own existence. This happens when the testimonies of men concerning such places and persons, are so many, and so consistent, that it seems impossible they should be fictitious. When a number of persons, not acting in concert, having no interest to disguise what is true, or to affirm what is false, and, competent judges of what they testify, concur in making the same report, it would be accounted folly to disbelieve them, especially if what they testified were credible in itself. Even when three, or when two witnesses separately examined, and who have had no opportunity to concert a plan beforehand, concur in the same declaration, we believe them, though we have had no experience of their veracity; because we know, that in such a case, their declarations would not be consistent, if they were not true.

With regard to an impossible thing, we should not believe our own senses, nor consequently human testimony. If we were to see the same man double, or in two places at the same time, we should think, not that it was so,

but that something was wrong in our eyes, or that the appearance might be owing to the *medium* through which we saw it. Miraculous facts are not to be ranked with impossibilities. To raise a dead man to life, to cure blindness with a touch, to remove lameness or a disease by speaking a word, are miracles; but to divine power as easy as to give life to an embryo, make the eye an organ of sight, or cause vegetables to revive in the spring: and therefore, if a person, declaring himself to be invested with divine power, and saying and doing what is worthy of such a commission, should perform such miracles, mankind would have the best reason to believe, that he was really sent of God, and that every thing he said was true.

As the common people have neither time nor capacity for deep reasoning; and as a divine revelation must be intended for all sorts of men, the vulgar as well as the learned, the poor as well as the rich, it is necessary that the evidence of such a revelation should be fit for commanding general attention, and convincing all sorts of men; and should therefore be level to every capacity. Now there is no kind of evidence, consistent with man's free agency and moral probation, which is likely to command

universal attention, and carry full conviction, in religious matters, to the minds of all sorts of men, except the evidence of miracles, or extraordinary events. Some facts seem extraordinary which are really not so. Such are the tricks of jugglers, of which, when we are told the contrivance, we are surprised to find it so easy. Other facts seem extraordinary to those only who are ignorant of their causes: and such are many things in electricity, magnetism, and chemistry: but the miracles recorded in the Gospel are quite of a different kind. They were such as no power of man could accomplish; and of so particular a nature, that every person present at the performance, who had eyes, ears, and common sense, was as competent a judge of them, as the most learned philosopher could have been. Of these miracles our Saviour not only performed many, but also imparted to his disciples the power of doing the same. If it be asked, what evidence is sufficient to establish the truth of a miraculous event, I answer, that every event admits of proof from human testimony, which it is possible for a sufficient number of competent witnesses to see and to hear.

EPISTOLARY BEAUTIES.

LETTER VII.

DR. BEATTIE TO MR. GRAY.*

Marischal College of Aberdeen, 30th August, 1765.

"IF I thought it necessary to offer an apology for venturing to address you in this abrupt manner, I should be very much at a loss how to begin. I might plead my admiration of your genius, and my attachment to your character; but who is he that could not, with truth, urge the same excuse for intruding upon your retirement? I might plead my earnest desire to be personally acquainted with a man whom I have so long and so passionately admired in his writings; but thousands, of

* This letter is admitted, not from any peculiar merit, but because illustrative of an occurrence related in the Life of Dr. Beattie.

greater consequence than I, are ambitious of the same honour. I indeed must either flatter myself that no apology is necessary, or otherwise I must despair of obtaining what has long been the object of my most ardent wishes; I must for ever forfeit all hopes of seeing you, and conversing with you.

"It was yesterday I received the agreeable news of your being in Scotland, and of your intending to visit some parts of it. Will you permit us to hope, that we shall have an opportunity, at Aberdeen, of thanking you in person for the honour you have done to Britain, and to the poetic art, by your inestimable compositions, and of offering you all that we have that deserves your acceptance, namely, hearts full of esteem, respect, and affection? If you cannot come so far northward, let me at least be acquainted with the place of your residence, and permitted to wait on you. Forgive, sir, this request; forgive me if I urge it with earnestness, for indeed it concerns me nearly; and do me the justice to believe, that I am, with the most sincere attachment, and most respectful esteem, &c. &c.

"P.S. Dr. Carlysle of Musselburgh, and Dr. Wight of Glasgow, acquainted me of

your being in Scotland. It was from them I learned that my name was not wholly unknown to you."

LETTER XIV.

DR. BEATTIE TO THE HON. CHARLES BOYD.

Aberdeen, 16th November, 1766.

"OF all the chagrins with which my present infirm state of health is attended, none afflicts me more than my inability to perform the duties of friendship. The offer which you were generously pleased to make me of your correspondence, flatters me extremely; but, alas! I have not as yet been able to avail myself of it. While the good weather continued, I strolled about the country, and made many strenuous attempts to run away from this odious giddiness; but the more I struggled, the more closely it seemed to stick by me. About a fortnight ago the hurry of my winter business began; and, at the same time, my malady recurred with more violence than ever, rendering me at once incapable of reading, writing, and thinking. Luckily I am now a little better, so as to be able to read a page, and

write a sentence or two, without stopping; which, I assure you, is a very great matter. My hopes and my spirits begin to revive once more. I flatter myself I shall soon get rid of this infirmity; nay, that I shall ere long be in the way of becoming a *great man*. For have I not head-aches, like Pope? vertigo, like Swift? grey hairs, like Homer? Do I not wear large shoes, (for fear of corns,) like Virgil? and sometimes complain of sore eyes, (though not of *lippitude*,) like Horace? Am I not at this present writing invested with a garment not less ragged than that of Socrates? Like Joseph the patriarch, I am a mighty dreamer of dreams; like Nimrod the hunter, I am an eminent builder of castles (in the air). I procrastinate, like Julius Cæsar; and very lately, in imitation of Don Quixote, I rode a horse, lean, old, and lazy, like Rozinante. Sometimes, like Cicero, I write bad verses; and sometimes bad prose, like Virgil. This last instance I have on the authority of Seneca. I am of small stature, like Alexander the Great: I am somewhat inclinable to fatness, like Dr. Arbuthnot and Aristotle; and I drink brandy and water, like Mr. Boyd. I might compare myself, in relation to many other infirmities,

to many other *great men;* but if fortune is not influenced in my favour, by the particulars already enumerated, I shall despair of ever recommending myself to her good graces. I once had some thought of soliciting her patronage on the score of my resembling great men in their good qualities; but I had so little to say on that subject, that I could not for my life furnish matter for one well-rounded period; and, you know, a short ill-turned speech is very improper to be used in an address to a female deity.

"Do not you think there is a sort of antipathy between philosophical and poetical genius? I question, whether any one person was ever eminent for both. Lucretius lays aside the poet when he assumes the philosopher, and the philosopher when he assumes the poet. In the one character he is truly excellent, in the other he is absolutely nonsensical. Hobbes was a tolerable metaphysician, but his poetry is the worst that ever was. Pope's "Essay on Man" is the finest philosophical poem in the world; but it seems to me to do more honour to the imagination than to the understanding of its author: I mean, its sentiments are noble and affecting, its images and allusions appo-

site, beautiful, and new; its wit transcendently excellent; but the scientific part of it is very exceptionable. Whatever Pope borrows from Leibnitz, like most other metaphysical theories, is frivolous and unsatisfying; what Pope gives us of his own, is energetic, irresistible, and divine. The incompatibility of philosophical and poetical genius, is, I think, no unaccountable thing. Poetry exhibits the general qualities of a species; philosophy the particular qualities of individuals. *This* forms its conclusions from a painful and minute examination of single instances; *that* decides instantaneously, either from its own instinctive sagacity, or from a singular and unaccountable penetration, which at one glance sees all the instances which the philosopher must leisurely and progressively scrutinize, one by one. This persuades you gradually, and by detail; the other overpowers you in an instant by a single effort. Observe the effect of argumentation in poetry; we have too many instances of it in Milton: it transforms the noblest thoughts into drawling inferences, and the most beautiful language into prose: it checks the tide of passion, by giving the mind a different employment in the comparison of

ideas. A little philosophical acquaintance with the most beautiful parts of nature, both in the material and immaterial system, is of use to a poet, and gives grace and solidity to poetry; as may be seen in the "Georgics," the "Seasons," and the "Pleasures of Imagination:" but this acquaintance, if it is any thing more than superficial, will do a poet rather harm than good; and will give his mind that turn for minute observation, which enfeebles the fancy by restraining it, and counteracts the native energy of judgment, by rendering it fearful and suspicious."

LETTER XXIX.

The following letter gives a very interesting account of Dr. Beattie's motives for writing and publishing his "Essay on Truth."

DR. BEATTIE TO DR. BLACKLOCK.

Aberdeen, 9th January, 1769.

"IT was very kind in you to read over my "Essay on the Immutability of Moral Sentiment" with so much attention. I wish it deserved any part of the high encomium you

bestowed on it. I flatter myself it will receive considerable improvements from a second transcribing, which I intend to begin as soon as I can. Some parts of it will be enlarged, and others (perhaps) shortened: the examples from history, and authorities from ancient authors, will be more numerous; it will be regularly distributed into chapters and sections, and the language will be corrected throughout. The first part, which treats of the permanency of truth in general, is now in great forwardness; ninety pages in quarto are finished, and materials provided for as many more. The design of the whole you will guess from the part you have seen. It is to overthrow scepticism, and establish conviction in its place; a conviction not in the least favourable to bigotry or prejudice, far less to a persecuting spirit; but such a conviction as produces firmness of mind, and stability of principle, in a consistence with moderation, candour, and liberal inquiry. If I understand my own design, it is certainly this; whether I shall accomplish this design or not, the event only will determine. Meantime I go on with cheerfulness in this intricate and fatiguing study, because I would fain hope that it may do some

good; harm I think it cannot possibly do any.

"Perhaps you are anxious to know what first induced me to write on this subject: I will tell you as briefly as I can. In my younger days I read chiefly for the sake of amusement, and I found myself best amused with the classics, and what we call the *belles lettres*. Metaphysics I disliked; mathematics pleased me better; but I found my mind neither improved nor gratified by that study. When Providence allotted me my present station, it became incumbent on me to read what had been written on the subject of morals and human nature: the works of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, were celebrated as master-pieces in this way; to them, therefore, I had recourse. But as I began to study them with great prejudices in their favour, you will readily conceive how strangely I was surprised to find them, as I thought, replete with absurdities: I pondered these absurdities; I weighed the arguments, with which I was sometimes not a little confounded; and the result was, that I began at last to suspect my own understanding, and to think that I had not capacity for such a study. For I could not conceive it possible,

that the absurdities of these authors were so great as they seemed to me to be; otherwise, thought I, the world would never admire them so much. About this time, some excellent antisceptical works made their appearance, particularly Reid's "Inquiry into the Human Mind." Then it was that I began to have a little more confidence in my own judgment, when I found it confirmed by those of whose abilities I did not entertain the least distrust. I reviewed my authors again, with a very different temper of mind. A very little truth will sometimes enlighten a vast extent of science. I found that the sceptical philosophy was not what the world imagined it to be, nor what I, following the opinion of the world, had hitherto imagined it to be, but a frivolous, though dangerous, system of verbal subtilty, which it required neither genius, nor learning, nor taste, nor knowledge of mankind, to be able to put together; but only a captious temper, an irreligious spirit, a moderate command of words, and an extraordinary degree of vanity and presumption. You will easily perceive that I am speaking of this philosophy only in its most extravagant state, that is, as it appears in the works of Mr. Hume. The

more I study it, the more am I confirmed in this opinion. But while I applauded and admired the sagacity of those who led me into, or at least encouraged me to proceed in, this train of thinking, I was not altogether satisfied with them in another respect. I could not approve that extraordinary adulation which some of them paid to their arch-adversary. I could not conceive the propriety of paying compliments to a man's *heart*, at the very time one is proving that his aim is to subvert the principles of truth, virtue, and religion; nor to his *understanding*, when we are charging him with publishing the grossest and most contemptible nonsense. I thought I then foresaw, what I have since found to happen, that this controversy will be looked upon rather as a trial of skill between two logicians, than as a disquisition in which the best interests of mankind were concerned; and that the world, especially the fashionable part of it, would still be disposed to pay the greatest deference to the opinions of him who, even by the acknowledgment of his antagonists, was confessed to be the best philosopher and the soundest reasoner. All this has happened, and more. Some, to my certain knowledge, have

said, that Mr. Hume and his adversaries did really act in concert, in order mutually to promote the sale of one another's works; as a proof of which, they mention, not only the extravagant compliments that pass between them, but also the circumstance of Dr. R.* and Dr. C.† sending their manuscripts to be perused and corrected by Mr. Hume, before they gave them to the press. I, who know both the men, am very sensible of the gross falsehood of these reports. As to the affair of the manuscripts, it was, I am convinced, candour and modesty that induced them to it. But the world knows no such thing; and, therefore, may be excused for mistaking the meaning of actions that have really an equivocal appearance. I know, likewise, that they are sincere, not only in the detestation they express for Mr. Hume's irreligious tenets, but also in the compliments they have paid to his talents; for they both look upon him as an extraordinary genius; a point in which I cannot agree with them. But while I thus vindicate them from imputations, which the world, from its ignorance of circumstances, has laid to their charge, I cannot approve them in every thing; I wish they had carried

* Dr. Reid. † Dr. Campbell.

their researches a little farther, and expressed themselves with a little more firmness and spirit. For well I know, that their works, for want of this, will never produce that effect which (if all mankind were cool metaphysical reasoners) might be expected from them. There is another thing in which my judgment differs considerably from that of the gentlemen just mentioned. They have great metaphysical abilities; and they love the metaphysical sciences. I do not. I am convinced that this metaphysical spirit is the bane of true learning, true taste, and true science; that to it we owe all this modern scepticism and atheism; that it has a bad effect upon the human faculties, and tends not a little to sour the temper, to subvert good principles, and to disqualify men for the business of life. You will now see wherein my views differ from those of the other answerers of Mr. Hume. I want to show the world, that the sceptical philosopy is contradictory to itself, and destructive of genuine philosophy, as well as of religion and virtue; that it is in its own nature so paltry a thing, (however it may have been celebrated by some) that to be despised it needs only to be known; that no degree of genius is necessary to qualify

a man for making a figure in this pretended science; but rather a certain minuteness and suspiciousness of mind, and want of sensibility, the very reverse of true intellectual excellence; that metaphysics cannot possibly do any good, but may do, and actually have done, much harm; that sceptical philosophers, whatever they may pretend, are the corrupters of science, the pests of society, and the enemies of mankind. I want to show, that the same method of reasoning, which these people have adopted in their books, if transferred into common life, would show them to be destitute of common sense; that true philosophers follow a different method of reasoning; and that, without following a different method, no truth can be discovered. I want to lay before the public, in as strong a light as possible, the following dilemma: our sceptics either believe the doctrines they publish, or they do not believe them; if they believe them, they are fools—if not, they are a thousand times worse. I want also to fortify the mind against this sceptical poison, and to propose certain criteria of moral truth, by which some of the most dangerous sceptical errors may be detected and guarded against.

"You are sensible, that, in order to attain these ends, it is absolutely necessary for me to use great plainness of speech. My expressions must not be so tame as to seem to imply either a diffidence in my principles, or a coldness towards the cause I have undertaken to defend. And where is the man who can blame me for speaking from the heart, and therefore speaking with warmth, when I appear in the cause of truth, religion, virtue, and mankind? I am sure my dear friend Dr. Blacklock will not; he, who has set before me so many examples of this laudable ardour; he, whose style I should be proud to take for my model, if I were not aware of the difficulty, I may say, the insuperable difficulty, of imitating it with success. You need not fear, however, that I expose myself by an excess of passion or petulance. I hope I shall be animated, without losing my temper, and keen, without injury to good manners. In a word, I will be as soft and delicate as the subject and my conscience will allow. One gentleman, a friend of yours,* I shall have occasion to treat with

* The gentleman here alluded to by Dr. Beattie, as a friend of Dr. Blacklock's, was Mr. Hume, who had patronised Dr. Blacklock at an early period, and done him several acts of

much freedom. I have heard of his virtues. I know he has many virtues; God forbid I should ever seek to lessen them, or wish them to be found insincere. I hope they are sincere, and that they will increase in number and merit every day. To his virtues I shall do justice; but I must also do justice to his faults, at least to those faults which are public, and which, for the sake of truth and of mankind, ought not to be concealed or disguised. Personal reflections will be carefully avoided; I hope I am in no danger of falling into them, for I bear no personal animosity against any man whatsoever; sometimes I may perhaps be keen; but I trust I shall never depart from the Christian and philosophic character.

"A scheme like this of mine cannot be popular, far less can it be lucrative. It will

kindness, which Dr. Blacklock never failed to acknowledge. But all intercourse between Mr. Hume and him had ceased (through no fault on the part of Dr. Blacklock) many years before the period here spoken of. In consequence of what Dr. Beattie says here, of Mr. Hume's being a friend of Dr. Blacklock's, I find, among Dr. Beattie's papers, a long letter to him from Dr. Blacklock, giving a detail of the whole of the intercourse between him and Mr. Hume, from its commencement to its close.—*Sir W. F.*

raise me enemies; it will expose me to the scrutiny of the most rigid criticism; it will make me be considered by many as a sullen and illiberal bigot. I trust, however, in Providence, and in the goodness of my cause, that my attempts in behalf of truth shall not be altogether ineffectual, and that my labours shall be attended with some utility to my fellow-creatures. This, in my estimation, will do much more than counterbalance all the inconveniences I have any reason to apprehend. I have already fallen on evil tongues, (as Milton says,) on account of this intended publication. It has been reported, that I had written a most scurrilous paper against Mr. Hume, and was preparing to publish it, when a friend of mine interposed, and, with very great difficulty, prevailed on me to suppress it, because he knew it would hurt or ruin my character. Such is the treatment I have to expect from one set of people. I was so provoked when I first heard this calumny, that I deliberated whether I should not throw my papers into the fire, with a *Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur:* but I rejected that thought; for so many persons have told me, that it was my *duty* to publish these papers, that I almost be-

gin to think so myself. Many have urged me to publish them; none ever dissuaded me. The gentleman, named in the report, read the essay, and returned it with the highest commendations; but I do not recollect that he ever spoke a syllable about publishing or suppressing it. But I have certainly tired you with so long a detail, about so trifling a matter as my works. However, I thought it necessary to say something by way of apology for them, for I find that your good opinion is of too much consequence to my peace, to suffer me to neglect any opportunity of cultivating it.

"I informed you, in the letter which I sent by Mr. John Ross, that I was become the father of a son. Both his parents and he are much obliged to you for interesting yourselves so much in that event, and for your kind wishes. He thrives apace, and my wife is thoroughly recovered. You ask me, what are my feelings? Perhaps I shall be in a better condition to answer that question afterwards than now. He is always near me, and never has had any illness; and you know, that adversity is the only true touchstone of affection. I find my imagination recoils from the idea of

such adversity as would bring my affection to the test. To tell the truth, I am at no great pains to obtrude that idea on my fancy; evils come soon enough, we need not anticipate them. At present, however, I feel enough to convince me experimentally of what I have proved from the principles of reason in my essay, that this στοργη is something entirely different from that affection we feel towards dependants, as well as from that which arises from a habit of long acquaintance.

"I long much to see your translation of the French poem;* pray send it as soon as you can. You need not, I think, be under any apprehensions of meeting with Mr. Home's treatment.† To translate a dramatic poem, can never be made to be on a footing with composing one, and bringing it on the stage.

* The French poem here spoken of, was a translation of the play of "Cenie," by D'Happoncourt de Grafigny, which Dr. Blacklock had translated, with the title of "Seraphina;" but which was never intended to be printed, far less to be brought on the stage. In a letter to Dr. Beattie, Dr. Blacklock, speaking of this piece, says it had been imitated, rather than translated, by Mr. Philip Francis, the translator of Horace, with the title of "Eugenia," but with not much better success than his own.—*Sir W. F.*

† This alludes to Mr. John Home's tragedy of "Douglas."

Even Presbyterianism itself allows us to read plays; and if so, it cannot prohibit the translating of them."

LETTER CLXXI.

DR. BEATTIE TO MISS VALENTINE.*

Edinburgh, 28th May, 1784.

"MANY interesting matters have happened since I have been here; and if I had time, I could write a wondrous long letter of news. The election of Scotch Peers; the meeting of Parliament; the state of parties; the old and the new ministry; Pitt and Fox; the General Assembly—all these things are now forgotten; and nothing here is spoken or thought of but Mrs. Siddons. I have seen this wonderful person, not only on the stage, but in private company; for I passed two days with her at the Earl of Buchan's. Her powers in tragedy are beyond comparison great. I thought my old friend Garrick fell little or nothing short of theatrical perfection; and I have seen him in his prime, and in his highest characters:

* The above may be read on account of the pleasing anecdote with which it concludes.

but Garrick never affected me half so much as Mrs. Siddons has done. Indeed the heart that she cannot subdue must be made of other materials than flesh and blood. In the 'Caledonian Mercury' you will see, from time to time, some critical observations on her action, which are very well written. The encomiums are high; but I assure you they are not above her merit. James, too, has seen her, and is transported. He never till now, he says, knew what acting was. It was very difficult to procure places; but by the kind attentions of the Duchess of Gordon, and Lord and Lady Buchan, I was nobly accommodated, and in the very best seats in the house. In private company, Mrs. Siddons is a modest, unassuming, sensible woman, of the gentlest and most elegant manners. Her moral character is not only unblemished, but exemplary. She is above the middle size, and I suppose about thirty-four years of age. Her countenance is the most interesting that can be; and, excepting the Duchess of Gordon's, the most beautiful I have ever seen. Her eyes and eye-brows are of the deepest black. She loves music, and is fond of the Scotch tunes; many of which I played to her on the violoncello. One of

them (" She rose and let me in," which you know is a favourite of mine,) made the tears start from her eyes. " Go on," said she to me, " and you will soon have your revenge;" meaning, that I would draw as many tears from her as she had drawn from me. She sung " Queen Mary's Complaint" to admiration; and I had the honour to accompany her on the bass."

LETTER CLXXXVI.

DR. BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 26th November, 1785.

" MR. BOSWELL'S book is arrived at last, and I have just gone through it. He is very good to me, as Dr. Johnson always was; and I am very grateful to both. But I cannot approve the plan of such a work. To publish a man's letters, or his conversation, without his consent, is not, in my opinion, quite fair: for how many things, in the hour of relaxation, or in friendly correspondence, does a man throw out, which he would never wish to hear of again; and what a restraint would it be on all social intercourse, if one were to suppose

that every word one utters would be entered in a register! Mr. Boswell indeed says, that there are few men who need be under any apprehension of that sort. This is true; and the argument he founds on it would be good, if he had published nothing but what Dr. Johnson and he said and did: for Johnson, it seems, knew that the publication would be made, and did not object to it; but Mr. B. has published the sayings and doings of other people, who never consented to any such thing; and who little thought, when they were doing their best to entertain and amuse the two travellers, that a story would be made of it, and laid before the public. I approve of the Greek proverb, that says, "I hate a bottle-companion with a "memory." If my friend, after eating a bit of mutton with me, should go to the coffee-house, and there give an account of every thing that had passed, I believe I should not take it well.

"Of Dr. Johnson himself, as well as of others, many things are told which ought to have been suppressed; such, I mean, as are not in any respect remarkable, and such as seem to betray rather infirmity or captiousness, than genius or virtue. Johnson said of 'The

Man of the World,' that he found little or nothing in it. Why should this be recorded? Is there any wit in it; or is it likely to be of any use? The greatest dunce on earth is capable of saying as *good* a thing. Of a very promising young gentleman, to whom Dr. Johnson was under the highest obligations, (for he had risqued his life in Johnson's service,) and who, to the great grief of all who knew him, unfortunately perished at sea about ten years ago, Dr. Johnson said, that it was pity he was not more intellectual. Why should this be recorded? I will allow, that one friend might, without blame, say this to another in confidence; but to publish it to the world, when it cannot possibly give pleasure to any person, and will probably give pain to some, is, in my judgment, neither wit nor gratitude: and I am sure Mr. Boswell, who is a very good-natured man, would have seen it in this light, if he had given himself time to think of it. At Aberdeen the two travellers were most hospitably entertained, as they themselves acknowledge; and when they left it, they said to one another, that they had heard at Aberdeen nothing which deserved attention. There was nothing in *saying* this: but why is

it recorded? For no reason that I can imagine, unless it be in order to return evil for good. I found so many passages of this nature in the book, that, upon the whole, it left rather a disagreeable impression upon my mind; though I readily own there are many things in it which pleased me.

"The Bishop of Chester's thoughts on this subject are so pertinent, and so well expressed, that I am sure you will like to see them. "You will," says his lordship, in a letter which I received yesterday, "be entertained "with Mr. Boswell's book, and edified with "some of Johnson's prayers; but you will "wish that many things in both those publi- "cations had been omitted: and, perhaps, if "they had not existed at all, it would have "been better still. Johnson's friends will ab- "solutely kill him with kindness. His own "character, if left to itself, would naturally "raise him very high in the estimation of "mankind; but by loading it with panegyric, "anecdotes, lives, journals, &c. and by hang- "ing round it even all his little foibles and in- "firmities, they will sink it lower in the opi- "nion of the best judges of merit. I saw lately "a letter from Mrs. Piozzi, (late Mrs. Thrale,)

"in which she announces her 'Anecdotes of "Dr. Johnson,' to be published this winter; "and after that are to follow his Letters to "her, &c. Mr. Boswell also is to give us his "Life; and Sir John Hawkins is writing "another, to be prefixed to a complete edition "of his works. Our modest and worthy "friend, Mr. Langton, is the only one who "observes a profound silence on this occa- "sion; and yet no one could speak to better "purpose, if he pleased, and if he thought it "would answer any good end."

"Johnson's harsh and foolish censure of Mrs. Montagu's book does not surprise me; for I have heard him speak contemptuously of it. It is, for all that, one of the best, most original, and most elegant, pieces of criticism in our language, or any other.* Johnson had many of the talents of a critic; but his want of temper, his violent prejudices, and something, I am afraid, of an envious turn of mind, made him often a very unfair one. Mrs. Montagu was very kind to him; but Mrs. Montagu has more wit than any body; and Johnson could not bear that any person should be thought to have wit but himself. Even Lord Chesterfield, and, what is more strange, even Mr. Burke,

* Satis superque!—*Compiler.*

he would not allow to have wit. He preferred Smollett to Fielding. He would not grant that Armstrong's poem on 'Health,' or the tragedy of 'Douglas,' had any merit. He told me, that he never read Milton through, till he was obliged to do it, in order to gather words for his Dictionary. He spoke very peevishly of the Masque of Comus; and when I urged that there was a great deal of exquisite poetry in it, "Yes," said he, "but it is like gold hid un-"der a rock;" to which I made no reply; for indeed I did not well understand it.* Pray did you ever see Mr. Potter's 'Remarks on 'Johnson's Lives of the Poets?' It is very well worth reading.

"By a Latin letter which I lately received from Holland, I am informed, that Dutch translations of the first part of my last book, and of my 'Remarks on Laughter,' have been published, the one at Haerlem, the other at Dort. I am greatly obliged to the Dutch. The 'Essay on Truth,' they translated twelve years ago; and I have a copy of the version,

* Surely it required no extraordinary acumen to understand a reply which intimated, that, though there was much good poetry, yet there was also some that was harsh and rugged, and that to read the one in order to obtain the other, was like digging for gold through a rock.—*Compiler.*

which I am told, by those who understand the language, is very exact.

"I become every day more and more doubtful of the propriety of publishing the Scotticisms. Our language (I mean the English) is degenerating very fast; and many phrases, which I know to be Scottish idioms, have got into it of late years: so that many of my strictures are liable to be opposed by authorities which the world accounts unexceptionable. However, I shall send you the manuscript, since you desire it, and let you dispose of it as you please."

FINIS.

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